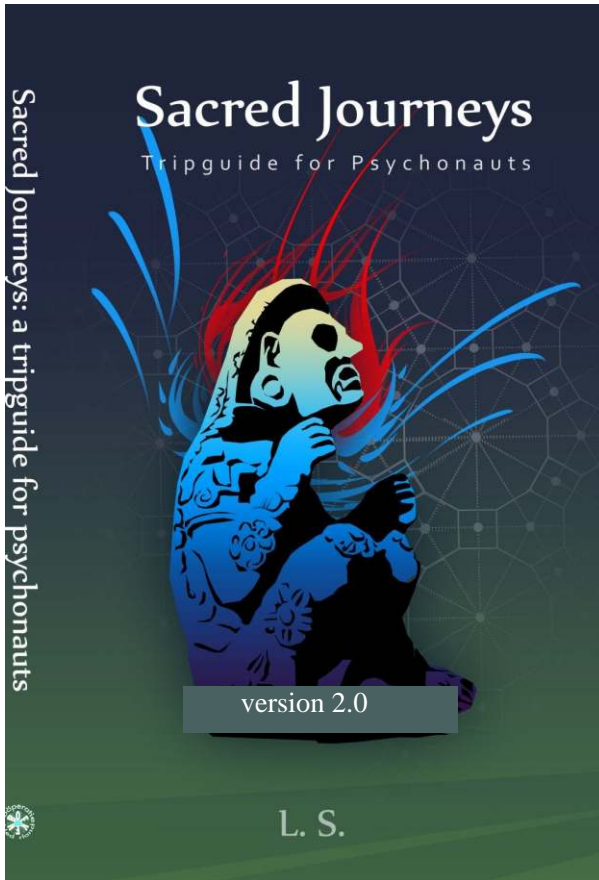


Sacred Journeys

5th updated and expanded edition, 2022



A critical introduction in responsible and transformational use of psychedelics, for first time users, sitters and therapeutic purposes.

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Be prepared for your trip

The use of psychedelic substances, hallucinogens, empathogens, entheogens by millions of people is a reality.

Those users and the people around them deserve adequate information about what these substances do, what is the best way to use them, and what are realistic dangers.

This book provides basic information about what tripping is and describes the effects of the most common psycho-active substances, LSD, Magic mushrooms, XTC and Ayahuasca, how they are used and what 'set and setting' is appropriate.

The focus is on deliberate use, preferable in what is called a ritual context, in order to benefit from the sacred qualities.

Beyond the recreational use, these sacred drugs provide a view of the deeper layers of our psyche and a peek into the otherworld of alternate realities. They can be used for self exploration, therapeutic sessions and mystical experiences.

Exploring the psychedelic states of consciousness can be a life-changing experience, but it helps to be informed about what the aspiring psychonaut might encounter, also for those around like parents, helpers, the medical profession.



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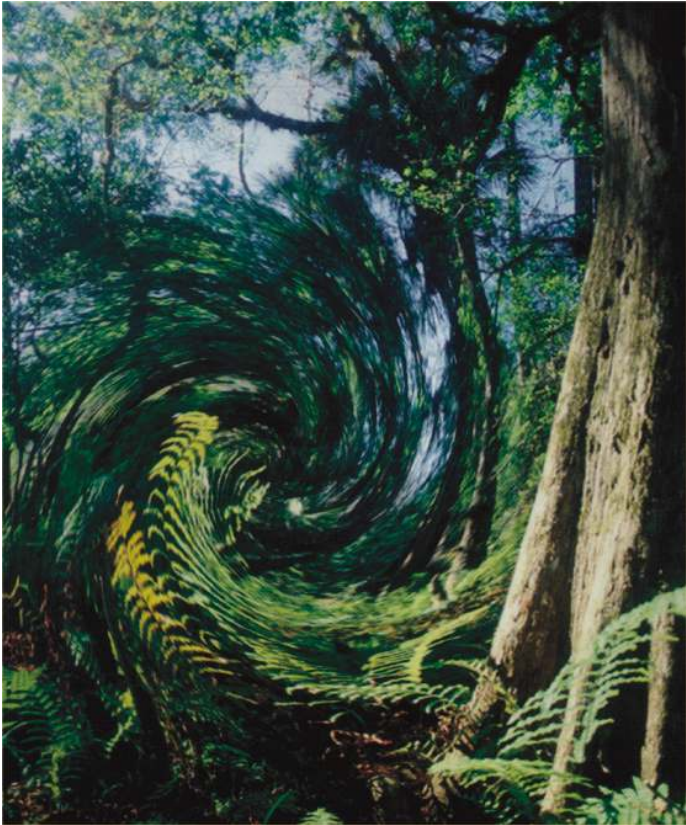
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Entering a magical realm, and nature is our great teacher



1 Preface

Psychedelics these days are being rediscovered as tools for self-discovery and therapy. An appreciation for what was already discovered in the seventies and observed in many cultures and historical traditions has grown over the past decades. The legal possibilities have widened, legalization and decriminalization are discussed and what used to be called soft drugs like Cannabis often are no longer prohibited. The use of psychedelic or at least psycho-active substances like XTC for recreational purposes is still illegal in most countries but there is certainly more freedom for research into applications like treating PTSD.

In the USA, the Biden administration's Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA) is anticipating that the FDA will approve psychedelic therapies, using MDMA and psilocybin, "within approximately 24 months." This is stated in a letter from March 2022 sent by Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.

From the start it's good to differentiate between the substances with transformational qualities dealt with in this book like cannabis, magic mushrooms, ayahuasca, LSD, MDMA, 2CB and those substances that mostly provide an escape from reality, like opiates, heroin or cocaine, and these days fentanyl and crystal meth which are generally addictive. I will have to mention them, as combination with more psychedelic substances is quite common and in many "scenes" these less transformational drugs kind of coexist and are used concurrently.

This book thus deals with potentially transformational substances. It's a general introduction to substances and practices that are age-old and were long regarded as illegal, primitive, superstitious and dangerous. Of course the chemists like Shulgin and Hofmann have isolated the more psycho-active components from their plant origins and made analogs and new concoctions, but it is clear that in the Eleusinian Mysteries and Soma ritual of the Vedic times substances were used with comparable effects.

This book is not promoting the general and often just recreational use of these substances, warns for the dangers to body and minds, but appreciates also what can be achieved by appropriate and what could be called ritual use. It tries to fill in gaps in understanding about process and ef-

fects and provide general information in order to guide users, bystanders, sitters, parents and those who have a professional interest in the matter.

What differentiates it from other introductions and books is that it's not just giving descriptions and factual data, but tries to go beyond the anecdotal, offering a more integrated view on how body, mind and soul are affected. It shows how our psychical development, our identity formation, our psychological type and profile, our trauma and dissociation history affect how a specific substance is experienced. It also show how different substances have a different effect and should be chosen to fit a specific person. Not all substances are effective for all people, there is no psychedelic snake-oil suitable for all. One has to choose the right substances, dosage, procedures, therapeutic and ritual set-up, geared to the individual or the group. Expand the usual "set and setting" to "set, setting, dosage, goal and evaluation/processing". How, why, with whom and where you take them can make a big difference.

The choice of a particular substance (and the conditions in which one uses them) has to be geared towards what one tries to achieve with the "trip", even if that is "letting go of all". Using some kind of model, like the chakra-energy points, or a typology like the enneagram helps, but in a scientific perspective one could also look at the relationship between the substance and the various neurotransmitter mechanisms and organs in the body.

In general it can be remarked that the psychedelic community, certainly in the last century, has experimented a lot but has not really integrated the understanding of psychological and psychiatric processes developed elsewhere. Things like systemic constellations, typology perspectives, developmental models like from Piaget, Erikson or Marcia, the various ways to describe trauma, dissociation, multiple personalities, body-mind therapy, etc. are only slowly being appreciated as part of a holistic view on the use of psycho-active substances and procedures. Many empathic and motivated therapists have used techniques like regression, hypnosis, guided meditations, body work and sexual awareness methods to help their clients, and with obvious success, but a comprehensive theoretical overview like this book tries to offer has not really emerged.

Maybe this has to do with the growing commercialization of the whole psychedelic scene, monetizing rituals like in the ayahuasca scene, making fortunes in mass marketing all kinds of pills, turning it into an indus-

try. Even science and the medical world falls prey to this, the interest in becoming a licensed and well paid professional psychedelic therapist is staggering. Projects like what MAPS¹ and Johns Hopkins Hospital have initiated are, in my opinion, not looking at the broader picture, but aim at permission and legal use for limited medical purposes by a limited and licensed group of professionals, a somewhat elitist and monopolizing approach.

The effect of psychedelics can be seen as either breaking one's mask(s) (the transformational) or fortifying (hardening, strengthening) it. Alas the recreational and massive use of pills etc. at events and in private circles mostly result in the latter. People tend to do, relate, dance, express themselves as they normally do, but just more excessive and more intense. They may change, but usually they don't and even get socially addicted to the scene, the hallucinating effects, the sense of belonging; generations are now growing up taking something every weekend. This is not what these sacred substances, as LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann called them, can really do for us; helping us to become better, more mature, more aware people.

Using psychoactive substances is as old as humankind and, if we observe that also animals and insects like them, their use can be traced back on the evolutionary ladder to primordial times. Even though this use has been the practice in many cultural traditions and religious practices, it seems it always has been surrounded by taboos, elitist notions, regulations and laws; making it illegal or limited to a select elite. In a way this is understandable, the effects of psychoactive substances can be serious, allowing a person or a group to see and understand mechanisms and relations beyond their position, freeing them from the fetters of society and moral programming. This could be and has been seen as a threat to the ruling class and the status quo, a reason to suppress its use.

Where to start?

There are a few questions that are maybe a good start, before reading this book;

- Ever tried or been drawn to use what are generally called psychedelic drugs?

1 *MAPS, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies*

- Ever had your doors of perception opened, as Aldous Huxley called it, giving you a glimpse of the wider and utterly magical reality out there and inside you, maybe with meditation, yoga etc.?
- Are you curious to experience a realm that is not only a visual or experiential treasure-chest but also allows you to better understand yourself and the world, stepping outside the barriers of normal space and time?
- Do you realize that what you think you are is an illusion and are you eager and willing to explore what your personality and identity matrix covers, meeting your true self, letting go of your masks(s)?
- Do you consider a trip because of what you want yourself or is there peer-pressure?

If so, you might want to have some reference, some matrix or foundation to give the experience a place in your world view and in your personal cosmology. This book tries to offer such a foundation and some guidance in the strange realm of psychedelic tripping. It is, however, not the ultimate map of that territory, as we still have only a fleeting insight in what these substances really do and what they offer to us.

The focus and purpose of this book is to help you see that the special gifts of these substances are best experienced if the trip is a sacred journey (in what one could call a ritual setting) and to help you create a proper set and setting and “liturgy” to achieve this, including the processing of the acquired insights.

We don’t want to advocate the general use of any psychedelic chemicals, plants or compounds, but offer some help for those who insist in taking them or have to deal with those who do. These substances aren’t just recreational uppers or escapist recreational drugs; they bring strong experiences that may shake your view of self and the world and are not always harmless.

Risks and dangers of psychedelics

Their use is not without risks, short term and long term. A trip can turn out bad, there might be immediate negative bodily or mental reactions, one’s sense of reality can be dangerously affected (I can fly!) and there are also long term health issues, especially with habitual use. The body (or mind) may have an unexpected and negative reaction, there are allergies, side-effects, after-effects and under the influence one may do the wrong things, get into accidents or worse.

Also increased awareness can alienate you from your family, network and bring about some isolation and loneliness.

There are important considerations like the dosage question; how much is effective, how much will lead to overdose situations, but there are other dangers. How potent is what one ingests, smokes or otherwise takes in? One might be caught by accidental intake, surprised by the effects, Cannabis cookies are well known for this.

Is what you take really that what you think or was told it is? How pure is it, how much contaminated or mixed? Some of these 'drugs' are nature products with additional alkaloids and substances that color every trip differently. What are the real basic active ingredients in 'synthetic' pills? Is it really MDMA (XTC) or just the more 'hard' MDA, etc. etc.? There is really no guarantee that one gets the right material in the right potency, as much of this comes by way of illegal production or import, by an industry often more interested in money than user-satisfaction or health. The effects may be as expected, give you a strong psychological lift, but they also can put you down and depress you, or worse.

Long term effects (especially when used regularly) are not really researched, the effect on life-expectancy (which could be looked at by means of telomere degradation analysis) has not been mentioned as far as I know.

Legality

Note that the line between legal and illegal is still fairly thin and artificial. Some drugs like alcohol (also psychedelic if you drink enough) chocolate and tobacco (sacred substances in some cultures) are legal, others come by prescription. There are legal psycho-active drugs used widely in the medical world like Ritalin, anti-depressants etc. but this book is about the ones outside formal medical use; specifically the ones with a consciousness altering quality leading to what very broadly could be called a sacred experience.

To broaden the perspective, there are many "drugs" that help us deal with the world. We can see smartphones as the most common 'digital' drug, using them also offers escape from reality, the power to shift time and place, change identity and retreat to a childlike state. Gaming is an obvious example, but social media are a serious factor too. Virtual reality devices offer even more immersive experiences (in the early nineties they were described as electronic drugs).

The attraction and even addiction to such non-physical (virtual) apps and tools and their effect on one's mental and physical health are well recognized. The Corona-crisis with its lockdowns and quarantine has aggravated the dependency on digital communication and social media. There may be long lasting effects on individual well-being and society we have yet to find out.

Psychotropic

There are many psycho-active substances, many sold over the counter, the more serious ones like lithium only by subscription, but basically painkillers are also psycho-active. The substances we address in this book are called psychedelics or hallucinogens, also indicated as psychotropic, and cause an altered cognitive (mind) state; they influence perception and often bring you in a dissociated state, being detached from 'normal' experience, freed from the normal mask and personality. One can feel and act so different from the normal state, that it can endanger oneself and others.

This dissociation is often considered an adverse and dangerous effect, and this is why such substances are formally mostly forbidden. If seen, however, as dissolving the ego self state (the assumed, known self) to make place or offer insights into a new self-image, it may be what makes the whole experience potentially so special and useful. If personality is seen as a mask hiding the true self, depersonalization then can be positive.

As mentioned already, the various substances can be used for just having an interesting, entertaining and fun experience, as a means to enhance dancing, partying, sex; reinforcing our 'normal' mask and ego-state. The other and more interesting purpose is to use them for transformation and personal quests, for psychological "Mind Exploration" or "Mind Expansion". In fact many psycho-active drugs, also the ones with less hallucinogenic qualities like MDMA, are very useful for self-exploration and psychotherapeutic use. Whatever the intention, being informed helps. Even purely recreational use is better understood and less risky if one understands the mechanisms and the process.

Group processes

One can experiment with these substances with some friend, in a small group and for a first timer this might be a sensible option, provided the others are reliable and know each other well. But larger groups, with

strangers and maybe a leader who is really not qualified, are less safe. This is more and more relevant, as many people are now introduced to these substances in group sessions, especially the ayahuasca scene has become almost exclusively group oriented. Now this in itself is not a problem. The historical use and most of what anthropologists see in the remaining cultures is usually a group setting with adequate safety precautions. The ayahuasca group rituals from the Amazon are by now widely known and even mass-marketed. One can join a more or less illegal group in many countries, the law is not always clear and it has become rather fashionable. Traveling to Peru or the Amazon is another option, there are package deals and it has become a kind of industry there.

A word of warning. The initial church-like setting and group interaction setup from the early days (the early nineties in Europa) offers safety and what Hakim Bey² called a temporary autonomous zone. But the proliferation and commercialization of the Ayahuasca (Iboga, Mushrooms, Peyote, SanPedro) scene has not only attracted honest and well trained people, many of the so-called shamans or ayahuasceros are there just to make money. They have little or no medical knowledge, often just superficial experience, and are not trained and educated like the indigenous ritual leaders were. There is money to be made one charges sometimes ridiculous amounts for sessions or retreats, and this has consequences. There are, alas, also many stories about sexual abuse by group leaders. In taking part in such a ritual one has to really try to figure out who and what the ritual leaders are, whether there is some basic medical knowledge, whether there is any selection and vetting of the other participants, etc.

In a session one picks up the energy of others, tripping next to a serial killer is maybe a bad example, but just realize that during such a trip aura sensitivity is high. The experience, personality, style and spiritual level of the leaders can help here, he/she can arrange how the people are seated and take charge of what happens, but is the leader really capable? It makes sense to check, ask for references, talk with people who attended before, and maybe realize that the price of the ritual might indicate the money-orientation. True healers don't charge!

2 *Hakim Bey/Peter L. Wilson: temporary autonomous zone TAZ*

Even as many people now make their acquaintance with these substances in a group setting, the medical and research interest has mostly on individual sessions and effect. There is little research, but a lot of anecdotal material, in what ritual setting, group processes, group mind emergence and shared sensual and extra-sensual experiences do for the individual. As much of the use of the modern psycho-active substances is in small or larger groups, this is a field that deserves more attention.



Magic or mindlift

In this book I work from a model of three realms or worlds, which includes the otherworld, the extradimensional, the spiritual or however you want to call it. Things like ritual I see in a magical perspective and this might offend those who don't believe in such a realm, but stick to the notion of just an inner- and an outer-world, mind and body, the material view. That doesn't mean this book is not for them. They could just realize that whenever ritual, spiritual or magical is mentioned, they should feel free to read psychological active, mind-process, or even illusion. But we know, that interventions like placebo and hypnosis are now recognized as effective tools, the mind can be easily programmed or even reprogrammed. That's what rituals do, and when enhanced by psychedelics, often do very effectively. So take the suggestions and recommendations as just psychological tools, that's fine with me and may make your trip a lot safer and easier.

PTSD and psychedelic therapy

There is a lot of interest in using psychedelics in dealing with trauma and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) with large research projects underway and an expectation of this becoming a legally accepted intervention. I wholeheartedly support the idea, that these substances, given set, setting, purpose and context are a great help in unraveling the programs and sometimes pathological in our subconscious, but I am critical of the present approach. The fundamental issues of body anchoring and mind-body interaction are not well incorporated in the protocols and sexual abuse and related trauma are kind of ignored, as they require a special setting and approach. Multiple personality and dissociation is-

sues, which could be addressed in the process and help to isolate trauma issues are not honored properly, even as they do play an important role in the healing process. The reported positive results are, in my view, often because one has accidentally touched such issues. The difference between healing and fixing in PTSD need much further research.

This books doesn't cover all substances, just the most popular ones, I made a choice there and also don't go very deep into popular substances like cannabis or laughing gas (nitrous oxide) as they are not really used for more intense journeys and there is adequate information available elsewhere.

I have of course experienced myself and worked with many of the substances mentioned, in groups and with individuals but to broaden the perspective I have included anecdotal "experiences" from other people, to illustrate how varied and individual a trip can be.

L.S.

2 Tripping: the process

In this chapter we introduce the general sequence of a psychedelic experience or 'trip', a roadmap describing the more or less regular phases and steps in the process. Please note that there may be much variation in the actual experience for different people, with different substances, dosage and different sets and settings and no two trips are ever the same.

A psychedelic experience is often compared to non-ordinary states of consciousness such as trance, meditation, yoga, religious ecstasy, or (lucid) dreaming. There are similarities but also differences, one being that there may be no way stopping the trip, you are in it for the ride!

There are some substances where the experience is rather short, like with low dose ketamine, DMT, cannabis, khat and some pills, but trips with mushrooms, LSD, ayahuasca, iboga and mescaline can take up to 10 hours or longer.

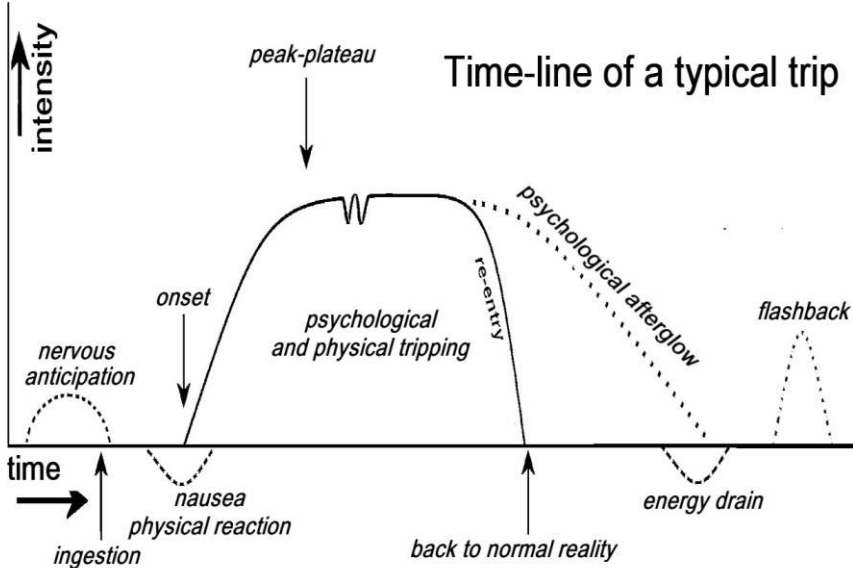
Journey to the dream

Taking psychedelics is a process, it takes some time, sometimes days. It is often called a journey, as it takes you to a place, far removed from normality and rationality. One enters a kind of dream world, where the mind is both steering and following, but in totally new and unexpected directions. There are certain similarities between tripping and the dream state and especially lucid dreaming. The dream is the mental dimension of our selves, and also is about traveling that dimension, not limited by the normal constraints of time, place and causality. In the dream we are free to use our creative talent, the worlds and events we create sprout from our imagination, often using cues from daily experience, but we ourselves create the imagery and in lucid dreaming, we are even aware we dream and can direct where we go. In a trip the imagery is usually magnified and intensified, but it is good to realize it is us creating these vistas, these worlds. We are utterly creative in that state and just as in dreams we are open to information from very deep, even beyond time and space limitations. Most ESP and prophetic experiences are reported from the dream state. The dream state and the 'normal' world seems to coincide at times, and this is also experienced in psychedelic states, we are able to overcome the normal limitations and reports of (imagined or real) levitation and such are not uncommon.

To ingest psychedelics to trip is not a game, certainly the first time it might feel like a bungee-jump into another world. You will quickly learn what ‘tripping’ means, but understanding the mechanics and some preparation and planning will make it less of a free fall, add some safety, help the process and prevent getting stuck in a loop and experiencing what some call a ‘bad trip’. Maybe there are no bad trips, but just very hard lessons to learn, some say. 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 the chapter on ‘Set & Setting’ for some more advice. We will discuss here the different stages of a trip. The picture shows a general format, but individual trips may be quite different.

The preparation

A good preparation and some planning is no warranty for a good trip, but it is certainly helpful and makes it easier to let go and be in the flow. It is important that you feel relaxed and at ease in your body. This preparation may start already a few days before. Rest, create space for the trip (and the aftermath) in your agenda, don’t traumatize your body with things like bungee-jumping or heavy workouts. Some fasting and abstaining from some foods like pork, sweets, alcohol, caffeine, cheese



and other drugs. Also abstaining from sexual activity can help to use that in the trip.

The timing of a trip depends on individual circumstances and preferences. A late evening trip might last well into the night, and the next day your energy may be low. A morning trip, like on a Saturday morning, will allow you to sleep it off and recuperate on the Sunday. After traveling (jet-lag) it is maybe better to wait a few days.

It is beneficial to stick to a light diet for a few days, or at least one day before, especially for natural drugs like mushrooms or ayahuasca. Some people prefer a total fast and the shamans sometimes advise a strict regime; it makes sense to eat only light meals the previous day and the trip day, like with fruits or vegetables.

Of course everybody has his own way of preparing and relax, some like to be in nature, to take walks, go to the sauna, some like to get inspiration from books, music, meditation or movies. It is particularly important to avoid stress. Even if you are not consciously preparing, your psyche might. Dreams can contain important pointers for the trip, also dreams afterwards can be very valuable in digesting and clarifying the lessons. Write them down if you can!

Taking a bath or shower before is a good thing, getting rid of the day's energy and dirt, feeling clean and ready. Make yourself comfortable, wear loose and warm enough cloths (not too colorful when in a group), bring a blanket, have some water around, a bucket for when you have to throw up. If you trip alone, really not a good idea for a first-timer, good preparation is even more important. Prepare the right music, switch off the phone, warn house mates or family that you are off the grid for a while, and trust the universe!

Feeling safe

Part of preparation is to take care of security, especially if you are going to be in an unfamiliar place, at a festival or with people you don't know. 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. The ritual aspects and what is called the sacred space, which are described in greater detail later, are important here. They provide a safe container, a structure that helps one feel at ease.

Take into account that you might start worrying and become confused after taking the substance and right before you really feel the effect. You might want to go through everything, so do you know where your keys

are and is the door locked? Better arrange for this now and follow the compulsive impulse to make sure everything is safe. Some insecurity and confusion at this stage is quite normal and healthy, so don't panic if you can't find the keys or your phone immediately.

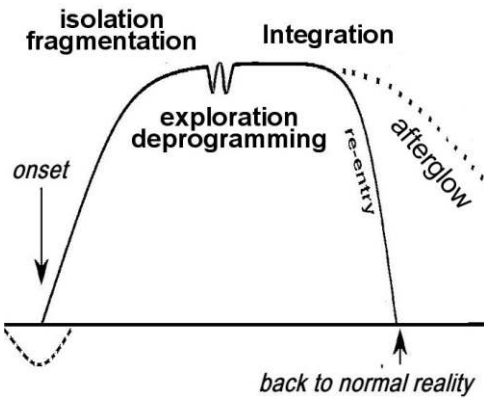
The actual ingestion can be (made into) a kind of sacred moment. Many people contemplate the substance, consecrate or bless it, ask for support and pray. This is a moment of truth, courage and choice!

Anticipation and fear

There is often a certain anxiety before the trip starts. At the onset of the actual trip, for many people, a shivering uncertainty emerges about this entering what could be seen as a dark and forbidden realm. And it is a one way street. you can't go back! Such fear is not unhealthy and a bit of fright is an honorable thing. Only fools walk happily and blindfolded into the unknown. So don't be ashamed, but share that fear with others. Don't push others into joining the trip if they don't feel like it or are really afraid, maybe for them being with you as a 'sitter' (not using drugs but watching over you) is a valuable experience in itself. The people around will usually experience a 'contact high' anyway, the 'hitchhiking' effect is well known as one picks up a little bit of the energy of those being 'high'.

For some substances, notably mushrooms and ayahuasca, in the beginning the body may protest, some nausea, vomiting or feeling sick may happen. This may be due to contaminants. These are natural products af-

ter all. This 'emetic' effect is also interpreted as a purging, of letting go of body blockages. Also it can be a way of the body to get rid of too much of the psychoactive substance, a natural feedback mechanism protecting you.



Phases in the process

Phases, giggling

The journey normally does not have a really linear progress, but will go through phases in a somewhat predictable and recognizable se-

quence like the diagram indicates, but there will be variations, maybe dips and peaks. There will be periods you feel like moving, dancing, and at other times you need some isolation and utter silence.

For instance a mushroom trip often starts with a giggle period. Many people have spontaneous outburst of giggles and laughter, sometimes hardly controllable; in general they are more sensitive to the ridicule of what 'normal' people take so serious. In such 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.

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 really feeling what is there. When you laugh about the funny way someone lights a cigarette or holds the phone, maybe that is because you recognize your own clumsiness and mask. These effects becomes clearer when looking at a video of a trip; recording a trip is not a bad idea even as the result may be mostly boring shots of people's grimaces and giggles. 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.

Isolation, liminality, the dark, loops

When the effects take hold, some people will at first feel lost, isolated, alone, wondering in what world they are, confused in what state of consciousness they got. They feel uneasy with the loss of control, in need of anchors and wanting to return back to their 'normal state'.

Even as some can hold off and delay the real onset sometimes for hours, one eventually has to give in and let go of control. This is what tripping also means; letting go of the need to control, to allow the dissociation to happen, to let go of the ego and the normal patterns. It is not easy; entering the subconscious feels like splitting up, fragmenting the self. It is of course part of the normal process of a trip or initiation rite.

One arrives at what the anthropologist Victor Turner called a threshold or 'liminality' - the in between state - but it may take a while to cross that virtual threshold and really enter the psychedelic wonderland, the magical state where hidden memories and archetypes are accessible.

The usual gradual process of sinking towards a more direct contact with your deeper senses and your subconscious, can then lead to feelings of

happiness, love, gratefulness. It may bring a mystical state or religious rapture but also more negative states of depression and despair.

Especially at higher doses negative feelings can surface like `what did I do to myself taking this shit', a feeling of insecurity, dissociation or a total loss of the concept of time. One can have to face the dark side, the shadows deeply hidden, the forgotten memories and traumas, the stuff that is hidden but rules our behavior and lives, via subconscious programs in our mind. Now they become conscious, but we might not like what surfaces.

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 your boundaries, and the more you invest in this, the more openings and solutions you will find. It is not an easy process, however, and some outside assistance and a change of posture and situation can help to stop the looping mechanism. Looping can resurface later in the trip, one can get stuck with a certain repeating pattern.

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

Negativity

You may meet your fears, your negativity, your distrust, maybe your lack of respect for your body, as demonic, negative forces. This can be very strong and it may take some time to deal with this. It is like if these forces, and they are inner forces, try to keep you away from the inner light, the love that is inside you and will be reflected in all around you, once you deal with the negativity. It's not easy to slay the dragons of fear, in fact it comes down to accepting them as part of you, then they turn into allies, protectors, guiding you to the light and ecstasy of pure love. In this phase some support from a sitter can help, some grounding, some suggestions, a touch, a moment of human contact can help to let go.

Letting go is best way to enter your inner space, be it hell or heaven; it's your own judgment that makes it what it is. Give up trying to give it meaning; that is a mental construct, your mind trying to frame things, your normal way to control things. Try to see beyond the form, open up to the details and isles of your visions, like allowing yourself to see the

beauty of that snake, spider, demon, how it moves, flows, reacts to where your attention goes. Once you realize, or rather accept that something deep inside you, much deeper than those controlling tendencies that separate you from that core, will guide you and help you, the joy will come. Letting go of the self delusions, the me that is not the I, or even deeper, where even the I dissolves, that is what a trip can bring.

In the trip you will, after the physical phase and the initial negative fears and anxiety, become more aware of the extra-dimensional plane, experiencing how reality is much more than the material. You will slowly become more conscious of things and processes which you took for granted before; 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 and time becomes fluid. ‘The doors of perception open’ as Aldous Huxley noted.

Auditive and visual; synesthesia

The psychedelic experience has stages where the sounds and colors around you are perceived by the senses, maybe distorted or synesthetically mixed, but also stages where the outside stimuli are taken over by the inner experience, sounds and images come from within. When you open and close your eyes and see the same “reality”, the inner imagination has taken over.

Colors can have a positive and soothing effect, but for some the colors red and black are better kept out, sometimes wearing only white clothes is part of the ritual setting. The sensitivity for red often increases, this shows in much psychedelically inspired art.

The soundscape during the trip is very important, the music, the verbal guidance by therapist or helper, the singing of special songs or hymns, the environmental sounds (sirens on the street are very annoying and triggering) and should be carefully planned. Auditive stimulation is often considered more important than the visual.

Synesthesia is when you experience one of your senses through another, like when you hear music, but you see shapes. Or you hear a word or a name and instantly see a color. Ayahuasceros do use their singing and voice to influence the visual, often creating a shared visual experience.

Body-awareness, sex

When the initial physical effects of uneasiness or nausea pass, and one accepts the trip-state, gives in to the flow, the focus will usually shift.

You will get out of your mind a bit, emotions take over and body awareness increases, you feel, smell, taste, hear and see in a different way. Maybe you will experience your body in a slightly different way. Most people become aware of the tension in the muscles, the face. There is usually a moment when 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. This 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 this defense system, you become aware of those tensions, shields, body armor, you can ‘work’ with them and let go of them. ‘Work’ as in feeling why they exist and you keep them. This is 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, selfie 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 tripping drugs.

Body sensations and emotional perceptions (by way of your emotion ears, the adrenals) do cause and include sexual feelings. The denial or ignoring of these, which is often part of the group ritual or therapeutic setting, are understandable given the cultural taboos, but do limit the experience and the potential for self-insights. In private settings, like a couple tripping, sex is often the highlight and even the purpose of the trip. Sexual trauma is so common, that ignoring this in the therapeutic setting as is commonly the case in the PTSD-therapy experiments and protocols is more than just a omission, it’s unwise.

Clarity but sometimes control-loops

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 and the urge to control, are the cause of a bad trip for mind and body. If you really can’t take it anymore 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 mixing 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 the right dose is. Because many indoles are alkaloid, like magic mushrooms, they are

very 'yin' and you can counteract the effect by taking some yang food, like some salted soup. An Aspirin can help too, it relaxes you and it is at least something. One can also give someone just anything, with a suggestion. The placebo effect works great when tripping, the suggestibility is very high. In fact one can trick people into tripping with a placebo or hypnosis and induce flashbacks, if they have had the experience before.

The support facilities at festivals (the harm reduction facilities like a sanctuary, chill-out place and expert helpers) and in hospitals have other means to get you 'down', but usually some friendly care, a change of posture, some moving around will help you to regain mastery of your thoughts and body. Knowing that help is available if needed is already enough, as it often minimizes the anxiety and thus the actual need for such help.

If you want to get out of the 'control-loop'; relax, watch something beautiful like a flower, put on some other 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 is something which happens in real life too, only there you can escape or hide it. In the trip there is no escape, the confrontation is there, the demons knock on your inner door and demand to be faced.

Sinking; hallucinations

As the trip progresses you are now, slowly but surely, entering a magical world, noticing that things look different, that perspectives are shifting, time fades, the normal world gets distorted but in an interesting, fascinating way. You get maybe out of the visual 'optical 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, the images and sounds, get more intense and wonderful, objects often surrounded by colorful rainbows. If you wave your hands, you see a kind of trail, like a video-effect. The colors and visual distortions often make you feel as if you really are in a Gothic church or Mayan temple. Maybe those architects of old knew a bit more than we give them credit for! Sounds and smells get a new flavor; music reverberates in all your cells.

The hallucinations, depending on the strength and dosage, will become very real, you will not experience them as separate from your world;

they become the world. You are immersed in a new realm, so vivid and clear and with intricate details, colors and emotions you never experienced before.

This is when the slightest turn, a sudden sound, a bit of pressure here or focusing your attention on some minor detail will redirect your trip.

What seemed fascinating a moment ago is now forgotten as you suddenly see new energy patterns, smell something that brings you back to childhood; this is wonderland, but in high gear.

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 more vividly. You see or hear things that can't be there, a simple shadow is interpreted as a whole world, and the painting you know so well is now a tridimensional portal into a strange realm. You feel like Alice in Wonderland, wandering in an enchanted world that is vaguely familiar but strange in its immediate changes, like in a lucid dream but more sensuous, more vivid.

In this phase you can feel very emotional and it is possible to focus, even for a fleeting moment, on affective 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. Remember that what you see in others is mostly a mirror of yourself, judging others is thus judging yourself. Your darkest fears materialize as entities, and are hard to embrace as part of you.

The reality becomes fluid, time flexes

It may be 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. Time becomes very subjective, malleable, the clock time is irrelevant; one can experience a lifetime in what the people around see as seconds or minutes. The sense of timing is gone, it's like being out of time. 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.

Peak

You will reach the peak of the trip, and maybe stay at that level for some time. vacillate a bit. Maybe your ego, your stamp on what you perceive, dissolves in that state, is no longer there. You let go of the reality checks, go with the flow. The world turns inwards; a new vista opens, in feelings and in perception. You may even lose body awareness, just become part of a mass-less universe. Hallucination slowly deepens, you lose track of where you are, time and ego dissolve. Closing your eyes transfers you to other, majestic, super beautiful, sometimes frightening places and imagery. Even with open eyes you see extra colors, strange patterns, things that you know are not really there. Maybe there comes a moment 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!

The most beautiful phase of your trip is happening now. You enter a world or many worlds with doors, halls, patterns and images which you recognize from a church or a temple in Mexico, Egypt or Greece, maybe you enter a bizarre sci-fi or comic book space with little men jumping around. You may recognize the inspiration for the psychedelic comics and movies like 'Fritz the Cat' by Robert Crumb. Tunnels and doors, caves and spaces, portals and stairs; you fly from one color and sphere into another. Turn a bit and you are displaced from the one extravagant Indian palace to the next Arabian harem, from a roller coaster to a beauty spot in nature. Overwhelming otherness, spectacular vistas and then the minutest detail, you fly where your attention goes or your attention follows your flight, as the notion of self disappears.

The normal rational perspective is non-existent, causality becomes fluent congruence and it seems that your vistas follow 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, maybe removed from who you think you are, there can be loss of identity, dissociation.

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 all the archetypal symbols, from crosses and circles and geometrical patterns to mythological figures, are also part of your trippy dream world. The psychedelic worlds are spectacular, maybe these images are where our concepts of heaven and hell come from. Dante's trip to the otherworld, where he meets the evil and the wise, is as good a description of a psychedelic trip as any.

Death, rebirth, growth

We like to grow, understand ourselves and the world better. "Know thyself" is an old adage, and very valid as point of departure for a psychedelic trip. But growing means learning, and this involves failures and lessons that are not so easy. We may have to die to our "old" self and the narrative we have constructed about ourselves.

We see our lives in a specific way, and when it's time to change that, and a trip is often such a moment, themes of either progress or rebirth mat surface, like in many myths. Death to a conviction brings rebirth, resurrection, a glimpse of enlightenment maybe.

This may come as a rather dark experience (sometimes called a bad trip), it may turn into a looping repetition as if you are in a prison you can't escape. This is not an easy process, it may come with anger, fear, horrible imagery, it may be associated with imagery and feelings of stagnation and disorganization. Letting go, giving in, accepting death is the way to go, and it may turn out to ok, as a real step forward.

Exploration and integration

The trip allows you to experience a self-state that is unusual, seems uncontrollable, but once you realize it responds not so much to your will but starts to follow your attention, a new kind of control emerges. You can steer the trip and the experience by focusing your attention, your imagination syncs with your intention. This is where you can explore; your body, your behavioral patterns, your programming, your cosmology, your world view, your beliefs.

The dissolution of the self (loss of ego programming and attachments) is a kind of deprogramming, or liberation, of breaking the schemas. You can come free from the paradigms instilled in you by parents and soci-

ety, open up to other possibilities and thus see where you limit yourself, or where society or social structures limit you and others.

Some see this as the political quality of a psychedelic trip, you can look at things like from another perspective on yourself and society, a little like a helicopter view. New insights will emerge, great ideas sometimes, the deprogramming makes space for new and broader awareness. In and after a 'good' trip this will eventually lead to integration of these insights and a new self-image and world-image. Alas, often the insights get lost, the re-entry happens without retaining the lessons. Gradual and 'soft' re-entry in the context of a good 'set and setting' is essential here.

Communitas, effervescence

Especially in a larger group setting, like at festivals, there may evolve a kind of communal feeling, a group mind state emerges. This can be very positive, even ecstatic. Anthropologists like Victor Turner (he called this communitas) and Emile Durkheim (collective effervescence was his term for this state) wrote about this state, but the group mind feelings can also turn towards violence, hooliganism and mass-hysteria. Suggestibility increases, psychedelics do stimulate this, the separation between self and other diminishes. In larger groups one tends to follow the example of others, mirror behavior and synchronize thoughts, lose identity or exchange it for a group-identity. This social (peer) pressure is not perceived very consciously, it just happens. There are mirror-neuron processes that stimulate this synchronization and in fact can be used, with positive or negative intent.

Direction

Now you are really sitting front row in your own theater. So watch closely, the show is yours and yet hard to control! Let the plant-teachers or the spirit of the drug (yes, synthetic drugs have them too) guide you during the trip. You can trust the 'entities' as such, or maybe realize that these are natural processes and that the subtle consciousness is always more right than the more coarse ego illusion on the surface. Thoughts and images come and go in a continuous movie you watch in awe, and you are observing as well as starring as well as directing it. You are the dancer, you are the dance!

To enjoy the trip, go with the flow, is the best route, sometimes there are fears and scary images, but usually this passes quickly. See all 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 you get similar signals in normal life, but you are mostly not aware of them or ignore them

A word of warning here, this is not a cinema. Some people go tripping mostly to enjoy the visuals, the beauty of that inner spectacle, and of course it beats just going to the disco. The real potential of a sacred journey is to grow, to explore the inner world and see how you create your life and reality, how the trip imagery is a reflection of your subconscious. You may want to re-unite love and truth (and thus experience the divine monad), find your true talent and purpose in life. A trip should be a challenge, not an escape from normal life. It then can become like a habit and even an addiction, with sometimes pathological consequences. What matters is what you bring back from the trip, how you integrate the great insights into daily life. Just getting high to escape the world is easy and addictive in a way, but it's not fully using the potential of these sacred substances.

The first trip may turn out to be the best ever. For many the quality of the visuals diminishes after a more trips. This doesn't mean that the quality of the experience diminishes, it just changes. As one becomes more apt in wandering the psychedelic inner worlds, more precise explorations are possible; the experienced psychonaut knows the way. The visuals are fascinating, but not the most transforming aspect of tripping. Often the 'cinema-trippers' who see the most colorful imagery and only come back for that, have some liver-problem, as it is the liver that kind of controls the visuals. In that sense LSD and ayahuasca/DMT are liver drugs.

In and out

One you have reached a peak, there is a certain plateau that may last for several hours. There are however always variations in intensity, because maybe the circumstances change, because your body reacts to the experience. One can even come back to normal perception and then get back in the trip somewhat later. The mind can and will deal with external situations, often very adequate and rational. There are experienced people who, in the middle of a trip, step out of it, deal with a situation, even drive a car, seemingly unaffected, and then return to the trip-state if the circumstances allow that. Not everybody though, so take no risks!

Sitters: designated helpers

It does make sense to have one or more trusted 'sitters'. These are people who don't take anything (or very little, a homeopathic dose of 10-20%) 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, 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! As sitter you have responsibilities, but also the opportunity to really help, make sure the relevant stimulants are there, like the right music, smells, a touch, kind words, water. A kind smile can be enough to steer a tripper away from the dark!

Sitters should not have an agenda beyond being supportive, being empathic. They should not try, even if they are qualified therapists, to steer or give directions, even thinking about influencing the direction of the trip is often enough to misguide, as the tripper is supersensitive. Let it flow, maybe just remind the tripper of his or her intentions.

Of course you can do without sitters, but then it is better to have some experience in journeying. Then you can arrange what you need before and kind of plan your journey. You can let it flow or then give it direction by concentrating on something you encounter or rather 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. This is helpful if you venture into the unknown or strange territory of the psychedelic experience; you can provide some structure by making things clear for yourself, creating a path for 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, smells, taste, your body, sex? Be sure to be clear about this in advance and share that with the others or the sitter.

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, is there

a private space, can one leave (usually not a good idea), smoke, eat, drink, have other drugs, use internet, invoke personal entities or souls, call your mother?

Would your kind of music be a traumatic downer for others? There are therapist that impose their music choice, with the best intentions, but is it also the best for the tripper(s)? Gregorian chants or Tibetan overtones are great for some, a nightmare for others. Silence is the sacred way, often the best insights happen when there is no music or distraction.

In general, specially with others in a group, but also with the sitter(s) try to discuss the playing field and make some rules. You don't need a formal contract, but it may make things easier if you write something down or record it.

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 wilderness. 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 psychonauts.

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!"

Set enough time apart, make sure you have at least a day to recover and don't take things too late in the day, otherwise the experience will keep you (and others) awake well through the night!

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, a mirror, illustrated books (of other countries and cultures, animals or plants) or objects that have a practical, (tissue paper), symbolic or emotional value.

Pick up the 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! And you can create in many ways, dance your dance, sing your song, and play your play! With modern tools and apps on your smartphone you can even record this. It can become a powerful reminder later, showing you have capabilities and talents hidden inside you.

The 'set and setting' of a trip, meaning the mindset and the circumstances, are key to a safe and rewarding experience. The intention or purpose of the trip matters, some preparation helps, the circumstances should allow for relaxation but also for stimulation at times.

Silence, on your own

Quiet rest, alone or in a chill place, 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 and precautions and a safety net are maybe wise (internet or telephone). 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, volcanoes, 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 and trauma

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 ignore 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 even when moving nicely with the music, take a break once in a while, find a chill-out spot and listen to the dance inside. Because we are often 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.

Often your sensitivity for physical sensations heightens, even as there are other moments when it feels like you leave your body. You are more aware of warmth, cold, and a breeze, but also of the smell of your blankets or of the electric field of an apparatus. Your senses get magnified. The suggestibility is very high, and this can help in healing.

A suggestive CD or audio track with energy- or chakra-meditation is helpful and also allows you to feel the chi-energy, the flow of your breath. With a little practice that can also be felt afterwards and used in your 'normal' state of consciousness. This kind of suggestive or hypnotic material (like guided visualizations) 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" or "I feel my body, my legs, my breath etc."

Also try to listen, if possible, to a recording with your parent's' or loved ones voice or watch a video or pictures of them (and you), you may notice unsuspected messages, a caring tone of voice, it helps bringing back memories.

You can enjoy or at least experience your body through massage or body-work; this can be an unforgettable and very healing experience. In the special state of consciousness (self-state) that you reach with psychedelics 'becoming whole' is a very interesting item to put on your agenda. The main purpose of the trip can be healing, dealing with health problems. Many times you will discover, however, that physical complaints or pains are mostly symptomatic, they are the anchors, the signals and repositories 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 information about the deeper causes of certain diseases or disabilities and if something can be done about them.

The mystical, regression

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 what happens in a meditative trance, yoga or ritual session, with drumming or chanting.

Some people will - during a trip - remember that they have had similar experiences before, as a kid, during traumatic experiences, accidents or in what some describe as regression, even into '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 an epiphany; 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 or Watts talked about, and for that matter, Jesus or Buddha.

Rebirth and death

The whole process of a trip can be described as letting go of the programming, the ego, the assumed self we think we know, getting closer to the core self (inner child). From the naked chaos we experience there, the loss of identity we can then learn that ego is illusion and in the re-entry coming back construct a new, a better self. This process is sometimes described as dying to oneself, as a psychological death.

Sometimes this is even experienced as a physical process of dying, mentally letting go of all attachments including the body. This is not reported as a painful, but rather as a quiet, peaceful dissolution of self, with similar images and sensations as reported from near-death experiences (NDE). This will often result, after re-entry, in less fear of death, less anxiety and is usually a very positive experience.

Returning to a more self-conscious level (more ego awareness) from a trip can feel like a rebirth, coming back to 'normal' life without the burden of the old masks and beliefs. One feels reborn, new, free from old burden, but the problem is to retain this 'lesson', to apply it in daily life.

It's 'You' coloring the trip

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 cannot easily overcome the duality of good or evil.

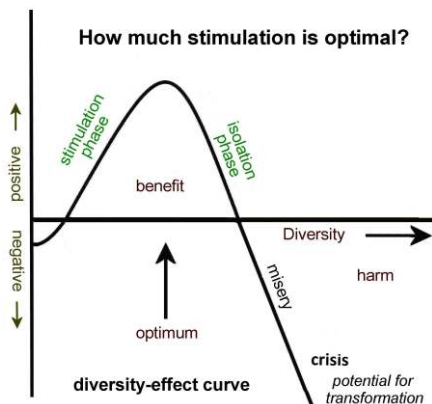
What we experience during a trip is mostly an inside job! Despite external stimuli and a greater sensitivity to the energy, colors and sounds of

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 your truth? Nobody can answer this question, at best we can believe in a certain form of ultimate reality at the core of the cosmos.



We have different, more sensitive reality filters 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, the sacrament of (self)-realization: "Thou art That" (whatever you experience around you is what you yourself are). This 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 afterwards are not only the images, you will now recognize certain geometrical patterns, figures and art from the sixties (and historic buildings) as psychedelic art, but mostly you will retain 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', re-entering the daily routines. If you feel like getting up in a hurry; don't rush; try to remain calm and relaxed. Some

think that this is the good moment to eat or drink something or to talk with your fellow-travelers.

Maybe it is, maybe not, decide for yourself. Maybe another person needs some more time, allow them a gradual re-entry. That word is appropriate, as you really come back to earth from another world, as a psychonaut 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 on Coming Down). If you are in the company of others then it is fun to end the experience together in some way. This can be done by sharing your experience or by silence, a ritual, a song, etc. The common experience creates a special bond.

Overstimulation

The setting of a trip can be in a quiet environment, but sometimes one ends up in situations, like at festivals, where overstimulation happens. Too many people, too much noise, too much diversity to handle. Finding a quiet spot, a chill-out location is then necessary, otherwise the combination of external and internal stimulation may lead to a serious bad trip, aggression or breakdown and the need for medical assistance. A good reason not to make one's first trip in a situation where overstimulation might occur, preventing accidents, hysteria etc..

Back to normal

In a few hours, depending on the substance, all the effects will have disappeared and it is 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, your judgment of speed and distance may be impaired.

If you took the substance in the morning (maybe 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, but the excitement may keep you awake.

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. This is also true for the common recreational use of for instance ecstasy, you feel fine and very happy the next day, the dip may come a day or two later.

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. You can feel gross, your pores might seem bigger, oilier, your smell is different, but this will pass.

With continuous heavy use of substances, 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. Your body may stop making its own happiness hormones, as you have artificially provided them.

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

Flashbacks

Sometimes the trip resurfaces after a while, even without having ingested anything, some trigger revives the memories and one get into a "high" state. This has to do with how our brain and body has registered the experience and maybe with unprocessed aspects of the experience. This can be a problem, for it's maybe unexpected, happens at strange moment at places and in situations that are not very suitable. People with a lot of experience can sometimes recall and relive the trip-state by just thinking about it.

The flashback experience is not very well researched and some doubt it even exists for indole compounds such as LSD and psilocybin, but many do notice some after-effects that could be described as flash-back. This might be a triggered reaction, a recall, but also a physical process.

With hypnotic techniques it is often possible to recall the experience and relive it, including the bodily and emotional effects. Hypnosis can, not for everybody though, recall a memory of experienced altered states, of being high (and also of drunkenness). Maybe this is what happened in rituals of old.

Without actually ingesting any substance, by going through the motions the “high” or “holy” state, from past experiences, is induced again. This doesn’t work without the prior trip, maybe this is why many religious rituals are now ‘empty’, mere repetitions. In general if you hold on to the experience of the trip, keep it alive in your memory banks, it lingers and can be called upon or accidentally triggered.

There are other effects that lasts. For some 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 substances.

Levels of experience

Masters and Houston (1966) recognized 4 levels of psychedelic experience, starting with enhanced sensory awareness, recollective/analytic (becoming aware of mental and emotional processes), symbolic (aware of primal, archetypal and recurring themes in human experience), and the integral/mystical level. Not everybody will reach all these levels. Stan Grof also recognized these 4 levels, but labeled the third the “perinatal” and the fourth the “transpersonal”.

The after-effects

The work of rebuilding the self, after the demolition during the trip, starts when the re-entry begins. The pieces of a shattered consciousness are stitched together, and there is the chance to create a better self, solving the problems, leaving the traumas behind. But this integration is not over when normality returns, then the ‘work’ to apply the insights, to resist falling back into the old and familiar old mask-modes, starts for real. The deeper - psychological - effects of a trip can still be felt after a few weeks and even after a few months. The healing, the self-realization can become permanent, but may require some drastic changes in life-style, relationships and occupation. This requires courage as often the people around try to drag you back to how they knew you. Everything in your daily life, all the objects, all the people try to push you back into the ‘old’ you. This is why afterwards therapy may be needed, to help one integrate the changes in daily life, or to help resisting relapse.

That what you saw and learned about yourself, others and the world can change your life, hopefully for the better but there are also cases where tripping led to serious psychological situations, depression, suicidal ten-

dencies, etc.. These are exceptions and often the tendency or inclination was there before anyway, a (hidden) pre-existing condition.

There is the risk that you will feel depressed for some time when you discover what you really are, maybe seeing what you have been doing wrong during your whole life, when you realize your mask(s) and defense mechanisms. 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 usually no need to deal with all of them immediately; it is good to let everything settle down, chilling out so to speak. 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 worries later. It is good to really look at the, process them (maybe with professional help) and 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, to let go of the emotional deadweight.

Bonding

A trip with others has consequences, that may last a lifetime. One tends to bond with others in a group trip ritual or event. There is a kind of magic connection, beyond time and place. Sometimes a very intense link between people emerges out of the sharing, the emotional support between people, the deep feelings. One opens up, maybe beyond normal limits. This can be a good thing, one can make lifelong friends. However, do realize, that if the connection wasn't really positive, maybe there is someone in your life and energy field you rather would not have met. This is one of the dangers of group-events with strangers.

3 Set and Setting

In the sixties the phrase ‘set and setting’ became popular, describing the context for psychoactive and particularly psychedelic or hallucinogenic drug experiences: one’s mindset and the setting in which the user has this experience. The term was coined by the psychiatrist Norman Zinberg, and became widely accepted by users and researchers of psychedelic psychotherapy.

The concept of set and setting comes back many times in this book, here I give a general outline. ‘Set’ is the mental state, the mindset a person brings to the experience, like thoughts, drives, mood and expectations. ‘Setting’ is the physical and social environment, where you are and in what context; the place, the people, the legal situation, the safety, the help and support one can get, on the spot or in case of an emergency.

Social support can be particularly important in the outcome of the psychedelic experience and these days social media networks, are part of it. Access to social media can be helpful, a contact via Skype or even a telephone can be a great help sometimes. The people around or accessible are then able to help or guide the course of the experience, when the need arises.

A less than optimal preparation and environment will breed anxiety, stress and fear, and may result in an unpleasant experience (bad trip). The wrong setting, the wrong people, too many people, the wrong purpose, the wrong intention, much can go wrong!

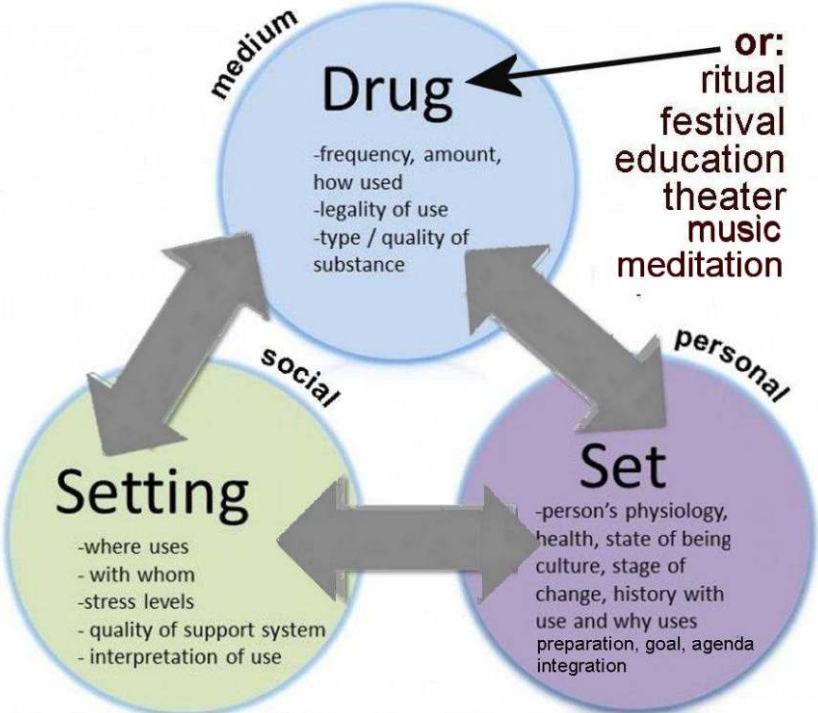
And don’t forget different drugs and different dosage, too much can cause a “bad” trip or even overdose symptoms, too little leaves you like halfway to heaven. Also the preparation matters, and this includes being careful about what you have eaten or used as medication before. The preparation at the start should be matched with processing, and evaluation afterwards, to reap the rewards of your inner work. Extending the phrase to: “Set, Setting and Drug” or even to “Set, Setting, Drug and Processing” makes sense.

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 and with some time to spare. A ritual setup usually provides the basic format with minimal risks. If you just swallow a pill, some

mushrooms or LSD when you feel lousy and have nothing to do, and in just the place where you happen to be, 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.

It is important that you ask yourself why you want to make a trip, the 'set' includes the intention or purpose. The motives can range from a need for a change in your life to just pleasing your lover in going along (not a strong one!).

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. The next chapter deals with the question of purpose in more detail.



drugsandstuff.co.uk

Adapted from Zinberg's Model of Drug, Set and Setting

The Drug, Set & Setting does apply to a psychedelic trip, but also to all events and experiences, it's fairly universal model.

Agendam planning

As there are maybe more things you want to explore in the trip, it helps to make a kind of agenda, a list of items or subjects. This may include problems in the family, relationship issues, urgent decisions you have to make, physical problems or illnesses, spiritual questions. Contemplating them before the trip and writing them down or ‘anchoring’ them with or in an object, like a little stone, will help. In the trip you will come across this stone, feel it and will be reminded. A sitter (guide, monitor person taking care of you while tripping) can help you to remember, help you deal with the issues, maybe by asking questions, handing you objects or pictures (of family, places, events), play music or recordings. All of course without pressure or stress.

The very important auditive stimulation (like a shaman singing hymns, listening or making music, guided meditations), the movements (like dance passes in the Ayahuasca church or massage) and the opportunity to be by yourself (away from the group, outside their “aura”, maybe go outside in nature) are points to consider in planning the trip. Creative expression, painting, writing, etc. requires the tools to do that, and having some recording device also makes sense.

Place

There is a separate chapter about sacred space, but note that the physical conditions do play a role. Are you inside or outside, what temperature, is there a live fire, access to water (shower, bath, swimming pool, sea, pond)? What music, sounds and smells are there or can be used to induce a different state, recall specific memories. Some food, maybe some fruit, certainly fresh water, soft clothing, comfortable chairs, a bed to lay on, pillows, cover, some sage or incense, candles, pen and paper, musical instruments, recording device; creating a good and safe atmosphere is important. Once in the trip it’s maybe hard to deal with the practical things, like finding matches or switch off the doorbell, so prepare. Make sure you can close the curtains, find your way to the bathroom, switch off the lights or have eyeshades around, to be in the dark.

With whom, with what?

It’s thus not only what substance you take (there are many options) or in what form and dosage you smoke, ingest, eat or drink them, it is also about the whole environment and the people around you (or maybe with no one around). It is important that you will not be disturbed, that there

is help available or at least one person who knows you are tripping (a back-up is important, only the thought that you can call someone you know can have a soothing effect) and that it is safe.

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. Skype and social media are a great resource for this.

Also take into account that strangers (police, FBI, DEA, unfriendly neighbors) may come by and you don't want them to find you with a bunch of shrooms, pills or strange concoctions next to you.

In theory the choice of substances is very wide, in practice the availability limited, there are no supermarkets one can go to, the clandestine trade is limited and even buying on the internet is only a limited option. So often you will take what's just available, taking some risk in the quality and dosage, but this means that one needs some safety lines. Preferably there is a `sitter' is available, who can watch over you (for experienced trippers being alone has its benefits too). These days a virtual (internet) sitter is an option.

If you are in a group look around for someone to help you and be your buddy. Think ahead! Are there some people in the group that take the substance a little sooner or later, do you help each other, do you choose a buddy before a trip, and how far are you prepared to go anyway? Be clear to each other and don't let laden issues like sex hang in the air. They will very likely come up and it is much better to be clear about them beforehand.

Bonding, transference, alliance, abuse

Tripping with someone forges an invisible link, that may last a lifetime! This goes for the sitter, but also for a therapist assisting in a session. In psychology one calls this **therapist alliance** and it can be great help if there is a trusting and compassionate relationship. But this is also a danger in this, emotional betrayal and sexual abuse are a serious danger!

This also plays a role in groups. So look around, are these the people you want to be part of your quest? It might be important or even essential to discuss and become aware of these bonding-effects, an invisible tie with the sitter, the therapist, some or all of the people of the group may be formed. You will see the others when they are vulnerable and that might move you to open your heart for them and vice versa. 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. One picks up their energy, intentions and even problems and illnesses. Projection of relationship problems from the past can be a problem, also with the sitter.

What happens is **transference**, an unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another. This is not uncommon in therapy, but the trip can amplify this, also resulting in less desirable connections. In the trip one can also pick up spirit energies, from the place or the people, perceived as entities.

Recording, art and expression

Some people like to make a recording of a trip (audio or video) to check later. Often this doesn't make much sense, the muttering and insights of the trip seem like insane babbling when you look back. However, when the whole event is set up as a therapeutic session with a sitter or therapist (who is sober or has only taken a therapeutic or homeopathic small dose to be in the same flow) and with some kind of premeditated agenda, such a recording can be meaningful.

It always makes sense to have a way to express oneself, by making (and recording) music, sketching, drawing, painting, claying or writing. Artistic expression is not rational but often communicates better than mere

Of course, the drug dose does not produce the transcendent experience. It merely acts as a chemical key — it opens the mind, frees the nervous system of its ordinary patterns and structures. The nature of the experience depends almost entirely on set and setting. Set denotes the preparation of the individual, including his personality structure and his mood at the time. Setting is physical — the weather, the room's atmosphere; social — feelings of persons present towards one another; and cultural — prevailing views as to what is real. It is for this reason that manuals or guide-books are necessary. Their purpose is to enable a person to understand the new realities of the expanded consciousness, to serve as road maps for new interior territories which modern science has made accessible

—Timothy Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*



words. Sometimes things come by itself, like automatic writing and many artist use or have used at some time tripping for inspiration.

Different ways of using

Popping a pill, chewing on some mushrooms, smoking a joint or drinking a cup of tea are the usual way of using the more popular psychedelics, but there are alternative ways. Injection of the substance is generally not advisable without much experience, although for some this is a way to achieve more intense results. There are situations where this is the only way, like with terminal patients and end-of-life situations.

There are body parts where applying the substances may work well, depending on the sensitivity of the person. The gums and the genitals are often used for cocaine and of course the normal paper LSD blotters are used in the mouth, under the tongue. Anal use of many substances works well and actually quite fast for people not willing to smoke or when the stomach responds too strong to the alkaloids in the drug. In fact for some substances one has a choice, like with mushrooms one can chew on them, make a tea, or smoke them. The effects and timing are slightly different and some people appreciate exploring the alternatives.

Summarizing, set, setting, dosage are important, but think about the drug effects and the integration and processing of what came up in your trip too. In whatever situation you are, take care!



4 Purpose

You can take psychedelics for many reasons. Having some fun or the sheer lust for adventure are maybe as good a reason as any, but one should at least consider the purpose of a trip. The goal is part of the set and setting, and makes a difference, in safety, outcome and in meaning. Don't do it to impress anybody, to get back at your parents, to escape the bad world, or escape yourself. That might easily backfire. 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 reported can usually be traced back to a pre-existing situation or state of mind or body.

There are positive reasons to choose and engage in such an experience. It can be an inner journey with a specific goal. Maybe at a time of indecision, to help you make up your mind about a relationship, a new job, or a career decision. You will be able to perceive and understand things normally not accessible. Some even take a psychedelic substance when checking out a guru or holy man, as they believe you then can spot the impostors more clearly. Visiting special places like a cathedral or powerspot in nature while being high also can enrich the experience. 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.

The wrong motivation, like wanting to escape from something or forget something unpleasant, can and probably will cause quite some trouble and in some cases a bad trip or worse. But then, you take yourself along on the trip anyway, so if you do it to learn about yourself, about your relation with others, about your body or if you want to come in closer contact with your spiritual or mystical side, then the more hidden and unpleasant parts in you will undoubtedly surface too.

It's an adventure, a vision quest, beware! There are dark sides!

Deeper goals

Let's leave the magical potential of a trip, like the possibility to perform miracles, to see the future or change the world, to sorcerers and sha-

mans. For ordinary people ‘knowing thyself’ or Greek ‘Gnothi teauton’ is what matters.

Turning insights into action, making choices, manifest them and apply them in daily life, that’s the magic one can attain.

The ultimate secrets of life are not about how to get rich or find your soul mate, but about finding out who you are, what your purpose in life is and how to live ‘right’. Finding out what your ‘false self’ or mask is, experiencing the inner child or ‘true self’, obtaining some insight in why your assumed self (ego) and shown self (what you show to others) are so different. The realization that the world you perceive is you (Thou Are That) and ultimately divine, that you see in others a mirror of yourself, that your behavior is but a reaction mechanism based on your past, that your mask is what you learned in order to cope with the world; there is the true wisdom a trip can yield.

‘Thou Are That’ means our universe is a mirror, as without, within, as within, without. Our situation is the product of our own psyche and expression, it is a symptom, an effect. We are so easily influenced by religion, media and opinions of others, filling the void in our understanding (of our selves). We can thus not blame others or fate, but have to look for the inner causes, and tripping allows and even forces this introspection.

Transformation

Deep perception, beyond the programmed filtering and alienated experiences, allows us to better understand our world, or at least the perceptual universe we think is the reality. This opens the way for transformation, for changing our world view, for creating a new self, a better one hopefully.

A trip can be a psychotherapeutic eye-opener, a life-changing event as has been reported in many studies. It allows you to reach a core in yourself where time and place don’t matter anymore. That can be a stepping stone to let go of what time does to us, lamentation (past), fear (future) and confusion (present).



The true goal of a sacred journey, and this is not the Saturday Night clubbing trip, is to seek wisdom, the inner wisdom. This may involve a change of values and of beliefs, a true transformation.

This sounds a bit mystical, but the 'Perennial Wisdom' in itself is a foundation. It is the 'Dharma' in the RigVeda; to lift oneself, to support, uphold one's true potential, one's root quality. From the Buddha we can learn that 'our life is the creation of our mind'. Alter your perception and you alter your world. Desire, fear, happiness, status, wealth, desire, rightfulness and skill don't exist outside of our mind.

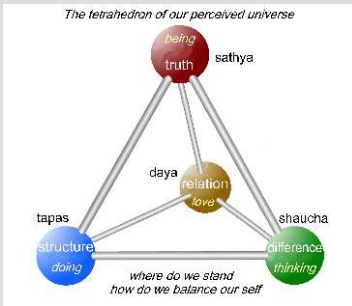
We all construct, with the help of others, a perceptual world and assimilate and then use words and ideas (memes) to think and communicate them. But our inner worlds differ, even if we use the same words. Words which are nothing but common denominators, but in fact creations of the mind to deal with complexity, spinning our own webs of significance (says the anthropologist Clifford Geertz). Language serves and is used to create consensual reality and be interconnected with others. But words are concepts and symbols, language is not rich enough to convey what a trip can bring, the mystical is wordless and analog. A trip is more about feelings, visuals, colors and sounds than the limited, discrete and thus essentially digital set of (symbolic) words we call language. The wordless words are sounds turned into images, the synesthesia of all the senses one can experience with the help of these substances can't be described in words, maybe in poetry and art.

A trip is a consciousness expansion, but note that this doesn't require thinking, just letting go, no control but flowing. It's visceral, emotional, not a cognitive exercise. It is the thinking, the clinging to power over the experience, the need to control that may cause a bad trip.

Thinking does requires consciousness and a sense of self, but consciousness can do without that self, or at least without the superficial self of our ego. Tripping is a shift in perception, not a shift in reality. The limits of ordinary perception fall away, we can reach the heart of our perceptual universe, where real significance is to be found. We can travel in space and time. Sometimes we can go back to old and traumatic events, relive and deal with them, change the perspective. A substance like the African Iboga (Tabernanthe) is very powerful in that respect, but is not to be taken lightly. Iboga can be a very long and intense trip, with much bodily discomfort but the potential to offer a new perspective on past

The Dharma Bull:

The Hindu notion of how one should be and act uses the holy bull image. In the age of Satya the four legs of the bull were established by the four principles; austerity/discipline (tapas), cleanliness (shaucha), mercy/ ahimsa (daya) and truthfulness (satya). These principles are guidelines for a good and wise life. But it appears that these days, in the Kali Yuga, three of



the legs are broken

due to rampant irreligion in the form of pride, lust for women, and intoxication.. In our day and age, the 4 dharma legs resonate with the dimensions of being, doing, thinking and relating and thus how we stand in our perceived reality. In a sacred journey one could introspect on how these dimensions are honored.

trauma and programming. Iboga can be used to treat addictions but also for self-realization and trauma-work.

The mystical and the sense of awe

For many their first trip becomes a major hallmark in their lives, something that bring insights and maybe belief changes that are long-lasting. The altered state of consciousness (ASC) induced by the drug allows us to go much deeper into the normally hidden parts of our mind, coming into contact with what some call the “soul”, or the divine spark inside. These experiences are often described as mystical, unitive, feeling united with the all, and one mentions loss of ego, divine presence and transformation.

The visuals and the overwhelming intensity of a trip invokes a sense of awe and this is known to be a factor in experiencing mystical states. It kind of overpowers the ego, that than makes place for the unitive, the connectedness.

Overcoming fear; experiencing death and rebirth

We all have fears, and luckily so, they help us to be careful and warn us for dangers. But they often stay with us, as a trauma, and will be trig-

gered by circumstances similar to the traumatic event. Fear can paralyze and overcoming or dealing with that can be a goal of the trip. This can have to do with phobias, traumas, but also with old age and the fear of death. The psychedelic experience may trigger those fears and thereby open the possibility to overcome the effects as we see why and what we really feared, maybe relieve the situation and learn to deal with it with less fear as a result. Some people experience death in the trip, they have to give up all hopes and expectations, surrender to the notion they are dying. This can be a great gift, as it helps to deal with the fear of death later, and usually one awakens after a short period (still in the trip), feeling as if a new life starts. This is a kind of rebirth, one sheds the old and welcomes a new beginning!

There are other challenging scenario's and blocks in a trip. Letting go, Immersing in them instead of avoiding them seems to be the most effective way to diminish the anxiety or panic that they may otherwise cause.

End-of-life

Psychedelic trips for terminal patients are intended not to achieve miracles, although there is always hope and a life-changing experience may well rebalance the body, but are primarily aimed at dealing with the fear and anxiety. If death is near, the need for inner truth and purging of the inner lies can be met by taking a sacred journey.

Science (Charles Grob among others) has been investigating this and the results are more than encouraging, people find peace and learn to enjoy what is left, rather than fight the last mile. Debunking our personal myth, our narrative, letting go of the 'emperor's cloth', busting the illusions, identifications, fake goals and pretensions, in the eye of death these things serve no purpose. Realizing that makes one free and ready to make the passage. Escaping the race for worldly worth in the eyes of others, their approval, their idea of success, self esteem and not self-acceptance, letting go of the prison of our story of life, our narrative, our shirt's logo or banner, what a challenge! Escaping the clock of time, and not enough time, no longer opposing the finality of time and thus life. Hope, something we like to cling to when life is difficult, is also an escape from the now, the actual reality. We like to exchange a difficult now for a dream of tomorrow, but in a trip we will have to slacken the fetters of hope, as only the now, the present remains. We may have to accept a new narrative, a new self image.

Narrative

Humans need a narrative, a story, some kind of logical explanation of the inexplicable. That's why we have religion, science, and why in times of crises people will follow an explanation that makes sense and is not threatening. The massive support for the vaccination-narrative (to the exclusion of all other options) in the Covid/Corona crisis is a good example, or the support for Ukraine. Some would call this mass hysteria, or mass-hypnosis, but it's a evolutionary need that comes from within (and is cleverly exploited sometimes). The same with our personal narrative. We need one, but it's a construction that maybe has to give way to another one in the trip, hopefully a little better rooted in reality and a better platform to deal with the challenges of life.

Tolerance

Tolerance is the hidden gift of tripping. We can realize that we see the world as we make it, perception is creating, but this is what all others also do. We see things not as they are, but as we imagine and thus make them, as we judge them and thus expose ourselves. Judgment of others is often projection but also a projector we shine out into the world. Learning not to judge, to be tolerant is what one learns, by oneself and from others in a trip. Rituals like the Santo Daime 'works' (see chapter ayahuasca) are geared towards that purpose. Letting go of the ego, of the fake masks we wear is what makes us more real, more authentic and in the end more loving and tolerant.

Intention

The real aim of a 'conscious and purposeful journey' is to look deeper, more intense into ourselves. The intention which guides and directs the trip is where you start, but also end, for it is the yardstick to see retrospectively what has been achieved.

5 Rituals and Group sessions

It can be argued that rituals and ceremonies are the most proper and safe way to use psychedelics. But maybe you believe that this is all nonsense and then you simply skip this chapter. Ignoring the ritual perspective and framework for a trip, however, might not only limit your experience, it also may bring about dangerous situations.

We deal with this issue of the ritual character of a psychedelic journey at some length in this book because it might help you to understand the context of a trip, but also to see the connection with other experiences, religions, and even the disco-culture.

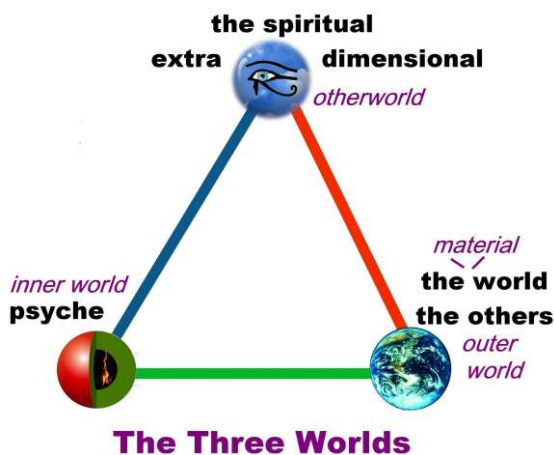
The ritual framework and liturgy has to do with access to the inner, outer and the other world. Just think about the wider reality as consisting of these three realms.

The whole idea of a sacred (inspired, sanctified) journey is to get the most out of it in terms of psychological (insights about yourself), social (insights about the people and relationships) and spiritual (magical) insights and correspondences.

To connect and maybe even integrate these three realms or worlds is what rituals aim for, here defining a ritual as having some magical purpose, while a mere ceremony only has psychological and social goals and effects.

Rituals are very old and come to us as an evolutionary inheritance from the animal world. Using psychoactive procedures including ingestion or smoking of substances in a ritual context, often combined with music or dance is as old as civilization and probably much older. This was done in secrecy, in sacred rituals, not for everybody but selectively in traditions and cultures that knew how to deal with the special qualities offered. For that matter it is maybe 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, using them as special and even 'secret' sacraments.

While the traditional religious rituals are becoming less popular in the rationalistic West, people searching for experiences and transformation have been looking at other means to reach a state of consciousness, that brings more connection to the body, the soul and the divine. In many, if



not all, cultures the use of mind altering substances has been found, and alcohol and tobacco are definitely in that same ballpark. Often hidden, esoteric, only for the initiates, but very essential in the whole culture, as part of initiations, rites of passage, as a means for healing, prophecy

and contact with the other world. In many traditions the use of these substances is considered a sacrament, a holy experience and initiation. The plants or substances are often given a sacred and nearly divine status.

There is much similarity in the altered state one encounters in formal rituals, meditation and devotional practice compared to the psychedelic experiences. Trips are, by many, considered ritual events and, if we appreciate the history of religion and the anthropological studies, have the most beneficial effects if done in a ritual context.

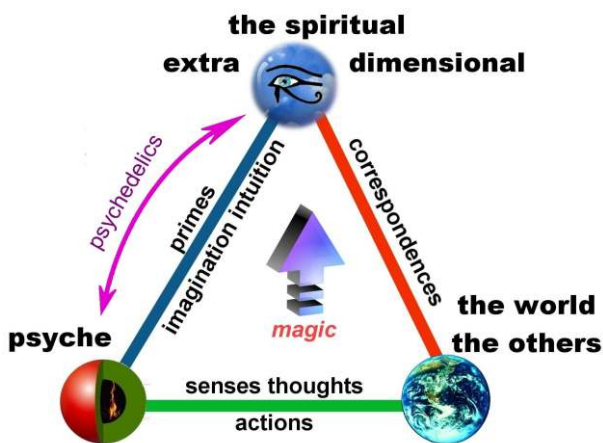
Psychedelic trips in this ritual perspective make the belief systems, inner worlds and all kinds of imprints rather visible, the imaginary (or real in another way) worlds one visits are representations of inner belief systems. There are gradual differences, not always is this mystical access to the other world very clear.

'Looking over the hill into the promised land' is an apt description of the psychedelic trip but in general the experiences have a common pattern, one reaches inner worlds of beauty and intensity beyond description, where love, truth and unity melt into a state of bliss and awareness never suspected. The primes (our deeper senses, the capabilities to perceive beauty, justice, kin and other intangible qualities) open up wider, we get in touch with normally hidden layers of feeling and intuition.

Healing journeys, mystical insights

Psychedelic experiences are, in many ways, comparable to mystical experiences, both are entering an altered state of consciousness. The mys-

tics have given us direct testimony of these states, but often what is written down or recorded doesn't make much sense, consciousness at that level is not very logical or rational. What makes sense during a trip afterwards often has little meaning. However, there usually remains the notion that one has seen important and perennial truths.



The purpose of rituals often concerns healing, already a magical act as it involves changing the cause of things. Initiation (on the path of personal growth or social status) is another purpose of rituals, as is trying to perceive the future. The access beyond time-space limitations (the quantum-magical toolbox) offered by psychedelics has its attractions and dangers. There is also the promise of power, of ego-boosting in knowing the 'old' wisdom, so we look for a back door to this.

There are other portals into this inner other world, like meditation, devotion and yoga, sensory stimulation or deprivation, trance, the traditions and methods are many. Those with access to psycho-active substances can preview the show somewhat easier than the saints and holy men with their traditional and often austere regimes of praying and meditation. But they will claim it is without lasting access to this 'higher' state and with some risk.

Medical use

The medical claims about these substances are many, and the more exotic ones like Iboga and the myriad of local psychoactive plants, herbs, mushrooms and even toads has spawned many stories of miraculous healing and cure for all kinds of diseases. There is good evidence that marihuana (cannabis) is effective for many afflictions and traditional herbal medicine is a great alternative and should be used much more. However, the medical use of psycho-active substances and the research has been mainly for dealing with psychological and psychopathological

problems. Bringing people to a deeper state (inner child state) where memories become accessible, inhibitions diminish and suggestibility is increased does make sense (see the chapter on therapy). More somatic use of these substances in for instance childbirth, to sedate or help relax, is less under consideration. The rising tide of forced birthing (Cesareans now 33% in the USA) and all kind of sedation or narcotics and regional or general anesthesia is a cause of worry. In normal and unседated birth the oxytocin and pheromones (smells, the only new sense for the baby) present create a great entry and first breath experience for the newborn, with positive effect on bonding, breastfeeding and immune system development, and probably affecting the sexlife too. The famous American midwife Ina May Gaskin claims marihuana is a great help in childbirth. More research in how psychedelics and herbs can help mother and child is needed. Indigenous cultures probably have much traditional (but hidden) expertise here.

Go for it

For many, but not all people it may help to engage in such an endeavor and make a trip; that is if you are curious, dedicated, and courageous enough to go through your fears and take a good look at what frightens you. Often at the root of this are certain experiences and traumas in your youth and it can be beneficial and even healing to look at them from a different perspective, kind of relive them and thus deal with the memories in your mind and in the body. One aims at understanding oneself and hopes for mystical insights into the personal and the eternal philosophical questions about one's path and essence.

There are quite a few respectable scientists who believe(d) that the psychedelic experience has at least mystical aspects, among them Stan Krippner, Stanislav Grof, Aldous Huxley, and Huston Smith. The psychiatrist Charles Grob did scientific research into the effect of psychedelic substances (ecstasy, psilocybin, ayahuasca) to help curb anxiety in terminal patients, but reported a high incidence of mystical experiences. Best practices for the psychotherapeutic use of psychedelics were developed in the 1950s by Stanislav Grof and have been used with great success, but most therapists/psychologists/psychiatrists don't know of them or aren't in a position to implement them. This book offers some pointers, but there is much literature and net-info about this.

The use of psychedelic drinks like ayahuasca, used for centuries in devotional and healing ceremonies, is now considered as a possible treat-

ment for depression, also by biomedical scientists. Clinical tests show promising results. Such research and work are part of a renaissance in studying the potential therapeutic benefits of psychedelic or recreational drugs. Research that was largely banned or restricted worldwide half a century ago is picking up, with support of organizations like MAPS, the Multidisciplinary Association for *Psychedelic* Studies.

Repetition, loops

The repetition and rhythm we encounter and use in rituals are also a basic neurological mechanism to escape stress, to let go of our ego and thus boost our other talents. Repetition is obviously a way to deal with stress as we can see in the behavior of animals and psychotic people, it offers a kind of security, probably by releasing neurotransmitters to this effect. Obsessive neurotic disturbances often have a ritual nature. One repeats a movement or thought pattern, a loop which seems to appease the brain, but can become a prison in psychedelics trips, getting out of such a loop is not easy. We also program our minds by such repetition; affirming and anchoring what we know or experience first in short memory, then in working and long term memory, be it in our brains or in a cloudlike extra-dimensional information field. This is an essential memorizing mechanism; repeat, preferably in an embodied way, and remember. In a ritual this is used to anchor experiences and insights, and to 'remind' them.

The journey beyond

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 will come into 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, some memories are about traumatic experiences; 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. In the chapters about purpose and setting we deal with this. 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 Carl 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, hypnosis and deprogramming but since ancient times medicine-men, priests and shamans have had their ceremonies and rituals. Many traditions did survive however, at the local and tribal level, often underground. These have proven their worth, otherwise they would have been abolished by now. For centuries there was a veil of ridicule and ignorance concerning the work of these healers, witches and helpers of old. However, things are changing now; 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 tools for what we would nowadays call "The communication with the deeper, true self".

Rituals are not linear, not logical, they work!

Rituals are not rational but were, just as the mastering of fire, fundamental for the evolution of mankind. They allowed layered hierarchies and the growth of societies with specialization and surplus. Rituals are essential to give structure to our lives and are especially important in connection with the psychedelic experience. There you are forced to 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. This is strange territory where some structure and some guidelines to follow are welcome and even necessary. Ceremonies and rituals provide that framework. They function as communal memory, containing the culture and cosmology. They were the vault, the carrier of shared memories, probably long before there was symbolic language. That's why in most traditional cultures one deals in a very respectful and ritual manner with the magic mushroom and other psychedelics.

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.

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 still carrying those traditions and heritage.

Of course there are many ways to perform a ritual, some rituals are very specific to a special culture, others are more universal. There is no all-in-one format. All ritual formats are intended as formalized ways to come into contact with the hidden and subconscious, inside and outside yourself (as in the spirit world). 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 just de- and reprogramming of your subconscious, it can still have a beneficial effect. The sub- and unconscious are not easy to reach. It has been programmed over the course of your life, especially in your early youth by your experiences, often by the endless repetition of the behavior and remarks of your parents.

Stages of a ritual

Many rituals contain the same elements. It is usually about purification, healing, the creation of a structure and making a link, a connection, and about transformation. There is a kind of ritual framework, a more or less general scenario or liturgy. It has a logical sequence and addresses the various realms and goals in turn. This matrix involves a number of stages like:

- Preparation - Entrance - Creating sacred space
- Purification - Propitiation (physical and psychological cleansing, asking for mercy and forgiving of sins)
- Shielding, keeping the evil thoughts and spirits at bay
- Dedication, making clear for what reason and purpose and for whom the ritual is and who is addressed (which divinity, spirit).
- Invocation - asking for the presence and help of the divinity
- Celebration/Commemoration, what is the time and the tradition, honoring the founders, ancestors. the seasons and moon phases.

- Devotion - worship, the 'bhakti' part of making oneself small in the face of the mighty ones. This is where the ego is let go of.
- Sacrifice, making an offering, a promise and maybe 'a deal'
- Petition (asking for Grace/Healing/Blessing)
- Transformation (the liminality phase of initiation) and ascension/possession, this is the peak of the ritual and often the main purpose. This can involve: manipulation of reality (consecration/ magic)
- Partaking of sacraments intended for helping the transformation or healing, but also for divination and/or influencing the future.
- Communion, the officiator (priest) and the congregation share.
- Integration and contemplation
- Party-fest-sharing, sometimes orgy
- Dismissal - reentry

You may notice that much of this sequence, can be recognized in the Catholic Holy Mass, but also that certain stages are left out there. Sex can not be ignored totally. Mardi Grass, the springtime fertility rite is not only fun and gene-pool widening but also has a religious connotation and used to be part of a ritual, celebrating the beginning of Lent. To have a party together can be a good way to end a trip; to totally let go in a new realization, in an expanded consciousness.

Be ready

The traditional way to prepare some days before a trip is through purification, fasting, a special diet, arranging special clothes, no sexual activity to retain the energy. Eat not too much, abstain from alcohol, pork meat, sweets. fat, other drugs, tasty cheese, fasting for a day or two makes sense. Clean yourself, let go of the worldly worries, to make an easier contact with the spirit world, when you go there to ask for help or guidance. One very often takes a bath, or a symbolic bath and likewise get rid of the influence of the past or the environment.

Purification and cleansing is often in the form of a smudge with herbs like sage or incense (scents are very important during a trip too). This 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.

The space where you take your trip is not only important, but also magical; it is possible to achieve safety and sacredness symbolically by putting an object in the four corners, a kind of watchtower. Native Ameri-

cans 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 stages one can concentrate and connect, like making 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, fire ceremonies, prayers, dances, chanting or special music.

Rites of passage: initiation

Often the traditional rituals connected with psychedelics have to do with initiations, which are then part of a rite of passage (for instance when a youngster comes of age). A boy becomes a man, the menarche of a girl (first menstruation), 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 trade or work, status in the tribe, where you live and what your task is. Often you are first sent into 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 for example 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 Mitzvah 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'. The idea is to cut through the programming, to realize who we are and why we are what we are.

Please be aware that when tripping you also make a step, especially the first time; it is in essence an initiation.

So why not give a ritual form to this initiation, which not only makes you part of the psychedelic community, but which also allows you to reach a deeper level of self.

And if you have changed, then the return to the world means coming back in a new form. So celebrate, as our ancestors did after initiation. 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.

The physicality of a ritual

In the ritual context 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). There are people who use internet to do rituals and this has some impact, but the physical and direct contact seems essential. The cognitive intent is symbolized and enforced by certain actions, passes, gestures, movements, which record it in the language of the subconscious (neuro-linguistic programming is a modern term for this).

Physical actions, steps, postures, dances help to 'anchor' resolutions and belief system changes (embodied cognition). Repeating this helps to connect body and mind. In the further course of a ritual repetition plays a big part, often using the rhythm of drums or rattles. This can help to achieve a trance, even when there is no substance taken.

Repeating words and sentences, in songs, creeds or affirmations helps. Concentration is essential and without calling this directly 'praying', there is a possibility that by using certain words you can give direction to your trip.

Contact – alignment - group mind - groupthink

Don't only purify (and protect) yourself, also align and connect. With the others in a group, with the entities invoked, but also with the cultural context and also with the substance, especially if it concerns a natural 'teacher plant' with something of an identity.

Becoming part of the group is usually beneficial because it gives more safety, feeling at home and in a friendly setting, and allows to reach out in case one needs help. Very large groups become impersonal, but then also a group-mind can emerge. Smaller groups of up to 8 people are more intimate and for psychedelic experiences probably more safe and effective. The group connection can be made by singing or 'ohm-ing', but some physical contact helps. 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 and mirroring helps, everyone has their own energy, but if we make the same gestures together and in the same breath rhythm we come closer to the same energy level, and to the same brain wave frequency (this is because of the mirror neuron mechanism).

The substances which magnify and accelerate all emotions and experiences make this even more intense. A group-mind (groupthink) evolves, some synchronization and as this is not always going into a positive direction (think about drunken hooligans or crazy protestors) it is a phenomenon to be aware of. The dangers of 'Group Think' as discussed by Irving Janis (*Victims of Groupthink*, 1972) are overestimations of the group, its power and morality, which leads to *Illusions of invulnerability*, excessive optimism and risk taking. There grows an unquestioned belief in the morality of the group, often resulting in closed-mindedness (rationalizing warnings and ignoring dangers). Such behaviour is characterized by stereotyping opposition (the enemy, them, not us) and pressures toward uniformity.

Positively, synchronization helps to create links, to allow the energy of others to merge 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 process of aligning with an archetypal energy which has been encoded deep inside by the image of some God, force or symbol.

Structure amidst chaos

Rituals can also be seen as a support to structure the chaos around you, to deal with the many diversions. This principle applies not only to the use of LSD, mushrooms or other psychedelics, but also to churches, societies, courtrooms, theatre and politics. all are ritual endeavors.

Rituals, especially if repeated often, provide a structure and thus safety. 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.

Eternal pattern, the mythical journey

It is good, when making the trip in a larger ceremonial context, to recognize the age-old pattern of separation, initiation and return. Even Freud and Jung spoke about separation and individuation, the process of freeing oneself of some old patterns by first creating distance, then facing challenges; seeking transformation is fighting basically oneself.

So make sure you separate yourself from daily reality, 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.

This separation, a liminal doorstep and transformation structure is present in all kinds of myths, the heroes of many folktales go through this process as Joseph Campbell describes so well in 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces' (first published in 1949). There is a classic matrix in all of this, the quest of the warrior. According to psychiatrists like Stanislav Grof, who worked with psychedelics extensively, our way of dealing with life and problems is related to experiences at the time of birth. You may experience this birth matrix or pattern in the trip itself but it is also possible to incorporate it as part of a ritual.

To copy a ritual or to create something yourself

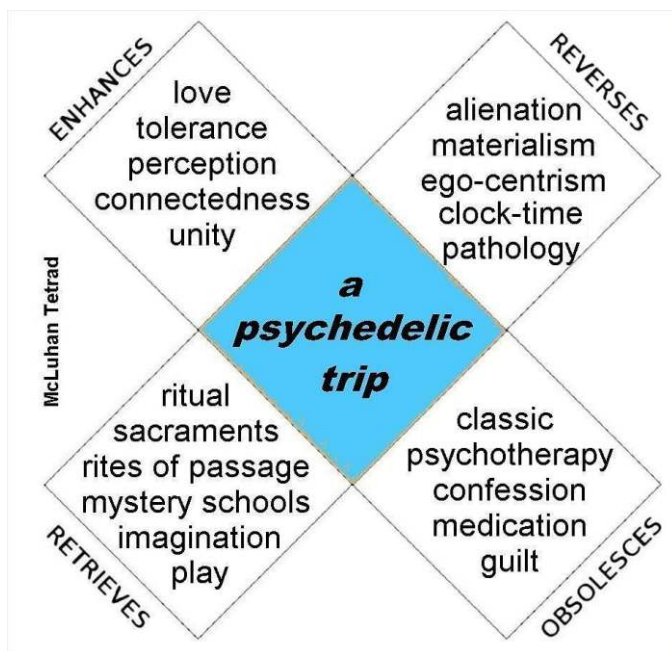
So far you got a lot of suggestions concerning rituals, now it matters how you apply this. You can rely on what, for instance, the shamans and the Native Americans do, but you can also create something on your own. Suggestions that may help:

- A ritual is to use certain gestures, sounds, words, prayers, visualizations and likewise intentional 'moves' 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 the 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 in that state of heightened awareness already carries some extra 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. Neurologist may indicate this as shifting to the right brain hemisphere, as theta or delta brain states and talk about serotonin and oxytocin, but the experienced tripper knows these materialist notions mean little when arriving in the inner world of imagery, feelings and deep knowing.

Rituals are a basic means to enter an inner world, where normal limitations of time and place don't apply. There one can see through the veil of rationality and belief-systems, see one's own psyche and masks, one's relationships, the world and evolution in a different light, and even enter the magical realm where time, place and reality becomes fluid.



This McLuhan tetrad makes clear what kind of medium a trip is and shows the relation with older events and potential dangers.

6 Sanctuary, safe space

In the title of this book we used the word ‘sacred’ and that is not accidental. The traditional purpose of using psychedelic substances in older cultures has been to access a sacred space, a world beyond the normal, often considered a secret world, so the word is quite appropriate. The father of LSD, Albert Hofmann, at his historic 100-th birthday event in 2006 in Basel, stressed that these substances are “Sacrale Drogen”, sacraments not to be taken lightly or just for fun.

Sacred, sacral, sanctified, these words all point to the same; that one enters a place and a dimension, where the ‘other’ is present. What this other is beyond what resides in our own psyche depends on one’s belief system, religion or cosmology.

To choose the right place and time for a trip or ritual in older traditions was often related to celestial constellations, and even today one can consult a astrologer for auspicious timing. But let’s begin with the place where the trip or ritual takes place. To use or create a ‘sacred place’ or ‘container’ is a good step in the process, it helps you focus, create safety and even helps in a magical way to achieve the goals you set for your journey.

Safety first

The place where you do your tripping is important, it is part of the set and setting and deserves some consideration. Most people understand that it has to be a safe place, offering a protected and comfortable setting, during and after the trip. Such a place is best isolated from the influence of the busy world outside, in nature or where the sounds and disturbances of the ‘normal’ world are shut out. Even as for many a festival, rave or party has been the place where they first experienced the effects of these substances, that might not have been be the best start for exploring the psychedelic otherworld.

A safe place is a first step, a sacred place is another level of creating setting and there is more to it than just being free from disturbances.

To understand this, we can use the notion of sacred space as used in ritual and religion. Rituals are an age-old way to enter into a different state of consciousness and we can learn from the ancient traditions, where special places in nature, temples, churches and ashrams were the location for contact with the otherworld inside and out.

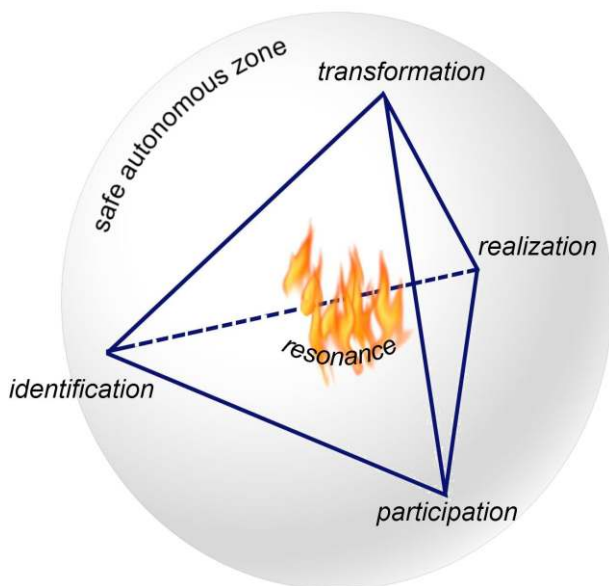
One of the most simple rituals is praying and although that can be done anytime and anyplace, most people and traditions prefer a quiet moment and a special place.

A special place, often a circle, drawn in the sand or made by cornmeal, chalk, etc. consecrated with spells and movements, incantations and maybe adorned with statues or substances to honor the four cardinal directions, the earth and the sky and the seventh direction, which is inside of us. There are many descriptions available on how to do this, it's a matter of taste. Make sure the place is set up, opened, but also closed.

Sacred space, temporary autonomous zone

In fact one creates a small sacred space while praying, a spot to be in touch with the other dimension, separated for a moment from the daily routines and noise. A space that fits anarchist writer and poet Hakim

Bey's notion of a 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' or TAZ, a place where the old rules don't apply, where there is safety, freedom and autonomy. This concept has value in looking at festivals, communities, but also at (computer) games, virtual reality, at a theater and even when immersed in a book or music.



parameters and mechanisms of change

A TAZ is a platform for the psychological transformation process, which is based on the qualities of participation, identification, realization, and transformation (see figure) and how set and setting are creating a resonance. These factors reinforce each other but require a separation from the 'normal' with the freedom to experiment. There and then identification with something that re-

places the old identity can happen, and also realization (insight) and transformation, helped by participation mechanisms (co-creation, feeling, acting or singing together).

Such a safe place, where the normal reality is shut out or replaced by a new 'world' seems one of the conditions necessary to allow 'learning' or changing one's programmed worldview (or self-image). In rituals this is well known, initiation rites (like the step from boy to man) usually take place in isolation. One is invited (or forced) to enter a liminality stage, become insecure in order to step over the threshold into a new state, with new status, rules, possibilities, letting go of the old. This means reprogramming one's self-image and even worldview, to become a different person. As such initiation rites are traditional in many cultures and go back to the dawn of mankind and even today are part of many training programs, boot camps, freemason rites, etc. we might learn something from how this is done.

The same idea of a temporary autonomous zone applies to a psychedelic trip, the ultimate virtual reality experience in one's own mind. A trip, especially if the purpose is personal or spiritual growth, should be a kind of ritual (and many rituals of old used psychedelics). So why not use the age-old and proven approach and make it a sacred ritual journey. One can do that alone or in a group. It makes sense to look for a special place, a power spot where there is the right energy and no chance of disruption. Such a place could be called sacred, a sanctuary, meaning very special and maybe specifically used and dedicated for the purpose.

Sacred places range from a mountain top, a place under an old oak tree or near a waterfall to majestic cathedrals and temples or the stone circles of Paleolithic times. Alas, many such places are not really suited for the purpose intended here because there are visitors, guards, or they are just closed off. We can, however, learn from the way they were constructed to help find or create our own sacred space, even in or around our own dwelling, in a dedicated room. There are the very logical and rational precautions one should take to make it safe, unaffected by neighbors, accidental bystanders etc. for the expected duration of the trip and a safe and relaxed re-entry.

Let's go a bit deeper into what 'sacred' means. It refers to sanctity, to the special quality of a holy and dedicated space. There are sacred spaces that are set up as such in a more permanent form, like churches, but in many older religions and in the neo-pagan traditions ritual spaces

are created for the event; one usually picks a spot with enough privacy and safety and comes back to it.

To sanctify such a place, it has to be prepared, dedicated and blessed. This requires some ritual steps, like asking permission from the owner and the spirits of a place, opening a circle, establishing the virtual borders by symbolic means like designated quarters and maybe setting up an altar and bringing objects with a special meaning.

A ritual in general has a threefold purpose, psychological, social and magical. This means it aims at having some effect on the minds of the participants, on their relationship and group perspective, but also intends to achieve something beyond the rational. The sacredness of a location works in all three domains, it affects the psyche, the social matrix and the 'magical'.

A sacred space is to be safe, also concerning the influences from the otherworld, like psychic forces and spirits. Even as one does not believe in such forces or entities, creating, separating and dedicating the place pays off. In a psychological way creating a place beyond the daily reality symbolizes that the trip is special, valuable and in a way, private. This can be done in many ways, with a group but also alone.

Assuming the place is clean, free of unnecessary clutter and well aired. Spiritually cleansing the place with sage or frankincense and then charging it and creating a special atmosphere with maybe a small fire or candle is then a good start. Drawing a circle, calling in the support of the main quarters, the sky and the earth and welcoming the inner fire, while establishing clear borders with what then becomes 'outside' are the basic simple steps. They can be expanded in many ways and the place can be decorated with flowers, statues, hangings. There are also practical issues like the music installation, water, tea, etc..

The participants enter the sacred space or circle not only in their mind, but do this also by making a small physical step or by going through a portal, thereby dedicating themselves to the purpose, anchoring it in their body and mind. Joining hands and chanting creates a 'holy' link between them. In this way the place or the circle really becomes special.

It makes sense to place the 'sacrament' (the substance used) in a central place or on an altar, honoring the spirit or teacher associated with it and ask for support and concentrate for a moment on the deeper purpose of

the trip. With our minds (and hands) we can charge the substance, making it even more special and powerful as we attach our intention to it. The general idea of a group mind that emerges in such a ritual context is synchronization of those present in the space or circle, aligning their energy and intention. The group mind can be very powerful, think about large sports events or demonstrations, and the sacred space concept helps to establish it and give it a beneficial quality. But be aware, you can easily be caught in a group-mind setting and identification that's not really yours.

Created reality experience

We may think we live in a "real" material world, but a trip will make you realize that at best we are in a consensual (shared) reality, but we have created a perceptions that's really very individual. Is your "red" the same as what the -next person experiences?

We live in a space/time reality where our mind very much governs what we perceive. In fact we observe usually not what is there, but what we assume is there. One could say we have programmed and hypnotized ourselves to create an inner image (what we think we see/smell etc.) that may not what is out there or what others see. In a trip we might see it different again.

This is an important lesson, reality is what we make of it, our mind "edits" our experience. In practice this means that for instance our home (or places we know and have been before) is loaded and charged with memories and these will influence your experience, also in the trip. This may be an argument of finding a new, virgin space, where there is no prior programming and maybe where the hypnotic messages of the modern world are less obvious, like in some pristine nature environment. Tune in, but be beware in what setting.

Earth Magic

The creation of an altar or circle as a sacred and safe place, both in material terms as concerning spiritual safety and sacredness, has an interesting foundation, which is not recognized as such. It has to do with earth magic and goes well beyond the notion of geomancy and ley-lines. Earth is one the four main cardinal elements—the others being air, water, and fire. Earth is feminine, nurturing and abundant, it is associated with the North. We walk on the earth, our feet are our sensors. Feeling the earth, it's energy and rhythms can be seen as a sense.

The connection with the earth should be pristine, unique, not too much influenced by what happened at that place before. The best place is where nobody has walked or stood before, virginal. Such a place is hard to find, but it's the idea behind finding your own spot in many "vision quest" traditions. The design of a temple also reflects this idea, the access to a "holy of holy" in a temple often is restricted to the high priest and only on special occasions.

This idea, that connecting to the earth should be unpolluted by whoever or whatever was there also means that places or roads where many people have been are in a sense "programmed" and their energy influenced those present or passing. Maybe ley-lines are just the result of many people following a certain path.

This "energy" may have all kinds of effects, but usually on a group-mind level, like when walking a pilgrimage or coming together in a church. For an individual experience aimed at connecting with the earth this may not what you are looking for, but as a group it can have some meaning to gather in a "holy" place.

Holding space and circle integrity

Once the sacredness is established, it requires some effort to keep it safe and sealed off from the outside, and that includes preventing evil energies or spirits to enter. High energy attracts entities and keeping them out can be the task of all, but also of some more experienced trippers or sitters. Holding space is an important job, especially in larger group events, it's a bit like the 'spiritual security staff'. Keeping the energy inside the place (circle) also means that entering and leaving are regulated in some sense. It is a good idea to ritualize this, as this also prevents participants from wandering off or going at it alone, without warning anybody. Sometimes some privacy is useful, but it helps to keep track of where everybody is.

Just as there is a beginning, the establishment of a sacred space, there should be a formal end, the circle (space) needs to be closed. This also means that whatever issues that arose and are not resolved during the session are discussed, and also that whatever happened, remains in the circle. Privacy and in a way secrecy is an essential part of the safety issue. Feedback can be very productive, but it is best done in the safety of the sacred space, and should not linger on and spread into normal life and interactions. What happens in the circle, remains in the circle, sometimes it is good to emphasize this at the start.

7 History and meaning

The use of psychoactive plants or mushrooms seems to have been part of most cultures. Based on studies of prehistoric art, archeological findings, observations of 'primitive' cultures and philological (language) references in texts like the Veda's and Avesta (where the use of Soma or Haoma is described) it was widespread, although in many cases reserved for priestly or shamanic use. Siberian shamans used it, the Aztecs did and in ancient Egypt the king (pharaoh) during the Heb Sed festival underwent a near-death kind of experience, probably with the help of some substance, some say the flower of the (Egyptian) blue lotus or blue waterlily (*Nymphaea caerulea*). It is commonly assumed that the mysteries of the Greek civilization involved the ingestion of psychoactive substances and were instrumental in the development of their philosophical and political views.

The mind altering substances (drugs) come in many forms and not all have the same effects. Some are more sedative, others stimulants. When things like magic mushrooms and LSD became known in the West the initial name was 'psychotomimetica' as they were supposed to induce psychotic states. LSD-25 was even initially distributed by Sandoz to study its use for psychiatric research and treatment.

Later on Humphry Osmond coined the word psychedelic ('mind-manifesting'). This is now mostly applied to substances with a strong visual and hallucinogenic effect. In a broader sense psychedelic states bring about changes of perception, synesthesia, altered states of focused consciousness, variation in thought patterns, trance or hypnotic states, mystical states, and other mind and mood alterations. Many of the older mood altering drugs, like cannabis, the opiates like laudanum, but also alcohol, tobacco, chocolate and coffee could be seen as psychedelics and in some traditions were used as such.

Although some are 'legal' and some not, they are all a kind of 'mood altering drug' and it depends on the substance and dosage, set and setting what the effect is. The most legal drug, as Terence McKenna noted, is of course sugar. Half a millennium of sugar has made most people sugar junkies, with detrimental effects on health and teeth but also limiting our

imaginative capabilities. Sugar and eyesight are related, in diabetes patients this is well known, but one could also blame our 'rationalism' and the gradual loss of contact with the sacred on this widespread use of sugar. Sugar also gives a 'high' and is not considered addictive but we like and use it a lot.

It's all a matter of perspective, in the Western world more people die of alcohol abuse than of any other substance and smoking is bad for your health, but both are legal and money making propositions for governments and business. Cannabis in high enough doses is also psychedelic, but has become, like alcohol, a common way to habitually escape the stress and is slowly becoming an 'accepted' soft drug. In other cultures substances like coca leaves (Peru), khat (Somalia) or kratom (Thailand) are used by sometimes the majority of the people.

"Drug laws are a censorial veil over 'being alive', you can binge on the sugar drug with impunity and make yourself ill, but the experience of grounding yourself with psychedelics is strictly off-limits"

notes Darryl Bicker of drugequality.org.

There is a tendency, especially among those who see psychedelics as 'sacred substances' like I do, to differentiate between drugs used to escape reality and drugs that enhance perception and offer transformation. Opium, heroin, cocaine, speed and such are seen as escapist, bad and 'hard drugs', they are obviously more addictive and not commonly used in a ritual context.

Psychotropic, entheogen, empathogen, hallucinogen

The effects of psychedelics cover a wide range of perceptual and consciousness alterations. There are different effects, because of the bio-chemical characteristics but also because of the setting. The one substance could have a totally different effect on different people in different situations. XTC was used in psychotherapy, but also became known as the love-drug in party-settings.

As the number of known natural and synthetic substances grew, a differentiation evolved based on the most noticeable effect. One started to indicate them more specifically. There are indications like entheogen effect, being more in contact with the divine, empathogen (sympathy) or entactogen (touch) for improved inter-human contact, stimulant, aphrodisiac, but there is no broad systematic classification of all the substances and all the effects. There is a lot of anecdotal material and descriptions of specific substances, like on the Erowid website erowid.org,

but little systematic comparison like in the psi-matrix in chapter 24. The many books about the subject are either very anecdotal or interpretations of subjective processes by people who themselves have experienced them and try to find some logic or patterns.

Evolutionary role, the base of self consciousness

Psychedelics are not only a fast and usually fairly certain way to reach an altered state. Its use appears to be such a fundamental part of many cultures, in prehistoric times and even now, that looking at it could help understanding evolution, civilization, consciousness, and how our psyche works. Psychoactive substances maybe were the change-agents that led to jumps in the use of tools, symbolic communication and the emergence of language, myth and religion and civilization as we know it, which is just some 10 to 12.000 years old. Fire and ritual (not symbolic language or myth, that came much later) played a major role in the development and the evolution of humanity, and maybe psychedelics helped in that jumpy process.

Using these substances, which were 'known' to animals (chapter 24), may have played a role in the human development and maybe jump started the development of (reflective) self consciousness. This notion has been promoted by the likes of R. Gordon Wasson, Terence McKenna and many others. It has gained some support because of archeological findings, discoveries of mushrooms appearing in ever more ancient works of art and understanding of ritual practices still surviving. The sources pointing at a major role for psychedelics are not only ethno-botanical. The Semitic language scholar and archaeologist and part of the official Dead Sea -Khirbet Qumran- scroll translation team, John Allegro in his 'Sacred Mushrooms and the Cross' (1970) showed that there are philological resonances between the references to the Amanita muscaria (Fly Agaric) mushroom in the early Sumerian/Mesopotamian languages, the Aramic used in the Hebrew Bible and the original Gospels and religious texts like those found at Qumram.

Allegro even claimed that the mushroom cult lies at the root of the Jewish faith and that the New Testament was a coded message for a secret cult of mushroom users rather than a historical tale.

He basically argued that our culture and religions were not the result of divine revelation in the classical sense, but are rooted in the use of psychedelic substances. Suggesting that 'official' Christianity and Judaism and their sacred scriptures were nothing but smart coded covers and

ways of dispersing secret information hiding a deeper and secret mushroom cult was at the time seen as sacrilegious and destroyed his scientific reputation.

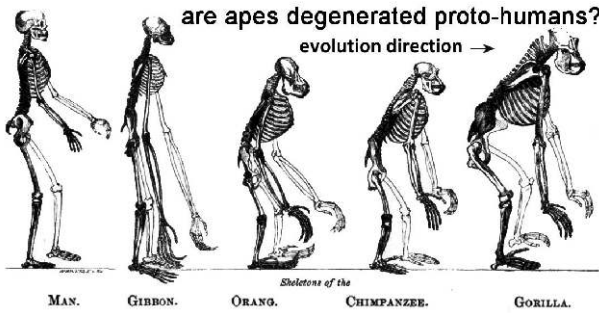
Laurence Gardner, author of many somewhat speculative books about the Holy Grail, has combined many more sources and came up with fascinating theories about the origin of mankind and the roots of the biblical stories. Like Allegro he links the Sumerian to the Jewish culture, but also extends this to Egypt. Based on his interpretation of steles, architecture, cuneiform texts, lineages, often pointing at mistakes and fallacies in the Bible, he constructs a view on history quite different from the accepted Christian and Jewish perspective. He sees influence of an Anunnaki race of unknown but extraterrestrial origin, meddling with humans and influencing history in major ways.

Whatever the value of his theories, his realigning of the dating of the Great Flood (he argues around 4000 BCE), placing the Garden of Eden after it, and how he sees Sumerian, Babylonian, Jewish and Egyptian history influencing each other, is fascinating.

In “DMT and the Soul of Prophecy” by Rick Strassman 2014 another resonance between Biblical history about prophecy and more recent DMT experiences concerning prophetic states is described. The old prophets thus may have used DMT or knew ways to use this natural occurring (in our body) substance to see the future.

Holy Mass could also be referred to as a re-enactment of an old psychedelic ritual. In ‘The Mystery of Manna’ (2001), religious historian Dan Merkur ascribes to the Christian Eucharist sacrament a ritual partaking of a psychedelic substance. Later discoveries, notably of artifacts with mushroom motives have supported the view that sacred mushrooms were at least part of the religious practice in the region and elsewhere. Maybe it’s too much to argue that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Biblical paradise was nothing but a kind of sacred mushroom that opened the eyes of Adam and Eve to the real nature of God and instilled self-consciousness (and thus shame). They were then expelled from paradise and had to live what we now consider a human life with hard work and painful childbirth; it’s an interesting thought. The end of a paradise, where self-consciousness played none or a lesser role.

That entheogens and psychedelics play a role in many cultures can no longer be denied, the question is how this has affected the species and



Photographically reduced from Diagrams of the natural size (except that of the Gibbon, which was twice as large as nature), drawn by Mr. Waterhouse Hawkins from specimens in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

This is not the usual parade, from ape to man, but the inverted one, starting with biped human, which makes more sense

then there should have been more recent ape-like humans, the mushrooms are still there. Maybe apes being 'Stoned Humans' makes more sense?

What about the theory (Björn Kurtén) that apes are degenerated proto-humans, as learning behavior of apes, embryology and DNA supports? Is it not more logical to assume that the large apes, walking on their paws, not legs, were initially bipeds? Maybe some proto-humans with a lot more in common with present humans than with their specialized ape offspring, lost the control of fire. Then they had to chew raw food, using up the brain energy and developing such large intestines that they had to sit back and become what we now know as chimpansees and gorillas. Admittedly this novel theory turns Darwinism on its head!

DMT is found in many, some claim in all living things, including the human brain, so is that the consciousness carrier, the evolutionary miracle molecule? There are quite a few stories about how our progress toward a technological paradise (and biological and ecological hell) came about in the evolutionary past, ranging from comet impact, pole reversal via extraterrestrial intervention to supernatural guidance. Were mushroom spores sent here by extraterrestrials, as McKenna once speculated or are psychedelic drugs the perennial and true bridge to the otherworld dimension? The explanations go from root races to Annunaki stories, from Immanuel Velikovsky to Zecharia Sitchkin's Nibiru, but what remains is that there were obviously strange jumps in the progress curve. All we know is that at certain moments in the earth's recent past things

evolution. Are humans just apes coming down from the trees because hallucinogenic mushrooms gave them an edge (better eyesight, more sex drive) over their natural enemies, other apes or pre-humanoids? Is this 'Stoned Ape' theory realistic? Not very likely,

happened that have initiated changes in how humans dealt with tools, crops, livestock and religion.

Progress or just a short bubble

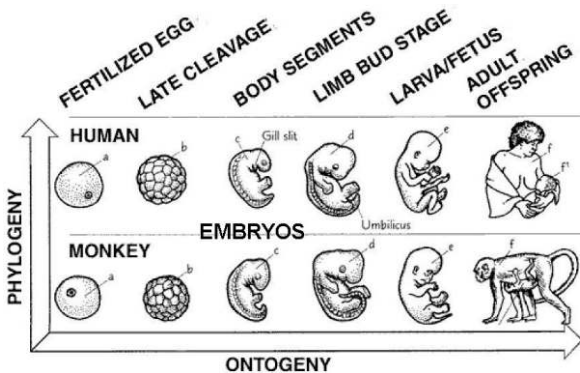
Self consciousness as in being more aware, with things like technological and philosophical progress, free will and intentionality attached to it, may not

have been a very prominent characteristic of the human race in its early stages. In fact pre-hominids, hominids and early human forms lived for millions of years without much change or progress. Only in the last twelve thousands of years or so there was an accelerated development of language, script, religion and science, and as Terence McKenna argued, a kind of increased race of discovery, invention and implementation toward a final teleological endpoint. This, however, did not turn out to cause the predicted Mayan 2013 paradigm shift.

Much of what we call progress is the result of this race. Using psychedelic substances or routines (sensory deprivation, standing on your head, breathing routines, etc. can have similar effects) may have played a role here. It allows access to a state, where all and everything is accessible, beyond the limitations of time and space, and this may include prophesy and insight in technology and physics. This also implies that what we call inventions maybe are nothing but re-discoveries, information we get from the beyond, the Akashic, the whatever. A humbling thought too, meaning we can never claim to be anything more than a messenger, originality being an illusion.

Tripping is analog, not digital

We can lookat this in the context of the dichotomy between love and truth; because of that emerging self-consciousness we became obsessed with truth, inventions, individual recognition and what we now call science, trading in love and connectedness. We started to live in larger



a young chimpanzee looks much like a human baby and the embryos are similar, so who was first, monkey or human?

groups, developed individuality and then needed symbols to communicate, language developed beyond the mere indicative. This can be seen as a move to a digital world, with more rules and 'hard' truths and less guided by principles and undefined feelings.

These days we talk a lot about digital, communication, computation, with discrete sets of symbols (digital is not limited to 0/1, it also means discrete sets of symbols like numbers and the alphabet). Digital is discrete, fast, rational, noise-resistant, left-brain and male, but lacks the beauty, the gradual, the love and wisdom of analog, right brain, holistic. Tripping then is not limited, not bordered in any way; it is essentially analog. It is not contained, there are no rules, and the symbolic merges with the isness.

This distinction in analog and digital we see in many fields, for instance in how religions can be digital and strict (like Protestant and Muslim Sunni) versus the more magical (Catholicism and Shia) and in the difference between the European (Roman/Rhineland) law system and the American (Anglo-Saxon) more digital, rule-based approach. In the medical field the digital, modern way is to use chemicals, surgery and 'hard' methods, while the ritual and spiritual approach to healing is much more analog, holistic and aiming at restoring balance.

The magical, mostly ignored

Ayahuasca, Iboga, Kambo, San Pedro, Datura, Mushrooms, Khat are, as LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann called them, "sacral drugs". Their use has great potential but there is another side to the psychedelic experiences. Accessing the level of consciousness where time and place play a lesser role, magic creeps in. Magic as the potential to influence the way things are, causation, including healing, self-transformation and all other kinds of magical actions.

Much of the modern use goes toward recreational and habitual use, often adopting half understood liturgies and hiding behind the spiritual and mystical goals, not honoring the sometimes very real magical. These days the rituals or ceremonies, often under the banner of being sacramental events, are at best transformational, but often cut off from the source by not acknowledging the magical roots. This means not using the true potential, but also ignoring the dangers.

This is another argument to use these powerful substances in a ritual context, with attention to set and setting, but also acknowledging the magical effects and the dangers associated with the use of magic.

This is a serious oversight, especially seen the fashionable interest in what is originally a magical tradition. Listening to the speakers at psychedelic conferences like Graham Hancock, but also noting the too many anecdotal and biographical books concerning individual Amazon ayahuasca experiences, it becomes clear that the focus of the psychedelic movement at the moment is toward the ayahuasca-concoction and the cultures around it, be it originally indigenous or mixed Christian-Voodoo-indigenous varieties.

The more modern “psychedelic churches” like the Santo Daime (see the chapter on ayahuasca) have good intentions. They try to follow the outlines and structures from the original (Amazon Indian) culture aligned with more modern Christian ritual and some African elements, but fail to make clear that these practices come from a different and essential magical paradigm. In fact the whole approach is very much to stay away from the magical, so maybe the founders/originators must have been aware of the dangers there.

Often the “healing” is mentioned as a reason for these new inverse cargo cults (coming to, not from the West) and some amazing results are reported. However, healing is already a magical act, it means changing the future of a person, and that’s not something to embark on in a casual workshop. The Santo Daime has, wisely, created special ‘cura’ sessions (cura is Spanish for healing) for this, where the sacred and the magical meet.

Aya-tourism

It’s fashionable now to make an, often expensive all inclusive, trip to the Amazon jungle and obviously this has spurred a local shamanic industry boom there. The focus of the Westerners is on the psycho-therapeutic, self discovery aspects of the brew; using them rationally for healing and self-exploration.

The indigenous users have different goals, different world views, a more magical perspective; they use the substances not only for entheogenic mystical or psycho-social purposes, but for tribal issues, for hunting, for magic spells, maybe even war. They often see it more as a group event, not an individual quest. It is embedded in their culture, they are used to, prepare much more deeply (also in their diet) before taking anything.

These modes of tripping are in a way different worlds, different paradigms, not always in sync. Many indigenous ‘Ayahuasceros’ have trouble with our Western ethics. Many see the Western approach of brand-

ing and labeling the material and the practitioners as too commercial, as neo-imperialism, as stealing their secrets and cultural property. Money is one of the dangers, as many would-be shamans and experts fall for what could be called the business model of ritual use. The guru status, sex and power are also winking.

Here a critical note is necessary. Even the western “Shaman” who trained there in the jungle or claims that, is rarely qualified to deal with real magic(k) and they too often fall for the money and power, ‘aya’ is now an industry! All the “Western” problems associated with therapy pop up, like sexual abuse by the shamen or assistants, and the cases of those who don’t survive the sessions or end up as psychiatric cases are not mentioned in the brochures and sites. This abuse also is a problem in the group and individual sessions held in the West, where this is a real problem, and has caused problems like in Canada with scientific experiments with substances for PTSD treatment.

While the stories about magical quarrels and spell-wars among the ayahuasceros -there is much (black magic) fighting- abound, there is little or no warning for the magical effects of ayahuasca (and other indigenous substances) on the participants of rituals. Besides the mystical (oneness) and socio-therapeutic effects the magical is ignored or only accepted in healing.

That ayahuasca in the jungle setting originally is used far more for magical effect, for hunting, sorcery or even war, with spells etc. is of course known. While some like Jeremy Narby even warn for this, it is not perceived as a deterrent for the aya-tourists and researchers.

Of course the contact between the western scientists and the indigenous ‘sorcerers’ has positive results too. Interesting notions have emerged, like Narby’s insights in the correlation between DNA and the ayahuasca imagery of serpents. DNA healing might be one of the forgotten, or now rediscovered, tools of the ancient. And there is some indication that the Egyptian and Stonehenge healing traditions were DNA-Celestial based, maybe using what are now called epigenetic methods.

The magical is at least as powerful and effective as the mystical states, the self observance and the visions reported in so many books, articles and movies about personal aya-adventures these days. Psychedelics (and ritual in general) bring about a state of contact with another world, where the limitations of time, place and causality are overcome and

magic can happen. It gives access to other dimensions, including the magical time dimension where free will and access to past and future are possible, but this comes with possibilities to influence reality in ways long forgotten or ignored in the rational scientific approach.

Another point, often overlooked, is that in the psychedelic state (this happens in other rituals too) one is also more open to incoming spiritual and even demonic energies. In religions like Voodoo, Umbanda, and Candomble this happens a lot and is part of the matrix and kind of contained. For those experimenting with substances this is a serious danger and a safe setup requires adequate ritual preparation like creating a sacred container (space) and “Holding Space” by dedicated people with experience in otherworld travel.

In ritual and therapeutic situations the magical intent, if present, must be made absolutely clear.

Narrow focus; looking at the bright side only, PTSD

There is a remarkable one-sidedness in the psychedelic movement and the scientist looking at it these days. The adherents are usually very positive, but within the reductionist and materialistic paradigm. Facing the suppression of the use and the information flow by the status quo (government and churches) this is understandable. Be positive, research the potential benefits, focus scientific work on how these substances can help terminal patients, alleviate PostTraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, help to break addiction patterns, there is a kind of optimistic stance in the psychedelic movement, similar to the 60s spirit. Many therapists are eagerly waiting for approved protocols and availability of legal substances, it a kind of fashion in the therapy world.

I am less positive about where this all could lead to. It falls just short of proclaiming psychedelics the snake-oil cure for all. The issues of body-anchored trauma, of positive trauma outcome, of sexual roots of later trauma, of trauma immunity build-up are hardly mentioned in the literature or research report, while they are a major issue in normal therapy. The notion of dissociation and multiple personality emergence, explained in this book, have obviously not reached the people doing the research, although I have addressed this issue at a number of conferences. Criticism of this kind, however, is not welcome and makes one belong to the other camp, the evil empire suppressing the holy grail. Things like magical effects and otherworld manipulation are not on the agenda. Us-

ing these substances as tools in business innovation, sex therapy and tantra, childbirth, artistic expression and music, research, education and what not, is left to individual endeavors and daring but isolated scientists.

The focus of most of the scientists and researchers in the West is on medical applications, the use in psychotherapy, dealing with addictions etc. All still very rational but is it really progress? I doubt it.

The PTSD wave

The work of MAPS is a signpost. Rick Doblin's crusade is certainly worthy and pioneering, the Beckley Foundation in the UK does some work, Ben Sessa has become a crusader and the ESC (Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council) tries to protect the ayahuasca, but are they aware of the real dangers? Do they see that the box of Pandora holds more than just better medicine? Are they willing to include serious body work, and sexual healing into their "proper" protocols. Do they look at the effect of trauma on personality multiplication and dissociation problems. Psychedelic therapy is very much about the identity matrix of a patient, but this is hardly mentioned in their protocols. The results they report are mostly based on self-reporting afterwards, not on measuring real time effects in blood values, reaction times, heartbeats, or even gut biome processes. The same can be said about the microdosing craze, where "hard" results are not available, just opinions, some psychological testing mostly still based on how one looks back at the experience, and much hindsight self-reporting.

Proving that most psychedelics are less dangerous than most legal drugs, have less side effects and even can be used for dealing with many otherwise difficult medical and psychological problems is very necessary and one may hope that this will result in a policy change at all levels. But do we really know what we are doing, usurping only the rational part of the indigenous secrets and tradition, in a neo-liberal way ignoring their real interests?

I have repeatedly argued for serious investigation into long term effects of for instance regular MDMS use. There are many ways to see what the (statistical) effect on life-expectancy is, like telomere-degradation analysis and other DNA approaches. What are the differences in blood values, neurotransmitter levels, IQ levels, biome dysbalance, adrenal functioning, etc, etc, after ingestion of these substances, one time or as a regular

prescription or drug. Many people use them recreationally every week for decades, what is their mental and physical health, beyond some self-reporting hindsight.

One should not shy away from acknowledging and warning for the potentially dangerous magical side of things, the ways of influencing reality via the backdoor. Magic may be irrational, but very present in our lives, ignored and even repressed by the establishment, labeled pseudo-scientific and irrelevant. Fighting magic (illogically separating it from religious practices) has been a major force in history. That Buddha, Mohammed and Luther were all anti-magical and that the fight between the magical and the anti-magical lies at the root of many terrible wars, witch hunts and crusades, is not broadly recognized. The Sunni/Shia schism has much to do with this, the IS(IS)-war (Daesh) and reformation in religions too.

So what if it became known that ayahuasca, iboga and most other psychedelic concoctions are originally and basically used for magical practices? That science and politicians (and most of psychedelic research) thus far ignore these effects, as they are considered unproven and irrational, is maybe a happy coincidence. We should however not blind ourselves for what would happen if magical abuse was added to the list of arguments against psychedelics.

Religions, magical institutions by definition and full of magical practices like praying and transmutation, would feel threatened, miracles are their turf and they don't like competition. Politicians would use the anti-magical sentiments among the general population to further ban the use and research. The movement would be labeled as underground voodoo and newspaper headlines would scream about witches, warlocks and how politicians use black magic. This sounds preposterous, but in many African and indigenous societies this is and has been the case, there magic and spells are part of daily politics, the power of leaders often based on this.

So, with all the benevolent effects of psychedelics that are presented at conferences and in literature and studies there is this real danger that the magical will one day be taken serious and labeled as dangerous and evil, ignoring the positive aspects. If parapsychology would really prove that for instance spells work, that thought waves have an effect (and in an ayahuasca ritual you are likely to pick up the thoughts, problems and trauma's from the one next to you) and prophecy and divination are real, we would open a can of worms.

8 The first time

To just ingest your first pill or mushrooms can turn out to be a strange, enchanted, but maybe an unpleasant experience. If all goes well, it can be a thrilling ride. For many it is the first time that they experience a different (alternate) 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 by way of 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 during a trip are actually quite natural. The substances involved are also made by our own body, like DMT and serotonin. One can have similar experiences without drugs. Fasting, meditation, sports or simply falling in love can have essentially the same result: to take you to paradise (and hell sometimes).

It will be clear by now, however, that it is something out of the ordinary, so it would be good to get some more information about the effects of the intended substance before taking it. Reading this book can help you, but why not discuss it with more experienced people, asking for advice, consulting some more books or searching the Internet? 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 disarmed. You will be nervous, even after many trips, for entering this realm is always exciting and new. If you loose that sense of wonder, you probably should end your psychonautic endeavors.

Experience: 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?

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

It is just like making love: there is only one first time and this experience never repeats itself. So don't take too much, but also not too little, a solid dose for the first trip will make it memorable and effective.

It's a new and different realm you will enter. The first time you see the world change, feel your perspective waver and your consciousness opening up, you can feel very open and vulnerable, out of control. It's a miracle trip and a wonderful journey, but you have to fly without wings or a safety net. The whole idea is that by letting go of all control you can enjoy the ride, but that step is not easy. Sure enough, if you can let go, it may become a life changing event. 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 make sure you are in good company. 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.

Experience: 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, I know.

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

9 Coming down, the integration

Experienced trippers know it, the indigenous traditions honor it and psychiatrists treating people with bad tripping experiences will tell you, coming down in a gentle way is not easy, but very important. It's the time to solidify the insights, to integrate them, re-assemble a self that hopefully is less hampered by your past and more open to the world. Tim Leary often said "getting high is easy, coming down and retaining the insights is much harder".

During the trip the defense-mechanisms go, we are free. At least part of our ego, the mask we assume we are, is disappearing. The pieces of our armor, which constitutes what we normally think what we are and know, our assumed self, break off. We are left with what seems chaos, a psychotic state, with no identity to cling on, but this opens us up to new perceptions and the strange adventures of a trip.

Great insights emerge, there is a new logic and causality, but what happens to these as we feel reality knocking? As the trip winds down and reality kicks in again, as the re-entry sets in and you come to your 'normal' senses, the expanded visions and deep feelings, the beauty, peace and connectedness vanish, slowly dissolve in the harsh modalities of everyday life.

When the peak of the trip is over, the effects fade and normal awareness takes over again, the world assumes its former shape and color, but you, the returning psychonaut, are for a while quite unprotected and left with the pieces. The trip gave you these great feelings and you would probably like to stay in that state for as long as you can, but then the end comes. But this is when the real 'work' starts. The integration phase, which is rebuilding your identity, starts and with it the opportunity to re-arrange the pieces. The normal armor of insensitivity, ego and masks is not yet in place, even as you feel it coming back, but you now have the opportunity to make choices, reject the mechanisms and games you have seen and felt as illusionary.

It's difficult, as normality creeps in and calls for action, you need going to the bathroom, the telephone starts to ring, you switch on the television, check emails, run to the shop to get some food before they close, you die for a cigarette. But this is when you need to take the time, not to hurry back to your old games and masks. Be gentle, look for a quiet

place, use what is offered to chill out. Watch out for the old patterns, the old projections, your environment is full with old hints, triggers, programs. This is also why tripping at home may not be the optimal choice, everything there reminds you, beckons you to fall back to the old patterns. Maybe you feel the need to share your experiences with those that are close to you but as they might also be the ones that push your buttons, maybe that's too much to handle.

Take it easy

In planning the journey you should allot ample time for this part, don't get into a tight corner because of appointments, work or obligations. Try not to give in too soon to the normal routine, relax, enjoy the aftermath by not getting in high gear. Remain in the same space, the 'sacred space' you created will still protect and comfort you.

It's time for perspective, for processing all that heavy stuff. Many a bad trip wasn't a bad trip, but a badly managed coming down. In that sensitive, special state of re-entry you are like a newborn baby, ready to see the world anew, 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 uncovered 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. The co-voyagers are, in that coming down phase and reflecting your own afterglow, usually very nice, sensitive and empathic, so sharing with others (trippers and sitters) may help you, but don't feel pushed or push.

You can recognize the really experienced trippers and psychonauts because they seem to have integrated the qualities of tolerance and empathy you now feel, especially in that in-between state. In that respect they resemble monks and spiritual people; those who, in different ways through meditation, isolation, and exercise, have wandered in the same space as the one you experience in a psychedelic trip. Their openness has increased, this is something psychological research has established as one of the more common outcomes of tripping.

The process of gradual re-entering into 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. This is the time to work over those great in-

sights, trying to understand the sketches or notes you made, ask your sitter about your mutterings, take stock of your discoveries out or in there.

A good metaphor is to see a psychedelic trip as similar to putting a bar of iron in the fire. As it heats up, it becomes 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 any way he wishes 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, phone calls from parents, etc. is not so good. In this vulnerable state try to come down slowly and consciously. Ask yourself if your opinions and reactions concerning outside events and people around you really have to be as they were before. What do you gain by holding on to those patterns and judgments, how much projection is there, how much old pain and trauma can you let go of?

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 nature, drumming, dancing or chemicals.

For many, the coming down and integration phase can be the most creative time, because the insights are still fresh, can be put in writing, in music, in art, in new patterns in mind and body, the juices flow!

10 Real, sacred or fun

A trip is not only serious, it's also a lot of fun. There is humor, laughing, embarrassment about one's silliness, and ecstatic moments. Let's not forget the sense of connectedness with others, including touching and sex. There is, especially with LSD, also the realm of the funnies, the comic strip figures running around, little clowns in long rows, repetitive patterns; nothing spiritual there, just amusing imagery. These images are what shows up in the 'psychedelic' books, posters and art, those are not pure fantasy but something encountered in a trip. The same goes for much of what we see in earlier architecture and art. Or is it the other way around, do we see in the trip what we know?

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

And it is a trip indeed, a fantastic voyage. A trip to the mythic world of heraldic lore or fantastic imagery with palaces, temples and strange surroundings is quite normal. Under the spell of the psychedelic one floats through doors and tunnels into enormous spaces with decorations and amazing and dynamic color-patterns.

The question is now what came first, the inner world or what was made and built in 'reality' as churches or buildings or expressed in art? Is the inner reality maybe more real and broader than the illusion of daily life? Is there, beyond space and time, a realm where everything exists, and is the trip just a peek into that? Is 'normality' the illusion and the trip real? The wise old men from the East already guessed this; they talk about maya, illusion of the senses. According to them nothing can be learned that is not already known, all exists in the Akashic, the repository of all. In that sense there are no inventions, just (re-)discoveries. True 'Aha-Erlebnisse', new insights, not colored by our own projection are like mercy, a gift from heaven, showing us something that was already there. In the trip the veil of ignorance was lifted a bit. In this respect one could call all real innovation, all expansion of perceived reality (divine) art. It's the artist in us, the irrational seeker who intuits and pushes the boundaries of reality, not the rational scientist. Ratio is being imprisoned in the strict cause and effect limitations of time and place. In the wider reality effect and cause are interchangeable.

We shape our 'personal' reality and truths, also in the trip. You see what you want to see, what you already know. You easily cover the truly unknown and the unusual with your own personal interpretation and projection. It is not without reason that nowadays many people claim or believe to have encounters with extra-terrestrials, 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 all the same kind of contacts with an unknown, unfathomable and strange energy, and we add to them or it a fashionable color or projection so we can more easily assimilate and integrate it. Our mind rationalizes and comes up with stories and explanation we can handle.

Fun and holy

Did people tens of thousands years ago pick mushrooms, peyote buds or psychedelic plants only for certain ceremonies or were they just doing it for fun, a kind of candy, a pastime, looking for a different experience?

Human history is not very clear on this subject, probably both uses happened, just like today. The use of 'drugs', special herbs or potions to attain a peak-experience seems to have been spread widely, for initiations and religious, and thus essentially magical, purposes. There are enough indications that many religions used one form or another of psychedelic trance in a ritual; like wine at the Dionysian mysteries, tobacco and peyote at the ceremonies of the Native Americans, the mysterious Soma of ancient India and possibly psychoactive fungi in rye (ergot from which later LSD got extracted) at the Greek Eleusinian mysteries.

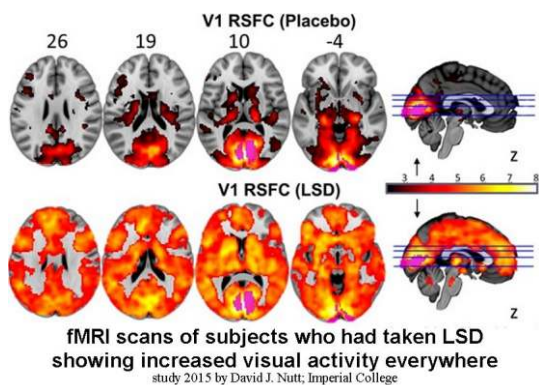
The Hindu philosopher Patanjali mentions in his Yoga-Sutra that magical plants are useful for the development of siddhis (special powers) like flying. There are bold speculations pointing at the importance of such experiences in our evolution. Ethnomycologist R. Gordon Wasson stated that religions are the result of psychedelic mystical experiences under the influence of mushrooms. As mentioned before, psychedelic writer and researcher Terence McKenna assumed that our consciousness started developing with apes eating hallucinogenic mushroom in the African savanna, and he even suggested the spores came from extraterrestrial sources. Not very likely given the variety of mushroom species and monkeys, and the fact that feeding psychedelics to monkeys (and they still can eat them in nature) doesn't seem to make them more intelligent, but it is an original point of view.

Evolution trail

Tripping itself sheds maybe light on where we come from. Regression along the evolutionary trail, going back the ladder of life is experienced by many in psychedelic trips. People tell about going through stages as reptile, fish, back to the origin of life. Notably there is a lack of monkey imagery in such evolution trail stories. This also supports the notion that humans were there before the apes, and apes are but degenerated humans This view kind of undermines neo-Darwinism and supports J.B. de Lamarck's adaptive and gradual evolution view (1801) - acquired traits (epigenetic tag -male and female- expression) are passed on to offspring - which was long rejected but is now supported by research.

The origins of myths and art

Could it be that psychedelic experiences are at the root of cultures, as we could deduct from many of our stories and myths? Substances like LSD stimulate "network disintegration and segregation" (David Nutt) and entropy, widening the visual experience beyond the ego filtering. and reducing the brain's ability to organize and segregate information. Ancient lore and fairytales contain, sometimes as a metaphor, indications of substances with the magical quality to shape shift or time shift, to enter another world or to go through a transformation. A potion here,



The inner visual, stimulated by LSD, is a source of creative expression

a magical spell or a jump in a magical pond there, the crossing of a river, falling asleep and awaking in a strange country; the well informed recognize the pointers.

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. It is known that certain toads (Bufo) discharge a substance (bufotenin or bufotonin), which is also psychoactive. It can thus be ingested by licking a toad, but alas, it is, as many DMT-containing

Experience: 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 now accept death easier, when it really knocks on my door.

indoles, not orally active without MAO-inhibitors. Actually, a better recorded but dangerous use of bufotenin is to dry the toad-venom and smoke it.

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 and from wild to wise, there are universal scenarios. Somewhere deep inside everyone resides the fascination that accompanies the stories and fairytales we listened to as kids. Nowadays comic strips, 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, but still follow the same patterns like Campbell's mono-myth. 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 Rings* 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?

Would Eve's apple not also be a metaphor for the psychedelic experience? After all, snakes show up quite frequently in trips. Are we really certain that Jesus and his disciples were drinking ordinary wine and were eating ordinary bread or was it 'special'? We use beautiful words, like transsubstantiation, for what believers see as the 'Body and the Blood of Christ' in the Holy Communion. It all depends on the view-

point; the psychedelic brew is a sacrament for the disciples of Santo Daime, but it is an illegal and dangerous potion for others.

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.

The truth of reality

All this fun and deep insights may mean nothing, for what is true? What is real, the stuff you can touch or the kaleidoscope and multiverse of the trip? Afterwards, when you look back, with both feet safely back on mother earth, you can easily discard all that trippy stuff. But you may also 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 another reality - and that is something you experience during a trip - apart from this limited tangible reality, or are there even 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 may we lift the veil a bit, and then only to discover another cosmic egg to crack. During a trip we can have a glimpse of other realms, 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 in the trip you superimposed your own filter over those perceptions.

What is perception and information, anyway

What we 'experience' is a self-conscious being with a set of belief systems that filter memory and perception. The information retained is rarely the result of only the good things. Cyber-philosopher Jaron Lanier's 'information is alienated experience' is a somewhat cryptic but relevant expression here. It points at the mechanism that what is not entirely processed, remain with us as a trauma or bad memory. It's transformation, not information that matters. The experiences that don't have

Experience: understanding suffering

I am concerned with the suffering of people. I sympathize with misery and disaster and try to help people, often overdoing it. In a mushroom-trip I realised, that the suffering of others is `their' suffering and I have to distinguish between my compassion and my projection of my own suffering. The lesson from the trip was that their problems are also their lesson, their way to develop. Just as my misery is often depending on my perspective, so is theirs, they have their scenario, I have mine. Especially in a trip I can see my situation a bit lighter, I can separate myself from my emotional attachment with situations, people, ideals. I can grieve about my lost youth, and laugh about me grieving at the same time, looking at my own melodramatic masks in a mirror. There is no way escaping the self, so you might as well be happy with what you are.

the potential to change or transform you become just memories of useless data, artifacts of the mind, monkeys thoughts.

There is a lot of data out there and in you, but only what truly reaches you and moves you matters. 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. Lots of data, and only limited information.

The whole process of how information comes to us, perceptually or from inside, how it is invited and filtered by our perception and how sometimes essential bits of info pop up, this is largely uncharted. It seems to be a field, rather than an arrow type of exchange with only sender and receiver and in a trip this process of unpredictable relevance, attraction and manifestation is overwhelming.

The lack of deep understanding of how we internally make sense of the 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.

Polarity and causality

Growing in consciousness is one of the results or gifts of the psychedelic adventure. It can be an uncovering of the core of our being, like a re-birth. The assembly of a new self, a more balanced and whole identity is a holistic process (seeking wholeness at all levels). This means accept-

ing that the polarity of all has meaning and thus disappears; good and bad, heaven and hell, fun and sacred are not opposed but just different perspectives. Karma in this perspective is not a result, but the force of change in the wider universe, it is a fundamental balance mechanism in the wider reality that includes the intangible spiritual realm. One way of defining magic is that it is just inverting (or escaping) the cause and effect relation.

Carlos Castaneda wrote about this in an impressive way. His books about the Mexican Indian sorcerer Don Juan provide a lot of information about the borderline between inner and outer reality and access to the otherworld. His notion of the *nagual*, as the magical state (and world) where one has to let go of the ego, the mask of the personality, is a good pointer for those interested in the magic that is accessible in the 'deep inner self' state.

When the fun, the pleasure and the sacred really merge, when joy and beauty are indistinguishable, we may remember that all is one, and truth and love unite.

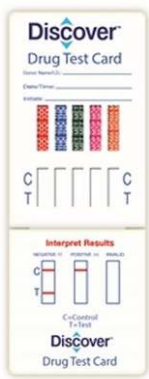
Experience: the Basic lesson forgotten

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.

11 Risks, dangers, the Law

Yes, there are dangers, but crossing a street is dangerous too. Maybe it is exactly because there is some danger and some adventure involved, that one is inclined to try this. Ignoring the attraction of these drugs is silly; psychedelic substances, entheogens, hallucinogens, empathogens, whatever you call them, they exist, are used by many and nowadays are easy to come by. That means we have to be honest about the dangers, even as they are relatively small. In normal situations the medical risks are minimal, but just as with prescription drugs being complete requires long paragraphs about what can go wrong, even as this rarely happens. This of course does not ignore the dangers of driving or working while 'high', for oneself or others and the risks of being caught by the Law or one's employer.



Overdose, addiction, dependency

The ingestion of psychedelic or empathogenic substances can be seen as just another way to reach a different state of consciousness. This, in very general terms and with much variations, is a trance-like state with enhanced functioning of certain senses and heightened sensitivity. This state is not specific to substance use, and is comparable to what can be achieved by hypnosis, drumming, dancing, meditation or

fasting.

There are, however, dangers in using psychoactive stuff and ignoring those would be stupid. The wrong dosage, the wrong time and place, the wrong people around, the wrong mindset, the wrong substance for you, an unlucky combination with other food, drinks or stress, something can go wrong during and after the trip and there are long term (delayed) detrimental effects too. And what if the police or your employer tests you for using?

The system criminalizes users

It's the Law that causes the most problems. We can't ignore or deny that psychedelics are 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 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 or funny pills and the cops mean bad business. Just as with mari-

“MDMA is not illegal because it’s dangerous; it can be dangerous because it is illegal” Gregory Sams

juana (and alcohol during the Prohibition in the USA) this has (but should not have) spawned a kind of underworld, a mafia industry which takes control over production, distribution and the trade. The dangers of criminalization are real, with the prosecutors, lawyers, judges, and the prison industry at its tails. It involves lots of money, bribes, payoffs, etc. Now that marijuana is becoming more and more legalized, in the USA and elsewhere, the billions of dollars size of the emerging above-board industry makes clear how large the underground trade has been.

Society is just not (yet) accepting the use of psychedelic substances, making experiencing the effects to be ‘off-limits’ and in fact criminalizing them for mere possession, except where they or the legalized substitute medical drugs are prescribed as a cure or symptomatic relief. There is an artificial separation between persons receiving prescription drugs, seen as generally beneficial and those concerned with so-called ‘controlled or listed substances’. The bad guys are pictured as anti-social deviants involved in dangerous activities that lead to physical and mental deterioration. Note that ‘controlled substances’ is just a legal term meaning substances on a list not really based on proper facts or research.

Doctors prescribe psychoactive drugs all the time and millions of people use them in that context, but we don’t see the use of painkillers, anti-depressants or prescription drugs like Ritalin as ‘drug’ use, even as the side-effects and harm are often much worse than anything psychedelics cause.

The ‘War on Drugs’ has, certainly in the USA, led to a new kind of slavery for millions in a commercialized prison system. The result of this war has been more distrust of the government, more suspicion and mistrust between citizens, more harmful use, more real criminality in the underground scene providing the drugs and hardly any progress towards a more safe, sane and healthy society.

Of course the government has some role here, we don’t want young kids to use, or ‘high’ drivers on the streets or at the workplace. But do they forbid the carrying of many types of weapons which can be used to harm or kill people, do they limit the use of cars because many more

people die in car-accidents than because of drugs and why have they accepted people using and trading alcohol and tobacco, but not the far more benevolent and medically active cannabis?

Testing for use

The authorities have reacted to the increased use of “illegal” drugs like Cannabis and XTC by using more and more testing devices, based on saliva or blood samples, and this has become a serious issue in some countries. Drug testing became obligatory for many professions and has become quite a nightmare for the recreational users, as a positive test might mean they lose their job or worse. More and more tests have been developed and even substances like LSD can now be traced, sometimes for a limited period (hours), sometime for weeks after one used them. A market has developed for drug testing tools, as people wanted to find out whether they would test positive at work and companies use these test as a precaution to prevent government interference, if they suspect drug use, so they can handle matters internally.

In the U.S.A. and some other countries it has now become a standard procedure to test whether people have been taking drugs. This is done at work and when applying for a job, in traffic, and for instance in child-birth situations in hospitals. There are safety issues that make this sensible, but it also has led to a real scare among users.

Marijuana and other common drugs leave traces in the urine, the hair, saliva and sweat. The wipe tests are fairly common now, and blood testing is often a second stage if a first test comes out positive. This testing is done by the Law and government officials, in special laboratories or on the street, but also by employers, hospitals, just as an intake procedure or at regular or random intervals.

Drug-testing is now quite common, even in regular traffic control and in the case of accidents where one nowadays not only checks on alcohol use, but also on drugs. Non-invasive Drug Wipe tests or urine sample tests for traces of drug residue indicate the use of cannabis, opiates, cocaine, amphetamine and the meth-amphetamines (MDMA, Ecstasy), the



Drugs Testing

source:thegooddrugsguide.com

Substance	Detectable in Saliva	Detection Period (hours)	Detectable in Urine	Detection Period (days)	Detectable in Hair	Detection Period (days)
Amphetamine (AMP)	5-10 min after use	72	2-5 hours after use	2-4	5-7 days after use	90
Methamphetamine (mAMP)	5-10 min after use	72	2-5 hours after use	3-5	5-7 days after use	90
Cocaine (COC)	5-10 min after use	24	2-5 hours after use	2-4	5-7 days after use	90
Opiates, Heroin (OPI)	1 hour after use	7-21	2-5 hours after use	2-4	5-7 days after use	90
Marijuana (THC)	1 hour after use	12	2-5 hours after use	15-30	5-7 days after use	90
Phencyclidine (PCP)	-	24-72	2-5 hours after use	7-14	5-7 days after use	90
Benzodiazepines (BZO)	-	-	2-5 hours after use	3-7	-	-
Ecstasy (MDMA)	-	-	2-5 hours after use	1-3	5-7 days after use	90
Barbiturates (BAR)	-	-	2-5 hours after use	4-7	-	-
Methadone (MTD)	-	-	2-5 hours after use	3-5	-	-
Oxycodone (OXY)	-	-	2-5 hours after use	2-4	5-7 days after use	90

results show in 3 to 8 minutes. XTC and cannabis use show up in urine and blood for weeks.

LSD is less easily traced, the quantity is very low and the chemical disappears quickly, it is only there during the trip. It does however leaves traces in urine and blood and can be detected but it is not a common test item. Mushroom (psilocybin or psilocine) testing is not (yet) part of the normal range either, neither is DMT-testing (like in Ayahuasca). Mushroom ingredients or metabolic residue like psilocin however do come out in urine in a substantial concentration. In Siberia drinking the pee of rich people taking the drug helped the poor also enjoy it. Not a common practice these days anymore, we can assume.



swabs for sweat and saliva are used by the police

The legal status of mushroom possession and ingestion is (in a number of countries) not very clear, as they grow in nature (but of course a re usually now grown indoors with grow-kits or professionally). Seemingly the drug test companies (and the Law) didn't make magic mushrooms a priority (yet).

There are home tests available, but like the common tests they only indicate positive or negative (based on a legal threshold) and are

drug test levels, minimum and maximum period/time to detect

Drug Name	Abbreviation	Cutoff	Minimum	Maximum
Amphetamine	AMP	100ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-4 days
Amphetamine	AMP-300	300ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-4 days
Barbiturates	BAR	300ng/ml	2-4 hours	1-3 weeks
Benzodiazepines	BZO	300ng/ml	2-7 hours	1-4 days
Buprenorphine	BUP	10ng/ml	2-4 hours	2-3 days
Cocaine	COC	300ng/ml	1-4 hours	2-4 days
Cocaine	COC-150	150ng/ml	1-4 hours	2-4 days
Marijuana	THC	50ng/ml	2 hours	up to 40 days
Metadone	MTD	300ng/ml	3-8 hours	1-3 days
Methamphetamines	MET	1000ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-4 days
Methamphetamines	MET-500	500ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-4 days
Methylenedioxymethamphetamine	MDMA	500ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-4 days
Opiates 300	OPI-300	300ng/ml	2 hours	2-3 days
Opiates 2000	OPI	2000ng/ml	2 hours	2-3 days
Oxycodone	OXY	100ng/ml	1-3 hours	1-2 days
Phencyclidine	PCP	25ng/ml	4-6 hours	7-14 days
Propoxyphene	PPX	300ng/ml	2-7 hours	2-3 days
Tricyclic Antidepressants	TCA	1000ng/ml	8-12 hours	2-7 days

FDA Cleared

not valid to prove actual inebriation or incapacitation to drive, this requires a more (expensive) thorough test in a laboratory. So if the police detects cannabis use, they cannot claim or prove one is driving under the influence, and further testing is needed. But they probably will force you leave your car anyway.

There are also complicated and expensive tests to trace for less common substances; in hair these usually stay traceable for much longer.

As drug testing, especially for cannabis which can be found weeks after use (regular use of most substances leaves more and enduring traces) becomes such a nuisance (and in many states and countries Cannabis is no longer illegal anyway), many try to fool the system. They try smuggling in 'clean' urine (needs to have the right temperature), use additives to hide the drug, but the labs are usually well aware of all the tricks. Drinking a lot and peeing a lot before a test is a good strategy. Figures for how long a substance can be traced can be found in the tables in this chapter (from the providers of the tests).

Being fair, the use of most of the psycho-active substances is not totally without danger, they affect our ability to work, to drive, to function normally. Polydrugusers will more easily harm their brain and body, especially when they start young, adolescent brains are more vulnerable than adults. Then one can take too much (overdose), there is the risk of addiction with some, there are physical side-effects and with prolonged and heavy use long term damage to brain cells or organs has been ob-

served. Of course this is more true for alcohol, nicotine, sugar and many other things including most medical drugs taken regularly by millions of people.

Driving while drugged and 'high' is an increasing problem, a public safety issue and remains an issue even if Cannabis use is allowed. A similar situation as with alcohol has developed, and testing drivers for being under the influence is now quite common and sensible. Studies in Maryland with drivers involved in crashes, fatal accidents, or reckless driving show that 34% tested positive for drugs, 16% for alcohol and 9.9% for both. Of this group, 50% were under 18 years of age. Another study showed that 4-14% of drivers injured or killed in traffic collisions, in various locales, tested positive for THC, an active ingredient in marijuana/cannabis.

screening device will give only a qualitative result, all positives should be confirmed by an alternative method such as GC/MS (gas chromatograph) mass spectrometry by a lab. - <http://www.americanscreeningcorp.com>



pricing: 6\$/pc
2\$/500 pcs

Neuroplasticity

Our brain adapts to the circumstances and this neuroplasticity may have adverse effects in the long run, but this is also true for computer game playing or the work you do. You train a specific ability and your grey mass adapts and supports it by growing that part. The neuroplasticity of your brain is not limited to growing up, you can train your brain and regrow brain cells till you die. This is why older people should exercise, both body and mind. Too much of anything is generally not beneficial.

There are some lesser known effects such as that some substances influence the way one sees colors. There is the strange fact that some color blind people report seeing the missing colors in a trip. For others the balance between colors is changed after the trip and this may be more or less permanent. Note that much psychedelic art has saturated reds, like the vividness of the Huichol art but also the colors in artwork by Western ayahuasca adepts and psychedelic artists. Using much ayahuasca for some people makes them perceive images different, this is line with the risk of 'hallucinogen persisting perception disorder' (HPPD). Symptoms are; a 'trip' that never seems to end, involving incessant distortions in the visual field, shimmering lights and colored dots. So this comes with more severe complaints than just a change in color perception. Some diminished perception of red (and hence more hues and saturated reds in

the imagery) doesn't seem like a big problem, but then color perception is related to anxiety and depression.

There are also more esoteric dangers, like spiritual delusion and magical possession, already discussed in chapter 6. By entering a realm where other dimensions or realities exist these may not always be perceived as beneficial and can be experienced as demons or evil spirits. Notably the fashionable ayahuasca rituals have a dark side that is not usually mentioned, they were originally (in the jungle) not only used for healing and spiritual deepening, but had practical and magical purposes too, like for hunting and warfare. In general these 'magical' effects of psychoactive substances (and rituals in general) are not recognized or taken serious by science, and are too easily labeled as superstition or hallucinations.

Overdose, OD

Taking too much, a bad combination with alcohol or other drugs, ingestion of something unexpected or administered by someone else with the wrong intent, it can turn a trip into a nightmare. It can become a bad trip (flipping), with loop situations and tendencies to do stupid things, like trying to fly or engage in dangerous activities like driving under the influence; one may become depressed, even suicidal.

Such situations are often labeled as an overdose. The word alone provokes thoughts of heavy drugs use, serious medical treatment, someone using heroin, crack cocaine or crystal meth and addicts dying in gruesome situations.

In fact overdosing on real psychedelics is rare, and the numbers of serious problems or even casualties are far less than from using alcohol. Some drugs are more dangerous than others, but the numbers and risks are not as bad as what is suggested in anti-drugs campaigns.

In the Netherlands, a relative tolerant country with more or less honest statistical reporting, the number of people taken to a hospital with serious symptoms are reported in the MDI statistics (the Monitor Drugs Incidenten). In Amsterdam, where many tourists come to get stoned or to trip, there are no magic mushroom casualties reported (sometimes there are incidents with combined use). XTC problems are relatively rare and not very serious (580 hospitalizations nationally, 4 deaths but the use is widespread and thus there are more problems reported than with speed (70 nationally). LSD and more rare drugs are not recognized as such or don't make it into the statistics as incidents are very rare. In comparison, annually some 850 people are taken to a hospital for her-

oin/crack/cocaine, and in the Netherlands as a whole some 100 to 140 overdose deaths for these hard drugs per year are reported. For cannabis in Amsterdam where smoking a joint is legal and very common, annually 240 are taken into the hospital, these are mostly panic attacks by first time users and because of unexpectedly strong space cake.

GHB turns out to be a nasty substance with 170 hospitalizations per year in Amsterdam (480 nationally in the Netherlands) with 5 deaths). Alcohol then is worse in numbers with more than 1400 people taken to hospitals in Amsterdam alone but of course alcohol use is also very common and the cause of many fatal accidents.

Overdosing effects and symptoms vary, depending on the substance used. There are personal factors, pre-existing body conditions, situational factors like temperature and access to water or help. See for details the specific substance chapters.

In general the random use of multiple drugs and certainly drugs and alcohol is more risky and not advisable, there is the '1+1=3-effect'. The combination dulls the positive, but enhances the negative effects, so that one tends to use more.

The symptoms of overdosing on drugs are usually that people start to act strange, become pale, have severe nausea symptoms, heart rate goes up or becomes irregular, they have lack of breath and panic. If an OD is suspected, it's better to call the medics or get someone to a hospital. In such a situation, the better one knows what substance and dose caused the OD, the better and more effective the treatment. Take a sample to show the doctors! If a person stops breathing, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is advisable. Keeping them awake and conscious is usually a good approach, walking around or a cold shower may help. The idea, that giving people salt water to fight OD symptoms is usually not correct.

Sometimes an overdose of some drugs is taken to commit intentional suicide.

Overdose reporting

One of the problems of criminalizing the use is that reporting overdose situations or even bringing in people in bad condition can have serious repercussions for the reporter (and the user). They often pay for their intervention by being prosecuted for being part of the use and overuse of the drugs. Normally, police would be notified and act to arrest all those involved in a drug overdose case for their possession and use. In California the 'Good Samaritan Act' AB 472 eliminates this conflict of

choosing between one's own interest and the need of the overdosing person and offers immunity from criminal charges.

Hooked, addiction, dependency

Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (apart from psychedelics also alcohol, cocaine, nicotine, etc.) or engages in an activity (e.g., gambling, sex, shopping, gaming, computer interaction) that can be pleasurable but the continued use/act of which becomes compulsive. It is a state characterized by compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli despite adverse consequences. The reward can be a mood change, pain relief, change in attitude or perception, increased sociability, courage, ability to withstand tiredness, escape from traumatic memories or thought patterns, forgetfulness, feeling capable or powerful, beautiful, creative or loving; there are many and very different rewards experienced as desirable and reinforcing (inducing to repeat). Addiction or long term heavy use may result in chronic deviation of the brain's reward set point and so diminish responsiveness to natural positive stimuli. This may result in an over-responsiveness to substance-related cues, coupled with an impaired capacity to initiate behaviors in response to natural rewards.

This is generally called addiction when it interferes with ordinary life and responsibilities, such as work, relationships, or health. One may not initially be aware that one's behavior is out of control and causing problems for oneself and others.

The term addiction is mostly used to describes physical addiction, where the body develops a craving for the drug, and a biological reaction of withdrawal (feeling sick etc.) occurs which can be overcome only by taking in some more. This is often accompanied by tolerance, so that the drug no longer has the same effect with the same dosage, but also sensitization occurs, an amplified response.

The brain will also increasingly respond to cues about the drug, and stimulate usage, this is already a more psychological addiction symptom. Psychological addiction is less related to physical tolerance, as some people compulsively use drugs, gamble, or shop in reaction to being emotionally stressed but also seek certain activities to escape stress, like in workaholics. Such addictive behavior is often related to only one self-state (mask, personality) and is therefore not usually a constant condition, but can be triggered by the situation (like calling forth certain

memories and traumas) or the need to get away from certain situations or problems. Social addiction is when one experiences a certain social situation as so rewarding, that one is drawn to return to it, this is part of what is called behavioral addiction, a certain kind of (compulsive) behavior. Peer pressure plays a role here.

We are all dependent

The whole concept of addiction is related to a cultural marginalization, the term is generally only used for certain (hard drugs) addictions with has negative connotations. When the notion of addiction is replaced by 'strong connection to' or 'dependency on' then most people have such connections and dependencies, to their partner, their work, certain food, music and many other habits, think money or religion. This can and does impact their behavior and not always positive, but is not labeled as addictive and usually accepted as part of normal life.

Drugs researchers and social scientists like Peter Cohen have pointed out that the marginalization has led to a very narrow view of how to deal with users, easily classifying all use as addictive. This ignores that there are many users of these substances that don't experience a distortion of their ordinary life, don't display aberrant behavior, don't suffer physical deterioration, decrepitude or decay of their life. This group of users, and according to Cohen this is much larger than what the media and drugs-researchers usually assume, has little or no problems with using some drugs in some circumstances, taking care that the effects don't overshadow their normal functioning and not overly 'depend' on them. The more detrimental addiction, which some see as a disease or mental illness, in a very narrow perspective even as a lack of morality or strength of character, is of course a serious problem and requires treatment and maybe resolve of social and economic conditions but it obscures the way 'drugs' are perceived.

There is more understanding now for the biological tendencies that may play a role in dependency and addiction. FosB, a gene transcription factor, is now identified as a critical component and common factor in the development of virtually all forms of behavioral and drug addictions. Recent advances in brain imaging have increased knowledge of the



function of the pleasure and reward systems, and suggested that addiction interferes with the balance of the neurotransmitters dopamine, glutamate and gamma- aminobutyric acid.

The myths about abuse, gloom and doom

There are many stories about how bad the use of this substances is, how many people ended up with fried brains, psychosis and in mental institutions. Since the sixties the medical establishment and the authorities have spread these stories, the jumping from high buildings being one of the sure results of taking LSD among them. Not based on statistics, but on anecdotal evidence, but in the media this has become the image, psychedelics make you mad, bad trips lead to hospitalization, positive effects were discarded. Now of course there have been incidents, but those were, recent investigations have cleared this, very rare. The bad image of psychedelics has been a myth, carefully kept alive to frighten people away from it.

A study published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology confirming this looked at 190,000 NSDUH respondents from 2008 to 2012. It also found that the classic psychedelics were not associated with adverse mental-health outcomes. In addition, it found that people who had used LSD and psilocybin had lower lifetime rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts. There is however the distinction between “incidence” and “prevalence.” The study shows conclusively that there’s no increase in prevalence of mishaps from the use of psychedelics, but it has no bearing on the question of incidence.

The ‘acid casualty’ myth from the 1960’s is thus more or less debunked, and the therapeutic use of psychedelics has shown positive effects. Even a single experience with psychedelics shows a strong correlation with improved mental health.

Real addiction to psychedelics like magic mushrooms or LSD has not been proven, although there is certainly a kind of socio-psychological addiction; subconsciously you remember the nice feeling, the sense of belonging, of friendship and unity and this makes you long for your next dose. Recreational addiction, a little bit of magic mushrooms or a pill every day can have a similar effect as habitual marijuana use; as a result you could remain continu-



ously in a dreamy mood; not really ideal for study or work. Tolerance builds up too. However, micro-dosing is still largely uncharted territory (see chapter 25) and there are medical conditions that benefit from regular use.

12 Therapy, healing, sitters, shamans

It is possible to see a trip as a kind of tuning and cleaning out of the mind, a cleansing. It can be an opportunity to have a good look at all nooks and crannies and corners of the psyche, 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.

It is, however, important to note that the traditional use of these substances was not primarily for healing, but about increasing awareness and if used for healing, often the shaman took it to look for the problems. Psychedelics were more used for initiations, for magical purposes and only by selected people, their use as a snake-oil cure for all ailments is overly optimistic.

Transformation as in changing one's life, belief system or personality is not easy and there are many therapeutic and psychiatric approaches, most take many sessions and have limited success. Here the use of psychedelics or in general psycho-active substances seem like a miracle-cure, in one session one can unravel more than in years of traditional therapy. There are many examples of people experiencing a dramatic shift in their outlook on life, due to a trip, but there is no guarantee and much depend on set, setting and the help of someone who can help prepare, assist and guide the process and the coming down.

Surface fixing or deep healing, the risks

What makes psychedelic therapy so effective is that one cuts through the superficial layers, the normal defense systems, bypasses the ego and come to what some call the inner child, the core of one's being. That is where real healing and transformation is possible. Most therapies deal with the surface, the superficial level of behavioral traits, of not adapting to what others, work, or society want. They can be effective in fixing problems in how one is perceived by others, but don't deal with the core of one's self-image and that is where the real causes often are hidden. The psychedelics cut much deeper, faster and reach the level where true healing can happen. But this is not without danger, just like with normal psychotherapy the outcome is not always as expected, there are risks. Apart from clear medical risks, one of them is that the underlying trau-

mas are not resolved, but solidified and the defense grows even harder to break. Fixing the superficial, just the behavioral side and not the deep causes, is, alas, a trend in a world where therapy costs money and becomes limited by strict diagnose/treatment protocols. And the new-age alternatives are not much better, they promise much but not always deliver. We all know people who go to one therapy after another, become therapy-junkies and never seem to find the breakthrough. Fixing is not healing and the problems remain.

Psychedelic therapy is not a universal and magical cure-all and requires expert attendance. The danger is that many of the so-called leaders, shamans etc. in psychedelic sessions are not really qualified, have no or little medical or clinical expertise, don't preselect or evaluate the participants and often don't do follow-up or aftercare. Joining a group or ritual circle hoping to be cured, and this is why many people even make trips to the jungle, is risky, one should really look into the expertise and qualifications of the therapists or leaders involved.

What is the purpose?

Realize that choosing change or transformation as the goal of a trip doesn't really work. Real change is a consequence, you can only strive to achieve a better understanding, becoming conscious about what is and what will be, what is fluid and what is unchangeable. Starting from there, problems often get solved spontaneously if you deal with them, live or relive them; not by working hard on them but by working your way through them.



The shadow, the dark inside of you

The therapeutic process, and we are talking about ‘work’ that heals and not only fixes some symptoms, will access emotions, perceptions, traumas and memories that are otherwise hidden from conscious awareness. These are usually not very nice, the reason they are suppressed. Reliving them or the realization that such things are part of you is a painful and often very intense process. This facing the devil, shadows or dark side, which may be accompanied with intense bodily reactions, is why some trustworthy and experienced help around is a good idea. The release of these hidden parts of the psyche can be painful, can come with some violence, crying, nausea, pains what will bubble up from the dark is hard to predict. The process of surrendering, letting go of the protective defenses that kept these memories hidden, is the only viable way to deal with them. Once we surrender, emotional honesty can deal with the traumas and buried programming, and love and acceptance, forgiving others and ourselves, can do their work of recognition and reconsolidation.

Body and soul, healing, your identity field

One of the purposes of using psychedelics is healing oneself by becoming more aware, or assisting someone in that process. A trip is seldom a cure for an acute medical problem, for that see a doctor or go to a hospital.

Apart from this obvious warning, it often does help to look into oneself, do some soul searching, find a new perspective and an awareness of the causes and roots of who we are and why we act as we do. Acceptance of oneself, self-love, is a great healer and stimulus for transformation.

Change your thoughts, change your life, change your health! If we assume the psyche is the great orchestrator of our body and soul, then looking for the deeper, mental and often traumatic causes of physical and psychosomatic problems may help. This better be a holistic process, just looking at parts or symptoms doesn’t help much, that is what the medical world does, and with limited success. Sure, the harm done in our pasts does show up in misalignments, tics, illnesses, but do we diagnose that easily and correctly or is it more of a chance process?

Holistic means that all is one, that symptoms and causes are related, but also that problems are never isolated, that we are totally connected.

Think how diseases can be visible in many body parts, your iris, hands and feet. Our personal identity (and the problems there) is not just a psychological issue, it affects your whole body, down to the cell-identity

and the (epi-)genetic mechanisms. In fact every cell is connected to all others like a hologram, carrying relevant information of the whole, but expressing just the relevant part (of the DNA).

We can work on the mind or affected body parts, but do we always intuit and honor that in for example the voice, the breath, the pulse, the thoughts and the emotions the same patterns, the same unbalances and problems show up? The 'identity field' we perceive at the conscious level reaches down, in the unconscious and down to every part of the body. In a trip this we may become more aware of this and here lies the possibility to influence this field, maybe even down to the epigenetic level of cells, as some claim. Identity problems at the surface may be the cause of cell-identity problems at the deepest level.

We are a complex puzzle, and there are many psychotherapeutic tools and approaches. Some work for many, some for only a few, it's not easy to pinpoint the right approach. Psychedelics can help to use these tools more effectively. In theory, any method could unravel the puzzle. In practice we are stuck with the limited set of tools that our (or the therapist's) previous training and profession offers us, also in psychedelic therapy. There are often eclectic choices there, combining different approaches. The personality and empathy of the attendant is a major factor, probably more important than the therapy model itself.

The therapeutic tools

There are the more or less 'official' therapies, beyond the classical Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic approaches there are the behaviorists, the transpersonal crowd (with more psychedelic roots), the InterPersonal Therapy (IPT), Cognitive Behavioral Analysis System of Psychotherapy (Cbsp), Schema Therapy, Narrative Exposition (NET) and approaches like Family (Systemic) Constellations, EFT, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), there is a wealth of choices, some more evident based, some more speculative.

However, cutting up the field of 'healing' and 'therapy' into all the partitions and specializations doesn't really help. We have already too often created specialists and specialist organizations, which only look at symptoms. And as the 'official' therapy world is less inclined to experiment or only looks at specific problems (like addiction and PTSD in the present research into psychedelic therapy), often the alternative and 'esoteric' therapies are what is used in 'private' and half-legal psychedelic sessions.

There are more holistic disciplines, like at least a dozen broad alternative approaches with roots in either the West or the East (like Yoga, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Reiki, Chi Kung, Tai Chi Chuan) and various body/mind approaches that help us gauge what's happening and offering paths to healing, cleaning, rebalancing, softening and restoring our energy balance. But even then some diagnosis is necessary. One can use a wide range of probes, from the very 'scientific' and indisputable medical methods, blood tests, scans, photo's and what not, to the intuition level and dowsing methodology of Radionics and such; there is a whole arsenal of tools and skills to use them.

The therapeutic use of psychedelics, in addition and supporting all these therapy approaches, opens up a whole new vista. It can use classic therapy approaches, but also the tools of older cultures, music, and why not modern tools like biofeedback or virtual reality?

Combining psychedelics with other approaches is an unorthodox approach, but with a long history and roots in shamanism and the practices of medicine men and yes, witches of old. We can learn from their methods, their use of music, drumming, incantations, additional herbal remedies and their psychological approach to healing. Often they use suggestion, covered in magic and even sleight of hand, which seems primitive but we now know that placebo effects are real and account for up to 50% of the positive results. What we believe has power, so try to change your belief system is the first step to changing your life!

So the conclusion might be to at least look for some holistic approach and honor the older traditions. Holistic therapy sees body and mind as one, takes into account the life history and situations and accepts that we are more than the material parts. It assumes that all trauma, experience etc. left traces or anchors in the body, but they are also related to the stuff deeply hidden in our minds. And it is the mind where psychedelics can make a difference, a difference that we can feel!

Feeling is healing

For many a trip is a rediscovery that they are capable of feeling, of being in contact with their body, their senses and realizing how emotions are a driving force, much more than our rational mind. 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 easily overwhelmed. In a trip 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.

The truth is as soon as we allow ourselves to really feel, often our system will take care of the problem by healing itself. That goes for the problems of others too. If we learn, through the psychedelic experience, to let them in, feel them and not separate ourselves from them, we are already healing them (and ourselves and the relationship) in the process. This approach is used in the Honopono approach, a forgiveness practice from the South Pacific. 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 problem is that in a trip we are like in a roller coaster or carnival ride, not very well able to direct and that's where a sitter or therapist can help. By reminding us what the purpose of the trip is, gently guiding towards experiences or memories that bring us in contact with the underlying problems or traumas, handing us photos or memorabilia, playing the right music or a video, massaging us to help feel the body blockages, support us in the sad parts; a considerate human can be a great help.

Helpers and Sitters; the guided trip

A person (sitter, friend, shaman, attendant) assisting in a trip is there for security, making sure nothing goes wrong, but can mean much more. There has grown quite a body of understanding what such a 'sitter', guide or monitor can do. Especially with ecstasy (MDMA) there is quite some experience and a wealth of literature and case-study material as this was legally used for therapy in the early years, especially in California, in the circles around Alexander (Sasha) Shulgin with notably Leo Zeff (see Myron J. Stolaroff ; The secret chief). There is now some more recent research (see MAPS), also into the effect of substances like ayahuasca, iboga, magic mushrooms.

The approach of a therapeutic sitter is usually based on gentle guiding and reminding the tripper, more than directly influencing. The general idea is to let the process work out. Less is more, even a thought is picked up. By gently using sounds, touch or movements to change the direction a sitter can steer the tripper away from looping situations or re-focus the attention. As the suggestibility in a trip is very high, the voice

can be used effectively to bring awareness concerning past experiences, the sources of traumas and the judgments one makes about others. It is a matter of mirroring, reflection, but also stimulation of expression and other standard psychotherapeutic tools. Also smells, pictures, taste (some fruit), sounds or a bath can help to bring back memories or change the course of the trip,

In general the approach of the transpersonal psychology, with the many tools developed there, is useful in assisting people in a therapeutic trip, but by following one's intuition one can come up with amazingly effective moves and suggestions too. Confrontational techniques are risky but some strife can't always be evaded. Some seemingly innocent words or gestures can trigger deep emotions, even violence and aggression and to deal with that requires experience, calmness and common sense.

A good friend or family member can be a great sitter, but they need to be well grounded as a lot of sadness, anger and projection can come up. Sometimes one wants or needs a more experienced guide, a real therapist, depending also on the purpose of the exercise. It may be possible to find such people that can assist, one can go to workshops and staged rituals or hire professional people who will function as 'sitters'. This usually means that they don't take anything themselves, but take care of things, stimulate, hold you if necessary and help you to feel safe. Alternatively, a person assisting in a session can also ingest the substance him or herself, sometimes taking a much smaller (homeopathic) 10 or 20% dose to be in the same mindset.

It is important that such a person stimulates you on the right moment and helps you with practical things, like handing you eyeshades, blindfold and drinks, but also with the music, with visualizations and breathing exercises. He or she can also help in the evaluation, the pre- and post-session processing, the integration of the experience.

A 2016 study from the Journal of Psychopharmacology has found that taking psychedelic drugs does not result in impairment of mental health or an increased risk of depression. From the three drugs that were involved (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide or LSD, Psilocybin and Mesca-line), the study declared that there are 'no significant associations between lifetime use of psychedelics and increased likelihood of past year serious psychological distress, mental health treatment, suicidal thoughts, suicidal plans and suicide attempt, depression and anxiety.'

Because assisting is too risky for `official' licensed therapists (their professional organizations reject this, also because of legal problems) it may take a while before you find a good and experienced guide.

There are less `official' people who can still assist you adequately on a trip. They often call themselves shamans (in many interpretations of the word) and they rely on age old rituals and the approach of medicine men and healers of foreign cultures. Sometimes real shamans from the jungle come to the West or you can travel there. This approach works well, but maybe it is a bit too much. Such retreats or ceremonies are usually a whole commotion with diets, meditation, singing, drumming and strange ceremonies, sometimes confusing; only afterwards will you maybe understand their real value.

Stanislav Grof, eminent psychotherapist, psychiatrist and pioneer psychonaut, talks about psychedelics as an `universal decoder', the function of the trip to help associations and connections to surface.

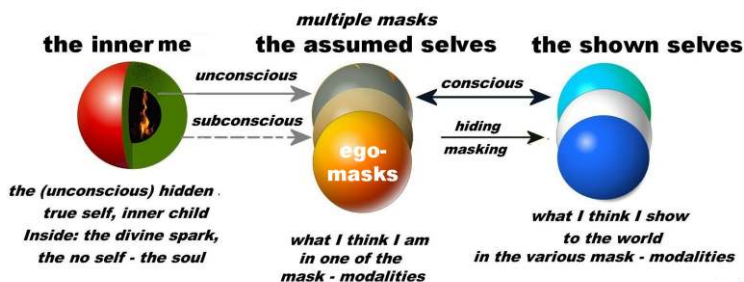
The `real' psychotherapists or psychiatrists are increasingly willing to assist using these substances so that deep traumas might surface and protocols are developed to guide them.

Exploration of the multiple masks

As will be explained more in detail in the next chapter about identity, in a trip we can often go beyond the superficial personality or ego, letting go of the mask and explore the deeper or true self and selves. This may shed light on what our mask is, what kind of identity we think we are and show to the world. Becoming aware of our mask is one of the potential benefits of a trip, or even becoming aware that we have multiple masks or (assumed) self-images, and that we vacillate between them.

Self-states: we wear more masks

what mask do we drop in the trip?



Becoming aware of this play of identities may be the single most factor in healing, as distorted identity-fields extend into the cellular level and could be the cause of malfunctioning there, some state.

Internet surveillance

Modern technology makes it possible, to assist or supervise online. Using not only your phone (make sure it's charged), but Skype, WhatsApp or another online real-time connection can make a solitary trip more safe, offers possibilities for intervention and could help to be more honest and open. This option could bring more safety, but also abuse.

Sex; mirror of the dark side and our projections

Intimacy is necessary, the shared privacy it requires is an evolutionary necessity (for bonding, mating, inner growth) and sex is a big part of it. Just think about yourself, how you feel about yourself concerning the world, others, relationships and yes, sex. How you look, how you feel about your body and your sexual attractiveness can be a real issue in your relationships.

In the trip, exploring sexuality can be ignored and often is, a random group is not the ideal platform for that. But journeying does offer opportunities to explore your sexuality, alone or with a partner.

In more private and recreational setting sex and intimacy with a consenting other is of course one of the more attractive aspects of tripping and often eagerly explored. Your sensitivity can be enormously enhanced, for what you feel yourself r what you sense in others. Just don't expect too much (performance), the mind (and the body) in a trip is easily distracted!

It does make sense to plan and maybe even discuss one's plans and objectives for doing a trip and to make clear what the intentions are in this respect. This maybe better done not just before you take the trip with your partner(s) or sitter, but if this is a serious issue, arrange for some prior sessions, maybe even consulting with an experienced person or a therapist. It helps to have some idea of what may and can happen, the physical effects and discomforts, the process and the traumas one expect to face. Certainly for a first time experience some preparation seems wise and maybe the sexual issues are better dealt with later.

Regrettably the present trend in medical therapeutic use is a setting that is certainly not welcoming sexual exploration, which is a serious omis-

sion in the protocols, as sexual issues are maybe the root of 70% or more of psychological problems.

When not alone, other people can be a mirror of what we are ourselves or what fascinates us, we project into them. This also applies to sex, abuse memories, we see in the other what is in us. Sitters can have a function there, being the mirror, allowing the transference and tolerate the projection to unfold. This may not be easy, being seen as abuser or evil parent and sliding into what is called a transference situation is best handled by experienced therapists. In group sessions this process of projection can lead to embarrassing situations, bringing out emotions that can disturb the group energy. This is why rituals often have a specific format and positioning of the participants, like in the Santo Daime church.

Tools

Actual sex tools and porn are an option, but start more simple. An actual (glass) mirror can be a great tool too. Looking at oneself (and others) during a trip can be a weird experience, one sees strange faces, animals and some traits become exaggerated, frightening sometimes. Using a small candle can make it more intense. It can become a kind of scrying, like looking into a magic ball or crystal. Images appear, sometimes meaningful, often just strange or funny. Having a mirror, a candle, crystals and pictures of art around is a good idea.

Look at a mirror when tripping and you will see amazing thing (the same as when looking into someone else's eyes). You can how your face shows the stress marks, how being relaxed makes you a different person (make a selfie!) and you can explore what you like about yourself, or not. This often has to do with how we look, how we are perceived or we think we are perceived by others, how it affects relationships, or love life. To really look at yourself is a challenge, and do you dare to take your clothes off and assess how you feel about your body? On the other hand, what about not seeing, having eye shades (or ear plugs) so you have to use other senses. That can be amazing, the smell, the taste, the touch, the sound of one's breath, the voice, the sensations you feel when being touched or touch, or when tasting a grape or smelling a perfume are enhanced, the "doors of perception" are not only visual. It's quite an adventure, but in a group you might find out these other senses are in fact what makes you feel attracted to a person, or not. We are animals, but have suppressed most of their tools and gifts.

?The use of psychedelics in therapy can go very far. It is not, however, in practice totally free and open, there are limits to what for instance a licensed therapist may do, especially concerning sex, touching and intimacy.

We could use some more relaxed thinking about this, the whole issue of intimacy as part of therapy is very restricted and taboo. The limits posed by society, specific cultures, the professional ethics and morals on how far one can go are, some claim, are limiting the efficacy of the therapy. This especially as sex is a problematic and a repressed area for many.

These days there is more understanding of how sexual abuse, trauma or limiting morals shapes our lives. One seeks ways to heal this or re-open oneself to what is suppressed, and psychedelics are certainly an option, but there are many other tools and approaches..

There are some general methods like EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) to recall traumatic experiences. The approach and exercises developed in the traditions of the East like in tantra-practice offer, also in psychedelic trips, a way to explore a bit further. Maybe free oneself from past experiences and learn to enjoy life, sex and the body more. In private and between consenting partners, sex and psychedelics is of course a great field for experimentation.

Kundalini, the inner snake, is a well known concept. This snake, 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. There are many Kundalini exercises.

Physical exercise during a trip is not a bad option, feeling where there are problems in one's movements or when getting tired can help locate the underlying causes.

In a trip one can have mystical peak-level experiences, like the unitive state, being one with the all, something related to the heart (chakra). But this kind of experience can happen in all chakras, can be cognitive or very bodily and it can be sexual too. Sexual (self-)exploration in a trip is therefore not only fun, it can bring great insights and liberation and can really improve relationships and solve deep trauma.

Ignoring that by opening up to the deeper layers of one's psyche sexuality will be an issue, is a bit silly. Many traditions, however, including the Santo Daime and all kinds of esoteric schools and religious ashrams, seem to deny the lower chakras or suppress them even more. Honoring

the force of creative energy, which is also associated with sex, in a psychedelic session of course does need serious premeditation, clear guidelines and the establishment of borders for participants and sitters.

Therapeutic protocols and approaches; ACE

There are many ways to assist in a trip, and some are developed as formal protocols, used in scientific research and as a method in “medical” psychedelic therapy. These include the pre- and post-sessions, the preparation and the aftercare, so essential for good integration. The many research projects underway into PTSD therapy and such are aiming at establishing universally applicable protocols. Very useful, if in the public domain, and considering the sometimes very clinical, non ritualistic and “cold” setting of such research. Of course a “tailored” approach is the best, but such protocols can be a good guideline. Some are research oriented, study protocols used by the MAPS, Usona, or EPIsoDE trials or like the Psychedelic Harm Reduction and Integration (PHRI) , but some are broader.

Examples of this are the Blossom¹ Protocol for Psilocybin Assisted Self-Development, the Accept, Connect, Embody, restore (ACEr) therapy developed by Rosalind Watts and the COMPASS Pathway’s psilocybin-assisted therapy program. In ACE one uses guided meditations, live breathwork sessions, reflective discussions, and regular psychedelic integration circles in a more holistic approach.

The problem is that one makes such protocols “proprietary” and even tries to get a patent for such intervention methods, like for “ketamine as behavioural addiction treatment”.

1 https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5f7390dfac8708fbb8e78a8c/5fb9cd79ec09452ffd8ec945_Blossom%20-%20Protocol%20v0.3.pdf

13 Identity and personalities

We all struggle with who we are. Who am I, who is me, why do I react the way I do, why do people react to me like they do, why am I not consistent in my behavior, why do I sense this inner dialogue, why is there this saboteur that obstructs my life at times? Important questions, especially in the context of the inner journey a psychedelic trip offers, but no easy answers.

When we look for help, science has no consistent answer, even though philosophy, psychology and sociology have pondered upon these questions for a long time. It's here that the "sacred" nature of psychedelics comes to the rescue. Not when you only use them as a recreational stimulus or entertainment, at parties or festivals, but in the ritual context aiming at self-discovery, emphasized in this book.

Are we always the same? A serious question and one that is very relevant for most of us when tripping. For that's when we can gain some insight into the identity matrix we have, and for most this means becoming



aware that we have more personalities. A sobering thought, but by realizing that PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) has become more or less a common complaint. Events like the Covid-crisis and the War in Ukraine have left many more of us with severe damage to the inner unity we assume and feel, but is an illusion. PTSD means that traumatizing events in our lives

have left us with such dissociation that what emerged after the trauma is a new person(ality) better protected to deal with the situation but mostly by shutting down certain emotions.

Even as the traditional psychological and medical world has, in things like the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) ordained that to have more than one personality is pathological (DID or Dissociated Identity Disorder, formerly multipersonality) this is

actually an oversight. More than 90% of the people have multiple personalities, more so in the West than in the less “modern” cultures.

Now this sounds like attacking the whole medical establishment, and it is, but there are enough dissenting voices to make this at least an interesting hypothesis and very valuable in understanding what happens during a psychedelic trip, when we can face how split up we really are. This is not a pathological condition, but something quite common.

Self-discovery might mean selves-discovery

One of the real fascinating aspects of the self-discovery journey facilitated by a psychedelic substance ingestion is the realization that one can drop one’s mask, let go of the personality we normally think we are and explore how it is to live, feel, experience and relate outside of that prison, outside the narrative we believe we are. We may discover that the self-image we have is not consistent and permanent, but that we can and actually do switch between selves (personalities). We are not normally aware of this, but usually people that know us well will confirm this, they may call it moods, or states, but they notice a change in behavior, in the voice, in the energy.

A psychedelic state (but also regression, deep meditation, special circumstances) may help to enter what could be called the “soul”state, sometimes indicated as the “inner child”state, the higher self, the core, unconscious, there are many and often ambiguous labels.

Are we always the same? Is this sense of a unified, stable self that we experience as essential, really justified? Most of the time, we don’t even consider that we are not always the same, we might have heard about multiple personality as a syndrome, as a disease, but this doesn’t apply to us, we are ourselves! Our self is stable and consistent, there is no question in our minds (and in those of most of the scientific and medical world) that there is just one “me”.

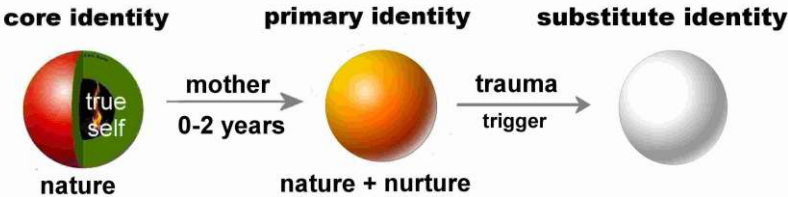
Alas, not true, for most of us. Our response to traumatic incidents can have been to dissociate so extreme as to create a new personality, better able to deal with the situation. I want to make clear this is true for most of us. It’s mostly not a pathological condition. Some 90% or more of the people have this, although the medical professionals and the DSM-V still talk about this as a mental disease.

So I claim, and this is based on extensive traveling in the inner worlds with the help of my friends, the best guides (Leary, McKenna, Shulgin) that this view of people being one and whole is actually not true, we all

have a matrix of identities (of which a personality is the expression). This observation (or hypothesis) is very relevant in the context of “tripping”, self-discovery and psychological and psychiatric therapy, but not part of the scientific canon (yet) and only seen as a pathological state in DSM-5¹ terms.

The problem is that none of us is just one self, we all have at least one true self (soul, inner child), the mostly hidden core of our being and then another self, the one developed in our first years, in interaction with parents and environment, usually mostly the mother. In that period we build up a defense system, traits and ways of manipulation to get what we wanted (food, attention, love), We slowly moved from an identification with the mother to an identification with this constructed self and became convinced this was our real self, the me that is always present. The resulting personality became our ego, the way we see ourselves in relation to others. In Freudian terms there is then the id and the parents remain present in our psychological structure as super-ego. But in a simple perspective, there is then the original (core, soul) identity and the created identity we could call the normal, dominant personality, some would call this the true and the false self.

But the story of how our identity developed doesn’t always end there. In most people the traumatic challenges they encounter are dealt with by dissociation, by creating an additional identity that is able to deal with the trauma.



Substitute identity formation

One of the important statements in this book, compared with most current views (see appendix for a more academic view) is the proposition

1 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*

that we can have more identities, that we can develop substitute identities (which are the root of our personalities) beyond the dominant (primary) one from our childhood. There are people with just a core and a primary identity, but they are a minority. Many of us (and more so in the West) will have developed additional identities because of significant events and traumatic experiences.

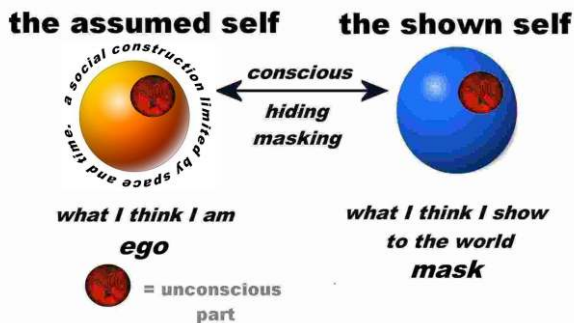
We all thus have at least a core (inner, innate, higher self identity) and one primary identity, but life (in traumatizing circumstances) sometimes forces us to check out, escape a threatening situation by developing a new identity, a substitute for the one unable to handle the situation. Sometimes even more substitute identities form, when we encounter new traumatizing events. Some people have 3, 4 or even 10 substitute identities, in pathological cases even more, but it need to be stressed that having more (multiple) identities is quite common and not pathological. An important message of this book is this substitute identity model to explain the possibility that you may have more self-states, more ways to deal with the world, people, stress and love than you normally realize, but will probably encounter in teh trip.

If this is the case for you, this is not an easy message to digest, as we experience our selves as a continuum, as a single identity. The person you see in the mirror is always 'ME', a singular person, and it is hard to accept that you are maybe looking at a complex of multiple self-states; each convinced they are the one and only me.

More me's

Now a specific personality is not a clear cut and simple set. What you show to the world is even more complex, a mask that adapts to continuously changing

conditions, goals, moods, roles. In many people such a multiplication of the "me" is present, but not always very manifest or noticeable. While this may not be apparent to yourself, others may notice it. We believe we are the same all the time, but people around you may see you behave different. They will probably know more 'YOU's' or at least recognize

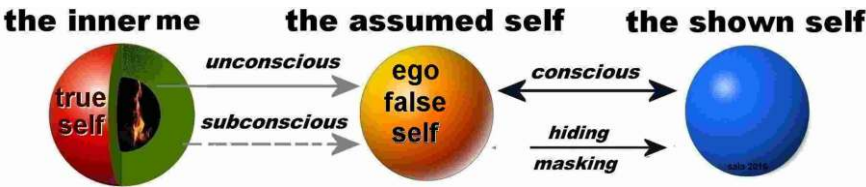


your moods and masks, and will even treat you in an appropriate manner, without telling you.

The substitute identity model is developed that deals with these additional “me’s”. It expands the simple model of how identity, self and masks work together with what we call substitute identities. This existence of multiple identities is a phenomenon that runs through this book as the yellow brick road.

We develop additional identities when confronted with such dire and traumatic situations that our normal (dominant) identity is unable to handle. We check out (dissociate) and form a new identity to deal with it. This new identity is a substitute for what we were before. It may remain dominant for a while, but sooner or later becomes dormant, showing up again at a later time.

Not all people develop such substitute identities (multiple personalities) The simple model with just a core and a primary identity explained earlier applies to people who have not had to experience such traumatizing events. They may have experienced significant events but were able to deal with those and integrate them. Even what are usually considered to traumatic experiences, for them may not have been so traumatizing to lead to a substitute identity. This doesn’t mean they didn’t notice them, but the trauma processing was more gradual and less of a shock. Not all dramatic events can be considered traumatizing, or not all dramatic



experiences can be considered traumatic.

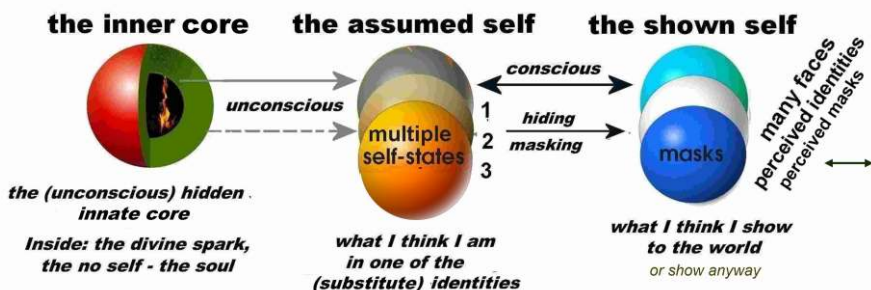
Some people can deal with adverse situations in a such a way, that they don’t have to push their experience away into unconscious memory layers, but give them a place in their development, learn from it and grow more naturally. This is learning from each experience, which is indicated as normal differentiation or conversion.

A substitute takes over totally, it is not inferior or a part, it is on the same hierarchical level, but of course is not always the dominant identity, it comes into play when triggered. A substitute is not a mask, it is

not the stage personality or image one puts out, those are conscious masks and each identity can have more of such masks, depending on the situation.

New (substitute) identities thus emerge in situations, where traumatization is experienced to such a degree that people can't handle them and have to resort to such intense dissociation, that a new identity is formed. I call such a new identity or self-state a substitute identity, as it (temporarily) takes the place of the then dominant identity. Substitute identities emerge at all ages, when a traumatic experience is so intense, that the dominant identity at the time is unable to cope with the situation. Some people are more prone to develop them, genetically or because of the environment and childhood situation. Once an extra identity has been formed, there is increased predisposition for having even more substitute

The subjective self dimension in the Substitute Identity Model
 in a situation where there are more substitutes and thus self-states



We can have more identities or self-states than one

identities. Substitutes can emerge from other substitute identities, if these are dominant at the time. This means a whole network of identities can emerge.

We can, just as we did in the formation of our primary identity (in interaction with the mother or care givers) slowly develop a substitute identity. If we put on a mask and play it out many times, we not only iden-

The message here (in computer speak) is that you may have more software programs running on your hardware (your body and brain).

who am I today



tify with it, but slowly internalize it, till it becomes a true substitute identity. A good example is how performers often develop a more or less artificial stage personality but then identify so strongly with it, that after a while it really becomes a separate identity. The sad and depressed clown who, when on stage, is a happy comedian is a classic. The strong interaction with the audience and the environment plays a role

here. The same happens with people following a spiritual or ascetic discipline, they fake it till they make it! This is then not the result of a single trauma, but of prolonged identification.

Triggers and activation

We usually don't remember the original situation that caused the emergence of the substitute, as the memories are repressed, but somehow retained as implicit body memory and in our unconscious mind. The substitute identities will reach the surface and become activated and dominant because of triggers that resonate with the original experiences. The triggers that activate a substitute personality can be sensations or remarks by someone, a situation or a detail of a situation that resembles the traumatizing event. The activation is thus involuntary, the substitute becomes dominant without one normally noticing it, but once recognized (as an independent state of identity) can be somewhat controlled. In ritual and shamanistic practice it seems possible to more or less control or guide one's state (of identity) or cause the core identity to surface.

This **substitute identity model** is, admittedly, not more than a model, but derived from practical interaction with many people and validated in therapy. It does explain a lot of psychological phenomena.

A sub-personality is not a substitute

Here it is necessary to make a distinction between sub-personality and substitute personality (which is the actual behavioral expression of a substitute identity). A sub-personality (a word used in various schools in somewhat different ways, see appendix) is a subordinate level, a part of a personality. Identity conflicts and identity state switches

There is always a dominant identity, the one we experience (assume) as self, but it is not the same all the time (for those with substitute identities). We can switch or flip between the identities and this can happen more often if we have substitute identities that are activated easily and come into play because of some trigger situation.

There are also people, where the substitute identity or identities are so dormant, that no adverse effects will ever surface. They are the ones with substitute identities that are seldom or never activated (becoming dominant). If someone is like that, usually the same as in being the same identity more than 95% of the time, there are usually less problems, but be aware, in certain conditions even such an identity may be triggered! Often this happens later in life, and this is why looking at earlier traumas may then be the way to find out what causes illnesses and problems.

PTSD

Especially in the Western world and the US, where stress, competition and lack of social cohesion impacts the emergence of substitute identities, a majority of the people do have multiple identities. I estimate, based on our analysis and work with people, but supported by the high incidence of PTSD, maybe up to 90% in the US, which in itself is alarming, the incidence is less in more traditional and cohesive cultures. Large scale traumas like the CoVid crisis, may cause a dramatic increase in PTSD. This doesn't mean they all suffer from this condition, in many cases it doesn't affect their normal life. When a substitute identity is rarely activated, it may not substantially affect our life and health, but when it pops up 10-20% of the time, it may become more of a factor in daily life. Others will notice substitute identities more easily than one-self does, they will maybe call it moods or at least notice and maybe wonder why you act differently.

The various identities are obviously different, as they emerge as a means to deal with situations the dominant identity can't handle, even as they are usually limiting, for instance shutting out certain emotions. They can manifest with different intelligence, traits, sexual orientation, the voice, the behavior patterns, and also in the body. Specific diseases are often connected with a specific identity. They are functional, they serve a purpose, protecting the integrity of a person. The difference between the identities, like that certain emotions are skipped, is a cause of internal conflict later, at conscious and unconscious levels. Those conflicts between identities, which are always potentially there, are at first sup-

pressed and not noticed, but usually becomes more visible later in life, and may then manifest as discomfort, sleeplessness, depressions, mental disorders and worse.

The classic symptoms of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), which in many if not most cases have to do with substitute identity formation, are well known, but identity conflicts could be the cause of many more problems, mental and somatic (in the body). The notion of identity conflicts as the root cause of health issues is impor-



tant, as it goes beyond the normal medical approach of just dealing with symptoms and not looking at the underlying causes. Dealing with the identity conflicts might be a far more effective and fundamental way to deal with health issues that just prescribing drugs to relieve symptoms. Identity conflicts are basically mental conflicts, but they play out in the body too, in many ways. The mind seems to open a gate for adverse impulses, infections, immune system disturbances, environmental damage, so at the bodily level something may go wrong, with symptoms like depression but eventually disorders.

We will, mostly unconsciously and involuntary, flip from the one identity to the other, and this can be triggered (activated) by perceptual cues or even thoughts, related to what caused the substitute identity in the first place (drugs can be a factor in this). And one can also go back to the previous identity. Such identity switches are well studied in the case of DID (Dissociated Identity Disorder) but happen in many more people, not diagnosed or suffering from this.

These changes normally happen involuntary, but can be induced too, in this context with psychedlics, but also with therapy, shamanistic practices, hypnosis, alcohol, drugs of any kind. Just seeing a specific object, smelling something, thinking about a memory or situation can bring one into another identity, and this can be a tool to deal with negative situations. The memory of a positive experience, looking at a particular photo, listening to specific music, or using some meditative anchor (breath, imagery) can help.

This ‘intentional identity shift’ of the trip, where opening up to the core, or dissolving the ego are well known experiences, opens the possibility to use such more or less conscious changes of identity as therapy (and apply this in daily life). There are a number of therapeutic approaches (hypnosis, regression, body work, EMDR, certain drug-combinations) to call forward certain identities, make them the dominant one, and then try to heal the adverse influence or conflicts.

Bringing people back to the core identity is a good approach and can be fairly effective in respect to understanding one’s matrix of identities, not only the core but also to see how the others function. In that core state (some would call this the inner child state) the normal boundaries and limitations of identities become fluent and one can see them for what they are, different states of being, different selfhoods. There are certain drugs (especially psychedelic substances) that help bring one to the core identity and one’s essence, but using meditation, hypnosis etc. is also a possibility.

This can help to really see and recognize one’s own substitute identities and integrate them (or at least diminish their negative impact). Becoming aware of the substitute identities, seeing how and why they function and formed is a major step in dealing with their effects. Accepting their ‘help’ as a function in situations of distress is a good step towards healing.

Finding out what the triggers are that make one step into a specific identity, can be a help in preventing switches and understanding the underlying root experiences. Understanding who you really are and why you behave in specific ways is an important step in dealing with the adverse effects.

The switch

The shift from one identity to another can happen unnoticed and very quick, but sometimes the switch isn’t that fast and easy, a person gets into an in-between state. Vacillating between the then competing (for dominance) identities this can be very unnerving, making one uncertain and this lack of a fixed identity can lead to pathological conditions. It is possible, and part of the substitute identity concept, that this is the root of many mental disorders. Not knowing who one is, the lack of the sense of selfhood in such situation can lead to what is labeled as psychotic, but

Experience : the distorted mirror of self

Do not go out to a busy place or wander into a crowd when on your first trip. 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. You will need all your attention to see and experience what goes on inside, so even crossing a street becomes difficult. Driving a car or being in traffic becomes dangerous, for yourself and others. And you can get in serious trouble, picking up the energy of the next bystander.

I noticed that when 'high' I would attract dangerous situations. I seem to get attracted to or attract the things I fear. 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. My obsessions seem to materialize before my eyes. When wandering into a

can also lead to looking for solutions, like using narcotics to alleviate the sense of being lost and this might be one of the roots of addiction.

Each identity is unique and different

It is important to realize, that one is really a different person in each identity. An identity develops as a reaction to specific circumstances, where specific characteristics are required and become part of the identity (and thus the personality). Each (substitute) identity not only has specific and identifiable emotional characteristics, but even bodily functions like blood pressure, heart beat, pH and epigenetic tags will show distinctive patterns. We will use the same hardware but with a different software operating program. Patterns in our voice, listening abilities, handedness (left/right), visual acuity, word use, spelling mistakes, typing speed and handwriting are just a few of the markers, but in our body there are many more. In short, our biological signature changes are specific to each identity. That even things like intelligence (IQ) and sexual orientation can be different for different identities goes very much against the classical psychological insights, but offers explanations for otherwise difficult cases.

The difference between the core and the substitutes

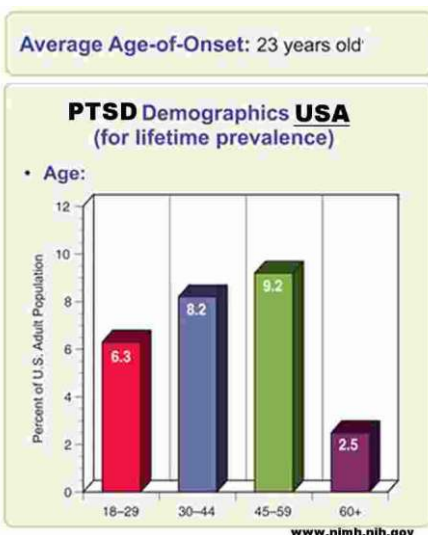
There is a fundamental difference between our identities, in the sense that the core (inborn) identity, while developing over time and with experience, has more of a timeless quality, a tendency towards wholeness

and a certain resilience. In the background it remains present and on course. Even if we don't go into the layers and structure of this core identity, leaving that to others who are writing about inner child, wounded child and the soul, it is the identity, which contains all the potential and has no 'ego' of its own. The core has the quality of being able to aim for and approach "completeness" while the substitute identities are more of a guiding and learning tool (a function) to aid the core in its quest for completeness. People who have learned to access this core identity, and not many have this capability, acquire authenticity, they are felt as 'real people', the Germans call them 'Mensch', fully human. Some would call this 'realized' or 'enlightened' or 'holy' but this ignores that this state is not meant to be permanent. We have the ego and our 'formed' identities too, which can be seen as the teaching mode and just as important and necessary as the core. Trying to be always in that 'core' (inner child) mode is futile, even as we see many aspiring and identifying to this as a 'holy' state, but just look behind the veil.

Incidence and consequences of Substitute Identities

It needs to be emphasized that not everybody has (multiple) substitute identities. We estimate in the USA some 7-10% has just a (mostly hidden) core identity and only one primary identity, which is then the dominant and visible identity. For another 40-50% of the people the substitutes are so dormant, that they have little effect on daily behavior and how a person is perceived, but on the intuitive level we seem to be very sensitive to 'real' or 'authentic' people without hidden agendas, with only a single mask; we intuitively see them as more trustworthy.

The ones with only one visible identity thus have some advantages, in dealing with others and also because they are usually healthier and less confused about who they are. We often will intuitively recognize and go along with the people with only a single mask, they often have careers in



sales or politics. People like Donald Trump, who we think has only one visible (primary) identity, are often recognized as not having a hidden agenda. They are (sometimes irrationally) more trusted and liked than people with more, multiple identities.

Once one becomes aware of the existence of such single-mask people, they are not hard to recognize, their faces often show a higher symmetry, they come across as more beautiful, more composed, less twisted. Symmetry, averageness and youthfulness are considered the important characteristics in aesthetics and physical attractiveness, with the genetics of a person as the root of their looks, but the difference in beauty between siblings is often very distinct, the development of their identity matrix (nurture not nature) plays a role here. There is also the culture and ethnic factor, beauty characteristics are not uniform. The development of a person and thus their character type shows in their faces, also in the aging of the face. Males with more symmetric faces in old age have higher intelligence and are more efficient at information processing than males with less symmetric faces. The people with beautiful faces (and thus likely a single mask) also tend to have more 'open' and extrovert faces, less lines and some inner strength and self confidence that shows. Another marker is that they often have identical lines in their left and right hands (palmistry).

There are ethical considerations here. It's not politically correct to say this, but single mask people may have an advantage in life, career and in relationships and usually are in better shape and live longer and healthier than the rest of us.

The notion, that people with a more complex identity matrix are distinctly different in the way they experience life and are seen as less trustworthy or even less healthy happy, well-being and with a shorter life-expectancy, is a very tricky one, and hard to defend in the light of non discriminatory political correctness. And there are many factors that play a role, like of course for here the number and differentiation of the substitutes, the incidence of them surfacing and a myriad of other consideration play a role. But the reality of things like a lower life expectancy (telomere degradation) as found in veterans, the resonance between PTSD incidence and a trauma-ridden culture and many other circumstantial pointers are too obvious to be ignored. Resonance doesn't mean causality, but here an interesting field of research opens.

The incidence of having substitute identities is more prevalent in the modern, Western societies. The more traditional and indigenous societies have far less substitute identities (the PTSD incidence in the various countries is a good indicator here, see the chapter 19 about PTSD). In societies where competition and individualism is less prevalent, there is obviously less stress, more support and hence less chance of traumatic experiences. People there learn to deal with stress in a more resilient way. This may be related to better family or tribal cohesion, initiation or ritual (including psychedelic initiations) and maybe to the religious stance, the closeness to nature, lack of stress in childhood and education, but does seem to affect happiness beyond material wealth.

14 Chakras and personality type: drugs of choice

It is good to notice that the effects and direction of a trip with a specific substance may be quite different for different people. To get the best, safest or most effective results for different people would require different substances, dosage and sometimes combinations. This is because of weight, digestion, sensitivity or simply because of one's mood, but also because of your specific character, your personality type (dominant identity). The active substances influence your personal filters, your defense mechanisms and ego barriers. To pick the right drug depends on the purpose and goals one has, and availability is usually limited. One has to look at the set and setting, what problems need addressing, and for what purpose like healing, balancing, experiencing mystical states, learning about oneself, just fun and dance, sex etc..

The perceived experiences in a trip are very subjective, but as there are similarities, a number of effects and experiences kind of repeat, this can be systematized and generalized and be used as a guideline for advice on the most optimal drug or combination and dosage.

Choosing the right substance or combination of substances for a given person, group or event is more of an art than a science. You can decide this based on previous experiences, but this is not always the best optimal choice.

Each substance has a more or less specific focus. Not much has been written about this, so here we outline some approaches that may be helpful. We first classify the substances based on where in the body, on which organs a specific drug has the most effect and then go into what your personality can tell you about your drug of choice.

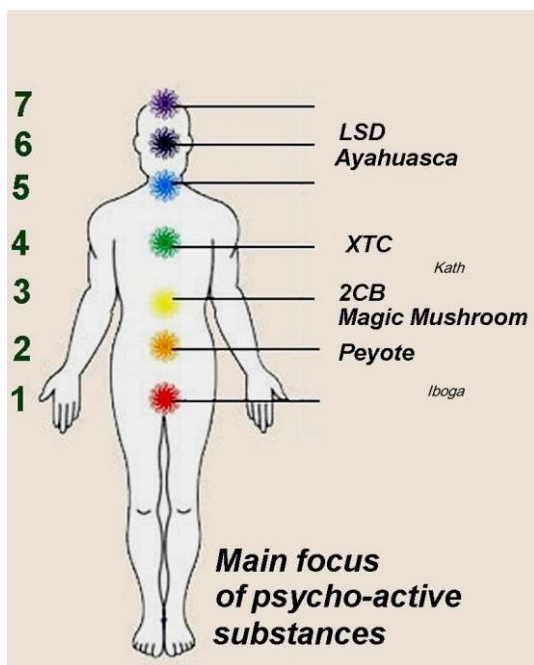
Chakras

Here we give a picture related to the chakra model, roughly indicating which energy centers (chakras) are mostly affected by the various drugs. For good therapy it is best to pick a substance active in an area that is blocked, closed, or underdeveloped. For instance, if one has trouble showing or feeling emotions, opening the heart with MDMA might be a good approach. On the other hand, being over-emotional might ask for a more cerebral understanding and then LSD is a better choice. Mush-

rooms and peyote open up the lower chakras, also good for fun and sex, while 2CB influences the solar plexus, and helps making decisions and brings insight about one's ability to bring changes. Iboga is a (very heavy) trip down memory lane offering existential insights, it's mostly working on the first chakra. This chakra scheme is not the only possible approach, but a very workable one.

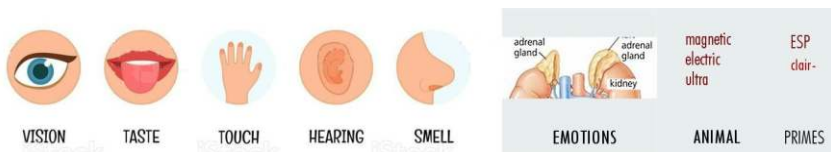
The results are not surprising; XTC is a heart chakra drug, LSD a mind opening one, peyote acts somewhere between the second

and third chakra, 2CB effects somewhat higher. Most people will agree with these general remarks, but to use the resonance between a person's inclination (trauma/drive) and a specific drug is not common practice. Also with most drugs you can make a conscious effort to explore a specific issue, like raising the kundalini energy along the spinal column. Most people know they have a drug of choice, something that gives them the best experience, the least side- or after-effects or hangover, the best visuals or the most mystical insights. Please note that one can choose to go with or against a tendency, just having fun in the most common mode is different from finding out why a certain mode is hard to reach. Careful observation of a person, the body language, physical clues and tendencies offers some insight as what the best choice can be. This might actually not be the person's own choice. An example is people having (often not diagnosed) liver problems preferring ayahuasca tripping, which is not very friendly to the liver but gives great visions. They come back again and again, to watch the 'inner cinema' of colors and imagery but unfortunately damage their liver....



More senses than five

In a psychedelic session we often become aware that not only our normal senses are enhanced and are much more sensitive than we normally experience, but other senses become active too. These are always there

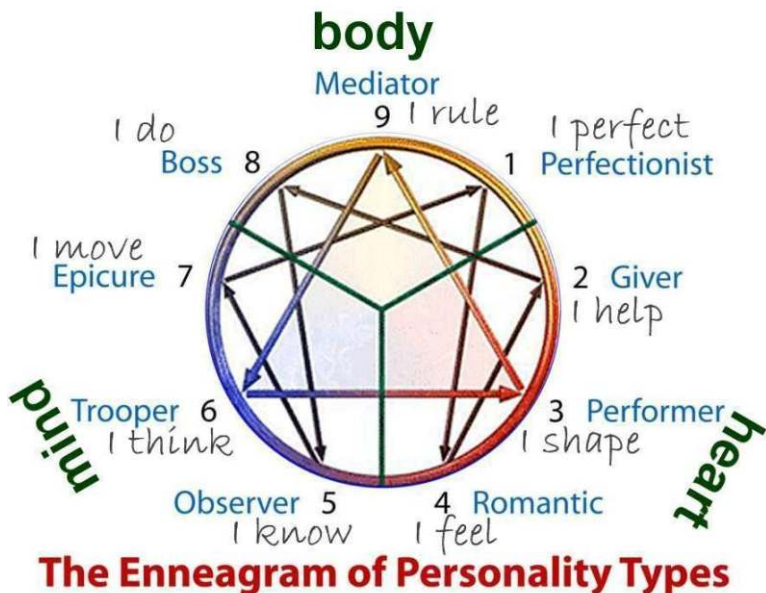


and even go beyond things like feeling magnetic fields, earth energy or sensing other people's emotions with our adrenals (the emotion ears) and can be seen as ESP (extra sensory perception) or magical and mystical capabilities. They do make the trip experience extraordinary, that's for sure. Seeing how animals and plants radiate energy, feeling sounds, hearing visions, sensing colors, the sensory mix can take all kinds of forms.

Personality types, drugs of choice

There is usually a drug one likes the most, the 'ally' because it aligns with the personality, and one that is the best lesson, because it attacks exactly that personality and mask. In a ritual setting the second option would be the drug of choice, but for having fun and not digging too deep the other one works better. The general lesson is that not every drug fits everybody, that one drug is the most enjoyable, and there is another drug that will be best for self exploration and reprogramming. This last drug, the one most effective in (self-)therapy, may not be the easiest; it should be the most challenging, addressing parts in you that need some work. One can say that there is a best 'teacher' drug and a best 'fun' or the 'ally' drug. The ally helps you to enjoy, to achieve what you superficially want but without the hard work, it only helps to do what your ego-state (the assumed or known self) does best.

The chakra classification can help you to choose an appropriate drug, geared to your personality type and purpose of the trip, but here there are other ways to look at it. Although everybody is unique and different, there are several ways to group and classify people. Profiling is a modern term for that, the ayurvedic classification in kapha, pitta and vata is much older. Astrology, Jungian typology, Myers-Briggs, there are a many such personality typologies, some very detailed, but an easy one is



to divide people in head, heart and body types, each with their own traits (the Enneagram approach). Understanding this scheme can help you to understand why others, also during a trip, behave differently.

We usually have one dominant type of behavior and thus personality (assumed self or ego) but often there are more self states. These are not really sub-personalities but clearly distinguishable moods and behavior patterns, often the result of traumatic experiences and thus material to look at in a trip. Apart from that there is a core, a deep self or I, everybody has such an inner child self state, even as we seldom notice that (in dreams, tripping and sex we are getting closer).

Psychedelics can help you to enter the inner child self-state, letting go of the mask(s). That allows to realize how this illusion that you think you are (your assumed self or ego) functions. You will kind of see through the masks, and recognize the ways you normally hide, fake and play games.

Coming back to types, exploring your focus in a trip can be a rewarding exercise. If you happen to be a head type, somebody who is always concerned (thinking) about what can happen, then the trip can 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 disarming this 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. These types will easily get access to the very deep layers, where mystical experiences and the feeling of oneness are within reach.

In the enneagram you can be extrovert, introvert or in denial. It is thus 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, over-compensating the lack of contact with the body by jogging, workouts, or aerobics.

Combining the chakra idea with this, it makes sense that a head type (brainer) maybe like LSD, but may benefit more from ecstasy or mushrooms. An overactive type (using motion to deal with emotion) may benefit from a heart drug, but should not take them at a festival but in a quiet space. Phlegmatic types on the other hand can use a stimulant and engage with others, experiencing a different mode and self state. Control types, the ones who have a hard time going along with the drug because they are fearful (thinking) can use ecstasy, if they are anxious (emotional worry) a body drug like peyote will work better.

Who is there, self states?

The whole personality story has one flaw; we are not always the same person. This has been dealt with in a previous chapter, but should be mentioned here again. Almost everybody has, in order to deal with different situations and resulting from various traumas, more self states.

Can we let go of our ego in the trip?



The word sub-personalities is too strong, but indicate that these self states are like masks one wears. There is usually a dominant mask, but given the triggers and the situation one may switch. This happens involuntarily and mostly not conscious, although others usually notice another mood, another mask you wear. These masks are like different software programs running on the same hardware, the body. They are not the same, each mask is an identity and can have a different intelligence, social intelligence, sexual orientation, voice, facial expression, etc. Even the bodily functions like heart-beat, blood pressure and the whole hormone balance can shift. Each self-state thus is a different ego, a different mask. This phenomenon of multiple identities is not well understood by the medical profession, but plays a role in how a trip evolves. From what ego do you step away, what mask is dropping and in therapeutic sessions, what traumas and situations related to what self-state are you dealing with or are you going to tackle. The strife between identities at the psychological level may even have repercussion on a cell-identity epigenetic level. Very often diseases are the result of a specific self-state/identity and the underlying traumatic root-experiences and problems; dealing with that specific state is the path to healing. In a deep and transformative trip one can realize, recognize and integrate these masks. Maybe it is good to discuss the possibility of multiple masks/identities before with the sitter and some people who know you and can help to pinpoint them. Very often people know you have certain moods, or modes, like for work, in helping others, when dealing with authorities, etc.

Drug classification and PSI-matrix: a comparison

As a guideline for what the various substances do, we give a list of substances and their effects, called the psi-matrix (PSYchedelic Indicator). It was drawn up to clarify and identify the various effects and checked with many people, among them Sasha Shulgin, about the general validity; individual effects can vary.

It is basically a comparison of various psychedelic substances. Somewhat like the periodical system of chemical elements this matrix ranks psychedelic substances according to their effects or dimensions. It is based on separating and outlining the various emotions and effects, still a subjective classification, but useful to compare the various substances.

PSI matrix: a comparison of psychedelics

*comparing C: Cannabis, E: MDMA-XTC, A: Ayahuasca, L: LSD, P: Mushrooms
M Mescaline, K Ketamine, A: Alcohol*

<u>Entheogen qualities</u>	C 30,	E 64,	A 40,	L 66,	P 68,	M 30,	K neg,	Al 24
Oceanic/mystical	C 20,	E 45,	A 65,	L 55,	P 50,	M30,	K 90,	Al 8
<u>Empathogen</u>	C 17,	E 60,	A 25,	L 16,	P 35,	M 42,	K 12,	Al 35
Stimulant	C 8,	E 48,	A 15,	L 27,	P 36,	M 70,	K 10	Al 65
Hallucinogen	C 34,	E 15,	A 75,	L 55,	P 68,	M 40,	K 85	Al 5
Visual effects open eyes	C 17,	E 18,	A 25,	L 40,	P 35,	M 22,	K 77	Al 28
Auditory effects	C 37,	E 30,	A 20,	L 45,	P 70,	M 47,	K 10	Al 15
Olfactory effects	C 25,	E 20,	A 17,	L 25,	P 25,	M 24,	K 35	Al 15
<u>Kinesthetic effects (tactile)</u>	C 25,	E 40,	A 25,	L 45,	P 35,	M 15,	K 80	Al 40
<u>Sensory effects (arousal/sexual)</u>	C 56,	E 25,	A 18,	L 37,	P 60,	M 40,	K 12	Al 40
Clairvoyance	C 4	E 10,	A 22,	L 34,	P 46,	M 36,	K 60	Al 12
Oracle quality	C 25,	E 30,	A 47,	L 62,	P 38,	M 28,	K 80	Al 26
Magic quality Q10enz=66	C 35,	E 20,	A 30,	L 30,	P 36,	M 43,	K 16	Al 13
Body awareness self	C 15,	E 45,	A 50,	L 60,	P 42,	M 28,	K 60	Al 40
Body awareness others	C 28,	E 60,	A 30,	L 24,	P 56,	M 22,	K 8	Al 60
Lifting boundaries/psych armor	C 25,	E 85,	A 55,	L 24,	P 38,	M 20,	K 2	Al 18
Ego dissolution	C 10,	E 18,	A 25,	L 10,	P 13,	M 22,	K 77	Al 8
Out of Body potential	C 16,	E 26,	A 40,	L 20,	P 23,	M 18,	K 46	Al 10
Suggestibility	C 28,	E 55,	A 13,	L 28,	P 25,	M 54,	K 2	Al 64
Reality assessment; driving etc.	C 20,	E 65,	A 6,	L 30,	P 25,	M 47,	K 2	Al 5
<u>Dose (for adult 80 kg/170 pnd)</u>	C 8 Thc,	E 125,	A --,	L 0,0,	P 35 pure,	M 55		
Onset (timescale relative)	C 4/75,	E 70,	A 30,	L 55,	P 40,	M 25,	K 30	Al 18
Peaking (time)	C 10/85,	E 90,	A 70,	L 70,	P 55,	M 80,	K 150	Al 55
Duration of plateau	C 22,	E 45,	A 80,	L 58,	P 40,	M 45,	K 90	Al 25
Duration of altered sensation	C 43,	E 70,	A 110,	L 75,	P 50,	M 38,	K 140	Al 27
Duration of mood C <u>hange</u>	C 68,	E 35,	A 90,	L 15,	P 35,	M 60,	K 60	Al 40
Physical discomforts (onset)	C 10,	E 26,	A 100,	L 60,	P 60,	M 38,	K 25	Al 4
Risk of addiction	C 66,	E 30,	A 15,	L 10,	P 45,	M 66,	K 120	Al 70

This matrix gives the characteristics and dimensions of various psychedelic substances (C=Cannabis, E= Ecstasy MDMA, A=Ayahuasca, L=LSD, P=Psilocybin, M=Mescaline, K=Ketamine, Al = alcohol as a

Positive mood effects after 24 hrs	C 16,	E 68,	A 50,	L 16,	P 72,	M 4,	K 26	Al 8
Negative mood effects after 24hrs	C 42,	E 12,	A posit,	L 15,	P 27,	M 65,	K 17	Al 60
Positive body effects (healing) 24h	C 20,	E 15,	A 45,	L 8,	P 30,	M 15,	K 8	Al 12
Negative body effects/exhaust 24h	C 25,	E 34,	A 4,	L 18,	P 36,	M 45,	K 45	Al 45
Effect on heart	C 35,	E 18,	A 50,	L 58,	P 35,	M 27,	K 70	Al 14
Effect on liver (negative)	C 4,	E 20,	A 70,	L 12,	P 55,	M 39,	K 15	Al 70
Use as psychotherapeutic tool	C 45,	E 85,	A 30,	L 53,	P 40,	M 20,	K 5	
Booster effect (same dose 3 hrs)	C 60,	E 70,	A 55,	L 14,	P 30,	M 20,	K 35	
Effect on brain, memory (negative)	C 32,	E 44,	A 25,	L 37,	P 58,	M 28,	K 32	
Effect on pancreas (negative)	C 30,	E 15,	A 37,	L 28,	P 19,	M 16,	K 26	Al 50
Effect on kidneys (negative)	C 14,	E 28,	A 42,	L 18,	P 20,	M 20,	K 36	Al 60
Food sensitivity general	C 12,	E 25,	A 65,	L 5,	P 25,	M 23,	K 4	Al 25
Food sensitivity to MAO	C 20,	E 30,	A 80,	L 12,	P 70,	M 16,	K 2	Al 3
Food sensitivity to protein	C 12,	E 8,	A 35,	L 8,	P 25,	M 15,	K 3	Al 10
Chakra 7	C 22	E 23	A 16	L 20	P 47			
Chakra 6	C 65	E 44	A 70	L 58	P 34			
Chakra 5	C 77	E 55	A 24	L 30	P 64			
Chakra 4	C 70	E 35	A 57	L 30	P 30			
Chakra 3	C 48	E 20	A 24	L 30	P 35			
Chakra 2	C 28	E 27	A 29	L 66	P 40			
Chakra 1	C 15	E 3	A 65	L 25	P 32			

reference) in a relative numerical relation (1-100, some exceptions). The values are not absolute. They are indicative, general and approximate values, individual experiences might vary. These data are given as an indication, for research and scientific purposes more validation is necessary.

15 Festivals, raves, party, clubbing

In ancient Greece each year hundreds of people, sometimes thousands, participated in the rituals of the Eleusinian Mystery-school and most probably ingested some substance, but this was still a select elite. In most cultures the use of these substances remained restricted to a small group, to priests or shamans and was often a secret ritual for only initiates. The widespread use of substances (except alcohol) is relatively new, these days at music and pop festivals many people use something to get is high. Estimates range from 15% to 60% at some events and across the age-groups.

This by itself is not so alarming, times do change, there were times that at public festivities everybody was drunk, and a festival is maybe a safer place than Mardi-Gras. In general drugs are part of modern life, but far less than generally assumed. The Dutch CBS (national statistics) indicates that among youngsters (under 19) XTC has been used by 3,9%, cocaine by 1,2%, speed 1,2% but, not surprisingly, 8,2% smoked pot in the last month.

Festivalization

The broader festivals and group events like pilgrimages have always existed and were usually related to some religious purpose, connected to nature and the sky as in seasonal festivals, and even sports events like the original Greek Olympics were in honor of the gods.

These days the religious focus is gone, there are all kinds of meets, festivals, raves. All through the year one can find something to attend, catering to one's needs and desires and in the summer there are mass events like Burning Man or Boom and the large music festivals with headline bands. In fact the whole festival business is becoming a major industry, ranging from the super large music events to the small gatherings of kindred spirits in nature.

These events officially don't provide or condone drugs, apart from alcohol, energy drinks with taurine, and maybe tobacco. The other substances or drinks were and are illegal, considered unhealthy and evil, leading to moral degradation and what not. The reality is that the use of stimulating, liberating, reality escaping and consciousness altering drugs is widespread. Millions of people each weekend go to festivals, clubs and meet-ups where they take some pills, smoke or snort something and



On big festivals, the sense of oneness and tribal revival is there, but also much use of drugs (Burning Man)

have made this part of their normal weekend routine. Normally this works out fine, but there are accidents; some pills contain the wrong components, too much or too little of the active ingredient, some people overdose or can't handle it.

In general the number of incidents is very small, much smaller than when alcohol is at play. The few

casualties or adverse situations do make it into the media and are often used as propaganda against the use of drugs, but statistically most of these 'drugs' are relatively safe.

The event organizers are aware of what happens, even if they publicly deny this, display 'no drugs' signs, have (ineffective) control at the entrance and play 'legal'. In reality many festivals have dedicated spaces for helping 'lost' users in trouble, facilitate testing and are looking out for vulnerable people. Usually there are at least chill-out rooms and often sanctuaries. 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. Larger festivals have sometimes very extensive harm reduction facilities, there are organizations like Kosmicare UK that provide excellent service, working with well trained staff and peer-level volunteers, good protocols and medical back-up. Having police on the premises is, according to some experts, not a good idea. The attendees spotting uniforms and dogs will maybe swallow their whole supply of pills and overdose situations emerge.

The availability of harm reduction facilities and chill-out lounges in itself diminishes the anxiety and the need for assistance. Even as the authorities sometimes don't want to support such harm reduction programs (why help druggies!) one of the nice aspects of most of these drugs is that they make the atmosphere a bit more social and people look out for each other. Alcohol, speed and cocaine, on the other hand, do have an adverse and antisocial effect and may lead to serious aggression and problems, but the psychedelics rarely cause group-mind problems. The

only problem might be that people start to doubt the prevailing paradigms of society, become politically aware and critical, which the status-quo folks see as a danger.

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 driving cars, waiting for busses in the cold for hours or having to cross unsafe places and neighborhoods.

Why are people going?

Do you just want to escape, dance the whole night and borrow some energy from your own future? Then the party drugs, the uppers, the XTC, the energy boosters, the speed or even cocaine probably are there. With XTC the problem is that after a few hours and more pills the empathogen effects are gone, and the stimulants keep working, early in the morning you see the dancers still moving, but without the liveness and community closeness from before.

Using something is also nice and even necessary as an antidote against the demands and stress of the neoliberal individualistic rat race. It helps to let go of the ego, join the community, go 'tribal' and feel one with the crowd. Venting off steam, enjoying 'communitas' (V. Turner), experiencing the group mind of an ecstatic crowd, this is not new, but very human, very old, and not much different from going to a large sports match, a parade, a fair. A different state of consciousness is what one seeks, away from everyday routines, rules and restrictions and the limitations of space and time there. This freedom can be experienced as total bliss.

In general, however, the atmosphere and setting at larger events with substantial psychedelic usage are less likely to give one a deep experience of one's inner self or the magical world, and yield only superficial insights. There is the risk that one gets stuck in the isolation and fragmentation phase and doesn't integrate the experiences and insights. Taking care of a good setting, maybe choosing the right circle of people to be with amidst the larger crowd and taking care of a good re-entry is therefore important.

The older generation and the authorities may look upon disco and house and large festivals as senseless and even amoral activities, but isn't that prejudiced about the way the young express themselves. Not only as entertainment, as before in a church choir or dance classes, but as a kind of

new ritual, a way to make contact, to tune in to each other and feel part of the `tribe' and enjoy the contact with the three worlds, inside, outside and the 'other'.

One can see these events also as the spiritual and ritual expression of a new generation, as Hans Cousto sees it. He argues that these modern festivals are also an expression of spiritual needs where, just as in the old days at a pilgrimage, religious festival or seasonal event, the attendants do open up to the otherworld. In joining with others they enter a group mind state where the separation with the otherworld evaporates. Union not only with the others, but with the all, the divine, emerges, some kind of mystical experience happens. The ingredients like music, drumming, dancing, lighting and ambiance are not fundamentally different from what initiation and religious events of older cultures offered, and it's just the rational world view that forbids labeling such experiences as spiritual.

This spiritual angle, once the main reason for many events, congregations, mass, pilgrimage and such is usually not acknowledged in the studies and research concerning modern events like raves and music festivals, but does play a role. Beyond the consumer aspects, the recreational use, the economic impact of festivals (a major industry now) there are deeper layers, both individual and social, and this also has to do with the importance of festivals as paradigm shifters. There is even less recognition for the magical aspects of such events.

Attending actual events happens for many reasons, the motives are varied and not always the same, the actual incentive to go may come because some friends go, one knows the band, or just out of boredom, nothing to do and then why not? In the context of using psychoactive substances one tends to classify them as merely recreational, aiming at a state of sociability, empathy, dropping psychological armor and inhibitions, opening up to feelings otherwise suppressed and releasing the energy, fun and joy inside oneself, to share this with others.

The motives for going to a party, festival and such are based on needs and desires which can be classified, in very broad terms, as psychological, physical, social and spiritual. In the context of this book we could say inner world, outer world (including one's body) and otherworld.

Going to a large festival with hundreds of thousands others and big bands, or to a small gathering of friends, we like it because we can re-

connect with ourselves, with others and the otherworld in a safe, protective and yet challenging setting. The physical aspect, being close to others, camping, using the body in getting there, dancing, doing some yoga or other exercise, engage in some sport; this is quite different from sitting behind a desk, Facebooking or working in our increasingly virtualized digital world.

The physical touch, the direct contact at a festival adds something we miss in daily life. Seeing and hearing the live music, singing, sitting around a campfire, this is what modern life has taken away, replacing it with virtual and artificial entertainment, with much less sensorial bandwidth (modern media are digital but also fairly limited in bandwidth). We like the immersion and the combination of the normal and extra senses we as humans have, not only to see, hear and touch but to experience beauty, friendship, justice and such intangibles.

Festivals bring that back, it's like jumping in a pool of humanness, of finding back our tribal roots, a revival of our evolutionary past.

The young like to go for it, but many older and senior citizens also like to go to festivals, where often their generation performs on stage. The oldies still going strong, like the Rolling Stones. It is, many say, an addiction in itself, the festivals are highlights, one sacrifices much in terms of money, time, travel and even comfort to attend. And the drugs are part of it. Going berserk, dancing for hours, one uses anything to feel at ease in a big, anonymous but synchronized crowd.

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 or Woodstock. 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. This means, that using drugs (not all, the more escape type of drugs like heroin are not really 'sacred' in any sense) at festival, raves and in clubbing does have a sa-



Boom festival, Portugal, a psi-trance event

cred, spiritual angle, maybe not for all, but certainly for some. The advice given in this book about set and setting, purpose and the stages and effects of those substances are thus also appropriate for such events.

What scenes, discos, places?

It is common knowledge, that there are drugs around at clubbing events, raves, in certain discos, coffee shops, at festivals, meetings, etc. and it really isn't that hard to find what you want. Usually at these 'in' places the standard staple-drug is XTC or similar amphetamines (pills are easy to hide and don't smell like hash), but also ketamin, coke and speed. It does happen that mushrooms have become part of a particular 'culture' of tribe, also ayahuasca and peyote have their followers.

Soft drugs are quite normal in some countries, pills also but the psychedelics like LSD and mushrooms are not mainstream for the average festival and disco-scene. The mushrooms just don't mix well with the hyperactive house ambiance, 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 same goes for low (less than 40 micrograms) LSD doses.

Those who like real psychedelics are usually more in favor of a peaceful trip, set and setting and there are festivals that cater for this too. For first time users, festivals and dance parties are often the first environment where they use any kind of psychoactive substance, and this is maybe not the best. The first trip better be safe, shielded, in a quiet setting, as one enters a whole new world where the normal shields, masks and ego are lowered because of the substance use. In general it is better to be an experienced user, if you want to take mushrooms or LSD amidst a group of people in a public place. It is easy to lose your balance there, 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, this can be more fun than going out on a limb.

Hitchhiking and contact with nature

Every experienced tripper is familiar with the phenomenon of hitchhiking, to take off on someone else's trip without using a substance yourself. Drugs change your outflow, some talk about aura, the invisible energetic layers around the body and the people in your direct environ-

ment 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.

The link with nature is more obvious when you are outdoors, it feels easier to communicate with trees, plants, and animals. Some claim one should stick to 'natural' drugs to enjoy that. There is much debate about 'chemical' or synthetic drugs like XTC. Many prefer natural mushrooms, plants or herbs like cannabis or ayahuasca. While LSD at times feels very synthetic, hard and analytic, a mushroom-trip is often softer and more natural. But there is a downside, the effects vary much more, because the active components differ, the mixture depends on where they were found or grown, the same goes for ayahuasca and other 'natural' concoctions, actually also the result of a chemical process (cooking). 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 medicine men, shamans, witches and wizards, influencing the weather (rainmaking) often was one of their special gifts.

Internet, social media and availability

Festivals these days need internet, for the fan-community, for booking, and even on-site public announcement. The rise of festivalization, the trend in events, group sessions, ritual gatherings goes hand in hand with social media. Marketing, profiling of the event and the visitors is done online, social media are the word-of-mouth of the digital virtuality. But for sure drugs are part of the formula and here online commercial availability also plays an important role. One can order anything online with little risk. One can check and frisk, but a small pill is easily hidden or just taken before entering.

Free water

An example of how even basic needs are ignored or sacrificed to make more money selling drinks, is the availability of free water at festivals. This is increasingly understood and regulated as a medical necessity, even required by law or regulations concerning the permission by the authorities, but still an issue. Drugs users (and in fact all people) need access to free water, to drink, clean or fight dehydration. But in order to sell more drinks, including bottles of water, festival organizations find



all kinds of sneaky ways to limit this like confiscating bottles, claiming water at the toilets is unclean, hiding the water-taps or making people pay for toilet use where those taps are. Even in situations, where the temperature is extreme, one does not organize free water. This could be seen as criminal neglect (for profit) like at the Summer Parkfestival in Venlo (NL) in 2016, where the temperature was well over 33 degrees C. but the organization refused to comply with the legal requirements and even banned protesters from the premises.

Sex: nice but also dark waters

At festivals and at group meetings the relationship with others is what matters, are you with friends or looking for a new link, for some excitement or even sex? With drugs like XTC you may feel more open, more inclined to experiment, but therefore also more vulnerable, for abuse, for people trespassing your borders. To a point that's not so bad, tripping is experimenting with those borders, but you don't want things to derail. The association of drugs and sex is not very public, it is kept by the cognoscenti as a secret, but obviously many people experiment with sex and drugs, in all kinds of combinations. The therapeutic angle has already been mentioned, but in situations with more people than a few friends and even in group ritual sessions the issue may be very relevant and some consideration and planning needed beyond bringing some condoms and a small mirror (a very insightful tool when tripping).

At festivals some extra care is necessary. Some substances like MDMA (XTC) lower inhibitions, other energize or stimulate. It can be very personal, the one substance works for the one, but not for the other, even the fairly unhealthy rape-drug GHB (Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate) may not work for some. XTC lowers inhibition for many youngsters, older people experience more the oneness and empathy and even can report a libido dip. LSD can be an aphrodisiac, but often strong psychedelics are not enhancing the libido or sexual performance, or only for a short time and on and off. The (chakra) focus of the drug matters, but set and set-

ting too. The stimulation of the lower chakras has a sexual, but also a creative side, some artist (claim to) perform best when high.

It's not very much known, but there are ayahuasca orgies, and wild sex parties with drugs are not uncommon. This is not new, there were Dionysian orgies and the Sex-Magick of the likes of Crowley and Blavatsky (yes she too, even as the Theosophists don't want to hear this) obviously used the then available substances to experiment.

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.

As for many the sexual inhibitions or traumas are part of their programming and masks, psychedelics can help to remember, relive and deal with those issues. This might even be more important than the use of such substances for more general PTSD and trauma relief.

Psychedelic trips can provoke energetic spasms, also in the context of a sexual and orgasmic energy pulsing. If this happens at a more or less public event it may not be recognized as such by the people around.

Just as a reminder, whatever is sold or offered at festivals may not be what you expected, it can work out very different. Make sure you keep an extra pill in reserve in case you overdose or get ill, to show the doctor or hospital so they can figure out what to do.

In the following chapters specific substances are described. Some specialist information like formulas and chemical names are mentioned, but don't matter for most users.

16 LSD, acid tripping



In 1943 in Basel the Sandoz chemist Albert Hofmann accidentally discovered that a previously (1938) synthesized ergot compound caused strong psycho-active effects like hallucinations. It originated from a fungi (*Claviceps purpurea*) that grows on grasses like wheat and rye, and was first called (by Sandoz) Delysid and became known as Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, abbreviated LSD or LSD-25 and now colloquially known as acid. This was the beginning of what now can be called the psychedelic movement and played a key role in the 1960s counterculture. It has changed many notions about the nature of perception and reality, and also led to appreciation of older and existing cultures using such substances.

LSD is the grandfather, the prototype of the modern psychedelic (empathogen, entheogen) drug culture; it was the first, the most potent (100-150 microgram dosage) and in the sixties became a widespread phenomenon. The effects like altered thinking processes, closed- and open-eye visuals with extended color range, repeating patterns and rapid succession of scenery, synesthesia, an altered sense of time, and induced spiritual experiences, were amazing.

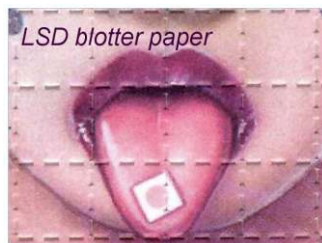
LSD is not poisonous and real overdose cases are unknown. Based on animal tests a lethal dose of 0,2 mg translates in a 15 mg dose for humans, that is roughly 100 normal doses. The substance breaks down in the body in the liver in about 5 hours (halftime) and is nearly totally gone in 24 hours.

LSD is mainly supplied on small pieces of paper, blotters, in 50-150 microgram (μg) dosage, sometimes 25 together, don't take all, just one little piece is enough. It is non addictive, but is illegal as a Class 1 drug. It is used for self-discovery, in therapeutic settings and as a recreational drug.

The visuals and insights one gets are fascinating and often reported as life-changing (like by Steve Jobs). LSD can also cause acute adverse psychiatric reactions such as anxiety, paranoia, and delusions but the scare stories and stigmatization of 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' has exaggerated the negative ef-



fects. LSD is in fact, in moderate doses, one of the safest and reliable psychedelics, also because it is a (semi-)synthetic drug, no accidental contamination. LSD is made from a natural source, the ergot fungus (ergotamine), but this is then processed in a number of steps.



this piece contains 12 trips

Ingestion

An LSD blotter is typically either swallowed (oral), held under the tongue (sublingual) or between gum and cheek (buccal). Sometimes LSD is available as a sugar cube, microdot, gelatin or in liquid form, it can also be administered by intramuscular or intravenous injection. LSD, in whatever form taken, needs approximately 30 to 60 minutes before the effects start. LSD is very potent, even with a 20–30 μg (micrograms) dose there is some effect like mild euphoria. This dose is sometimes used as a party and dancing stimulant. The stronger hallucinations happen with 100 μg or more, extreme trips till 400 micrograms are possible, after this the trip may be longer but not stronger. The dosage, a normal blotter piece contains between 70 and 150 microgram, can be adapted by cutting up the small piece of paper. A trip can last from 4 to 8 hours, sometimes longer, the acute effects taper off as time progresses and apart from a sense of clarity, are usually gone the next day.

The effects vary in time, there are waves and one can become even quite 'normal' at times and then sink back into the trip. Body sensitivity, but also the effects of music, atmosphere, smells and taste are heightened. Being in a group, apart from the safety issue, makes not much difference for the effects, LSD tripping is usually a very individual experience, especially in higher dosage, but there are 'acid test' parties.

The experience of an alternate reality, where seeing, feeling, even the knowing changes, can be an eye-opener. It may change one's world view and the perception of others, becoming more accepting and less judgmental. The borders and barriers with the environment dissolve, feelings of unity with everything, also the otherworldly realm, emerge. The senses, the perception of time, sounds, colors, etc. change and can overlap and cross (synesthesia) and a sense of magical power can develop (flying is not advised).

There are creative impulses and insights, which can be used to write, paint, create music or share. One can see the grand design of the universe, and one's place in it, but alas, these great discoveries may have little relevance for normal life. Taking home the relevant insights is the hardest, but most rewarding result of an LSD trip.

Time perception

Psychoactive drugs can alter the perception of time. At higher doses time may appear to slow down, speed up or seem out of sequence. This happens with traditional psychedelics such as LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline as well as the dissociative class of psychedelics such as PCP, ketamine and dextromethorphan. Stimulants can lead both humans and rats to overestimate time intervals, while depressants can have the opposite effect. Dopamine has a particularly strong connection with one's perception of time. Drugs that activate dopamine receptors speed up one's perception of time, while dopamine antagonists cause one to feel that time is passing slowly. Meditation can also lead to a relative overestimation of durations.

Adverse effects

A trip is unpredictable, positive emotions can change into negative, loops can happen (being stuck in a repeating circular pattern). There can be, especially at the start, anxiety, panic, fear of dying, fear that the trip will never end, loss of control over time, behavior or body, frightening views of demons or devils, snakes, insects and strange patterns in everything. Sweating, nausea, palpitation, dizziness, bowel problems, shaking, all can happen and can be an indication of too heavy a dose and in extreme cases need for medical attention. However, most of the time this challenging phase passes and one enters a world of universal love and unity, with beautiful and sometimes outright funny visuals.

Higher doses work stronger, sometimes longer, but overdosing with physical dangers is rare. The most severe negative effect is known as LSD Psychosis, often related to pre-existing tendencies or bad 'set and setting' conditions. It is physically quite safe and non-toxic, the most noticeable effects are pupil dilation, reduced appetite, and wakefulness. LSD effects do not last longer than the amount of time significant levels of the drug are present in



the blood, thus during the trip. Usage can thus not be traced afterwards, not with normal means like a wipe (the claims by the test-manufacturers are exaggerated) but in urine and serum with complex methods up to 2 or 3 days.

During the trip sleeping and studying is nearly impossible, working or driving a car difficult and dangerous. Participation in traffic is not advised, even as the trip has ended, the senses are affected.

In case of a bad trip, usually changing the posture, walking around a bit and creating a sympathetic and friendly environment (certainly a police cell isn't) will help, the talk-down method of treatment, pioneered by David Smith, is used for LSD panic attacks. A change in breath rhythm, music, a drink, a walk outside, suggesting to relax, think about pleasant things and "Go with the flow" will help. Body contact can help, but also aggravate the situation, don't stare (as a sitter). A quiet place and a trusted 'sitter' is important. As the person tripping might be disoriented tell them who you are and who and where he or she is and that this is due to LSD.

In severe cases anti-psychotic medications like benzodiazepine (diazepam), chlorpromazine (thorazine or largactil) are used. LSD acts (different from many other drugs) at both serotonin (5-HT_{2A}) and dopamine (DA) receptors, 5-HT antagonists like pirenpirone and ritanserin can be used. Haloperidol reduces the hallucinations.

LSD is sometimes contaminated. Some mimic blotter and liquid LSD being sold contained some DOX's, DOB and the relative new 25i-NBOMe (25i) compounds, in 200-700 microgram dose. DOX is 2,5-Dimethoxyamphetamine (2,5-DMA).

DOB(bromo-DMA) is Dimethoxybromoamphetamine, brolamfetamine, a psychedelic synthesized by Alexander Shulgin in 1967. 25i-NBOMe is more risky than LSD and may cause palpitation, blood pressure problems, epileptic fits and aggression.

Because of the high potency versus weight of LSD most comparable substances don't fit on a blotter.

There are, however, LSD analogues and derivatives and some like IP-LSD work in a similar way and dos-

Detects LSD/Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
 2-5 day detection Read results at 5 minutes,
 the results are stable for 1 hour
 10 ng/mL cut-off -www.americanscreeningcorp.com



Tracing LSD-use is now done with standard tests

age. According to Shulgin an LSD derivative, ETH-LAD, is even more powerful but not very stable. 2-bromo-LSD does not cause hallucinogenic effects, but helps in cases of severe cluster headaches, just as normal LSD (and psilocybin) does.

There are plants containing LSD-like ergot alkaloids with much lower potency. Morning Glory (Convolvulaceae family with *Ipomoea violacea* and *Rivea corymbosa*) is a common vine with heart-shaped leaves and bright white, pink, or purple flowers. The Aztec used it and these day Mexican Indians do use the seeds. Commercial seeds however are often deliberately coated with poison. Also the Hawaiian Baby Woodrose seeds (*Argyrea nervosa*) belong to this family, containing a naturally occurring tryptamine called LSA (Lysergic Acid Amide), which is closely related to LSD.

Combinations

LSD is often combined with other substances, and this can enhance or prolong the experience. Some cannabis may enhance the visuals, but also softens the trip. Candy flipping is well known, MDMA (XTC) and LSD are then not mixed, but stacked, it extends the trip and gives 'the best of both worlds' as some claim. Timing and dosage are important, taking the MDMA first eases the onset of the acid, but in general the relative "peak" times of the two drugs should not overlap. Individual experiments with the sequence, dosage and timing may give very different effects. In therapy this combination is one of the more advanced tools to help the process.

LSD and mushrooms together can work well after some nausea, use the LSD first to limit this. LSD and alcohol are not a great match. MAOIs (mono amine oxidase inhibitors) increase LSD potency.

LSD and anti-depressant drugs don't mix well. In general with medicated psychological problems or drug use, LSD should not be taken.

Tolerance to LSD builds up over consistent use and there is some cross tolerance (lasting a few days) between LSD, mescaline and psilocybin. Consecutive use doesn't work well, tolerance sets in, it takes a few days before the drug will work again. Flashbacks happen, but rarely as strong as the original trip.

LSD is one of the most potent drugs, and maybe too much for a first time flight into the magical realms, but is also a reliable carrier for exploration of those fantastic worlds.

17 Cannabis, marijuana



Although in this book we don't talk much about *Cannabis sativa* (marijuana) it is certainly one of the most widely used psycho-active substances. More and more the use becomes legal, for medical and even for recreational use. It relaxes and hides worries and problems, many people enjoy the effects. The effects vary, there are many strands with a very high THC (the active component TetraHydro-Cannabinol) content and there are other active substances present in marijuana.

Cannabis is used in many forms, as weed (grass) and as more concentrated and compressed trichomes, the most potent material from cannabis plants, called hashish or hash. Cannabis is also used to bake cookies, make cannabis oil (hash oil) and as an ingredient in other foods or drinks.

It has many street names, like pot, herb, dope, reefer, grass, weed, ganja. Sinsemilla is a strong form of marijuana. It has many effects, some beneficial as a medical drug in many countries some level of legality is emerging, even in the USA.

The usual way to take it is smoking, with or without tobacco, as weed or hash, in a cigarette, pipe or with a vaporizer. For many people smoking a joint is hardly considered a psychedelic experience, they like the relaxing effect, see it as an easy escape for stress and the demands of life and maybe use it to relieve some physical problems. As recreational use of cannabis (as in weed, grass, hash, hashish, a joint) has become a very widespread habit, most youngsters will have tried it at least incidentally, one is often familiar with the effects, and tolerance develops.

The effects, however, when the dose is large enough, can be serious and very psychedelic. As with other substances first time users, not used to the experience, can panic, become anxious and behave erratic and in need of help.

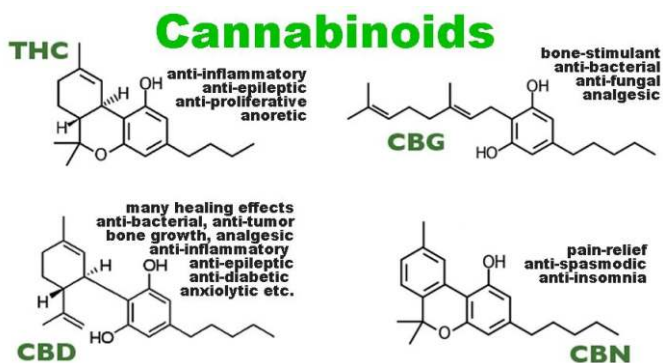
The THC content can be so strong, that although one has used cannabis before, the effects surprise. A high dosage will lead to some serious psychedelic hallucinations and a panic can still happen. This happens more often in the case of so called space-cake or products containing hash-oil, where the effect is less predictable and also may take some time to be

digested in the stomach and 'hit', so one is easily tempted to have another bite.

The habituation of cannabis use, many smoke every day, somewhat levels out the effects, the creative spark cited in the beginning numbs, one may become lazy and disinclined to work or exertion. Marijuana affects memory, judgment and perception. Learning and attention skills are impaired among people who use it heavily.

People who smoke marijuana often can develop similar respiratory problems as cigarette smokers, daily cough and phlegm, symptoms of chronic bronchitis, and more frequent chest colds.

There are also many positive and medically beneficial effects of cannabis. As actual hash or weed or hash oil may consist of many strands of medicinal cannabinoids, of which some have different medicinal effects (like on cancer cells) just using cannabis as a cure-all is not necessarily effective. CBD is one of the most relevant medical cannabinoids and in-



creasingly popular, but picking the right strand of cannabis for a specific disease is not easy.

Apart from the natural cannabis, with ever increasing content of THC and other natural cannabinoids, there are more and more synthetic cannabinoids. These synthetic "herbal smoking blends" have many names, are indicated as codes like CP 47,497, AM-1248, APICA and JWH-018. WH-250 or (1-pentyl-3-(2-methoxyphenyl-acetyl)indole) is a representative member of a new class of cannabinoid ligands. It is an analgesic chemical from the phenylacetylindole family that acts as cannabinoid agonist with cannabimimetic effects.

18 Magic Mushrooms, Psilocybin



Why do we buy a bag of magic mushrooms, a dose of shrooms, in Amsterdam the still legal magic truffles, share with friends dried or fresh little Mexicans, thin Hawaiians, Liberty Caps or obtain some exotic varieties in Bali or Thailand? Why do we now ingest something that was rumored to be poisonous before? Why this fascination for what officially is deemed an 'illicit drug'.

For many a mushroom trip is the first encounter with a serious psychedelic experience and a great experience. Apart from cannabis the magic mushrooms, also known as psilos, shrooms, musk, silly putty, boomers or paddos are the most popular 'natural' psychoactive substance. There are many different kinds and they grow all over the world in nature, and can be home-grown with some trouble. In most countries they (or at least the active components psilocybin and psi-

locin) are illegal, but they do grow in nature and can be picked and eaten fresh from the fields. Luckily nature has her own laws.

The effects are psychedelic and can include euphoria, altered thinking processes, closed and open-eye visuals, hallucination, synesthesia (overlapping sense perception), an altered sense of time and spiritual experiences (entheogen, meeting 'the god within'). They are used as recreational drug, for religious, mystical and divination purposes, and for creative stimulation and therapeutic and spiritual growth.

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 or leprechauns 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 known to connoisseurs. This varies of course from culture to culture. In Eastern Europe and Asia mushrooms are held in higher esteem, although this is

usually because they can be eaten or are used for healing. The more or less hidden attraction of mushrooms is of course that some varieties are psychoactive, hence magic mushrooms.

There is evidence that magic mushrooms were used since the dawn of humanity. We find traces of them in many cultures and times. In the Tassili caves in the Sahara pictures have been found of humanoids with their heads in the form of mushrooms. Shamans in Siberia would use Fly Agaric mushrooms 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 and 16th century. The priest that came with them inflicted all kinds of prohibitions on the indigenous population and their religious or magical practices.. 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 at least 300 BC in the North of Mexico.

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 God, who was called Xochipilli, Prince of Flowers. He was the sacred protector of the `flowery-dream' as the Aztecs called their hallucinatory trance.

Mushrooms with psychoactive properties have long played a role in various native medicine traditions, in cultures all around the world, but there were other uses as well. The Vikings - as told in Norway – used the Fly Agaric (Amanita) before they went ashore and while intoxicated were stronger and wilder than usual(they were then called Berserkers).



*Xochipilli, the Aztec God of
drugs (flowers)*

The mushrooms have been mostly used as sacrament in rituals and to facilitate visionary states. One such ritual is the Mazatec healing Velada ceremony by a shaman or curandera (priest-healer). Ethnologist Richard Evans Schultes and biologist Blasius Paul Reko discovered that these Veladas were still held in certain areas in Mexico.

This is how the American banker and ethno-mycologist R. Gordon Wasson and his wife got to know the magic mushroom, in a 1954 Velada with with the subsequently famous curandera (healer/sorceress) María Sabina. They went to a small village called Huatla de Jimenez, in Oaxaca in the South of Mexico, the territory of the Mazatecs, where 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 as Gordon Wasson published an article in Life magazine that stirred up a huge response. The timing was probably right because in the 60s the popularity of mushrooms rocketed sky-high, in particular amongst hippies and other alternative groups, using mushrooms partly as a 'natural' alternative for LSD.

In recent times magic mushrooms thus were more or less rediscovered and after

a first wave of interest in the sixties they have now gained popularity in the party and house-scene and as a 'natural' eco-drug.

Nowadays they are quite well known and available in many places, but not legally. You can maybe find them in fields in England, and in Thailand and on the Balinese beaches they are for sale. In many European countries the liberty caps (the mushroom *Psilocybe semilanceata*) grow freely, and in Mexico the locals will willingly but secretly sell you a handful, if you visit Maya-temples. In Amsterdam the dried paddos are no longer sold, but you can get truffles containing psilocybin in the smartshops.

Magic mushrooms of all varieties can be taken fresh, dried, in a tea or with honey. The most active ingredient (psilocybin) can be synthesized (LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann was the first to do this) but it is rarely available as such. Magic mushrooms grow in the wild, all through the year but mostly in the fall or rainy season. Home growing is possible, there are kits available, also off the internet.

'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 also known as "Paddos", which comes from Paddestoel, which means Toadstool.



Effects

Spiritual insights, great visuals and well being are what one can expect from a mushroom trip, maybe some sexual excitement. Noticeable changes to the auditory, visual, and tactile senses may become apparent, in the beginning or later during the trip, which can last several hours (depending on the dose to half a day).

The shifts in visual perception include seeing patterns, all kinds of imagery in otherwise random surfaces, enhancement and contrasting of colors, strange light phenomena like auras or "halos" around lights, increased visual acuity, surfaces that seem to ripple, shimmer, or breathe; complex open and closed eye visuals of utterly bizarre but beautiful spaces and objects that warp, morph, or change solid colors. One feels a sense of melting into the environment, and sees trails behind moving objects. Sounds are heard with increased clarity; music, for example, can often take on a profound sense of cadence and depth. Some users experience synesthesia, overlapping senses, wherein they perceive, for example, a visualization of color upon hearing a particular sound.

The hallucinations are not always there, but can be very strong, there is even a moment when opening or closing the eyes makes no difference, the image remains the same. This shows that it is the mind making the images we see, not our eyes.

Psilocybin is metabolized mostly in the liver, it is there converted to psilocin (which is also present in the mushrooms or truffles). It only takes about 40 minutes for psilocybin to be broken down and 'dephosphorylated' into psilocin, which itself has a half-life of only 3 hours..

The main psychotherapeutic relevant process (with a normal or so-called flood dose) is to let go of control, surrendering to deeply hidden memories and programs, which can mean facing dark, hidden parts of oneself (the shadow) and this can catalyze mystical-type experiences. This may lead to realizations concerning one's subconscious drives and programs

that can then result in long-lasting positive changes in behavior and personality.

The magic mushrooms affect the second and the third chakra, thus some sexual arousal is possible. The effects on the willpower (magical powers, solar plexus) makes one feel like a sorcerer; the stories of Don Juan (Carlos Castaneda's books) are well known. If one enters into the inner child state, comparable to the 'Nagual' self-state, magical manipulation of reality is a possibility.

Good Friday Experiment

To illustrate the spiritual effect, one often refers to The Marsh Chapel Experiment, also called the "Good Friday Experiment". This was a Harvard 1962 experiment conducted on Good Friday at Boston University's Marsh Chapel. Walter N. Pahnke designed the experiment under the supervision of Timothy Leary and the Harvard Psilocybin Project.

Pahnke's experiment investigated whether psilocybin would act as a reliable entheogen in religiously predisposed subjects (theology students). Half of the participants received the real thing, the other half a placebo. The results of the experiment were amazing, the ones who received the psilocybin had mystical experiences and spiritual insights, the process and feelings they reported were mostly very positive with some anxiety in the early stages. One of the participants, Huston Smith, who became a world renowned scholar on comparative religion, later described his experience as:

"the most powerful cosmic homecoming I have ever experienced."

The experiment has been repeated, to ensure the randomized and double-blinded validity of the outcome. Rick Doblin (MAPS) did it and the 2002 experiment by Roland R. Griffith at the Johns Hopkins University (reported in 2006) which studied the spiritual effects of psilocybin in particular made headlines. This study involved 36 college-educated adults (average age of 46) who had never tried psilocybin nor had a history of drug use, and who had religious or spiritual interests. One-third of the participants reported the experience (the trip they made) was the single most spiritually significant moment of their lives, and more than two-third reported it was among the top five most spiritually significant experiences. Two months after the study, 79% of the participants reported increased well-being or satisfaction; friends, relatives, and associates confirmed this. They also reported anxiety and depression symptoms to be decreased or completely gone. Fourteen months after the

study, 64% of participants said they still experienced an increase in well-being or life satisfaction.

The experience was not easy all the time. One-third of the subjects reported extreme anxiety at the onset. However, the anxiety went away after a short period of time. In another study in 2011, Griffiths (Johns Hopkins) looked into optimum psilocybin doses needed for positive life-changing experiences, while minimizing the chance of negative reactions, and kind of confirmed the advice given in this book. The researchers found that 94% of the volunteers rated their experiences with the drug as one of the top five most spiritually significant of their lives (44% said it was the single most significant), 89% reported positive changes in their behavior as a result of the experiences. As you can see the experiments do have slightly different outcomes, this can be due to differences in set and setting.

Some, like psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, have proposed that many of the qualities of a drug-induced mystical experience are indistinguishable from mystical experiences achieved through non-drug techniques, such as meditation or 'holotropic breathwork' or mystical states reported in religious contexts, but the drug using approach is regarded as a shortcut by those following a serious spiritual practice.

Note this all is based on self-reporting or interviews and some psychological testing, not on "hard" tests. Of course there is some data concerning neurotransmitter level before and after, but real time monitoring is not done much. Some brain scans are said to support the notion that tripping heals, but for those who believe the brain is just a tuner this is not very convincing.

Set and setting of the trip

Early on researchers like Timothy Leary and Walter Pahnke studied the effects of (mind) set and setting (see the chapter about this) in mushroom trips. This turned out to be so important for the safety and the outcome of the trip, that 'set and setting' soon became the keywords, the battle cry of the then growing psychedelic community. It turned out that some kind of group setting, with not too many people (not more than 8, preferable people one knows and trusts) is best, groups smaller than six are even more supportive. In smaller groups, meaningful personal interaction and experimenting with environmental stimuli, like music, guided meditation, scents, taking a hot bath or going out to the garden, is easier.

The tripping experience is not logical, often chaotic and there is some loss of control. To prepare some kind of agenda beforehand is therefore helpful. Make a plan, consider what you want to explore, maybe write it down or otherwise mark it (discuss it with the sitters), make sure there are no stress or unwanted disturbances, and keep time for re-entry and chilling. It is good to create some opportunity to have some private time alone. A ritual setting with preparation of the place, stimulating artwork, some fruit, music, an altar with inspiring imagery will help to make the best of the opportunity to learn about oneself, obtain and anchor new insights, bond with others and grow in consciousness,

Environment

The place and the atmosphere is important, in the chapters about ritual and set/setting more about that. Music is one of the main factors, and can be used to steer the trip. Sometimes relaxing, sometimes stimulating, making a playlist is a way to structure the event. Leave also some quiet and alone space, no sounds and music, just what plays inside your head. It is good advice to take some time off, be alone with yourself, outside the influence, aura and energy of others, even the sitters, for a while.

In group sessions the soundscape is what a shaman or leader probably will use most. Creating a nice atmosphere, soft light, no 'hard' imagery, decor or colors (like red), a candle, some incense and also the possibility to move around a bit, dance, express, make music yourself, it all makes the trip more pleasant.

Tripping in nature is very special, being away from normal sounds and disturbances will open you up to a deep connection with life. You will see and feel unexpected beauty and vitality, often experience a deep connection with the all. Even just a stroll in the garden or a park (take the sitter along!) will be awesome. Just realize that in a busy or public environment you will be bombarded by the energy around you, not everybody can handle that.

Variation in the environment will bring different emotions, imagery and body feelings. Taking a walk or change body posture can be effective to escape a particular pattern or loop. A bath, a dip or shower, will maybe help to go back to intra-uterine memories, some experience going back the evolution train even to the cosmic beginning.

Holding or being held by someone you trust can be a way to deal with unrest, loops, bad memories or traumas. Even as tripping is a very good way to deal with hidden traumas and coming to terms with their imprints

and traces in body and mind, things can get too heavy. Then a holding hand or a hug can help. It is good to talk about this before the trip, with the others.

With mushrooms sex can be an issue, supporting creativity but also lust, so coordinate this with the others present (before the trip), or withdraw to a safe and alone place. Hugging, holding, massage, close dancing, some music, watching a movie or even pornography (not unusual and maybe a way to recall certain memories); it all will bring up certain emotions, memories, body states and they can be very nice, very healing, but will the others like this too? Don't forget, much of our trauma is sexual, ignoring that will not help healing much.

Dosage

Too small a dose can be as disappointing as too large. The common magic mushrooms, like *Psilocybe cubensis* or the smaller *semilanceata* or Liberty caps can be eaten either fresh or dried. According to Albert Hofmann, who discovered LSD in 1943 and was the first to synthesize psilocybin, an active dose (also called flood dose) varies from 4 to 20 mg. psilocybin per person, which is between 2 and 5 grams of dry mushroom. The amount of active ingredients (psilocybin and psilocin) is not easily determined and varies a lot, so often you will have to rely on what others tell you, what the mushroom or magic truffle seller or dealer indicates and maybe you'll have to start out with a lower dose to determine how strong they are.

We can only 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. For the two kinds of common mushrooms the content of the psilocybin (psn) and psilocin (ps) is as follows: quantities are listed in mg. of active substance per gram of dried mushroom.

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

For fresh ones this amounts to a normal dose of 20 to 30 grams per person, and 2 to 5 grams dried. However, the amount of active substance varies, in nature up to 10 times and even in indoor controlled growth up

to 4 times. For truffles the dose indicated by the sellers is usually a good indication, but when grinding the truffles (or cutting the mushroom) into very small parts) or putting them in a tea the effects can be stronger. Then all active material reaches the body, nothing just passes our stomach and bowels.

The microdose (sub-perceptual) use of psilocybin or psilocin is not leading to intense experiences, the substances are broken down after a few hours and don't add up, but small doses are reported as being able to rescind and balance the neuro-physiological functions associated with anxiety and depression. This is an effect similar to what Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) like Prozac do, the drugs normally prescribed to alleviate the depression symptoms (not cure them). Some report less side-effects using mushrooms this way.

Intake

It is possible to prepare mushrooms like you do the common edible 'champignon' variety, use it on a pizza, in an omelet, pasta, chili, etc. A mushroom soup is a popular way to eat them.

If you put the mushrooms or truffles in your mouth, chew well and swallow, there is a peculiar taste to them; some like it, others don't. Some people prefer the fresh Liberty Caps, they do have a particular taste. Especially the dried *P. Cubensis* has a bit moldy, sometimes green outward appearance. They are not really a treat, maybe it is better to disguise them by mixing them in with honey or some other better tasting carrier, Some users crush the dried mushrooms into a powder and mix them with hot water to make tea, adding sugar or honey to mask the taste. You can heat the tea (not boiling too hot, easy does it and take some 20 minutes). 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 absorbed. Notably the psilocin, which is more present in fresh *P. cubensis*, breaks easily down if heated and the effect is weaker. On the other hand, ground and in a tea more of the active material will be digested. Tea can be frozen, a good way to store, even for a longer time. We noticed good effect even after years in the freezer. Normally mushrooms in the fridge keep good for a week, dried ones longer but they gradually lose power or go bad.

You can mix the mushrooms with other vegetables or ingredients to make main dishes. Some users prefer mixing the mushrooms with another substance. Honey or chocolate can be used. 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 psilocybin. Red wine and cheese before mushrooms might upset your stomach and system more than is necessary.

Smoking dried mushrooms works faster and with less nausea effects than eating. It has a milder effect than eating them or taking them as a tea, but you will need more. The effect can be compared to a good joint or a marijuana-cigarette. Be aware: there is a theory that carcinogens are absorbed into the lungs when smoking mushrooms.

The long term health effects of mushrooms are not deeply researched, but some Mexican shamans tend to favor peyote over mushrooms as they believe it has less aging effects.

Discomfort: let it be

It takes about 30 minutes to an hour before the effects are noticeable, some people can and will (not consciously) suppress them for a while. So not immediately, but some time 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). Nausea is not uncommon, and if you really have to throw up maybe this is a warning that your body tells you the dose may be too strong or it's just not your thing. Maybe some funny, unexpected or strange thoughts will pop into your head, there is nervous anticipation. 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 clenching 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 very conscious of your body ailments, 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 somewhat heavy in your limbs, more relaxed, while you feel more free and happier and your ego (defense-system loaded with worries and traumas) will evaporate, become lighter and less noticeable.

Warnings

There are some negative effects of psilocybin too, although the drug is one of the least dangerous in terms of long term adverse effects. Many experience some nausea, due to other compounds, maybe some toxicity. Sometimes other, more toxic mushrooms are mistakenly or accidentally part of the portion. Especially for first time tripper the changes in perceived reality, like sound, touch, taste, and sight and the auditory and visual hallucinations, the sometimes sudden mood swings (from unstoppable laughing to crying) and the lack of control over the effects can lead to panic, nightmare-like and disturbing thoughts, often induced by external factors, like an adverse environment or disturbing company.

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). And if you have taken a rather high dose, don't go to a sauna or take too hot a bath. A normal bath or a dip is ok and can bring up interesting body memories and feelings.

Sometimes one experiences those same feelings at a later date, like having a flashback of the experience. Flashbacks are instances when a user vividly remembers a past experience when he or she was on mushrooms. Neither flashbacks nor HPPD (Hallucinogen persisting perception disorder) however are commonly associated with psilocybin usage.

Variation in effects

Because of their chemical composition, individual sensitivity, and maybe the additional chemicals associated with where they grow, the hallucinogenic mushrooms may produce different effects, like a sometimes slightly wobbly feeling, a tendency to giggle and with a stronger dose a view into a different - magical - world. A mushroom trip is not to be taken too lightly, it can, depending on the dose, be quite an experi-

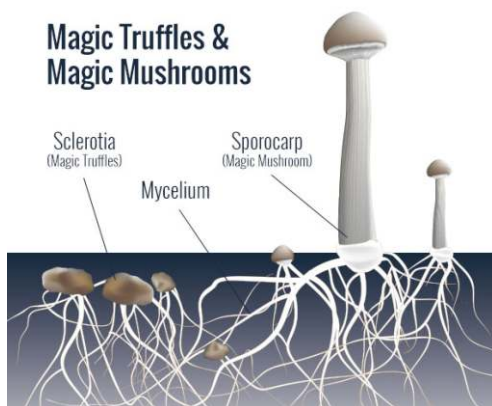
ence and shake up one's world view and self-image thoroughly. It can not be recommended just to everyone. There are clear dangers, medically and psychologically, but on the other hand the magic mushroom has the potential to help you understand yourself and your perception of reality, a much needed commodity and it does that a lot gentler than alcohol or other drugs. Yet don't rush into it! It helps to consider some preparation, do some scouting as to how a trip evolves and ask some advice from more experienced psychonauts.

Overdose

Although you need to take a lot, certainly overdosing is possible, usually it makes the effects more intense and longer and the risk of paranoid or delusional thinking increases. The symptoms of an overdose can include decreased heart rate (different from the overstimulation and body temperature problems of XTC overdose), liver problems (pain there), difficulty breathing, general loss of control and mental confusion, sometimes paranoid behavior.

In case of an overdose, it is advised to try to vomit. If things get worse take the mushrooms or mushroom concoction to the hospital and tell there what you took, show the sample. This is important and helps to make the correct diagnose and do the right things. The doctor need that info, and might determine that the individual took one of the toxic or poisonous forms of mushrooms and then have for instance the stomach pumped.

Physical addiction is unlikely, as the tolerance increases and effects diminish with regular use. Psilocybin and psilocin quickly create significant tolerance, even with a higher dose a reasonable experience can hardly be repeated the next days. So you can't really get (chemically) addicted to mushrooms, but you could start using them (with some interval) 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 (mental addiction). Some people do get stuck



there and get caught in a downward spiral, lose track or become depressed.

So it is nonsense to guarantee that nothing can ever go wrong. On the other hand, it is most 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 of you. Most people who used them treasure the feeling that they reached insight and came a bit closer to the universe, the All, the God in themselves.

Legal situation and tracing

Mushroom use can be traced to over a week after ingestion, in urine, blood, saliva and sweat. The normal tests however, used by the police, so far don't trace mushroom use (but many other drugs are detectable), only special lab tests will reveal that.

The international treaties like the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances list Psilocybin and Psilocin as Schedule I drugs. Psilocybin mushrooms as such are not covered by UN drug treaties, as they grow in the wild and are used for religious purposes. However, growing or picking psilocybin mushrooms is regulated or prohibited in many countries, often carrying severe legal penalties. The law(s) regarding fresh or dried mushrooms and related products vary greatly from country to country. Sometimes picking them fresh from the field is allowed, mostly their possession is illegal. In the Netherlands, where magic mushrooms were legal for a while, one can now only buy (in smartshops or on the internet) magic truffles, not the whole mushrooms. Grow kits are a different story, especially if the (very minute) spores are not in them, and are obtained from a different source.

What are Magic Truffles?

Magic Truffles don't look like mushrooms at all. They are actually 'sclerotia', the underground part of different types of Magic Mushrooms. This is not the classic form; the truffles are mostly dark colored fungi. Due to a small hole in the legislation this is still sold legally or at least condoned (in the Netherlands). Growers have succeeded in making these truffles as potent as the stem and cap, the so-called fruiting body, of the mushroom. The active substance in magic truffles is thus also psilocybin, with some psilocin and baeocystin, the same as in magic

mushrooms. Magic Truffles are as old as the world and go by very different names like: the Philosopher Stones, Space Truffles, or Sclerotia. You can eat the truffle (pieces), but making tea (with some honey, not overcooking) tastes better. Grinding the truffle very fine helps to get the most out of it. Truffle tea can be frozen for later use.

First timers

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`, but asking for advice from more experienced users or ask them to be `sitter` or `monitor` is a good start too.

It is all up to you; you can leave the magic mushrooms to others, or just try them once, or you can really prepare for the trip, the `inward journey`. 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 what is experienced through the senses is colored and distorted.



Combinations

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

- 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 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, especially from red wine 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 (Ketalar) and magic mushrooms are a bad combination.
- Combination with cocaine or speed (amphetamines) is like kicking the accelerator with one foot and braking with the other. It can give some wanted effects like sexual arousal, but also lead to muscle pains and dangerously ignoring the body signals of fatigue and thirst.
- It is also better not to mix mushrooms with substances like 2CB or mescaline, which heighten the body-sensitivity, especially when vigorously moving or dancing.
- 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) or 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.
- 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, even tobacco can give an extra boost.

One could be tempted to use too many or too many different drugs in the "house-ambiance", but mushrooms are self-regulating, and the body may reject too high a dose or odd mixes by vomiting. 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.

Picking mushrooms

We are not going to elaborate on this topic, you can find enough literature about it. It is really more for hobbyists and people who know their way and the most likely places to find them in the fall. A small piece of

Experience: occult

A helping of psilo for me is truly an esoteric delicacy, something like a sacrament. Every paddo-trip gives new insights.

This does not imply that I believe everybody should just try them. One has to be reasonably shock-proof, able to enjoy and shiver at the same time. Hallucinogenic mushroom amplify both the light and the dark, what one learns can be illuminating as well as frightening.

I doubt if it's a good idea to promote ayahuasca or magic mushrooms at all. Like with LSD and XTC the drug selects its own audience. If you are really interested in the magical and willing to accept the mystical too, if you have a bit of adventure in your blood and can stand the shock of loosing touch with reality, you have a chance to pick up some of the goodies of the magical kingdom inside.

information: there are really hundreds of mushroom varieties that contain a higher or smaller amount of hallucinogenic substances.

Biological genera containing psilocybin mushrooms include Copelandia, Galerina, Gymnopilus, Inocybe, Mycena, Panaeolus, Pholiotina, Pluteus, and Psilocybe. Over 100 species are classified in the genus Psilocybe. Most grow in subtropical humid forests like the popular *P. cubensis*, but a number of species also grow in the more moderate climates, like the pointed Liberty caps (*Psilocybin semilanceata*), 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, but these psychedelics grow in the park, the forest and the fields and can be gathered freely (if the law isn't looking, in some countries even picking them up is illegal). 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 for mushrooms in nature 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! 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 thread-like texture under the ground that can spread out very far. The magic mushrooms above the ground are spore-forming reproductive organs and like Terence McKenna said, this is how they take their sun bath.

Back to the practical. In Europe and North America you can find them in the summer, usually after rain, but especially in autumn. Prepare by reading up on the different varieties, recognizing toxic mushrooms. There are lots of books and internet info, but going with an experienced mycologist is best. Take a container that breaths, baskets or paper bags and remember to bring 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' by cows, some claims that's why cows are holy animals in Hinduism. 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 to spread the spores 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 in the wild or obtaining some pre-packed truffles is to grow them yourself and harvest the 'little brothers' from your cellar or dark space. In reality this is not a simple procedure. Especially the preparing of the subsoil and 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 growkits sold in the Netherlands and online. A loophole in the legal situation -the spores of psilocybin mushrooms do not contain the drugs- makes this

possible, but there are also countries that criminalize the possession of psilocybin mushroom spores, like Germany. With these kits 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, many experiments never succeed. Either they are ridden by strange insects, other growths or dried up in spite of frequent watering or the mycelium just withered away.

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

Amanita muscaria

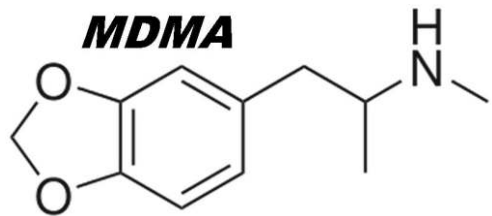
A few species in the Amanita genus, most recognizably Amanita muscaria, but also Amanita pantherina, among others, contain another psychoactive compound, muscimol. Muscimol is produced naturally in the Amanitas, along with muscarine, muscazone, and ibotenic acid. A. muscaria and A. pantherina should be eaten with caution and prepared properly to lessen effects of nausea; no official deaths from poisoning have been recorded from A. muscaria and A. pantherina, that's the myth to keep you away. In A. muscaria the layer just below the skin of the cap contains the highest amount of muscimol, and is therefore the most psychoactive portion.

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) shamans, forget about it.



19 XTC, Ecstasy, MDMA or Molly

Among the various psychoactive substances, or should we say psychoactive media, the synthetic compound XTC, MDMA, Adam, X, E, Mandy or Molly is quite popular. Tens of millions of people have tried it, and millions use it regularly, mostly in the context of parties, raves, and dance events, it's the favorite club drug. XTC is an empathogen and stimulant, not specifically hallucinogenic, but does alter the self image of the user, helps to drop the personality mask (ego) and in that sense is depersonalizing. There is also the slight feeling of being unreal, disconnected from one's normal self. In that sense it can be called a dissociative drug, but words like empathogen, euphoriant or enteogen better describe the effects.

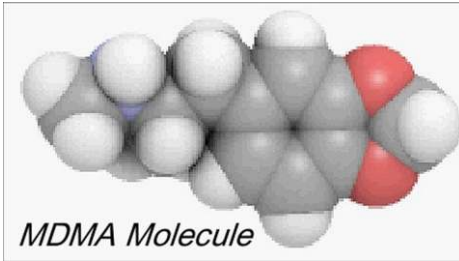


MDMA or XT formulaC

Energetic, happy, absorbed in music, being able to dance for hours, making contact easy, wanting to cuddle, amorous feelings ... The positive effects of ecstasy are many. Everybody happy, friends with each other, peace on earth. And this 'love drug' is not even addictive. No surprise that MDMA, the active ingredient in XTC, meanwhile is one of the most widely used synthetic drugs, as a recreational drug but also as a tool in psychotherapy.

In some subcultures, such as house, techno and trance, swallowing one, two or even a handful of pills, is now nearly as common as taking a few beers. MDMA is often considered the drug of choice within the rave culture. It is less dangerous and addictive than speed (amphetamine or methamphetamine) and is more relaxing than speed or uppers, but still energizes and stimulates (like for dancing). Unfortunately, this seemingly ideal drug has some undesirable effects as well, prolonged and heavy use will affect one's health and mental state.

In this chapter you will find information about the origin, the development and use of XTC but also tips for enjoyable and responsible use and what you can do to reduce the side effects. As is also mentioned in the



chapter about festivals the use of XTC and similar drugs is, by most people, not considered very 'sacred'. It's often labeled as consumer or recreational drug-use. This however ignores the deeper psychological and spiritual effects, the

sensation of unity and connectedness with the all, even at mass-events and festivals; there is ritual and indeed ecstatic side of such events. For many ecstasy is a first step in exploring the inner world, the deeper feelings and essence within. As such ecstasy deserves a place in this book about sacred journeys.

Ecstasy, E, Molly, XTC or xtc is the street name for crystals, pills or powders containing at least the substance 3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, or MDMA. MDMA is derived from the structure of methamphetamine. Besides MDMA there are other variants, such as MDA (3-4 methylenedioxy-amphetamine), with similar effects but slightly more 'speedy' and hallucinogenic. MDEA or 'Eve' is a somewhat weaker drug with comparable effects.

MDMA was discovered and patented by the German pharmaceutical company Merck in 1912. In 1967 it was rediscovered by the Californian pharmacologist and chemist Alexander Shulgin, the scientist responsible for a great deal of the 'modern' psychoactive drugs. He synthesized MDMA among many other psychoactive substances like the more psychedelic 2CB and tested his findings on himself and a solid group of good friends. Shulgin wrote, together with his wife Anne, a number of very influential books about his work in discovering, synthesizing, using and researching many drugs; notably PIHKAL; A Chemical Love Story - Phenethylamines I Have Known And Loved and TIHKAL; - Tryptamines I Have Known And Loved: The Continuation.

At first MDMA was recognized as a potential tool in psychotherapy and for personal growth and was kept more or less hidden and distributed only among a select group of people experimenting and using it for such purposes. Leo Zeff introduced the drugs to many in the psychotherapy world in those early years and called it ADAM, believing it put users in a state of primordial innocence. Later it became more public and more or less a common drug in the rave and party scene, where it found a

large following. The UN (UNODC) estimates between 9.4 and 28.24 million people globally use MDMA at least once a year.

It is (illicitly) produced from more or less natural precursors like Sassafras Oil (Safrole) and Nutmeg in a chemical process involving quite strong and dangerous chemicals, in laboratories all over the world. Sassafras was long known to have all kinds of medical uses, but now safrole has been made illegal and is even classified as carcinogen by the FDA. The official medical stance is that MDMA has some limited therapeutic benefits in certain mental health disorders, but has potential adverse effects, such as neurotoxicity and cognitive impairment, associated with its use. Recent research acknowledges the use for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression treatment and the use as a tool for self-discovery and relational problems is quite common. In general the effect is to open the 'hearth-chakra' meaning that the emotional protection mechanisms people have built up to deal with their environment and traumatic experiences are relieved or dissolved. This is experienced as 'opening up' to feelings normally suppressed (inhibition-reducing) while XTC also stimulates physical activities (dancing all night). It is an erotic stimulant for some and is associated with biological/chemical effects like a raising of dopamine, use of serotonin and other neuro-active substances in the brain.

Prohibit ...

It was made illegal and classified as a Class 1 substance late in the eighties (USA 1985). In the UK it was already made illegal in 1977. In the Netherlands MDMA is illegal since 1988. Class 1 drugs carry, according to the authorities, an unacceptable risk. In addition to XTC, this list also contains cocaine, heroin and LSD. Possession, manufacturing/production, sale and export of XTC are punishable but the use in itself is not, in some countries.

If the police in the Netherlands and some other tolerant Western states find an amount for personal use, that is one XTC pill per person, they can take the pill but there will be no prosecution.



Sassafras

This is of course different for larger quantities and trade. Some countries like Indonesia have much harder policies, even capital punishment for small amounts of drugs.

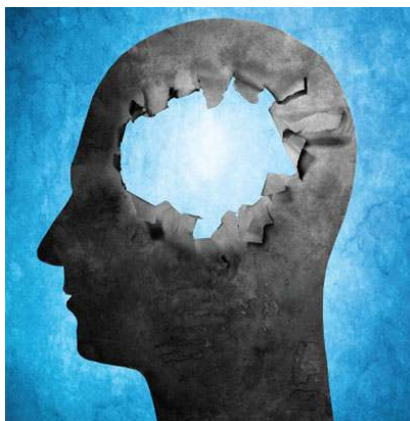
MDMA and similar synthetic drugs are made everywhere, the number of clandestine labs is enormous and it is, even as prices have dropped to a few euros or dollars for a pill, a very lucrative business. It is widely accepted that Canada has taken over the position as the largest XTC producing nation in the world from the Netherlands.

The police, DEA, etc. sometimes carry out major operations against XTC manufacturers and companies that supply raw materials to the producers. And those are no innocent small-scale activities, sometimes quantities of over 50,000 liters of chemicals are found.

... or tolerate?

In some countries things are getting a little bit more tolerant, if not realistic. Legalization of XTC or at least re-classifying it as a soft drug is advocated, the decriminalization is supposed to separate it from the real hard drugs scene. Proponents also argue that by legalizing the quality will benefit because the control is easier to organize.

The effects of XTC are now better understood and the exaggerated casualty statistics used to scare potential users disappear. One talks about “responsible drug use” meaning that a person can use drugs recreationally or otherwise, with a reduced or eliminated risk of negatively affecting other aspects of one’s life or other people’s lives. Advocates of this concept point to the many artists and intellectuals who have admitted to using drugs, experimentally or otherwise, with few detrimental effects on their lives. Steve Jobs (Apple) is one of the successful entrepreneurs who admitted that LSD has positively changed his outlook on life. There is more research and analysis into what these substances really bring. For example, in a study of the Dutch RIVM (National Institute for



Typical image used for anti-drug propaganda, showing brains that have an enormous hole.

Public Health and Environment) there is a ranking of the different harmful drugs and XTC is relatively low on that list.

Opponents believe that legalization decreases the threshold to using XTC with the risk of increase in incidents, either by incorrect dosage, 'pollution' with adulterants, the circumstances or the (over) sensitivity of the user. XTC is then portrayed as a physical addictive drug, dangerous to use, with damage to the brain etc. There is admittedly some detrimental effect on the brain with habitual use and a certain risk of social addiction, in certain circles or tribes there is some peer pressure to use such substances regularly.

Politically, the classification as a Class 1 drug is challenged, and drug policy reform advocated. In the Netherlands, where the use at festivals is quite widespread and most people realize the risks but recognize these as far less than drinking alcohol, there is a groundswell movement for legalization. On May 15, 2015 the Young Democrats (D66) made a statement in Amsterdam by opening the world's first XTC shop. In the shop (placebo) pills were sold to show how regulated sale could look like: with an age check, with extensive information leaflets and with quality control. This more or less liberal political youth organization states that the damage to individuals and society as a whole will decrease as MDMA is legalized and regulated. With this citizens initiative (www.mdmja.nl) they hope to make it possible to open more of such shops for real.

Fact: The street price of an XTC pill is coming down, nowadays (2016) it is between three and five Euro in Western Europe. But as is often mentioned the price is NOT a good indication of content and quality of a pill. To know for sure what you are going to use, in terms of both quality and quantity, you can (in the more tolerant countries) have your XTC pills, and also things like 2CB and MDA, tested. The testing at big parties in the Netherlands has been stopped since 2002, as drugs are formally forbidden at such events and too many people use anyway and there have been few incidents. There are MDMA-like substances like PMMA that have a similar effect but work slower, users may assume they are less powerful and take more, with overdose risk.

The standard psychotherapeutic dose is a 130 mg pill, the typical pill contains 100 mg but often there is only 60-80 mg per pill with bulking agents like lactose and binding agents as filler. There are often 'adulterants' present, often MDA which makes the effect more speedy and coarse.

Effects: empathogen and entheogen

In general, recreational MDMA users begin reporting the effects within 30 to 60 minutes of consumption, hitting a peak at about 75 to 120 minutes which plateaus for about 3.5 hours. Taking a booster (another pill) after some hours may prolong the peak, but rarely increases the level. In psychotherapeutic sessions, the onset may vary, depending on the anticipation, the fear or anxiety. Sometimes the effects are suppressed for some time, by willpower, not willing to cede control or give in to the effects. In therapeutic use, the physical effects like stimulation are often less noticed (or activated like in dancing or by mirror-neuron resonance) and more 'serenity' effects and opening up to the deeper self and the guidance of a sitter or therapist are common.

The psychoactive effects of MDMA include a sense of 'Euphoria' – a sense of general well-being and happiness, it's an euphoriant next to stimulant. This manifest in increased sociability and feelings of communion and reaching out to others (and to some degree nature and animal) being easier and less inhibited. The feelings are often described as increased empathy (hence empathogen) and, if seen in the spiritual perspective as entheogenic, a sense of inner peace, closer to the divine, the all. Depending on the basic personality program (ego-drives) one can become more tactile, entactogenic, touching others, feelings one's body and this can be a great asset to feel where illness, pains, muscle knots are coming from, sensing the deeper causes of such problems. It has also aphrodisiacal qualities, the moniker love drug makes sense.

In general one comes closer to what some call the inner child state, the higher self, the hidden but true soul.

There is not usually a distinct psychedelic effect, as experienced with LSD or 'heavier' psychedelics, although depending on the dosage and the sensitivity some mild hallucination, closed eye visuals, changed perception of sounds etc. is possible. In general the sensitivity is enhanced, and for some this leads to arousal of certain functions, like in creating music or art, but also to sexual arousal. This has more to do with lifted inhibitions than with direct aphrodisiac or libido enhancing effects, some other drugs like peyote or mushroom have stronger effect there.

There are some risks, also during the trip. Some feel a certain stiffness in the jaws, and a clenching of the jaw and teeth, the pupils widen and heart rate and blood pressure go up, in fact a normal reaction to the

physical stimulation. The more serious short-term physical health risks are overheating (hyperthermia) and dehydration.

Of course there are also positive effects, it's relaxing and helps to reach out to other people. It's not a bad idea to give terminal patients or the ones actually dying some XTC. Couples can use the drug to experience a deeper connection and solve relational problems, also with a therapist present. This also works for family problems. People with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's dementia, but also all kinds of physical complaints could be helped (symptomatically at least) and activated by using psychedelics of this kind occasionally or regularly, maybe micro-dosed (sub-perceptual dose). The use in childbirth of these kind of substances as a more natural sedation or relaxor has been mentioned before.

Therapeutic tool

The drug MDMA came into vogue in psychiatry and psychotherapy, where it was used among other things to support the treatment of depressive and neurotic patients and in relationship therapy. Quite some work was done, but secretly in those days.

In the early eighties the drug came out of the closet and became popular among young people who used it for recreational purposes. The increasing popularity, coupled with publications about alleged neurotoxicity (damage to the nervous system) led to a decrease in therapeutic use and it was quickly banned (in the US). In Switzerland MDMA as a therapeutic agent was used by scientists until 1995. In the US, MDMA is still used in exceptional cases for soldiers with war trauma and some experimental projects are now allowed.



In a pilot study in 2010, the American psychiatrist Michael Mithoefer was targeting patients with a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from crime or war situations. He gave MDMA, along with psychotherapy, to 21 participants who had developed treatment-resistant PTSD. Only 15% of the MDMA-treated subjects continued to experience PTSD afterwards, as opposed to 85% of the ones who received psychotherapy with a placebo. New experiments, as reported by MAPS, seem to confirm these findings. The problem is that diagnosing PTSD is not so easy and self-reporting or psychological test are not very "hard". Telomere degradation analysis would provide better answers.

Off the record there is much experimentation, it is often given to terminal patients, used to help with sexual problems, dementia and other ailments or problematic situations. It is similarly used in combination with all kinds of therapeutic approaches, but not formally researched as such.

Use, ingestion

MDMA pills, powder or crystals can be taken orally, with some water or juice. Some people take a lick of the powder, but then it is difficult to dose and it tastes awkward, also because of the filler material. It is recommended to take 1 or 1.5 mg (beginners 0.5-1 mg) per kg body weight. So for a man of 75 kg a pill of approximately 75-100 mg is sufficient, the 130 mg dose is considered a standard for some serious xtc-experience. If you swallow more the chance of vomiting, anxiety and panic increases. You can even become unconscious, overheat or dehydrate. In addition, high-dose pills give a more speedy effect and jaw clenching than the typical relaxed XTC-effect and, of course, the unpleasant after-effects like tiredness and stiffness are greater at high doses.

All the drugs you are taking orally work faster on an empty stomach because the active substance is absorbed more quickly and you more quickly get a larger amount in your blood.

After 40 minutes, sometimes one to one and a half hours you start noticing the first effects, with powder and crystal sometimes a little faster. After about four to five hours the effects start to decrease. Sometimes it seems, during a trip, that the effect starts to diminish but it then may come back stronger again. Taking extra additional pills (boosters) makes some sense. The stimulating effects are enhanced if the original dose was weak and the trip lasts longer. Taking more and more pills will only work as a stimulant, no longer as an empathogen. The youngsters dancing all night look like stiff and 'hard' ghosts in the morning.

At the end of the trip the effects decrease and you may have to deal with fatigue and a somewhat depressed, slow mood. There often will be a dip some days later.

Fact: An XTC pill can have a particular color, shape or logo. However, this says nothing about the contents of the pill. In recent years, there was about 80 mg of MDMA in an XTC pill. Anno 2015 that average increased in some markets to 140 mg of MDMA, with peaks of up to 300 mg!

Effects and adverse effects

The effects of XTC use are different for everyone. This depends partly on the type and quantity of MDMA, there are significant variations in amount and composition of the active compounds, but also on one's physical or mental vulnerability, overall health and the environment. Young people, women and slender people experience the primary and side effects usually stronger.

Physically XTC causes your pupils to dilate, your heart to beat faster and your body temperature to go up. Despite the many positive effects the use of XTC can also have less pleasant short term side effects such as nausea (sometimes vomiting), jaw grinding and clenching, stiffness, exhaustion, heat stroke, headache, dizziness, palpitations, restlessness, teeth gnashing and not being able to urinate or sleep, and surprisingly erectile dysfunctioning for some. You can also go slightly hallucinating when using XTC. Of course, the higher the dose and the more repeated use, the stronger these effects.

After the drug wears off, users sometimes feel irritable, confused, depressed and anxious. XTC may cause muscle tension which can cause muscle soreness the next day. And if you've danced all night during your trip your body is of course exhausted. Fortunately, muscle aches and fatigue will soon pass after some rest and also the feelings of gloom basically disappear after a few days by itself, but there is often a dip 2 or 3 days later. Longer term effects can be insomnia, depression, lockjaw (trismus), anxiety, irritability and trouble experiencing natural happiness or joy. There may well be a life-expectancy effect from long-term use, but adequate research like telomere degradation analysis is missing. Some say repeated recreational use for decades will cost 5 to 10 years of your life, but this is not substantiated!

Overdose

Ecstasy, MDMA and MDA overdose commonly happens because the user takes more of the drug to prolong the euphoric and stimulating feeling and stave off the negative crashes that result. The overdose symptoms occur when individuals take too much of the drug or mix it with other drugs (often cocaine or speed) or alcohol. Usually the most dangerous effect is overheating. Over 40 degree C. people may suffer all kinds of symptoms with lethal effects.

Overdosing puts a massive strain on the heart and kidneys, can cause panic attacks, loss of consciousness, muscle cramps and seriously

messes with temperature regulation and hydration levels. A common symptom(hyponatremia) results from drinking too much water, one gets thirsty and drinking is used to prevent overheating, but also causes a salt imbalance..

Treatment of overdose is symptomatic, and usually includes both external cooling, and internal cooling via IV infusion of cooled saline. If there are muscle cramps, nausea or convulsions Benzodiazepines can be used to control convulsions. Blood pressure can be lowered either with a combination of alpha blockers and beta blockers or with other drugs such as nifedipine or nitroprusside.

There are however no specific agonists or other medications that can be given as antidotes to ecstasy and MDMA. Ambulance or hospital personnel will initially want to stabilize the respiratory function and open the airway if necessary. Intravenous fluids are often administered to prevent dehydration caused by hyperthermia. Because ecstasy and MDMA overdose symptoms commonly include paranoia, doctors may take precautions to ensure one doesn't try to escape medical care. Other treatment may include pumping the stomach (gastric lavage), administering activated charcoal, medications to treat hypertension and agitation and cool baths to treat hyperthermia. As MDMA is basically a serotonin drug, serotonin antagonists and dantrolene may be used. Overdose symptoms may last for some hours, most patients recover fully within seven hours.

Long term risks

How dangerous is XTC really? To this question there is yet no scientifically valid answer. Especially about the long term effects of taking MDMA studies are going on. In addition, there may also be other substances in an XTC-pill that may bring health risks. The sensitivity for all this also depends on your personality, sensitivity and the extent of use. A 2007 UK study ranked MDMA 18th in harmfulness out of 20 recreational drugs.

The neurotoxicity (damage to the brain) is there, although small, but MDMA use has been shown to produce brain lesions. This damage can be repaired over time, but neurotoxic damage to axon terminals has been shown to persist for more than two



years. MDMA also produces persistent cognitive impairments in human users, like in affecting memory, also in the long term and for all kind of memory functions.

Are you an avid user then, on the long term, you need to consider possible brain damage, memory problems, or a more prolonged period of depression. The risk of brain damage is higher at ambient temperatures above 18-20 degrees. Also XTC combined with speed arguably gives a greater risk of brain damage. However, there is still much research needed into the precise extent and severity of the brain damage and the extent to which the brain can auto-repair.

If you have problems with your heart and blood pressure be extra careful with XTC because it ups your blood pressure and pulse rate.

There are reports of users getting and keeping anomalies with seeing; they see disturbing deviations in color, shape, movement, contrast or moving particles. There is not much known about these defects and the circumstances under which they arise. Medical treatment is possible, but many doctors do not recognize this condition. According to Tibor Brunt (Trimbos Institute Amsterdam) a small percentage of users is genetically more subject to problems, they are less able to break down the MDMA. He found little long term damage, just warned for people with a genetic tendency towards depression.

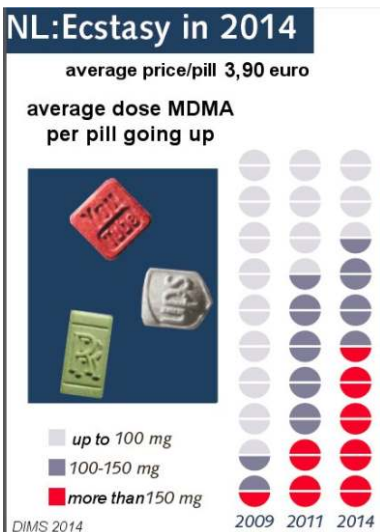
MDMA usage can be detected up to 24 to 72 hours in the urine, sweat, saliva and blood. Sixty-five percent of MDMA is excreted unchanged in the urine (in addition, 7% is metabolized into MDA) during the 24 hours after ingestion. MDMA and MDA may be identified in blood, saliva, plasma or urine to monitor for use, also for investigation of a traffic or other criminal violation or a sudden death. Some drug abuse screening programs rely on hair, saliva, or sweat as specimens.

Addictive?

Users of MDMA experience no physical addiction. After moderate use the brain requires five to six weeks to replenish the reserves again. For that reason it is wise not to use MDMA too regularly, maybe no more than once in two or three months. If used more regularly one will usually notice tolerance. The positive effects (like the changed perception of the self-state and the feeling of love) will be less and there will be a tendency to use more, with more neurotoxicity effect and maybe long-term damage. Weekly use of larger doses or serial boosters (taking

another pill after the previous one wears off) will limit the autonomous happiness potential.

Nevertheless people can get psychologically dependent on XTC. The scene, the friends, the atmosphere can be addictive, one can't do without the pleasant effects of XTC, even as these are less and less frequent and deep and require more of the substance. Users who have to stop or reduce, report that they feel the urge to use it (and react to cues in that direction) for example nearing the weekend, as an outlet for the stress of everyday life (routine use).



Depletion

The body normally already produces neurotransmitters and well-being endorphins, serotonin (the euphoric feeling), dopamine (the stimulant) and oxytocin (the contact feeling). By using external sources or stimulants the body may respond (with heavy and prolonged use) by not anymore providing these happiness-chemicals and hormones in adequate quantity. This depletion will prevent or limit the auto-happiness one can normally experience without any drugs. Especially serotonin production by the brain is affected, in an ecstasy trip a lot of serotonin is used, this can lead to a shortage later and the typical dip. The lack of serotonin becomes noticeable when the euphoria disappears and the stimulant effect of dopamine remains. The serotonin system, located in the brain and spinal cord, helps the control of behavioral, perceptual, and regulatory systems, including mood, hunger, body temperature, sexual behavior, muscle control, and sensory perception.

Herbal Ecstasy

There are many alternatives to MDMA, not only synthetic drugs, but in nature there are many plants with similar effects on the psyche. Sometimes these are legal, and they are often sold as 'herbal ecstasy' or with a similar name, usually a mixture of different herbs. Ginkgo Biloba, Kratom, Guarana, Khat, Yohimbe, Ephedra, Kava Kava, Kola Nut, Ginseng, Green Tea, Nutmeg, there are many combinations and local varieties.

ies. Often the contents of such pills, liquids or tablets are not properly indicated. Herbal ecstasy usually doesn't bring hallucinations or strong empathic feelings like MDMA, but is stimulating, sometimes erotic, speedy, it's akin to drinking a lot of coffee. For people with heart problems substances like Ephedra carry some risk.

2CB

Alexander Shulgin synthesized in 1974 another and more psychedelic (hallucinogenic and perception changing) drug, 2CB (4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine). It is chemically related to mescaline, an alkaloid derived from cactuses such as peyote, which for centuries is used in Mexico in shamanic rituals. Before the 90s 2CB was sold over the counter in some countries, like in Spain for weight loss and in the Netherlands it was available in a number of smart shops, sometimes under the name Nexus. Since 1997 it is forbidden (classified) but it is still illegally sold (over the internet) in the form of powder, capsules or small pills.

A pill is usually small and may contain between 4 and 15 mg. More than 45 mg will have unpleasant results, overdosing is easy, so be careful.

You can also sniff the powder but this is not recommended because it is painful for your nose and the chance of unpleasant physical effects is greater than with swallowing. The effect of 2CB is usually noticeable after 30 minutes to one hour and a trip also takes 4 to 6 hours. Compared to XTC 2CB has the great advantage that you hardly get an after dip in energy or mood and 2CB is probably not neurotoxic (damaging the brains) in normal doses. It effects the energy-centers (chakras) somewhat lower than MDMA, the third chakra (will, solar plexus) and sometimes the second (sex) are more stimulated. Great for therapy!

Cocaine

Cocaine hydrochloride is a drug obtained from the leaves of two Coca species native to South America, *Erythroxylum coca* and *Erythroxylum novogranatense*. Cocaine stimulates the reward pathway in the brain. Mental effects may include an intense feeling of happiness and euphoria, sexual arousal, loss of contact with reality, or agitation. The effects start very shortly after snorting, injection or application and last between five and ninety minutes. Many people experimenting with the various pills will have tried cocaine, which has stimulating and empathogenic qualities, but is not really psychedelic. It is, however, part of the many "scenes" where it is used in combination or as a starter or booster for

other substances. Cocaine use correlates with other “party drugs” (such as ecstasy or amphetamines), as well as with heroin and benzodiazepines use, and can be considered as a bridge between the use of different groups of drugs.

It is potentially harmful and addictive, but less so than heroin, crack and crystal meth. The main problem is that it’s illegal and has created a whole criminal industry and underworld. Moderate use of cocaine and some kind of sustainable dependency is possible, without falling into the trap of becoming a junkie.

Speed, amphetamines

Speed is slang for amphetamine, methamphetamine and substituted amphetamines. These substances are uppers, used for energy, to keep going, they are stimulants, but not really psychedelic. They are used in the party scene and are available on the internet, as not all varieties are illegal and some are legal prescription drugs.

Amphetamine (Benzedrine, Adderal, dextroamphetamine sulfate) is also used as a performance and cognitive enhancer, and recreationally as an aphrodisiac and euphoriant. It causes emotional and cognitive effects such as euphoria, change in libido, increased wakefulness, and improved cognitive control and memory consolidation at low doses. It induces positive physical effects such as decreased reaction time, fatigue resistance, and increased muscle strength.

4-fluoramphetamine, 4-FA of 4-FMP is a relative new amphetamine compound comparable to MDMA, but more speedy. It stimulates and has entactogen qualities. 4-Fluoromethamphetamine (4-FMA) is a stimulant drug related to methamphetamine and 4-fluoroamphetamine.

Crystal Meth

Methamphetamine or crystal methamphetamine, also indicated as “Meth” or “Crystal Meth” (Desoxyn), pervetine, “ice” or “glass” is a strong central nervous system stimulant that is mainly used as a recreational drug. It’s a serious stimulating harddrug, like heroin, psycho-active but hardly psychedelic. Users usually smoke with a small glass pipe. It gives a quick burst of euphoria, makes one feel confident and energetic. A user may feel anxious and confused, be unable to sleep, have mood swings, and become violent or paranoid.

This is a relative cheap (to manufacture or to buy), harmful and highly addictive escape drug, which has become very popular because of the

cost and the length of the trip, replacing other substances in the drug market and in the production chain. It is slowly driving out substances like XTC and other recreational part drugs, but is really dangerous. It has massively won over the poor in the USA and invades the party scene elsewhere, and is considered a serious and growing problem for public health.

GHB: Gamma-HydroxyButyric acid

GHB (also called Liquid E) stands for 4-hydroxybutanoic acid, also known as gamma-hydroxybutyric acid. It exist naturally in your body in small quantities. It was used as an anesthetic in operations and is now illegal and considered one of the more dangerous substances. GHB is usually obtained as a colorless drink in a small tube that you can drink pure or mixed with water or soda, and is hard to notice when put in your drink by someone else! You notice effects after about 15 to 30 minutes, after 30 to 45 minutes you are on the top and the effects last for about 2 to 3 hours. The effects resemble those of XTC but are often more sexually; touch is felt stronger and orgasm can be stronger. The dosing of GHB is difficult and this often goes wrong, too much and you pass out. It is in many ways a dangerous drug. GHB is also called the rape drug as it can be given to someone mixed in a drink unnoticed, and the victim can end up in situations or acts not normally desired or even become unconscious and abused.

The differential between a dose with desired effects and a dose with unpleasant effects is small. Overdosing on GHB can have serious consequences, even death. A whole tube (the standard supply dose) is too much for most people. If you regularly use GHB you can get used to it and you'll need a greater dose for the same desired effect (tolerance development) but for a novice user of about 70 kg less than half a tube (1.4 mg GHB) is often enough for the desired effect. Never mix GHB with alcohol or other drugs because then the numbing effect comes on much stronger and you run the risk of unconsciousness.

Khat

The stimulating drug Khat, Quat or Kat (containing methcathinone) is used widely by the locals in Somalia by chewing the leaves and is occasionally available as a pill, with similar effects as 2CB but less psychedelic and useful for short therapeutic sessions (2,5 hours) with a kind of serenity effect, calm contemplation, opening up to inner self.

New synthesized substances, sometimes still 'legal highs' are mainly cathinone derivatives (methyldone, methylenedioxypropylone (MDPV), butylone, flephedrone and mephedrone) which possess a similar chemical structure to amphetamines, and are usually sold either as capsules or in loose powder.

New products on the market contain new chemicals and include: Ethcathinone, Naphyrone, Dimethocaine, Synephrine, and Dimethylamylamine.

Combinations, mixtures

Pills of supposedly MDMA are often containing MDA or MDEA, and this changes the trip slightly, but usually not to a high degree. There are however other combinations with more or less serious effects.

XTC can be combined with other compounds. Therapists or shamans with a good notion about the effects of various drugs can in this way enhance the trip en guide towards certain effects, healing etc. Sometimes a little XTC before an LSD session will help to let go of control issues, ease the psychedelic process and address certain blockages. When XTC is combined with LSD this is called candy flipping. It is good to first take the MDMA (this ensures that the psychedelic experience will be pleasant and effective) and then one and a half to two hours later the LSD. Ecstasy is known for being taken in conjunction with various psychedelic drugs in the club scene. The more common combinations include MDMA combined with cannabis, LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, peyote, 4FA, ketamine, cocaine, etc. This to either enhance the effects or influence the flow and direction of the trip.

Some clubbers use mentholated products while taking MDMA for its cooling sensation while experiencing the drug's effects. Examples include menthol cigarettes, Vicks VapoRub, NyQuil Throat lozenges.

For the body and the brains, a combination of drugs is always heavier to process than the use of a single agent. The risk of mental health problems are greater if one randomly combines XTC with other drugs, choosing the appropriate mix is a specialist field.

When XTC is combined with magic mushrooms it is called hippie flipping.

The combination of XTC and alcohol causes headaches, nausea and a bigger hangover because this combination will dry out your body more. After using this you can often even remember less of the evening before than when either agent is used alone.

Combining speed with XTC is even more harmful to the brains than when either agent is used separate and overloads your cardiovascular system even more. The dip after use is higher and the following days you may feel 'empty'.

Cocaine is a common sidekick but inhibits the breakdown of XTC in the liver which increases the likelihood of harmful effects of XTC. Do not do it!

XTC and too much cannabis can be unpleasant. You may start to feel fuzzier but the hash or weed can also push away the stimulating effect of XTC; you experience those effects less.

A combination of XTC with GHB can make people, especially on the sexual plane, do more than they want or planned. In addition, the combination is very difficult to dose because the dose of GHB is a delicate one and with the invigorating effects of XTC you hardly notice the anesthetic of GHB. As long as you are under the influence of both, you go out less quickly than with the same amount of GHB without XTC. However, once the XTC has worked out, you will really feel the damping of GHB. You can then suddenly pass out. It works the other way as well: after the GHB is done, you can suddenly go (too) hard.

Do not combine XTC with medications such as anti-depressants; you may receive a fatal serotonin poisoning.

Tips/advice

The use of XTC can be a special, and sometimes even spectacular, experience. The feeling of connecting with, even belonging to your surroundings and the people around you, the insights in yourself, your ego-patterns en self-states and the joyful feelings and stimulating energy boost are not only nice but may also be challenging, and sometimes even life changing.

After reading the above, you could draw the conclusion that the use of XTC is a perilous enterprise. But if you follow the tips below you avoid or limit potential problems or unpleasant side effects.

- Use only XTC when you feel physically and mentally well. Also not use it if you are taking medication or if you are pregnant.
- Adequate rest and nutrition in advance help to reduce exhaustion.
- If you take XTC for the first time, find a safe environment with familiar people around you (maybe someone taking none or a much smaller dose, a so called sitter). Then you can surrender completely to the experience and stay true to yourself rather than for example to the

(dancing) crowd around you. In an ecstasy trip you are more susceptible to the group-mind and transference, picking up from other people

- Creating a safe space also should involve creating a sacred space, where unwanted energies are kept away, preferable in a ritual setting.
- For therapeutic or self-growth it helps to make an agenda beforehand. What do you want to achieve? What is the goal of the trip? Write it down or ask a sitter to remind you and help you focus.
- In a club or at a party regularly cool down in a chill out room/space.
- Wear clothing in layers so you can easily take off something or wear light clothing and leave your head free. Your body temperature is an indication of how hard the drug hits you. Overheating is a danger!
- Dehydration can be prevented by drinking plenty of water or isotonic drinks. You will be thirsty, but drink not too much, because then you run the risk of water intoxication which can also be lethal. Drink about one to two glasses per hour.
- Do not take part in traffic during or shortly after an XTC trip, your response, spatial awareness and timing are affected.
- Eat and rest well after a trip and take plenty of vitamin C and antioxidants, for example by eating broccoli, cabbage, celery, onion, apples, blackberries, cranberries, raspberries, grapefruit, pears and plums.
- Taking L-tryptophan or 5-HTP to recover seems to help, but the positive effects of this are not (yet) scientifically proven.
- The energy used for dancing is like a loan from the future, many people experience a so called 'Tuesday Dip' after a trippy weekend.

20 Ayahuasca, Mescaline; the holy trip

One of the more popular natural psychedelic substances these days is Ayahuasca, a brew originating from the Upper-Amazon region with strong entheogenic and hallucinogenic effects. We deal with it here, because the ritual setting it is mostly used in offers a good example of what a sacred journey can entail.

The 'jungle tea' Ayahuasca' (Yagé) is a psychedelic brew that contains a hallucinogenic ingredient (DMT, N,N-Dimethyltryptamine) from the leaves of a plant, *Psychotria viridis* (Chacruna or similar plants like Chacropanga), combined with a peculiar MAO (mono amine oxidase) inhibiting vine, *Banisteriopsis caapi*.

The active ingredient DMT can be found in many plants. It is in essence part of our own human biochemistry, and is used by itself for very short trips, but allows slower intake and longer trips when combined with a release factor (an MAO inhibitor like harmala alkaloids) in a brew or tea.

Ayahuasca is a bitter tasting dark brew, which for many people doesn't sit well in their stomach (this is called emetic). So vomiting is a normal part of the scene (and described as part of the purging process); the bowels sometimes protest and some people need to lie down for a while. The effects are sometimes very visual and hallucinogenic, resembling the use of magic mushrooms and allow an intense trip in one's unconscious inner and maybe otherworld, with links to other extra-dimensional experiences, for between 3 and 6 hours, longer with a booster (second drink).

Ayahuasca (Aya) appeals to the spiritually inclined and those attracted by an image of an exotic and deep adventure in a realm where Indians and jungle folks went before them.

The experienced users usually look down upon escape drugs like heroin or cocaine, party scene drugs but do use weed or hash.



DMT

Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is an indole-alkaloid with a molecular structure similar to the neurotransmitter serotonin and very dissociative and entheogenic effects. It is called the ‘God-Molecule’ or “Spirit Molecule” as it dissolves the ego and helps to reach a “unitive” state. Such an experience can be very enlightening, but as a straight DMT-trip is very short and intensive, it hard to retain the insights and consolidate them.

There is N.N. DMT and the more powerful 5-MeO-DMT. The DMT effects are very visual and ego-dissolving. DMT appears in many hallucinogenic plants and compounds, like in *Salvia Divinorum*. It is also available in a pure form as a powder and when snorted then causes a quick (15 min max.) and deep experience. On its own, eating DMT doesn’t do a thing for you (but smoking does) because your body renders it ineffective via the MAO (mono-amine-oxidase) mechanism. Substances acting as MAO-inhibitor are some herbs like Passiflower.

DMT is one of the active substances in ayahuasca, where the effects are mitigated and last longer and less intense. *Peganum harmala*, *Johimbe* and some medical drugs. There are other DMT brews like *Jurema* (*Ajuca*), using *Mimosa tenuiflora*.

Aya is quite a heavy trip. Maybe the African root *Iboga* offers even more of a bungee-jump into the deep, but it is the ayahuasca that has lured hundreds of thousands into joining a ritual setting drinking this now fashionable and very ‘hip’ concoction from the Amazon jungle.

The effects are amazing and include entheogenic contacts with the divine, intense hallucinations, sometimes also of a sexual nature, flashes of phylogenetic memory (going back in evolution), and out-of-body experiences. Some people experience telepathic contact with others and the leader of the ritual, get visuals related to the music or songs (synesthesia) and there is sense of space time travel, beyond the normal limitations. Users often report a change in their attitude, becoming more tolerant and social. Ayahuasca communities in Brazil are very peaceful and tolerant. This has to do with the realization that for everybody beyond and inside the masks and personality there resides a core self. That core self



**Banisteriopsis
caapi**
from "Plants of the Gods"
by Schultes and Hofmann

is encountered in the ritual; this realization can be a change moment, a rapture event in one's life. The healing capabilities of ayahuasca are widely recognized but may be just related to this realization; many experience a spiritual awakening because of the ayahuasca trip. Ego-death, near-death and rebirth-like experiences are common and mostly beneficial.

Some people meet 'entities', elves or other strange creatures, seemingly existing in different dimensions, and communicate with them. This is mentioned as proof of extraterrestrial life-forms, but may be just some anthropomorphic projection, the mind constructs imagery to deal with the unknown.



History

The substance has been used by indigenous people in the region for as long as one can remember, but has been first described in 1773 by Catholic priests as a work of the devil. Ethnobotanist Richard Spruce wrote about a ceremony with the Tukano tribe in Brazil around 1850.

The original use by indigenous tribes in the Amazon has spread to immigrants like the rubber tapping workers in the jungle. It became the root of a new religious movement in the 1930s with the Santo Daime church as the best known example.

The brew 'Ayahuasca' or 'Yagé' was first academically described in the early 1950s by ethnobotanist Richard Evans Schultes. It became known through 'The Yage Letters', first published in 1963, a collection of earlier (1953) correspondence and other writings by Beat Generation authors William S. Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg. "Yagé may be the ultimate fix" Burroughs concludes at the end of his first novel, 'Junky', published in 1952.

It was made popular in the West much later, in the early nineties, as the Santo Daime church expanded, first into the Netherlands and later all over the world. Ayahuasca rituals since then have become popular, in various forms and often no longer associated with a religious movement.

Ritual use

The way ayahuasca is used is, in most cases, a sacred journey. It's not (yet) a recreational drug and most likely won't be, because of the vomiting and the heavy hallucinations. As an example of ritual use it illustrates well the main message of this book, that responsible and respectful use of psychedelics has much to offer.

Drinking or eating tea, herbs or mushrooms of a hallucinogenic nature in a ritual context and group-setting can be an enlightening and spiritual experience for the participants. It usually brings inner vistas of unthinkable splendor and heightened bodily sensations, but also realizations of a more psychological or even psychotherapeutic nature. It is often felt as a healing experience and brings understanding of trauma's and experiences in one's past. It can have a lasting and deeply transformational effect on the consciousness as participants realize that there is more than 'normal' reality and that they themselves are co-creators of their experience; that the visual reality of daily life is a matter of interpretation if not illusion.

You can take your own ayahuasca trip, but the structure of a formal ritual in a group setting is probably a better option, it can help you through the dips and prevent accidents. We use the example of the Santo Daime church ritual to illustrate how ayahuasca can be used and how this ensures a relatively safe environment. The brew is also used in private sessions and psychotherapy, but then the general remarks about therapeutic use, dealt with in other chapters of this book, apply. Here we focus on the group-setting of the Santo Daime ritual.

The Santo Daime approach (shared by a few similar religious organizations) is not the only platform for such trips. Other groups and many

Experience: the teacher-plants

We can learn a lot from psychoactive plants and magic mushrooms. Not only that reality (partly) resides in our awareness, but the plants 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.

shamans in The Upper Amazon (a whole money driven industry emerged there and is now spreading) use less formalized and individual journeys. These are usually more geared to individual journeying (lie-down) and hallucinogenic trance experiences, or intended for specific healing and transpersonal therapy. There are two main modes in an ayahuasca ritual. One is the active group setting, either dancing or sitting down with often hymns and some instruments, as in the Santo Daime. The other aims at a more individual trance-state, usually lying down, also in groups and guided by an ayahuascero.

Santo Daime Church

A Santo Daime ritual (actually a religious service) is a group process, with strong social overtones, with for some too much of a Christian taste in songs and liturgy, but it offers a safe environment, certainly for a first experience. Santo Daime is a syncretic religion (combining Christian and indigenous practices, with some African elements) that was founded in the 1930s in Brazil by Raimundo Irineu Serra, Mestre Irineu. Santo Daime sees the use of ayahuasca as a sacrament and the rituals as ‘works’, as a practice to work on knowing oneself and one’s relationship with the divine.

The participants in the ritual take a sip and usually later a second or third helping of the Ayahuasca (Daime, Jage) in a ritual setting, which is a mix of jungle and Catholic influences. They are grouped in a special circular mandala form, all dressed in white, men and woman on opposite sides, and sit or stand, dance and sing special hymns. These hymns are mostly in Portuguese and have a strong Christian flavor. The hymns are ‘received’ and inspired. One is also silent, but usually one sings and sings endlessly and sometimes 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 four to eight hours. However, under the influence of the psycho-active potion, the mood elevates and the Santo Daime people see this as their sacrament and enjoy the process. About half an hour after ingestion one slowly



A large ritual gathering of the Dutch Santo Daime

starts to enter this different state, in which the rhythm and movement is a kind of basic framework to anchor oneself and stay in the present.

In itself ayahuasca can lead to a very intense and visual private 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 starts to feel a deep connection with the people around and the universe. This is perceived as spiritual ecstasy, more mystical than magical. The results are not only religious, social and psychological, 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 Brazilian government (and some others like in the Netherlands) has allowed the use of Ayahuasca in their rituals.

The ritual is a religious event, it is a church service, also in the legal sense. This is important as the use of these substances outside a religious context is not legal and in most countries the police cannot enter a religious service without much ado.

Purpose

The stated purpose of the ritual (the 'work') is a spiritual one, to become more united with the all and everything, experiencing the oneness gift (Daime means give me) of this sacrament of the inner vision. A oneness that also, apart from the feeling of love, can manifest as visions of outrageous forms, colors, and sensations, sometimes mystical unity and connectedness with the self and the world around, but this bears on one's individual intention, mood, body and state of mind.

This ritual offers great openings for soul work, release of tension, somatic and psychological healing, reconnecting with the people in your life and your past, divining your life's path and can help you in important choices. That these are mostly psychological and not religious purposes is not emphasized, the religion is the platform and carrier of the 'work'.

The Santo Daime approach has special sessions, like a healing session (cura) and in general favors 'aware' participation and staying within the



Mestre Irineu

group process. Lying down is possible if necessary but not recommended, staying with the group is preferred. It is important to understand the purpose of the group session, whereby one either sits or stands up, in silence or often dancing or singing in a strict regime. Instead of taking a dive into the colorful inner world, one is supposed to remain present, in the group and circle, where men and women are separated and facing each other. This presence leads to a psychological confrontation with one's projections, up to the point of irritation and anger. Dealing with that, integrating one's frustrations is the first outcome, then entering the heavenly state of total love the next stage.

As the purpose of the Santo Daime ritual is not to fall into one's own trance-world, but to stay present with the others and the ritual, the ego is kind of peeled away and slowly a strong group-feeling emerges. Sometimes, when the energy is getting lower and lower, the leader picks other hymns and so changes the rhythm (and thus the dance) to shake up the participants. This way he (or she) intentionally brings the group back to the group interaction process, preventing a sliding into the deep trance-state.

The idea is that by staying with the individual feelings and frustrations and obeying the discipline of the circle (no confrontations, stay with your own energy) these feelings are slowly transformed, the ego dissolves and a new state of awareness is achieved, ultimately felt as a state of love. Love for oneself, for the most highest and the others around you. It is like chafing the ego, slowly sanding and polishing that inner self, your eternal soul, until it shines anew. Letting go of the ego, with its trauma's and defenses, for most people feels like freedom, but it is a hard process. The results will last even after the ritual, sometimes for days and hopefully the lessons learned will carry over into daily life. As ego-frustration often lead to psycho-somatic problems, this ego-chafing has markedly healing effects.

This specific mode of the ritual of the ayahuasca churches is sometimes felt as a kind of indoctrination because of certain rules and ceremonial aspects, clothing, hymns, altar setting and dance-steps, but it is good to honor the original intention, providing as safe and effective an environment for group trance as possible.

Part of the ritual is sometimes smoking marijuana (Santa Maria), as it enhances the effect of the ayahuasca in subtle ways while limiting hallucinations and individual trance-states

Guidelines for participation

The wearing of white clothes (no distraction, sign of purity) is an essential part of most formal ayahuasca rituals. It originates in the original Brazilian tradition, it is linked to the shamanistic aspect of the ritual and it is seen as a core quality of the very idea of a ritual, of a holy and sacred experience. Red or black colors are not welcome as they are supposed to attract evil spirits or thoughts and should be eliminated from the premises.

Overdose and risks

It is common practice to have several (booster) doses of the brew, some hours apart. Sometimes the first dose is deliberately weaker, to accustom newcomers to the space, and the subsequent helpings are a bit stronger. It is possible to overdose, but taking a small cup every time limits this risk. In the Amazon area one can participate in rituals where one takes the brew for a week or longer, every day. This requires a strong constitution, and involves some risk especially if one already deals with some serious disease and medication.

In the West, in the non-religious setting, often the first dose is done in silence, with the later servings comes more engaging music and more communal activities, like singing and dancing.

Taking too much, which also can happen because the brew is made from natural materials with varying strength, will lead to more intense and longer tripping. Taking too little leaves one dry and not high, not nice if the rest of the group is flying high. The ingestion of ayahuasca clearly has physical effects like increased pulse rates and blood pressure that can be too much for people with pre-existing heart conditions. It also takes a toll on the liver and a combination with other medicines is not a good idea.

It can, depending on the dosage, cause significant but temporary emotional and psychological distress (the 'bad trip' experience), reason why a ritual context with experienced people around is advised. Long-term negative effects are sporadic, but can happen. Some traditions promote intensive and extended use of ayahuasca, sometime for weeks, but this requires a good initial health. As some seek a cure for serious or terminal illnesses in the ayahuasca sphere, one has to balance risks and benefits. Even as Ayahuasca is sometimes portrayed as a cure for all, in cases where the general health is already diminished and other treatments have taken their toll, the risks increase.

As a preparation and to limit physical discomfort a specific diet is often recommended. Fasting on the day of the ritual is advised, do not eat anymore from up to 4 hours before the ritual. Drinking water during the ritual is ok.

The diet regime is an important factor, some shamans emphasize this and have specific rules. Dietary taboos are often associated with the purification of one's self – abstaining from spicy and heavily-seasoned foods, excess fat, salt, caffeine, acidic foods (such as citrus) and sex before, after, or during a ceremony. A diet low in foods containing tyramine (ripened cheese, sauerkraut, yeast and soy products, meats and red wine) has been recommended, as the speculative interaction of tyramine and MAO inhibitors could lead to a hypertensive crisis (extremely high blood pressure). There are some contra-indications with food (24 hours) like no aged cheeses, red wine, white wine, beer, chocolates, yeast extract, pineapple, soy sauce, whipped cream, avocados, bananas, liver, coffee, figs, raisins, yogurts, sauerkraut. It is strongly advised not to use any drugs like mescaline, cocaine, heroin, xtc or any kind of alcohol on the day of the ritual.

Any regular medicine containing an MAO-inhibitor such as anti-depressants like Prozac, etc. is a CONTRA-INDICATION for participation in ayahuasca rituals. One warns against combined use with sedatives and tranquilizers, antihistamines, narcotics, amphetamines, drugs like Asarone/ Calamus, Tryptophan, Tyrosine, Phenelamine, Macromerine, but also decongestants, allergy medications, cold medications, diet pills, asthma-inhalers, Meperidine, Levopoda, Dopamine, Carbamazipine, some antihypertensive medications, sympathomimetic amines (acting directly and/or indirectly), including Pseudoephedrine and Ephedrine. Those who have suffered or are still suffering from psychiatric problems, psychosis or any mental disorder should not participate.

It comes down to this. If you take medical drugs, especially psycho-active uppers, downers, sleeping pills or anti-depressants, or have a medical condition like manic-depression, pregnancy or heart-problems, abstain or start with a very small dose.

Usually one is asked to sign a paper stating that participation is voluntary, that one assumes all medical risk oneself and implicitly agrees to abstain from any litigation; the responsibility is yours and you should make sure you have enough information about the working and the effects, otherwise ask questions before the ritual starts. This may just be to prevent legal hassles and a bit overdone. The message is that this is not a

recreational or merely social event, it is a intense spiritual journey into a territory that at first might seem strange and frightening, but offers a deep teaching about yourself and your relation to the world around you.

Spreading of ayahuasca

A number of modern religious movements based on the use of ayahuasca have emerged in Brazil, besides the Santo Daime there are the Barquinas, União do Vegetal (or UDV), Friends of The Forest and other groups, like the Peruvian Iglesia Soga del Alma.

The original recipes, which already used a number of different plants and additives, have expanded and now more local or otherwise easier available plants like Syrian Rue (*Peganum harmala*), *Mimosa tenuiflora* (in Jurema), *Salvia divinorum* or Changa in various combinations are used as Ayahuasca analogues with similar effects. Pharmahuasca is a synthetic pharmaceutical version of Ayahuasca

The research into the medical and therapeutic effects of ayahuasca has yielded promising results for many medical and psychological problems, but only in the religious context the use is legal and only in a few countries like Brazil and the Netherlands. Aya-tourism and the mostly clandestine use of ayahuasca has become widespread, if not fashionable.

Before we go into the negative about the ayahuasca use it is good to mention that while some warning and precaution is necessary in the context of this book, the overall experiences are clearly positive and things go seldom wrong. The ritual leaders also don't want to talk about potential mishaps before an event, as it brings bad energy. They often trust, and rightfully so, the universe and their personal discretion, to bring the right people in the right conditions, so why spoil the energy.

Apart from the Santo Daime there are now many forms of ritual use of Ayahuasca and similar substances like San Pedro. They are advertized, often pretend to be part of a church, but use different formats and not all have the integrity and experienced leadership of the real church rituals. Mostly they use the lie-down model, with an ayahuascero or shaman guiding the trip, with music and ritual methods. This is usually done in a circle, which is a universal form for a sacred space. The ritual models and techniques from pagan or indigenous traditions can be used, like ohming, chanting, mantras, guided meditation, the passing of crystals, the use of hypnotic inductions, relaxing exercises, yoga, breathing, etc.

There usually is a special place in the circle or mandala in front of the altar for the leader(s) of the ritual and the musicians. Apart from the leader as an overseer there are also more experienced members who 'hold space' meaning they protect the perimeter from incoming negative energies, a level of spirit control is needed at rituals.

Sometimes strange energies emerge that influence one or all of the participants, the group mind can become very strong. The energies that reside in ourselves sometimes resonate with energies outside ourselves and we then experience these as demons, devas, spirits or entities. This can be frightening, but realize that these energies can also be our teachers, as they help us become aware of our fears, our hidden trauma's, our connection with animals, plants, stones and ancestors. As such they need to be respected, but they can be quirky too, so smudging, aura-cleaning and dedication are helpful. Imagining a protective shield, pyramid or protective light-rays helps to deal with these energies.

Esoteric dangers

It is mentioned elsewhere in this book, but the denial of the magical power of ayahuasca is a serious point. Few of the people from the West (including many of the would be shamans) using it, realize that the special state also can be used for magical purposes and this includes using it against others. The ayahuasceros are known to fight each other at this level, using spells, voodoo kind of magic, etc. because of status and quarrels, often about money. And how better to hurt a competitor than spoiling his rituals, meaning aiming the magic at innocent participants? Another less known danger is that one becomes very open and sensitive during the ritual. One can then pick up on invading entities, but also assimilate the energy of the person or persons close by. This can be seen as aura resonance and have beneficial effects, but what if the person on the next mattress is a certified idiot, or worse, suffers from something you definitely not want? Many people pick up on the condition of others, in the trip this is amplified and there is little protection if you are not aware of this. In general, choose wisely who are close to you in rituals or trips, and protect yourself against unwanted influences from whatever side or realm, like by imagining a protective shield or guardian angel.

Peyote and San Pedro; mescaline

Some cactus families have psychedelic qualities. Peyote is a small cactus, rarely larger than 15 centimeters, found in scattered places across

the US and Mexico. It has medicinal qualities and is used for a number number of ailments. The buds or crowns contain mescaline and are psychedelic and are ritually use for primarily healing by indigenous tribes mostly located in the Southern Plains. It is legal for them in the USA, it's part of the religious practice of the Native American Church. It's now also legal to non-Native Americans in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, and Oregon.

Peyote is suited for self-exploration and ritual use, it brings some dissociation and hallucinations. It is empathogenic, more outward directed than ayahuasca and usually brings a somewhat gay and happy atmosphere after a second helping. A mescaline takes some time, most people start to feel the effects within 15-40 minutes, but it could take up to three hours to peak. Coming down can take another three hours, and the whole experience can last 10 hours or so, especially as one usually has two helpings, similar to ayahuasca rituals.

San-Pedro rituals

Another substance now popular and suitable for group ritual events is San Pedro (*Trichocereus/Echinopsis pachanoi*) or Huachum. It is a thin, columnar cactus native to the Andes mountains in South America. It's called the Sacred Cactus of the Andes. The effects of San Pedro are quite similar to that of peyote, but the spirit of San Pedro is more tranquil and in a certain ways more friendly.

The San Pedro cactus is one of the oldest magical plants from South America, and is different from the peyote used in Mexico and the Southern USA. The earliest known depiction of the San Pedro cactus is on a stone tablet found in Peru dating to 1300 B.C. There are different varieties, such as *Trichocereus pachanoi* and *Trichocereus peruvianus*. The main psychoactive ingredient in San Pedro is mescaline, but it contains also a lot of other psychoactive components.

The plant itself is not illegal and can be found decorating yards and gardens across the country and can be grown indoors. The San Pedro experience is known for being empathogenic and bringing radical introspection, healing, and a sense of wonder and awe. It is a medicine that can be used to help



perceive our self-created barriers and limitations, and greatly aids in opening and connecting with our hearts in a usually gentle way. It may stimulate sexual arousal, which can be fun, but also a nuisance in group sessions. San Pedro produces auditory hallucinations, heightening the hearing sense but also causing sounds to be quite different than normal. Mescaline also sharpens the olfactory sense.

For a good connection with San Pedro, some preparation can have a very beneficial effect. Some fasting and the avoidance of pork, excessive sweets, desserts and fat, alcohol, caffeine and recreational drugs (including marijuana) is a good idea. It is also beneficial to not release sexually as to keep the vital energy available for use in the healing process.

The Shuar Indians call this plant Aquacolla, because it has a strong connection with the water-element. Therefore it works especially for healing and balancing on all the fluids in our body and also on our emotions; it has strong anti-depressive and therapeutic qualities. The plant gives beautiful and colorful visions and it opens the heart and mind in a very gentle way. One can sometimes perceive events happening in distant parts of the world or in metaphysical realms, even the future. This plant is more soft and friendly than ayahuasca, but it is still very healing and powerful; it's a bit more energetic and with a higher sensory load and body-awareness. The taste is bitter, but not so strong as ayahuasca and there will be hardly any vomiting.

Besides this, San Pedro is more benevolent and acceptable for people who use prescription-medication. The "coming back" of a such a mescaline trip is smoother than with the other traditional psychedelics.

The Ayahuasca Santo Daime and the San Pedro/Peyote rituals of the Native American Church are a living tradition but obviously they are similar to rituals as described in the Aryan Veda's, the Iranian Avesta and observed by anthropologists in Siberian communities and indigenous tribes elsewhere.

21 Ketamine

Some substances kind of dissolve the self-awareness and the ego, they are dissociative or entheogen as they may invoke spiritual or mystical experiences. DMT is an entheogen, but Ketamine is another one, and increasingly popular either as a mild stimulant in low doses or as a real dissociative medium in higher doses.

Ketamine or Ketamin is a medication that doctors and especially veterinarians have used as an anesthetic to induce loss of consciousness for a long time. Effects include dissociation, sedation and reduced sensation of pain.

It is increasingly used as a psychedelic, for recreational use and as a performance enhancer, it got a bad rap over the past few decades as a teenage party drug. It is also used now as a psychotherapeutic tool and to deal with depression. It produces shorter-term hallucinations than taking LSD or PCP, usually lasting 30 minutes.

Ketamine works in a few different areas of the brain, including dopamine receptors like those triggered by more addictive drugs, such as cocaine. It affects the brain's production of glutamate, a neurotransmitter that neurons release to communicate with each other. On higher doses of ketamine, glutamate production is halted, at lower doses glutamate production increases.

Ketamine can produce, in higher doses, hallucinations similarly to other drugs such as LSD and PCP, or angel dust. Hallucinations are distorted perceptions of sounds and sights. Because its dissociative character it is less of a group drug, the experience is very individual and can be enlightening but like with DMT, taking home and integrating the deep insights is not easy, many have no memory of events that happen while they are under its influence. It's not really a good substance for first time tripping or self-discovery.

People who take ketamine recreationally report sensations, such as being separated from their body (reaching the K-hole) or a pleasant feeling of floating. Some people have an almost complete sensory detachment that they compare to a near-death experience. The sense of detachment from one's physical body and the external world is known as depersonalization and derealization.

Ketamine has therapeutic qualities and is increasingly used to deal with conditions that don't respond to other approaches, like it can quickly relieve depression in people who do not respond well to other treatment. Application of the substance in social anxiety disorder (SAD) and PTSD cases is growing. Ketamine assisted psychotherapy is where patients undergo ketamine infusions during a psychotherapy session. Its use in medical and therapeutical context has become more interesting in the context of PTSD and depression lately and there are many research projects and treatment schemes. The combination with Virtual Reality is an interesting option (see appendix).

Ketamin can sedate, incapacitate, and cause short-term memory loss, and some people use it as a date-rape drug, like GHB. Combination with alcohol and other drugs is not advised. There are side-effects like double vision, drowsiness, nausea and physical incapacity at higher (intravenous) doses. The day after taking ketamine, a person may experience disorientation, aches and pains, impaired judgment, anxiety and clumsiness.

22 Other substances, NPS

(In this chapter many substances are mentioned and this might be confusing, so skip this if you are not interested in “specialties”, party drugs, rare herbs etc.)

There are many psychoactive substances, both synthetic and natural, the numbers run in the hundreds and maybe thousands if we count the various species of mushrooms and the many DMT containing plants. Some of the synthetic drugs are already mentioned in the previous chapters and new ones are discovered or synthesized regularly. This book only deals with the most popular of the available psychotropic drugs. There are many more natural ones like Iboga (an oneirogen, deep dream enhancer), these are used in therapy more and more. Nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas, nitrous, nitro, or NOS is quite popular, even with much younger kids these days, and relatively harmless. It is not really a strong psychedelic but has some mild psychoactive and stimulating effects and makes one talk funny. It's still a “legal high” of sorts, as are substances that have still escaped as being listed, but umbrella legislation kind of limits this more and more.

Alternatives, MDA, GHB, PCP

There are many synthetic drugs on the market, some of the top selling drugs will be discussed briefly.

Already in 1910 MDA (3,4-methyleendioxyamfetamine), which is very closely related to MDMA, was synthesized by G. Mannish and W. Jacobson. In the '60 it popped up in the drug scene. Because it was sometimes used in psychiatry as a potential therapy for Parkinson's disease (!) it was relatively cheap and easily available. At normal doses (80 to 160 mg) MDA causes an euphoric high that usually takes about 4 to 6 hours. The effects are similar to XTC but are often experienced as heavier, speedier and more hallucinatory. MDMA pills often contain some MDA.

Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate (GHB) is used in the party circuit, sometimes used as a rape-drug (slipping the nearly tasteless, little saltyfluid in someone's drink). It's effects are like being drunk, calming, relaxing, happy, not halluconigenic. It was used by body builders, but is now quite common in certain circles, but fairly unhealthy and very addictive.

Not a good choice for self-discovery!! GHB is based on GBL (Gamma-butyrolacton), which is a drug in itself.

Angel Dust or PCP (Phencyclidine or Phencyclidine)- is a hallucinogenic and dissociative drug (ego-dissolving). PCP's effects include sedation, immobility, amnesia, and marked analgesia. It can induce feelings of detachment from surroundings and self, numbness, slurred speech, loss of coordination accompanied by a sense of strength and invulnerability. A blank stare (catatonic), rapid and involuntary eye movements are the more observable effects. Higher doses of PCP produce hallucinations. The effects of PCP vary by the way of administering and dose, it is addictive to some degree. Not a wise choice for ritual use or self-discovery.

Herbs and plants

Nearly every culture has found its own psychoactive and psychotropic substances, often based on plants, although the Bufotenin Bufo Alvarius (the Sonora Toad) comes from the animal world and some insects might contain similar substances. It has to be noted that DMT (dimethyltryptamine) is also present in the human body, it's not foreign to our chemical composition.



Many plants and mushrooms contain psycho-active components and were discovered as powerful tools in self-exploration, healing etc. Such effects were sometimes seen as a gift from the plants, which then were called teacher plants like ayahuasca. However, such discoveries also resulted from studying how animals or even insects like such substances.

Alcohol, like in wine and fermented fruits, is obviously psycho-active and can cause hallucinations and dissociation, and shows up in many rituals, in some cases it can be a helpful tool in therapy. Cacao and tobacco were American, but there is kratom in Asia, hashish was around in the Near-East, iboga in central Africa, khat (cathinone) in Ethiopia, amanita in Siberia, Iboga in Africa, the list goes on.

On the internet many of these substances can be found, by description and often for purchase, as the legality varies, some things can be legally sold in one country, but not elsewhere, so internet and some smart packaging open the back door.

Smartshops are, also on the internet, selling all kinds of herbs and stuff, like growkits for 'real' mushrooms, cannabis seeds, but also many smart

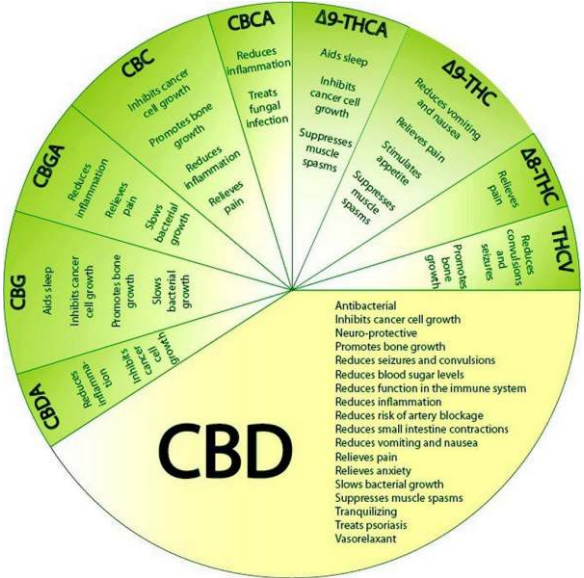
drugs, named thus because they are supposed to stimulate the mind and improve the memory. These include many herbal energy substances like Guarana, Cola nut, mild sedatives like Blue Lotus flower seeds, relaxation herbs like Kratom, Skullcap, Valerian or aphrodisiacs like Muira puama, Ginkgo biloba, among others. Things like Somali Khat (the shrub *Catha eduli*), *Salvia divinorum*, Iboga, Morning Glory seeds, *Argyrea nervosa* or Ephedra are, some for good reasons, not legal anymore, but there are many, many other plants that have special effects.



New 'special' herbs and plants are found all the time and freely sold for a while, until they become register-drugs and illegal. The herbs and concoctions are sold under many guises, often combined in a capsule or pill, but the salespeople (in a shop) usually do indicate what is in it and what effect can be expected, even as the producers don't like to put this on the product. On the internet much more can be obtained, often with less information about the contents and with off-shore ordering there is the risk that customs will find out what is shipped and problems may arise. Substances with a relaxing, sedating, stimulating or psychedelic quality, and these usually overlap, are abundant in nature and many are used, often in combinations and given some extra 'kick' by adding things like synthetic cannabinoids or other, stronger additives usually not mentioned on the package.

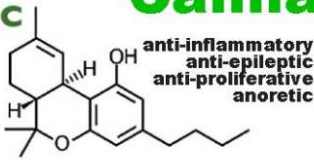
Marketing of these compounds mimics all the tricks and manipulations of the 'normal' society. They are imported and traded under many names, sometimes called 'bath salts' or 'herbal tea' because import under that label is easier.

**Designer drugs:
New Psychedelic**

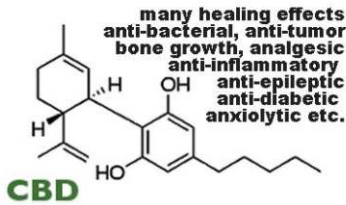
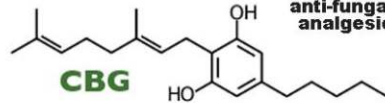


Cannabinoids

THC



bone-stimulant
anti-bacterial
anti-fungal
analgesic



Substances (NPS)

An illegal psychotropic drug is a drug that fits the february 1971 Vienna “Convention on psychotropic Substances” but since then the number of substances has increased enormously, mostly because of newly synthesized concoctions.

The new synthetic drugs, now usually called NPS are often labeled as ‘club drugs’ bor “party drugs” because the milieu they are used in, or ‘designer drugs’. For a while they were called “legal high”, but legislation as outlawed them, en new umbrella laws deem all substances with similar psycho-active effects illegal and listed.

These substances are newly discovered or synthesized, but some were known for some time, like 2-CB, Ketamine and MDMA (XTC) and their psychotropic qualities were not noticed at first. MDMA was first used in the underground psychedelic movement for therapeutic use, before it became a mass-market recreational drug. Ketamine was used as an anesthetic for animals, but it’s dissociative qualities (ego-dissolving) are now seen as very special, potentially with large therapeutic benefits

Many of these drugs emerge and disappear again, as their effects were not satisfactory for the intended audience or the materials needed to make them (precursors) are too hard to obtain. Some become ever-greens, like 4-FA, 2C-B, 4-MMC and 3-MMC. or become popular like the Fentanyls because of medical overdistribution of prescription drugs.

The new synthetic compounds were popping up at an increasing rate, scores of new 'drugs' hit the market, some similar to natural compounds like the cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones like mephedrone, MDPV (3,4-methylenedioxypropylamphetamine) and methylone, also very strong ones like the LSD-like 25-I (25i) or 25i-NBOMe. The more common substances are sold as pills in the club-circuit like MDA, PCP and the many kinds of speed (amphetamines). The rate of innovation has somewhat subsided recently, also because of the CoVid-crisis, which has limited the whole party scene dramatically.

The list of NPS substances, however, is enormous, just to mention a few names (many have other slang names like meow meow-DRONE, Mephedrone-4-MMC or Benzo Fury 6-ABP), there are 2-CI, 5I-NBOMe, 4-4'DMAR, 5-IT, AH-7921, STP, DOM, 4-FMP, MDPV, TMA-2, Methoxetamine (MXE), MT-45, benzylmorphine, DOB, PEPAP, PMMA, AM-220, 1M-2201, DET, 2C-T-2, DMHP, 2C-I, Methylone, Methcathinone, MPPP, Para-fluorofentanyl, Acetyl- α -methylfentanyl, Tetrahydrocannabinol, AL-LAD, LSZ, 1P-LSD, poppers (amyl/alkyl nitrites), etc. etc.

They range from stimulants like speed (amphetamine) to more contact-oriented empathogens or entactogens, with all kinds of effect, sometimes sexually stimulation, some are creativity enhancers, allow spiritual transcendence, some making one clearhearing, especially sensitive to specific sounds or colors, magic or ESP-enhancing, physically overperforming (like in sports), being able to communicate with animals or plants, it's an amazing array of potentiality and danger like with rape-drugs like Rohypnol, Ketamin and GHB. Much of this has been anecdotally mentioned, but very little fundamental research has been published. The military and security agencies have experimented a lot with many substances, but their findings are kept secret.

Such 'research chemicals', mostly tryptamine (like DMT) and phenethylamine (like 2CB, 4FA) compounds and synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones are discovered or invented by scientists with an interest in medical drug development, similar to how Albert Hofmann discovered LSD, by people interested in creating something outside the legal confines and yet (for a while till the law forbids them) catering to the age-old human desires for spiritual self-transcendence, hedonism and recreation, and of course greed for the designers/producers/dealers.

Alexander Shulgin (and his wife Anne) has, in a sense, opened a can of worms with his research into psycho-active compounds with their books Tikhhal and Pikhhal.

Today all over the world people are creating new psycho-active and psychotropic substances, for criminal gain, personal curiosity or scientific research, it's big business and the health risks are serious. It's often just a step away from using cocaine and may lead to serious hard drug addiction.

Problems with NPS

When buying such substances, one never knows what the exact formulation is, what additions are part of it, what the exact dose is per pill, and what the effect one could expect. They all look alike, the small signs on the pills may help to identify where they came from, but it's more or less a guess. It's not uncommon and maybe sensible for groups to purchase more pills and have someone just have a try-out. In many pills sold as MDMA there is MDA, mCPP, PMA, PCP or PMMA and also the strength varies, is actually increasing as one puts more of the active ingredients in the pills for a more and more demanding clientele.

The strength of a pill can cause different effects. In some cases a small dose is stimulating, a higher dose more relaxing or euphoric. Too much may lead to physical discomfort (pain in the jaws) or overdosing. If that happens, bring a similar pill to the doctor or hospitals as dealing with NPS's requires knowing what substance caused the problems.

Most of these substances are sold in the circuit, but can be obtained from the internet. Then there is the risk that the pill doesn't contain what is claimed, has a different dose, but also the legality of the purchase is an issue. Customs or DEA may stop the shipment and take action against the buyer, even if the purchase was legal in the country of origin.

Alternative use of medical drugs, Fentanyl

Many psychedelic substances are prescription drugs, like ketamine, GHB, PCP but illegally used for tripping.

Over the counter drugs like cough medicine contain dextromethorphan and many prescription drugs are also (ab)used for the psychoactive, relaxing or sedating effects and can be addictive. Prescription cough medications may contain codeine or pseudoephedrine.

Some prescription drugs are also used as psych-active stimulants and could be seen as NPS, notably stimulants for ADHD like Concerta/Ritalin (methylphenidate), Adderall XR (amphetamine). Students found out it helps them to perform better in class and during exams and this has become fairly widespread, also among professionals in business, etc. subject to stress.

Fentanyl (Sandoz) is also more and more used and sold under various names. It is becoming one of the serious problems concerning drug abuse. It is not very hallucinogenic and psychedelic, but very psycho-active as an escape option and narcotic. Officially used for the long-term management of pain that is severe enough to require daily around-the-clock pain relievers, when other treatments don't work. Synthetic opioids like Fentanyl and analogues like Oxycodone and MT-45 are being the dominant and fastest growing psycho-active drugs in some countries, especially where painkillers like Oxycodone (Oxycontin) have been pushed by Big Pharma and distributed widely and have made many, many people dependent on such drugs.

23 Why and how do they work?

In the chapter about identity and personalities we already outlined the idea, that psycho-active substances help us to let go of our masks, help us to relate to the true self or higher self, the inner child stuff deeply hidden.

But there are other perspectives. Philosophers and scientist have tried to explain the mind and thinking. Modern materialist science has come up with complex explanations how electrical impulses and chemical processes happening in our brain and body produce thoughts, emotions, changes and happiness. However, with all this knowledge and data obtained with modern instruments and scans we have no idea what life is, and nobody has been able to identify a thought any better than as some activity at some time somewhere in the complex matter in our head. And maybe thinking is nothing but using the tuning function of our brain cells (and junk-DNA may be instrumental in this) to tap into a wider consciousness.

What happens in your brain

The scientists have found all kinds of electrical activity and chemical reactions happening in your brain when using these substances. The mechanisms and processes of hormones, neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and many others are well known. With modern MRI and other scans one can see where and when activities happen. The question is whether the chemical and electrical changes are directly related to what one thinks and experiences.

The materialist are sure that this is the case, that thoughts are just that, the electrical and chemical processes. But maybe it works different, maybe the brain is just like a tuner or antenna (using junk DNA?), picking up information from beyond the material plane. The material processes and responses are then less relevant, and the way psychedelics really work might be totally different from what the brain-researchers can trace.

Chemistry or functionality

It's not necessary here to go into all the details of the chemical and biological process. It suffices to note that there is an important role for the serotonin (5-HT_{2A}) receptor. Activation of the 5-HT_{2A} receptor is neces-

sary for the effects of the “classic” psychedelics classes like LSD (ergoline), psilocin from mushrooms (tryptamine) and mescaline (phenethylamine). So beyond the complex stories of hormones, neurotransmitters, serotonin, oxytocin, dopamine and the interesting but complex pictures of where what brain activity happens, let’s focus on what psychedelics do, how they work at a somewhat higher level of abstraction.

Enhanced perception is what seems to happen during a trip, but also we seem to create more easily, as we perceive also other worlds, visuals and insights, things that we ourselves make up, the imagination in overdrive.

There are a number of explanations how psychedelics work. Robin Carhart-Harris thinks, based on brain-scan research, that there are two basic principles of what classic psychedelics do.

The first is disintegration: The parts that make up different networks in the brain become less cohesive. The second is desegregation: The systems that specialize for particular functions as the brain develops become “less different” from each other.

Psychedelics thus dissolve patterns and organization, introducing “a kind of chaos”, with sometimes beneficial results

Psychiatrist Ben Sessa puts things more simply, he thinks they offer an opportunity to “press the reset button” and give patients a new experience of a personal narrative.

Here Aldous Huxley’s ‘Mind at Large’ concept, indicating a connection to the all, comes to mind. He looked much wider, expanding the idea of what the ‘otherworld’ means. His notion of a Mind At Large as in “The Doors” that:

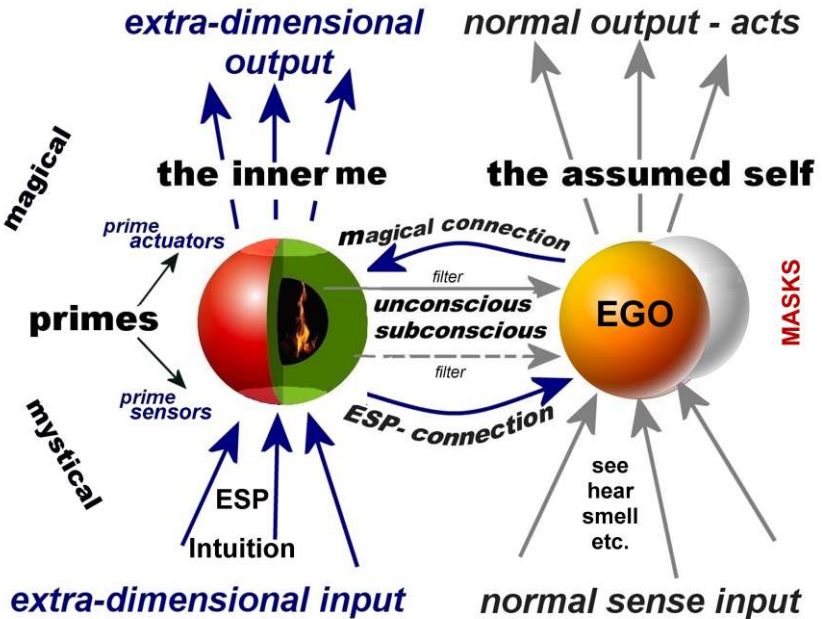
“each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The function of the brain and nervous system is to protect us from being overwhelmed and confused by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge, by shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember at any moment, and leaving only that very small and special selection which is likely to be practically useful.”

points at a wider reality out there we are all connected to, but filter, shut out. We could call this extradimensional, divine, the objective dimen-

sion, the Akashic or refer to the quantum-physical 11-dimensional model.

Aldous Huxley’s ideas of what psychedelics do as in “Doors of Perception (1954)” has had much influence. Huxley posed that psychedelic drugs act by disabling the filters that block or suppress information or signals to reach the conscious mind and in a way open us to new experiences. The human mind in his view filters reality, out of necessity, as there is too much input to handle. We perceive what we can handle, colored and limited by our filters. We are thus protecting ourselves normally from an overwhelming input of the senses by filtering, limiting what comes in. Psychedelics loosen the filters and allow more to come in, be perceived, processed into new realities and imaginative imagery. With a drug like mescaline, Huxley noted, one experiences and sees much more, becomes aware of visual cues normally not noticed, hears better etc. The sensory perception is heightened and this is what most people pick up from their “trips”.

Here an alternative explanation is developed, assuming that we are not only experiencing the normal input of the five (and some) senses, but also are open to what could be generally described as ‘thought-field



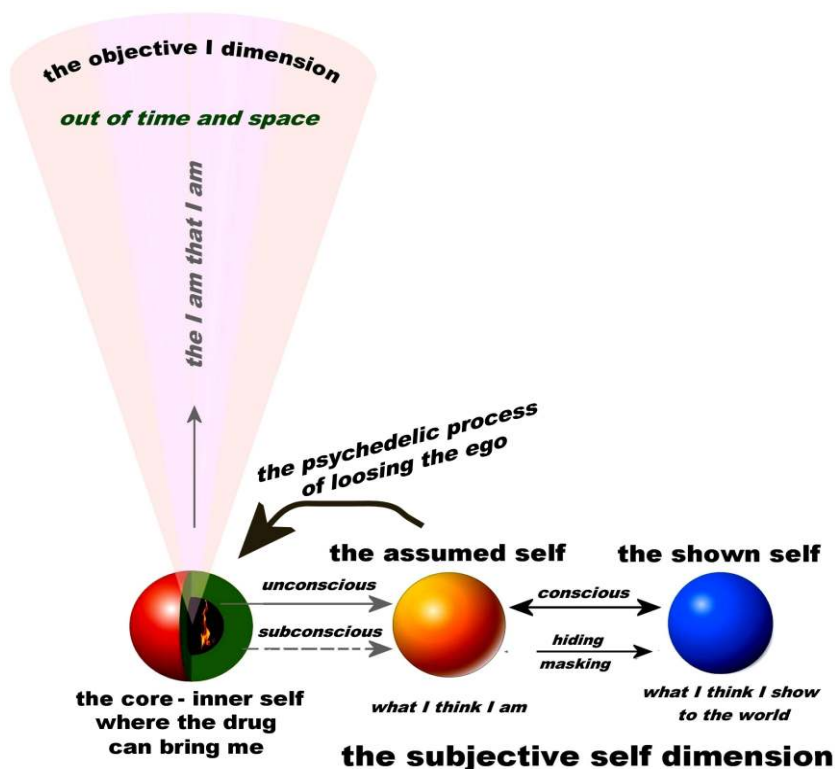
waves' or consciousness-field waves by less obvious senses. This is what we perceive as intuition from others, but maybe also from animals, plants, and matter, things like beauty, justice, danger. This we all know at some level, and it involves telepathy and ESP but is probably much wider, it is the stream of information (by lack of a better word) that engulfs us. It is information that is very effective, via the back door, in influencing our actions and thoughts. Humans have more senses than the classical five, but especially our very primal (intuitive) senses (primes) for intangibles like beauty, justice, kin, balance, and love are mostly ignored in theories about perception. Yet they do play a role, most of our decisions are based on these intangibles. They influence the build-up of our defense systems, our masks; the development of our self-state (assumed self or ego, also indicated as mask) en thus our whole demeanor.

These defense systems (there can be more than one mask or ego state) are necessary, they are filters protecting us from overload as Huxley noted. Now what if psychedelics help us to better (not less) filter that incoming multitude of primal signals, shielding us from disturbing intuitions and thought-waves? This would free our brain from putting energy in keeping the defenses up, and allows concentration on what really matters. We would be more free, we can drop our ego (defense) masks, not waste energy and can now experience the world e as less limited, unfettered, an exciting trip. We would open our doors of perception and imagination, but in a different way, the reverse of what Huxley posed. We would be freed to use all our 'normal' senses in a more 'open' way, see, hear and feel more intense.

Now there is some support for this explanation. The feeling of being free from outside thought impulses, the stopping of the flutter, the monkey talk inside, is what many experience with certain drugs, entheogens



and psychedelics. Brain research (with psilocybin) has shown that in a psychedelic state there is actually less brain activity than in a 'normal' state, something also observed with meditation and trance states. With LSD there is, however, much more visual brain activity everywhere.



This all could indicate that what we experience has little to do with the processes at the material level, but that some other mechanism is behind what we call thinking or experiencing. Maybe psychedelics only help to shield us from the constant stream of thoughts (thought-waves) around us, help us to concentrate and diminish the need for shielding; of protecting us by way of our ego-personality as armor. They thus give the impression our senses are enhanced, while they are only liberated from the protective work they normally have to do.

So in this view taking psychedelics is a paradoxical process, eliminating or suppressing the need to defend ourselves. We can let go of our masks as we eliminate the noise of thought-waves coming from others. There-

fore we are free to feel more and open wider our normal senses. The problem in this model is that we would close our special senses (our primes) to achieve this. To use them in this state would require training and experience, but isn't this what shamans and prophets are supposed to master?

This explanation in a way assumes that "thought waves" are different from the normal sensory input, they are only part of the extra-dimensional whole. Blocking them (closing the filters) opens us (or maybe only experienced trippers) up to other frequencies and layers in the classical and meta-dimensional sense. We can see, hear, feel, perceive more, tune in to whole new levels of experience and also allow more 'inner input'. This is clear when the closed and open eye hallucinations become the same, and even at the brain-scan level this is illustrated (see page 80, David Nutt), there is no difference in the brain activity. Nutt states: "*It seems increasingly evident that psychedelics reduce the stability and integrity of well-established brain networks ... and simultaneously reduce the degree of separateness or segregation between them ... that is, they induce network disintegration and desegregation. Importantly, these effects are consistent with the more general principle that cortical brain activity becomes more "entropic" under psychedelics.*"

When we let go of the filtering (and trying to rationalize and understand) we are open to what is inside and, paradoxically to what those external thought waves contain.

The 'initiated' can even enter the realm of the normally unseen, unfelt, the extrasensory, the clear knowing, the magical realm, where we connect to what we can call ultimate consciousness, love, chi, or Mind-at-Large; where ordinary space and time dimensions



Reality creation

What we think is real is no more than what we create, with our mind. The deep, ultimately divine reality can only be approached when in our deepest core, other states of consciousness create illusory realities. Tripping brings us closer, but not all the way.

become irrelevant.

Letting go of the ego, our assumed self, is what a trip can do. This is what many experience, one finds the 'true self', the inner fire, the objective I, no longer limited by subjective self-illusions. Once we reach the normally hidden inner me, the I that is beyond time and space, we can experience the magical but also realize how illusionary our ego and our identity is, and maybe decide to live without that mask or clean it up. Reaching and realizing the hidden sub- and unconscious can free us from our traumatic past, deprogram and clear the slate.

In this process we may encounter things that are not so nice, perceive them as demons or entities, as something outside of us. It doesn't matter much if you believe or not that there is a realm where these energies reside, they do appear and are perceived as real. Sometimes they are related to memories, but they can also originate from other people. If the person next to you (or the sitter) projects something, you will pick it up, good or bad. This effect is what makes group experiences more intense, you might not only fight your own demons, but those of your co-voyagers.

This whole process als model makes clear why we need such careful 'set and setting' preparation, we are opening up ourselves to the full awareness of the inner machinery of the mind, where a connection with the otherworld is possible.

This can bring great insights, but also dangers. There are hidden corners and rooms in our mind and body memory, that are maybe better left closed, certainly when the setting is not congenial to what arises. Tim Leary used to say there are no bad trips, only heavy learning experiences. We all know. however, that if the setting isn't right, negative and dramatic things can and do happen. People can get into loops, experience too much sensorial impact, have physical problems, but careful and loving planning can help to limits this. The setting is what helps a person to relax, feel safe and open to suggestions.

24 Imagery, guided visualizations

The visual effects of ingesting a psychedelic substance can be very impressive and mind-boggling, with amazing colors and patterns, weird but beautiful spaces and with great freedom to move and change the imagery. Going with the flow will bring you to visual realms, if not totally new dimensions, where causality, time, order and symmetry manifest in always different, but immensely beautiful and strangely complex ways. The crystalline structures, organic flowforms, angels, divinities and sometimes strange animals and entities, the snakes, jaguars, spiders; they all convey messages that originate and influence at some deep level, they are a mirror or a peek into what lives in the subconscious psyche and in what Jung called the collective unconscious.

For many the fantastic imagery are what they remember most clearly. Visuals are maybe not the only and maybe not even the most important effect for you. Sounds, feelings, touch, smells and taste and above all the primal senses of beauty, justice, kin and such play a role too. Imagery also does not need to be only visual, auditory and/or kinesthetic shaping is certainly possible and for some the natural mode of inner experience. Your intelligence and imagination, which in the trip feels expanded and amplified, may not be cognitive, but come through in many ways, in gestures, melodies, art, or just that special kiss for a loved one. The great lover inside you may come to the surface!

The visual effects in a trip manifest with closed eyes (CEV: Closed Eye Visuals), but also with open eyes (OEV: Open Eye Visuals). Sometimes there is no difference between open and closed eyes, this can be a reason for panic, the link with normal reality is lost (but will come back as the trip runs out). Using eyeshades or a blindfold may help to concentrate. The imagery does not always happen so intensely, the visuals depend also on the food and body status, especially the liver plays a role and with many substances the visual effects fade with time and usage. The first trip for many is the most impressive.

The trip removes the barriers between the inner and outer worlds, what you see or feel inside manifests in the outer reality and vice versa. It's like being in love; the right music, the right things just happen miracu-

lously. You dance, you resonate with the music, inside and outside become one, the senses mix, you may see the music, feel the colors.

Help in seeing with the third eye

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 or they only feel (kinesthetic) or hear things. But it seems that psychedelic substances are helpful in this respect for nearly everyone; you imagine or focus on the most beautiful or relevant images and you really see what you think about. Tripping makes seeing things with your inner eye (third eye) and manipulation of imagery easier. A psychedelic journey can be a real discovery in this respect, you can watch and learn how to develop and deal with this talent and you can try it later without taking anything.

Using the imagery, healing the body

Seeing wonderful imagery in a trip is nice, but using the imagery and making your imagination work willfully for you (or for others as a shaman does) is also possible. Controlled or guided visualization is different from just enjoying what appears by itself.

Creating certain images and thus imagined realities by yourself or with the help of someone or a recording can be a great help in changing your belief system, help your body to heal or look for insights about yourself or the world.

Such visualizations can be applied in many fields. In sports it is now nearly mainstream, but such techniques can be used in arts, in therapy (regression, hypnosis) and even for superlearning and memory enhancement.

Visualization (or imagining in another sense mode) of your body can be very rewarding. Think about scanning the body and organs to see and then feel blockages, energy points like chakras, perceive different layers, the etheric and higher bodies; in general understanding that the physical is a manifestation of the spiritual. Healing, by understanding the root causes and processes is possible, concentrating positive energy and light on specific organs is a step towards a cure. If you feel you can do this, and have permission to do so, you can concentrate on others, even give positive energy to organizations, countries, the world, the cosmos.

Using this to improve creativity, physical capabilities and what not, is not new. Not only in peaceful times, there are many stories about the use

of visualization (often helped by ingesting or smoking something) in war, in hunting; sorcery and witchcraft traditions often use visualization as their main tool! According to the Ancient Masters and magicians it is thus possible to influence reality with your mind and a trip enhances this capability.

Religions and spiritual schools all over the world use these techniques, but so do the management-gurus and happiness-peddlers. Hypnosis and suggestion, using imagery can be used in many ways, not always positive, so be careful. Listen to talks or suggestions during a trip may plant the good, but also the wrong ideas in your head.

Because of the susceptibility and suggestibility during a psychedelic trip the guided visualizations that are often used in 'straight' therapeutic sessions can become real power tools in the right set and setting and with an appropriate substance.

Guided visualizations, hypnosis, regression

This means using an external support, a person or voice guiding you through an inner adventure. This can be live but also a CD or audio track or someone on Skype. You can find such material on the internet, buy it, make it yourself, or ask someone to help you. Some people are very good at this work, they guide you, so to say, on the journey to the self. This is called 'guided visualization'; someone who as a guide helps, gives directions and stimulates you. It is also called hypnosis and when used to go back to childhood or even prior lives, regression. It can be used in a trip.

The course, intention and the duration of such a visualization is flexible. Everyone has different projects, problems, wishes. In general there is a relaxation phase (induction), in which you relax, listen to music, 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. You slowly start to respond to suggestions that, for instance, you are lyence 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.

Visualization is an age-old technique, that we are slowly rediscovering. It was not only something for witches doing magic, but was used as a

memory technique and people would sleep in a church (incubation) to have dreams and visions. There is always a deep core of 'visions' and inner experiences at the heart of a tradition. The priests, shamans or monks use visualization to strengthen their will, dedication, powers of concentration and time-travel. They also do work with physical objects and totems, but these are merely ritual supports for what they plot in their heads.

Buddhism uses visualization in many exercises and meditations, think about the complex but symmetric images painted on silk (tangkhas). To create, reproduce and manipulate the images with the eyes closed is an exercise in visualizing and that can turn out to be a very mystical experience. A lesson from that tradition; circular mandalas can be very insightful and it helps to draw something similar on a comfortable bed in nature and enter an adventure in your mind, that feels like real.

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 into a dark space where you can make peace with deeper feelings, projections and thoughts. Your hidden, often sexual or violent fantasies can become reality, at least in the trip, but you can also seek for answers why and how these fantasies emerge. The guide can suggest you to call upon people, dead or alive, in your 'dream' and seek answers. You can also meet or consult your parents and other people (perhaps through messengers or gifts), watch videos, find hidden treasures (messages) or read inscriptions.

If you fly upwards, to a more spiritual place - then you go to the overworld, your own paradise. This is the place where you can also roam and seek answers, meet teachers, parents, talk to animals, whatever comes up, you will visualize it and experience it as real. That's why suggestion work so well in this state. It is good to search for support from nature, entities, look for a safe spot, maybe a secret cave and take a look at what you keep hidden there. A whole repertoire of archetypal symbols will maybe manifest. 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.

Of course the guide can't see these worlds for you, but suggests general thinks and maybe needs some feedback, words or gestures and watches your body state, breath and emotions to help you.

Building your dream temple

A special technique, also used by the Arica Institute, is the building of your own dream castle or temple through visualization. An inner temple for prayer, consultation and meditation, in your head. You can build this step by step; you start with a case for the things that you want to get rid of, then you imagine an altar, a cabin, a chair, statues and you start enlarging it step by step; eventually you build a whole dream sanctuary, counselors included. To do this without support you will need several sessions, but some psychedelic stimuli help you to build it faster.

The idea behind this is that you can keep visiting your imaginary dream temple at a later time, to contact your deeper self. If this truly becomes part of you then you can ask for counsel there or find solutions for problems. Although it requires some effort, it is a nice and powerful technique with old roots. We know that Saint Augustine used a similar 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 (human and spiritual) guides; 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.

25 The toolbox

In this book a number of tools has been mentioned, that can be used in a trip-session. Tools to make the trip safer, more enjoyable or a better tool for self exploration and spiritual self discovery.

Just think of what is available as a toolbox, and planning ahead about what your toolbox contains makes sense. Most of the things have been mentioned before, but listed here as a reminder and framework. It might be a good idea to discuss this toolbox list with a close friend or relative, as they may have suggestions that make sense and probably know your blind spots better than you. Do realize that planning ahead and making an agenda helps, but the actual trip may be completely different, which is fine too.

Set and setting

How do you feel, what's your mood, your mindset, your body (are the complaints, pains, what have you eaten, a diet to prepare can be important). Are you comfortable, can you control the temperature, fresh air, is there enough to drink, maybe some food, also afterwards when chilling out? Do you have a place or opportunity to really be alone with yourself, in a group setting this might require some planning, but can be essential for your process.

What's the goal of the trip

Is there an agenda, a bucket list? You can anchor that with a little object, like a stone in your pocket, so you will be reminded during the trip.

Environment, practical things

Music is important, but also access to a mirror, eye shades, ear plugs, books, a pen and paper, a recording device, camera, crayons or other creative tools, to make new things or keep track of your wanderings in the trip-world. Your notes may or may not make sense afterwards, but writing things down can help to escape from loops (repetitions that kind of lock you in). Are there maybe some tools to help you physically exercise, like dumbbells, a yoga mat. Do you have clothes ready for when you want to go out (not advisable for first times).

Safety, timing, emergency contacts

Did you contemplate what could go wrong? Like when your parents, children, the police show up. What if turns out you are overdosing. Whom to call? A note if things go awry (like with a sample of what you took) makes sense. Did you leave enough time for recovery?

Sitters or people around

The people are part of the setting, and their energy influences the trip. Is there someone to keep an eye on you, what help do you allow, can you be touched, hugged, comforted and in what way. If it's a group session have you set your boundaries and communicated them?

What do you have around?

Did you think about some things that contain or represent memories, pictures, video, music, smells, tastes, nature, crystals. Smells are strong anchors, maybe a fruit, a perfume or spice that triggers memories, Maybe there is a psychological assessment, an astrological chart, some papers you wrote, a pendulum?

Are there phone calls (with or without video) you might want to make, like with a friend or therapist. Do you inform them of the possibility?

Therapeutic tools like meditation, guided visualizations, hypnosis, NLP, self-tests, EMDR, mandala painting, voice dialogue.. One can make a playlist of such things.

Body work

Do you have oil etc. around for (self)-massage, touch, body scan, breath work, sex tools?

Sex

You can escape it, but sex and relationships are major issues for most of us. Can you be free enough to not only think, but maybe engage with the dark sides in you there, with yourself or others. What tools could you use, how overcome your shame and traumas. Talk this through with sitters or the group? A frightening subject, but don't ignore this!

Challenges

Does your (mental or written down) agenda involves challenges, traumas, nasty memories from you childhood, disputes with parents, your boss, etc.. The things you don't want to face are probably the most rewarding.

Chill-out

Enough time, enough comfort, enough isolation to fully process the trip' and the insights?

Aftermath, evaluation

By yourself, with your sitter, friends, a therapist? This is when you can anchor the lessons, make decisions about changes in your life, your relationships, modus operandi. Change starts now!

26 What can parents and schools do?

How to deal with kids that want to take mushrooms, pills, marijuana or have already taken them? That question comes up as more and more parents, schoolteachers, doctors and counselors come across drug use. A ban on drugs is not usually effective, so much is clear, and even stringent control and penalty doesn't seem to help much. Kids will try them anyway and won't tell you, many youngsters admit they fooled their parents for years. And not only adolescents, even kids under 10 years old may experiment with laughing gas or hear stories.

Although taking drugs of any kind is certainly not restricted to any age group, these days many people in their fifties and sixties or even older will try it for the first time (with usually) good results, it's mostly the young that will experiment a bit carelessly and get into trouble. It is the group of teenagers and young adults that the authorities, parents and teachers are concerned with, also because the cognitive development isn't complete and could be hampered by the use. So what to do?

Ignore it, forbid it, accept it or even stimulate it?

These questions are not so easy, as not only personal opinion matters, but also how peer groups, society, the Law, the System, the Church 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, for many reasons and maybe not very well informed, but denying it is not wise; the issue will come up. Curiosity, hormone push or peer pressure at school might seduce or even force your kids to experiment. Your kids might go from a little grass or hash to a little mushrooms, not feel much of a difference and then take the step to other more serious drugs, some very addictive and dangerous. It's often the gradual upgrading, the habituation that happens because of peer pressure that leads to problems and moving on to more harmful drugs, and where good information and a warning matters and is needed. Without openly discussing the matter, however, it just happens. The only way to tackle this situation is good communication and valid and real information, not the scare stuff that they know is fake. The process

otherwise takes its course. A little puff with little effects, let's take some more, but already the effects wear out. One gets used to it in a recreational setting, tolerance sets in, they are often not even suspecting what a real dose would do.

There is even the notion that first time users should not take too small a portion, as that robs them of the true experience. Someone who knows from the start how heavy a mushroom trip can be, will honor the properties the next time and not chew a few dried mushies casually.

There are actually two schools among the psychiatrists that have worked with psychedelics. One that advocates the small dose, many time approach and another that aims at a break-through by using a larger dose, but only once. The idea is that breaking through the defense mechanisms and accessing the root problems requires a strong effort, a confrontation.

The authorities are, rightfully, worried and warning about the effects on health and educational results. It would, however, be a good thing if there would be more research into long term health effects, the influence on mental capabilities, school results, etc.. The worst is, and this needs to be stressed, that these substances have become criminalized and users run serious risks because of that. The war on drugs (or should we talk about the war of drugs?) has victimized too many!!

In societies where these kind of psychedelic experiences are common, 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. But the medical world does warn for harm if using very young. Depending on age there is some 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 with older users, who become more communicative, more open than hyper. This might have to do with what kind of 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.

Is it dangerous for my children?

The dangers of a psychedelic trip are real, but compared to alcohol, cigarettes and serious hard drugs they are not very serious or common. The use doesn't normally lead to aggression, although a somewhat inflated

ego image is not uncommon. There is certainly stimulation and an energy boost, it can be an aphrodisiac, but the opening of the heart and an increased body awareness are no great 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.

Psychedelics are not addictive and less dangerous than marijuana in so far as that very few users take them every day, while many, also kids, do smoke a regular joint. Habitual use of marijuana, grass, joints or hash and also speed has more damaging effects than occasional psychedelics. If you know what to look for you can spot if kids are using something. With speed and joints they tend to become a bit lethargic or lazy and their grades and school results will go down, and that's what parents are worried about. Psychedelics may have a more positive effect, but of course popping pills every weekend is not really beneficial.

Pusher pressure

What certainly should not be tolerated is pusher or dealer pressure, meaning that those who sell drugs will influence kids to try it, give free samples but really aim at addiction and repeat business. The dealers and pushers of course like to have a captive audience, but for instance LSD or mushrooms are not really their line, psychedelics are not addictive. The experience with marijuana and speeds in many schools makes clear that schools, youth centers and such are often 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.

Will my kid tell me?

Many parents hear stories about the widespread use of laughing gas, marijuana, XTC and shrooms from their children or other parents. 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 sometime or already did. They are maybe just testing your response. Peer pressure, the thirst for adventure, the mere fact that the parents or the school disapprove, 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. A good discussion about drugs and other things, in an open communication mode, can at least help to get the message across that this could be dangerous and why, and how to limit the risks.

How do I tell my parents and tripping together?

Often an initial experience is so shocking or deep, that children do want to talk about it, or they feel that an open channel of communication about this is better than hiding what they do. Now it may not be easy to break the news or start a conversation about the fact that one wants to try using something or already has used, but dropping clues may help to break the ice. Leaving this or similar books lying around, marking documentaries about psychedelics on Netflix, having a friend talk about it, one can create an opportunity, an incentive or moment to talk.

Of course there are situations where this is less appropriate, for instance when the school wants parents to snitch on their kids (or vice versa) or when the mindset of the parents is really too much set and closed. In general however, open conversation is the best approach, discussing dangers and maybe setting limits, talking about what a good set and setting would be.

The idea to actually share the trip-experience with parents is not so far-fetched. Especially between family members relations with often hidden irritations or worse, traumas, could benefit a lot from making a trip together. Just as psychedelic therapy can help to mend and improve relationships between partners, this may work for family relations. One can even do this in settings like 'systemic constellations' or family constellations (Bert Hellinger) or other approaches for improving family situations.

A step further is the use of these substances when serious illnesses, like terminal diseases, may call for what we could call serious cleaning the slate, a last moment of sharing. The urgency of the situation and the need to say what always was hidden or needs to be said one last time could well benefit from some chemical help. There are many reports about this being a breakthrough, even in situations where dementia has hampered the contact. With some help there may emerge a new level of understanding, of often wordless contact, which will help both the patient to die more peacefully and free the kids or partners left behind; help them in the goodbye and grieving process. If anything, the positive

effects of psychedelics and empathogens at this stage are often so deep and liberating, that more research into this and general use in palliative care is more than warranted.

Unexpected trip: what if something is put in your glass

For mushrooms this is not so easy, but it does happen with other drugs, notable the so-called more or less tasteless rape-drugs like GHB. Slipping a drug in one's drink is quite irresponsible and could lead to serious problems. Sometimes XTC or GHB is put in a drink or given to someone as a harmless pill in order to lower their resistance to sexual approaches. With XTC however 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. GHB is more dangerous, one can pass out.

The problem is, that sometimes the effects become noticed a bit later when nobody is around to indicate that this is a GHB, entheogen (XTC) or psychedelic drug state. The person feels the drug 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 the situation, they will also overreact. 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!

Luckily these days many people know a bit more. They maybe deduct from the situation, the place and the company what might have happened, but even then it's not easy to confirm this; it's not easy to test for indoles like psilocybin or LSD (but possible). DMT testing is even rarer. Knowing what substances were taken is, certainly when problems arise, essential, also for the medical professional called in for help.

In general, it helps if parents and teachers are well informed, not only about the risks and bad effects, but also about the positive aspects. Denial is not a good start of communication about the issue. Being able to talk honest and sensibly, well informed and with an open mind for why and how youngsters are attracted by these magical substances, is the best approach.

Age and use, kids and seniors

There is quite some scientific proof that the use of these substances, but also of alcohol and tobacco at an age when the brain is still developing, will negatively affect the brain and the cognitive abilities later. This means that drug use by younger kids is ill-advised, and the medical world and the authorities do stress this point. The paradox is that the same seemingly does not apply to prescribing drugs like Ritalin to youngsters (sic).

In any case, denying that drug use, even at a fairly young age, is part of modern life, is not a sensible approach. Kids will hear about it, notice others, even their parents, talking about it, using it, and may be tempted or feel peer pressure to experiment. And they will experiment, and most likely not tell their parents, just as they will experiment with cigarettes and alcohol. Many kids can hide this for years, playing the 'nice, well adapted' son or daughter, but secretly using.

And this is not so strange. The effects of many illegal drugs are agreeable, certainly at first and they will not recognize at first there is the gradual path from the relatively harmless to the habitual and addictive. Ignoring the reality and the potential for feeling better, escape hardships, stress and boredom, and just forbid it all isn't working very well. It will prevent kids from sharing their experiences with parents, teachers and those who could help them with a broader and maybe wiser perspective on things.

For older people, the seniors, our parents, talking about these substances and their use also makes sense. They may wrestle with questions about the meaning of life, the inevitability of aging, disease and death. Psychedelics can provide deep insights and help to relax about these issues. The experience for people facing hardship, disabilities and terminal diseases, and making a trip is mostly very positive. Richard Yensen, Albert Kurland and other researchers like Charles Grob collected evidence that psychedelic therapy could be of use to those suffering from anxiety and other problems associated with terminal illness. A small dose to help people make the final passage is not uncommon and seems a much more humane approach than just increasing opiate dosing (morphine).

27 Animals and drugs, teacher plants, shamanism

Using drugs is not exclusively human. All kinds of animals like the psychoactive substances; therefore our notions of animal and human consciousness might need an update. For starters, biologically the brains of animals and humans are very much alike.

Animals also use psychedelics and seek out psychoactive things. It is widely known that animals, once they have tasted alcohol, tobacco or other inebriating substances, can become addicted or at least acquire a taste for them. Smoking monkeys, drunken elephants, marijuana-chewing goats, many animals are quite human in their taste for mood and mind-altering plants. The Italian Giorgio Samorini in 'Animals and Psychedelics' (2002) also referring to earlier work by Ronald Siegel, has shown that there are animals that not only acquired such a taste through human interventions, but by themselves seek the effects of certain plants. This happens not only after accidentally eating a psychoactive plant or fruit, but intentionally.

There are numerous examples. Mammals but also insects like psychoactive substances. Some insects are actively looking for specific plants, flies that seem to drop dead when close to an Amanita mushroom, therefore also called Fly Agaric (sorry for the thus incorrect witch lore), are not dead at all but inebriated, enjoying some kind of trip and will return to life after a few hours.

In many cases it turns out it were not the humans who taught the animals to use them, but humans imitating animal behavior. The mandrills and gorilla's seeking out the root of the strong psychoactive Tabernanthe iboga have inspired the indigenous tribes to use the Iboga root in their Eboka initiation rite of the Bwiti faith. The jaguar shares his name with yahe (yagé), one of the ingredients of ayahuasca, as the vine also is a favorite hangout place for the animal.

When cows discover the effects of certain weeds called 'crazy weeds' they become obsessed with seeking and eating these 'locoweeds' and become even addicted with detrimental results. The interest and sometimes symbiotic existence with certain psychoactive plants can lead to inebriation and addiction, but also to a rather peaceful co-existence. Not all animal 'drug' use is negative or dangerous. Animals can 'abuse' the

substances or live in harmony with them, similar to the way humans deal with 'drugs'. Some are more addictive (and there are clear withdrawal symptoms like with locoweeds), some seem to give just a nice 'buzz'.

Samorini gives many examples of animals seeking out not only for the psychedelic or hallucinogenic effects, but for medical purposes. Cats are known to eat certain grasses that make them puke to clear their stomach. Michael Huffman studied wild chimpanzees in West Africa and noted they intentionally look for medicinal plants, applied as effective anti-parasitic; they have developed a chimp herbalist subculture. Based on all these examples it seems that much of the early medicinal knowledge humans acquired was not theirs, but borrowed from animals by observing their behavior.

The results of animals or insects consuming these substances can of course not be described in cognitive terms, but the behavior of the animals shows that their bodily reactions are similar to what humans experience, including hallucinations. Experiments with animals given LSD and other substances support this.

Assigning some kind of consciousness and intentionality, even free will, to animals is quite a step but the work of Samorini shows that at least the notion of the uniqueness of the humans and the anthropocentric view need some reconsideration.

Looking at behavior, ritual behavior is not specifically human, animals also display various kinds of ritual behavior. Not only mating rituals, they display emotions, as any dog, cat or horse owner knows. To give a striking example, elephants when finding elephant carcasses stop to mourn and even more surprisingly, they mourn longer when it concerns one of their family. Ask yourself, would you recognize the skull of a deceased family member?

One could say that we have inherited (in an evolutionary way) rituals from the animals. Could dreaming, another peculiar trait we share with animals, have even earlier roots and maybe constitute an inheritance from the plant world? Think about teacher plants, how some plant substances induce or enhance telepathic contacts and how dreaming is stimulated under certain trees.

Conscious plants, dreaming, teacher plants

In the context of the ritual use of the ayahuasca brew or peyote these are often regarded as teacher plants, as entities that help us to understand

ourselves and nature. There are many stories of how the plants helped humans to find cures, medicinal plants or edible fruits and in general conveyed information about the plant world to humans. One can speculate that the plant kingdom (including mushrooms etc.) communicates through the dream state. This assumes a kind of consciousness far beyond what science and biology accepts.

The common view is that plants have no neurons and therefore no feelings and no way of internal communication beyond the chemical/ physical. But look at this in another perspective. Animals and humans are in a way just plants that decided to move around and to do so they carry a bit of earth (food) in their stomachs. To do so they had to develop a sense (nervous) system that would allow movement with touch and sight and feedback. Plants remained static, not having locomotion, not moving from place to place and therefore not needing a neurological system. But why should plants not have other senses? They can feel weather changes coming, sometimes seasons ahead. It turns out plants and notably trees are more sensitive and capable of 'willful' actions than was assumed. Trees can communicate via pheromones, influence and use insects to do their territorial defense and physically react to abuse like beating or damage. Also their manipulation of DNA to deal with external situations is remarkable. Plants have much somatic genetic mutation (acquired mutation), a change in the genetic structure that is not inherited from a parent but happens incidentally, and this has been used to develop new strands (sports).

Plants may thus have more consciousness and 'sensations' than generally has been assumed. It actually turns out that the notion of holy trees, influencing people and nature around them in magical ways is not so irrational. That people working with trees often 'talk' to them and ask for permission for instance to fell a tree is maybe less superstitious than one assumed. The communication might be slower and via other senses (like the primes for intangibles like beauty) but talking to trees might be more than a silly new age hobby.

Then there are the fungi, the psychedelic varieties also considered as entities, some religions talk about 'sentient' mushrooms. Mushrooms (the Fungi Kingdom) are not plants, but in fact are much closer to man and animal than plants. They are not dependent on sunlight, some species are more or less free-living and can move or seem to crawl through flagella, a kind of whipping tail. DNA in fungi more closely resembles

the DNA of the inhabitants of the animal kingdom and humans. We are thus in a funny way closely related to mushrooms.

Shamanism

Using psychedelics in a therapeutic session in the Western perspective usually means that the voyager (tripper) is the one ingesting the drug and the therapist assist in the experience, but this is not the traditional way most cultures use these substances. There the shaman, priest or ayahuascero is the one taking the drugs, maybe leading others that also partake, but essentially leading the way to benefit the others, the tribe or a person in need of physical or psychological healing. He enters the otherworld, while a sitter or therapist usually tries to remain grounded and rational. The shaman doesn't care to remain logical or rational, in his trance state all the worlds are connected and there exists another kind of (magical) causality.

The shaman is the experienced guide in the psychedelic world and the most active, not the patient. This is a very different role. The magical perspective of the shaman who communicates and maybe fights with spirits and deities, with nature and the illness as entities, performs psychic healing and all kinds of magical acts doesn't fit in the rational and scientific paradigm. Yet he believes his approach works and that is all that matters to him and his patients and often with miraculous results.

Experience: the teacher-plants

We can learn a lot from psychoactive plants and magic mushrooms. Not only that reality (partly) resides in our awareness, but the plants 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.

28 Microdosing

What is the effect of regularly using a small quantity (microdose) of a substance? The research into the effects of psychedelic drugs (research that was stopped for some 40 years and that is now slowly allowed again) has a materialistic bias toward looking at the causal effects on medical conditions, recognized mental illnesses and such. Not much is done to research the use of these consciousness-altering substances in small quantities for healthy people looking to enhance their life, their creativity, their well-being or their spiritual connection.

Many alto-plano people in the Andes regularly chew coca leaves, and taking a very light dose of mushrooms, less than half a gram daily, seems to benefit 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. The holy men in India often smoke their chillums, chew datura or other strong herbs and seem to be fine with it.

These days many Westerners use a little marijuana regularly and claim to function well in society, in fact many are more relaxed and better able to cope with our stressed world. Physicist Stephen Hawking claims modern smart drugs have made him more intelligent.

So what are the effects of a habitual but very moderate use of entheogens, nootropics (smart drugs) or psychedelics? More and more reports are surfacing of 'normal' people using microdosing of psychedelic substances with good effects, for physical and psychological problems.

These effects are different from where one smokes a lot of hash daily or take pills every weekend; there often the vitality starts to suck as if the users are continually draining their energy. The medical considerations are mostly that being hooked to substances can be detrimental to one's health, but with a low enough dose the negative bodily effects can be minimized. Many people daily take medicinal drugs anyway.

Micro-dosing is thus different from regular use of larger quantities and the mental and spiritual effects of microdosing could be beneficial.

James Fadiman, one of the researchers in the 1960s at the IFAS facility in California spoke about this at the 2013 Horizon Conference. He reports positive results from microdose intake for prolonged periods.

Fadiman defines a micro-dose as 10 micrograms of LSD (or one-fifth

the usual dose of mushrooms). According to Fadiman, Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of LSD, called micro-dosing ‘the most under-researched area of psychedelics.’

Albert Hofmann was a special and admirable person. He lived very conscious, reached a very high age (102) in excellent shape. His mind was open and youthful, interested in people and nature, he was exceptionally clear and aware and one always suspected he was himself taking either small amounts of his ‘problem-child and/or hydergine (another ergot drug invented by him and prescribed for Alzheimer’s). Hofmann seem to have hinted at the possibility that micro-doses of LSD would be a viable alternative to Ritalin (ADHD drug) that also is now sometimes praised as a mind-enhancer.

In Fadiman’s project a growing number of volunteers have taken a micro-dose every third day, while conducting their typical daily routines and maintaining logbooks of their observations and have reported back to Fadiman. His findings suggest that micro-dosing is not at all like a ‘trip’ but rather a general mood enhancer, yielding ‘really good days’, a mind state when things kind of work out and one is in the flow.

All this points at the possibility that micro-dosing brings and keeps people in an inner child (higher self) state of consciousness where they are more connected and thus more in tune with what happens.

In his 2011 book ‘The Psychedelic Explorer’s Guide’ Fadiman lists six factors that determine the quality and nature of a psychedelic trip.

- Set: the mental attitude of a would-be psychedelic voyager
- Setting: the surroundings in which the substance is ingested
- Guide: a person experienced with non-ordinary states of consciousness who helps to mitigate challenges and channel insights
- Substance: the type and quantity of the psychedelic agent
- Session: the entirety of a psychedelic trip, including all activities or rituals
- Situation: the environment, people, and culture from which a person comes to a session and returns afterward

This is roughly the same approach as used in this book. Fadiman has argued that well planned and executed psychedelic experiences can help people to cope with the increasingly dangerous alienation we face in the post-industrial society.

29 The future, legal developments

In this final chapter some speculative thoughts, but some serious questions too.

How will we deal with these, as yet mostly illegal substances in the future? Cannabis is now legal in many countries, Peyote is allowed in ritual context, and there is talk about making MDMA (XTC) legal. It is to be expected that soon some medical use of MDMA and/or mushrooms will be approved, like for treatment of PTSD and addiction, but is that the beginning of much broader acceptance of what these drugs could do? And what will we do with the more addictive substances, like cocaine, crystal meth and the oxycodon addiction? Will ketamine and fentanyl be regarded as creativity enhancers rather than as just harmful drugs? Tobacco and alcohol are certainly addictive, we managed to deal with that, even accepting the harm people do to themselves and paying for their treatment if they become ill.

This is not only a matter of freedom, allowing people some say over what they can or cannot use, but the socio-economic consequences are serious. Big Pharma sees opportunities, even beyond the enormous amounts of painkillers, sedatives and anti-depressive drugs, this will become a mass market. Will they broaden the range of prescription drugs with 'happiness' enhancers or cognitive stimulants? What new compounds will emerge, what applications and combinations with different activities and therapies will be found? Will the legal use go beyond medical and therapy and officially reach fields like creativity enhancement and arts? Are universities going to make the use of Ritalin and other brain-booster part of the curriculum? Will they remain illegal or will science and the government bow to reality and what the voters want?

Will the war on drugs go on, incarcerating millions, turning them into modern slaves to support the (commercial) penitentiary systems?

Who actually benefits from criminalizing both users and providers, leaving the business to organized crime? What will happen if cultivation of (precursor) plants will be made legal? Will the medical and pharmaceutical industry move in and assume a major role in producing, prescribing (and selling) at huge profits or will the tobacco companies seize this opportunity?

It is hardly possible to ignore the signs of the times. In England every weekend millions of people go clubbing with some chemical assistance, the percentage of people smoking a regular or occasional joint in the Western World runs into double digits, and how can we ignore that there are whole nations more or less habitually using cannabis, kratom, khat or coca-leaves?

Will the indigenous people take control of what can be seen as their cultural heritage? Can we use psychedelics as tools for diagnostics of anomalies, testing intelligence, creativity, conformity, as a lie detector in court or for interrogation? Will smart wearables lead to new insights about how these substances work, will the new sensor technology, in combination with substance tracing, be used to probe into private use, also in marketing, registering what our subconscious reveals. Will electronic drugs (using sound, light, virtual reality) develop into psychedelic alternatives or combinations, something already predicted and explored in the early 90s?

Transformative technologies are what now drives not only psychologists, the medical world, the computer game and the VR industry, but also the marketeers and politicians. We want new and better (trans-)humans, boosting our capabilities and dealing with the costly side-effects of progress. To deal with autoimmune diseases, obesity, cancer, mental decay, etc. obviously more experiments and research with mind-enhancers and identity probes and how they affect epigenetic processes are the way to go. We need ways to induce life-style changes, reframe identities, release the trauma's of the senseless educational system and ambitious upbringing in a world where 'work' and career will only be for the happy few.

To deal with challenges like terrorism and extremism, we need also new answers about how cognition, behavior and convictions work; what better probes than the chemicals that help us explore the inner world. The rise of internet, robotics and the entropic effects of global cyberspace will bring forth a need to give real or artificial meaning to the human subclasses, and why not give them something better than just weed?

Technology moves on, science brings new possibilities. There are new compounds synthesized nearly daily. What will happen if genetic engineering makes it possible to create one's own drugs in a way similar to brewing one's own beer? This has been demonstrated for home-brew opiates, according to an article in Nature magazine.

Will we acknowledge how psychedelics in the context of ritual (and eventification and festivalization are clear trends) can be used as tools for transformation, to stimulate innovation and group mind changes? In science fiction the broad use of mood enhancers and psychedelic escapism as a way to keep the masses happy and slavish is a common theme. Will the government take an active and monopolizing role, like distributing the soma, as in Aldous Huxley's novel 'Island' with the danger that it will also use it to make us 'cattle', repress innovation and social change and force all to conform and behave like modern slaves?

We know little about the group mind effects of psychedelics and mood-enhancing drugs. But it is clear that demagoguery and manipulating a crowd is much easier when they are high, and the tools for mind shaping with sound and imagery are more and more refined. What if the government, the music industry and the marketeers really start to use big data collection at festivals or places where people are high? Festivals and drugs are already like twins, and the personal and society (political) transformation effects are well established.

Progress or road to hell, or chemical heaven?

There are essential questions to be asked here and ignoring them will not really help.

The future will tell, but we can think ahead, see the broad horizon and yet not close our eyes to the dangers. Maybe we will learn to appreciate the beneficial effects, reduce harm, allow citizens to choose for themselves and deal sensibly with the negatives the way we do with alcohol and tobacco?

The Law, decriminalization, legalization

The trend in the West is towards a more lenient regime and laissez-faire approach concerning these kinds of drugs. Governments, under pressure of the popular vote, are slowly allowing more freedom, more medical research and medical use.

In the USA, the Biden administration's Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA) is anticipating that the FDA will approve psychedelic therapies, using MDMA and psilocybin, "within approximately 24 months." This is stated in a letter from March 2022 sent by Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.

Not everywhere, in some countries there is either a more religious stance, Islam is dead against drugs, or one is mostly looking at how to make some money out of the thing, for the government or those in power.

Decriminalizing some drugs, notably soft drugs like cannabis and ecstasy, is a possibility supported by many, at all levels. It will lift the bad omen of 'criminal in itself' justice and effect the cost of police, prosecution and prisons. Legalization is a further step. It will normalize the trade, allow controlled and reliable production and may bring taxable income. More pure substances will also help eliminate some of the unwanted side-effects of illegal and compromised drugs.

The law gets a bit easier, not only in allowing the sales and use of substances like cannabis, but there is more acceptance and appreciation in many fields. An important development is that more scientific research is now allowed into the effects of these substances, in a scientific and medical context. The days that LSD research was just looking into its use as a weapon or way to control people are hopefully behind us, the danger now is Big Pharma moving in.

the motivation of some of the medical research has to be questioned.

The present research projects seem aiming at just specific diagnose/treatment combinations, with strict protocols and thus a price-tag, creating work and good income for a new class of medical professionals, psychedelic therapists. Away with the old school psycho-analysis, make space for the new breed of well paid sitters with a license, using approved but expensive prescription pills. Institutionalized monopoly, science and the medical world are good at it!

More freedom to ingest what we want, sounds good. But beware, there are counter arguments too. It may affect cognitive development in kids, have an effect on workforce productivity, may lead to more accidents and medical situations, and opens the way for users to move on to the heavier stuff. And where do we draw the line? To allow free use of crack or heroin is obviously out of the question, due to the health hazards, addiction symptoms and the negative effects on behavior, even as these also might be mitigated in a less criminalized situation.

Drug policy reform

Short term we can look at the way drugs are classified. Separating the substances in new 'classes', different from the present fairly strict 'crim-

inal' classification, makes sense. Soft drugs like cannabis are in the same range as alcohol and tobacco, the escape and addictive drugs like heroin are a class apart, speed and performance enhancers could be treated separately, the empathogens and stimulants like XTC and 2CB have their turf and the heavier psychedelics should be treated separately. Addiction as a reason to prohibit some substances needs re-evaluation. There are not many people habitually using the more 'psychedelic' substances like LSD, addiction is very unusual. Serial use is physically impossible because of tolerance, the effectiveness diminishes. There is social addiction, but is that so different from football or going to the pub? Note that caffeine and nicotine, but also alcohol and chocolate are legal but have a noticeable effect on the mind and were considered sacred and used in ritual settings in some cultures.

New psycho-active substances

The art and science of psychedelics production and use develop, modern techniques allow more in-depth research of the synthesis, effects and workings of the substances. Alternative ways to produce existing drugs from different precursors are explored. Some are mentioned in this book, new ones emerge.

Not only the 'alternative' world looks out for new and better substances, the 'legal' drugs companies also search for what could be patented and used in 'allopathic' normal medicine and psychopharmaca, obviously at a profit. Cheap, no longer patented alternatives are suppressed like Hydergine, a dihydroergotoxine mesylate and a close niece of LSD. Many legal prescription drugs contain psychoactive substances, and their use as a mental enhancer or mind-expanding drug has developed out of normal and accepted use. Ketamine is a good example, Hydergine and Piracetam (dementia treatment) and Ritalin (for ADHD treatment) are also used (in a different dosage) for consciousness or cognitive expansion and mood-altering.

The range of effects is very wide, one talks about 'Nootropics'; these are the smart drugs, memory enhancers, neuro-enhancers, cognitive enhancers, and intelligence enhancers, but also stimulants, learning enhancers and suggestibilia. The psychoactive qualities are much more varied than only psychedelic and hallucinogenic; there are various effects on the senses and consciousness, they act as empathogens, entactogens, entheogens, erotic stimulants, aphrodisiacs and creative stimulantia. Even capabilities enhancing the more esoteric clear-sensing,

clear-hearing and sensing the future were observed, although experienced on a personal level and with little scientific proof.

Science is looking for what can be done to enhance or stimulate our consciousness, brain functions, also to fight diseases and ailments like dementia, PTSD or psychopathological problems (or even use in chemical warfare, crowd manipulation and such less ethical endeavors). Lately more research in the use of hitherto forbidden substances like marijuana, but also Psilocybine, LSD and XTC is allowed, organizations like MAPS and the Beckley Foundation promote this actively and large scale tests are underway.

It is clear that over time we will learn more about how all this works, how it affects the brain and the body and our cognitive and creative capabilities, and no doubt there will be new synthesized chemicals, but also new psychoactive plants or animal secretions may be discovered, for new uses too, like in childbirth, for euthanasia, enhancing our senses. The number and range of psychoactive substances is already enormous. There are abundantly 'known' plants, roots, herbs and animals -like some toads- that contain such substances, and new discoveries happen all the time. Because of the popularity of magic mushrooms and similar products such as peyote (cactii) and ayahuasca scientists and adventurers started looking for more and there has been a wave of discoveries, like the iboga root. Indigenous tribes used them but kept such usage secret for a long time, for their own (common) people and the outside world.

Ethnobotanists went searching for herbs, roots and plants that produce similar effects; they went deep into the jungle but also some were found in the backyard. Some very strong ones like *Datura* (*Brugmansia*) can be found even in city parks. There are quite a bit of plants containing DMT in particular, but using such lesser know substances is not to be taken lightly, the effects could be rather surprising and dangerous.

There are now lots of herbs on the market which are slightly psychoactive and sometimes, when taken in combination with other substances, have psychedelic or nootropic effects or at least act as stimulants or aphrodisiacs (and are not always legal). Here we can refer to *Salvia divinorum* (*Officinalis*), Guarana, Kratom, Syrian Rue, Damiana, Khat, Kava, Kola Nut, Calamus, Catmint, Laudanum, Gingko biloba, Ginseng, *Bacopa monnieri*, Crimson Weed, Morning Glory, Waterpepper and

many, many other plants, herbs, but also substances like isoflavones or oxytocin are in the 'smart shops' or on the internet. They are often combined in new mixtures and given fancy names like Herbal XTC. Ayahuasca and other DMT-concoctions require some chemical preparation (cooking for some time). Here innovation, also due to regulation of precursor material, kicks in. New varieties and combinations like pharmahuasca are regularly found and improved. On the other hand, cannabis, magic mushrooms and (raw) peyote are more or less a direct product of nature; cultivation and breeding is possible. One steadily experiments to produce 'stronger' marijuana strands (more THC or specific cannabinoids) and grow magic mushrooms with more impact.

New drugs are more than a possibility. Chemistry is a scientific way to find and synthesize new drugs. The chemists, either legal or in secret, find and create new concoctions and substances all the time, sometimes called 'designer drugs'. Sasha (Alexander) Shulgin was the most famous researcher, he found or synthesized hundreds of substances, he was fond of the 'dirty pictures' of chemical formulas.

Commercial branding and exploitation

The popularity of such 'new' substances carries risks, they are kept proprietary and made very expensive. As soon as a lot of money can be made with anything, a kind of mafia-situation easily develops. The regular (legal) drugs-companies also operate from the same principle and in the health-food industry new remedies carry a high price. New and maybe even approved use like in palliative care could lead to a high demand and new markets may emerge if any positive effect in for instance cancer-treatment could be proven, like what happened with CBD and hash-oil.

Popularity breeds commerce and merchandising; the business of selling hemp clothes and T-shirts with cannabis imagery has become an industry by itself. Head shops are popular all over the world, even where cannabis is formally forbidden. Commercializing hemp, popularized by making a link with cannabis, has been enormously successful, there are now many hemp products and rightfully so, hemp is a great and versatile fiber. Magic mushrooms also sprouted new products, ranging from special honey with mushrooms to psychedelic mushroom-cakes. Popular drugs have a following, in people (artists, musicians, creators in general) and in products, me-too imitations, paraphernalia and events/festivals.

Another possibility is that a whole series of products get developed, using the psycho-active effects. Remember Coca-Cola, originally containing coca-extract and now the stimulant taurine is used in so-called energy drinks like Red Bull. After all, the marketing machinery will move in once there are enough customers; by customizing products, branding, and packaging.

Politically or theologically incorrect

Not only the law, but the religious, political and scientific establishment doesn't really want research or products that undermines the reductionist paradigm or debunks the current notions of fairness and social justice. Spirituality is fine as long as it remains unproven, irrational and inconsequential, but what if we can prove mindfulness and spiritual practice has real effects and psychedelics boost these? Suppose using psychedelics (depending on dosage and setting of course) in a spiritual context makes you live longer, makes you more intelligent, reduces the risk of cancer, improves your sex life, increases social mobility, makes you more creative, makes you vote more left of right, etc. and this could be proven, what then? If they are a step towards trans-human capabilities, the ethical issues will pop up!

Will we find out what widespread use will bring? Big data techniques offer ways to at least research this, but who will fund this or publish the results? Or take the notion, that taking these drugs per se has little effect on intelligence, creativity, sociability or happiness, but that group processes like festivals and being exposed to the talents of others boost this. It seems not too farfetched, we do send our kids to elite schools, don't we? Proving that, however, would mean the whole educational system needs reframing, that research, art and maybe the whole notion of human development has to change. Proving that psychedelics and magic or extrasensorial perception (ESP) have more than an illusionary relation will upset religions, and will attack the foundations of philosophy and all science. That psychedelic revolution is what the likes of Leary and McKenna envisioned, but frightens all that are part of the status quo machinery.

Innovation and insights, creative tool and platform

In an enhanced state of consciousness, as can be reached by way of psychedelic journeying, people often feel their creative capabilities expanded, their intellect reaching new heights, they experience access to

greater wisdom and truth than in their normal state. This is often ridiculed and those ideas discarded afterwards, as they make no sense in the then again limited perspective or in the eyes of bystanders. But maybe there is true wisdom there, sometimes?

In a trip many feel they reach or receive insights not only about their own situation, but relevant on a wider scale. There are stories about big scientific discoveries, but also many artists and even entrepreneurs will acknowledge that psychedelics have helped them in their work. Systematic use of trance and psychedelic techniques to gain new insights and fuel innovation, however, has not been part of the scientific or in general the innovation toolkit, but this may change.

New ideas often result from a change in perspective, looking fresh at problems, turning them in opportunities. Tripping offers new perspectives. Pressing issues like ecology, energy, terrorism or peace are not addressed in this way. Why not use what psychedelics could offer if used in a format geared towards exploring these different perspectives, including the irrational. There are many fields that could benefit from this, dealing with diseases of the psyche to start with, but why not use the psychedelic format in a more or less standardized (ritual) way to look a bit beyond that. Traditionally there is the use as a prophecy enhancer or diviner tool, what if we took that option serious.

How would futurist scenarios look, with a bit of LSD? Would we foresee that the energy crisis is nearly over, that cyberspace will end big business, large institutions and government, and transhuman eugenetics might split the world?

A good example of a field where psychedelics might be a great tool is the fundamental dichotomy between religion and science, seen by many as the root cause of many social and ecological problems. Questions like the nature of time, non-locality, entropy and syntropy (Luigi Fantappie's idea that information flows from the future), the notion that there are a deterministic and a separate free will time dimension, supercausality, superconsciousness; what better tool to research this than something that projects the seeker into a state where time, space and the laws of physics are malleable? The complexity of such enigmas requires new methods of exploration, why not use what nature offers?

Using psychedelics as a tool, rather than as a stand-alone individual experience, can be combined with existing methods. Think about brainstorming or other group processes with something extra. This maybe requires some experience in tripping and specific choices in dosage, drug,

set and setting. This kind of use of course resembles the shamanic approach, where the shaman trips on behalf of someone or the tribe.

Combinations with therapy

A better understanding of the mechanisms in the brain and the body, using modern scanning and neuro-research, will also lead to new ways to administer the substances, new procedures and safer conditions. As we learn more about the short- and long-term effects of them a more specific use of the various substances can be made, either psychological, emotional or physical. Also combinations of substances and the use of identical or different 'boosters' or otherwise enhancers to prolong or enhance the effects will probably be researched and become more widespread. Many already privately experiment with this, but it has yet to be studied in formal research projects.

In the chapter about chakra-specificity of certain substances this kind of 'evolved' use is already hinted at. In the context of therapeutic use more adequate diagnostics of the underlying problems, at the 'ego' identity surface and at deeper and subconscious levels will help to identify the most effective approach, substance, dosage and timing.

The combination of physical postures, exercises and meditation, probably enhanced with augmented reality, with certain substances will probably be researched more. There's a therapeutic technique called TRE Trauma Release Exercise to release PTSD and folks who have been traumatized in collisions etc, which involves shaking until it triggers an involuntary spasm. Singing and laughing are great tools, like making music, ohming, yoga, massage etc. and don't forget to cry!

Sitting, lying, walking, or certain body postures have different effects, add to that the environmental factors like sound, light, temperature, etc. and a whole realm of potential studies emerges. Modern sensors and feedback can be used to optimize and customize the experience. Many people know that a warm bath, massage, specific music, certain dance rhythms, drumming or even sensory deprivation (darkness) enhance the journey or steer it towards certain realms. Could modern approaches like virtual reality or immersive computer game environments help here? We should at least try this out, with the help of MRI- and other scanning methods the effects can be determined and effective treatment or tripping protocols established. Electronic drugs are on their way!

Better understanding happiness

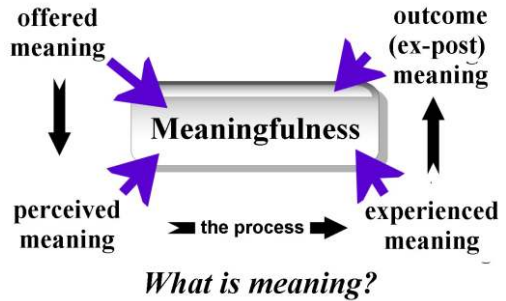
One of the main questions we face, also in view of technological progress, robotics, changing notions about work and leisure, is what makes life worthwhile. Especially as modern technology, social alienation, robots and digital virtualization and isolation eats away at what is the most 'human' need, meaning, we will need to explore whatever can enhance our senses of meaning and happiness.

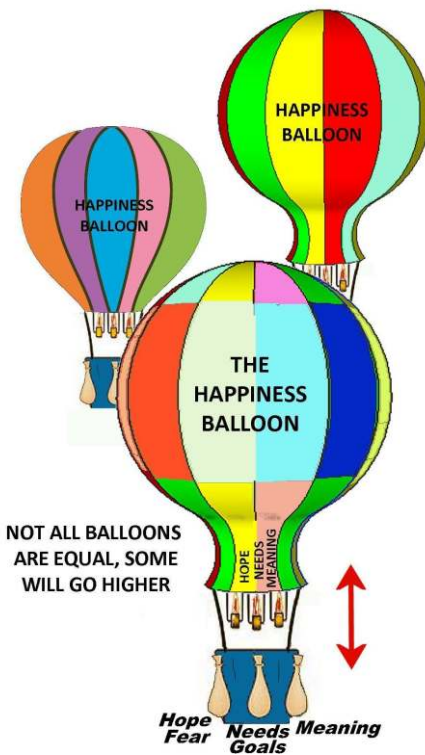
Much research lately went into what happiness is, into the subjective and the objective experience. With questionnaires one has tried to rank countries, cities, communities and people as being more or less happy, trying to quantify happiness in mostly materialistic terms, or in how good the needs and goals of people (as for instance Maslow listed in his pyramid) were met.

The amount of publications about happiness, mindfulness and how these relate for instance to health is dazzling. Most use self-reporting and thus very subjective methods. Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman pointed out, that there is a big difference between what we see as happiness in retrospect, when filling out such questionnaires, or what we experience in the moment; the physiological processes happening in our psyche when we are happy or not. The difference is substantial, we are not good at remembering what we really felt.

The issue is whether we can define happiness at all. There is research and there are theoretical models by people like Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (the Flow) and Jonathan Haidt, about happiness and health, about happiness and income, family situations and what not, but so far we hardly know what really makes us happy or gives meaning.

Here the idea of mind-altering substances to secure some level of happiness touches the psychedelic scene. Aldous Huxley described a science fiction future, where the government supplies a substance, soma, that would keep everybody happy, but conforming. A good citizen should not think for him- or herself, but take pills to be happy. This dystopian vision is not very far off; we already give people (not only in mental in-





stitutions) drugs that just sedate. The amount of legal drugs for depression and mental problems with the effect of numbing the user is enormous and legal cannabis is now around the corner.

So maybe we can use the psychedelic experience to figure out, what happiness is, beyond the serotonin, oxytocin and dopamine levels in our brains? It is obviously a state of mind, it is subjective and it is not constant, we go up and down in happiness. Even great happiness booster events like winning the lottery don't make us happy for long, just as very negative experiences also peter out.

A nice image is to see happiness as a balloon, going up and down, usually within a certain

range of subjective happiness that may differ between individuals because their genetic imprint and the situation and circumstances they are in, with some but limited influence to change those circumstances.

Happiness has to do with fulfilling needs and goals (the Maslow hierarchy which includes material, social (love) and self realization needs), but also with meaning, and with hope (and fear) and spiritual connection. It is, apart from those neurotransmitter levels, a fairly illusory state that can be manipulated by many means, from outside or inside, like with drugs, electric signals, meditation, media, propaganda, religion. We are happy if our subjective expectations are met, but we tend to ignore the objective reality.

Especially the idea of meaning is very subjective, we can seek and find meaning in material things, in relations, but also in our relation with the otherworld, with ideals and lofty goals. Meaning is a matter of perspective and not a constant either. The factor time and its shadow in our mind can turn the whole meaning on its head. We can accept the most

miserable conditions, just because we hope that in the future things will be better or on the other hand, not enjoy the present because we fear the future.

The traditions that value meditation and self-knowledge like Buddhists tell us, that happiness is, like all thoughts and feelings, an illusion. Not attaching value to those thoughts and feelings, just observing them, letting them pass, not trying to control them will bring happiness of a higher order, satori or samadhi. The psychedelic experience doesn't require to ignore all those inputs and experiences, but it does teach things become a lot easier if one can let go of the control. It has the advantage that it brings people in a similar state of mystical ecstasy or happiness without the tedious work of meditating or ascetic exercises, but only temporarily. The deeper insights, which can help to stabilize the happiness balloon, are easily lost on re-entry, but the fundamental release from nagging doubts, fears, needs and thoughts is comparable with what the experienced meditator or enlightened sage can achieve. It may be short lived and somewhat fake, but the psychedelic state does offer an opportunity to look into what constitutes the very individual happiness state and its root mechanisms.

The story of psychedelic experiences, be it with chemical or other means, is not yet finished. Research into new and other applications of substances and technologies will no doubt reveal more about how they affect our psyche, how this can help in healing, transformation and how we can optimize its use. This no doubt will widen the potential and maybe help the acceptance of what are now mostly seen as dangerous and illegal drugs.

Ignoring, however, how many old traditions explored our psyche and just focus on rational neuro-science would be a bit stupid. Let's integrate the psychedelic into all that hi-tech research! As we, with genetic engineering and use of dataprocessing, implants, cyborg technology, etc. etc. will find ways to live longer, more healthy, the insight in the essential questions about meaning and happiness become more relevant; that is where exploring the deep and dark parts of our psyche can help. The notion of trans-human or even a-mortal human beings, supported by replacement organs and nano-biotechnology and with a much longer life-span may be the next step in the evolution of mankind, but what are we going to do, how do we keep life interesting?

The idea of the right 'set and setting' is not only relevant in tripping but in most human activities. Here the lessons of psychedelic experiences,

and especially of the ritualized and sacred trips should not be ignored. Getting this out of the dark and illegal dungeon and into the light is what we can hope for.

We hope this book will help to achieve this!

Appendix identity theory

In the chapter about identity a personality/identity approach is mentioned, that can be very relevant during a trip. The concepts posed there, however, are not mainstream and in this appendix I try to relate it to observations and models in the literature. This appendix is for those curious about how the substitute identity model relates to the insights and models about identity and identity development. It's not very relevant for those who only want to have a safe and rewarding trip.

Multiplicity

Even as multiplicity in our identity matrix and in our personalities (as the expression of those identities) is very common, the multiplicity in self and identity and the existence of what I call here substitute identities is not used in current psychotherapy much.

Having more me's or 'I's' has of course been mentioned in the literature.

Pierre Janet was one of the first to talk about splitting of consciousness (German: Spaltung) resulting from innate weakness in *De l'Automatisme Psychologique* (1899). It has been observed by Carl Jung in himself. Writers like Horowitz (1979) presents a clinically anchored scheme of multiple selves or „states of mind“.

Rosenberg and Gara¹ (1985) have underscored the multiplicity of personal identity. Markus and Nurius (1986) talk about of a wide assortment of „possible selves“, Similarly, Higgins (1987) has developed a theory of „selfdiscrepancy“ with various „actual selves,“ „ideal selves,“ and „ought selves“. Rosenberg and Gara (1985) have underscored the multiplicity of personal identity.

1 Rosenberg, S., & Gara, M. A. (1985). *The multiplicity of personal identity*. *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6

Before we can even try to define identity, it makes sense to ask **why there is identity**. It is an axiom that existence exists, meaning that nature, i.e., the manifested universe as a whole, cannot be created or annihilated, that it cannot come into or go out of existence, it is ruled by the **law of identity; that each thing is identical with itself**. An entity without an identity cannot exist because it would be nothing. All of our reality is caused and determined by the identities of the elements or agents involved. We could use another word, but there must be a fundamental aspect of reality that describes the isness of things, and identity is what is used to describe the essence of manifestation, the final cause of existence. Since things are what they are, since everything that exists possesses a specific identity, nothing in reality can occur causelessly or by chance. **Causality is the Law of Identity applied over time**. Action is a change in the identity of an entity

It is sometimes mentioned as roles, ego-states, inner voices, self-aspects², agencies (M. Minsky) or as a multiplicity or ‘community of selves’ (M. Mair)³.

John Watkins and the ego-state school, based on the work by Eric Berne and Stewart Shapiro⁴, see the person as a confederation of components (subs). John Rowan⁵ used the idea of a “Dialogical Self” in Psychotherapy and Counselling (2010).

Now that psychedelic therapy is more and more applied in PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) cases, it has been remarked by Ellert Nijenhuis⁶ and Onno van der Hart, that PTSD is more a dissociation (splitting, multiple personality) related disorder and should not be treated as separate in the DSM-V.

2 *Linville, Patricia, W. Self-complexity as a cognitive buffer against stress-related illness and depression. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, (1987).*

3 *J. Miller M. Mair, in D. Bannister (ed.), New Perspectives in Personal Construct Theory (1977)*

4 *Shapiro, Stewart; Critique of Eric Berne’s Contributions to Subself Theory (1969)*

5 *John Rowan: in “Psychotherapy and Counselling” (2010).*

6 *Nijenhuis and Van der Hart: one view of the elephant (2011) doi: 10.1080/15299732.2011.570233*

Personality theories

- Psychodynamic theories of personality are heavily influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud and emphasize the influence of the unconscious mind on personality. Psychodynamic theories include Sigmund Freud's psychosexual stage theory and Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.
- Type theories are the early perspectives on personality. These theories suggested that there are a limited number of "personality types", which are related to biological influences.
- Trait theories tend to view personality as the result of internal characteristics that are genetically based.
- Behavioral theories suggest that personality is a result of interaction between the individual and the environment. Behavioral theorists study observable and measurable behaviors, often ignoring the role of internal thoughts and feelings. Behavioral theorists include B. F. Skinner and John B. Watson.
- Behavioral theories suggest that personality is a result of interaction between the individual and the environment.
- Humanist theories emphasize the importance of free will and individual experience in developing a personality. Humanist theorists include Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow.
- The social cognitive perspective of personality emphasizes the importance of observational learning, self-efficacy, situational influences and cognitive processes. Albert Bandura emphasized the importance of social learning, or learning through observation.

Identity development

Do we gain something from knowing more about our personality matrix? Do we progress, become more mature, maybe more spiritual, more connected to who we are and what the world really is? The theme of progress is a favorite in histories of science, for most people assume that science moves forward, toward greater understanding and truth.

From the current vantage point, some progress in the history of personality psychology can be seen, but the progress appears uneven and fitful. Sanford (1963) warns that the research activity of psychologists at any particular time may not accurately reflect main ideas in the field.

Personality psychology became an identifiable discipline with Gordon Allport (1937), Murray (1938), and Lewin (1935). Allport viewed per-

The concept of “identity” as a label is popular and has received much attention, but mostly in the context of social identity and identity politics, with a focus on race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. This use of ‘identity’ we see in the public debate and in books like Fukuyama’s ‘Identity’ (2018⁷). It refers, however, more to identification as a psychological attachment to a group than to the totality of a personal identity or an objective group identity category. We are often identifying with multiple, and sometimes very different groups, and even as we tend to follow the one group in some respects, we may differ in others or go along with the rules and patterns of another group we happen to be in. Language and context are important, but once things are used in a specific way and get translated, they tend to have a life of their own. For the term identity this is quite obvious, since Erik Erikson in the 1950s used it for social category (social identity) it has taken on a different meaning than the general definition we use in this book. In psychological and popular use it is now more linked to socially distinguishing features including dignity, pride, or honor (Fearon, 1999). The definitions, even in the standard dictionaries, are not very precise, contradicting and usually swing between the social label and the philosophical angles. In the psychological and social interpretation people like James Fearon even dismiss the historical roots and focus on the social identity and the social construction of identity notions emerging in the mid-twentieth century.

sonality psychology as the study of the individual person, of the self, the proprium. He defined personality as „the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments (characteristic behavior and thought) to his environment". His stages of development were:

(1) the sense of bodily self, (2) self-identity, (3) self-esteem, (4) selfextension, (5) self-image, (6) self-as-rational-coper, (7) propriate strivings toward life goals, and (8) a unifying sense of self-as-knower, or the sense of the totality of the person as a process that is continually changing and becoming.

7 *Fukuyama, Francis; Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment (2018)*

For Gordon Allport (1961), „Scarcely anyone questions the existence of traits as the fundamental units of personality" because they represent the „considerable constancy in a person's mode of conduct“. Murray (1938) argued that "the psychologists who think of personality as . . . traits and those who think of it as . . . [motives] focus attention on different phenomena, use different methods and end with different accounts"

Although some theories of the self provide integrative frameworks for viewing the person as a unified and unifying whole, others suggest a multiplicity in self and identity. Horowitz (1979) presented a clinically anchored scheme of multiple selves or „states of mind.“ of a person's self-defining life story as organized along the „thematic lines“ of agency (power/achievement/autonomy) and communion (love/intimacy/care) (Bakan, 1966; Wiggins, 1991). The story displays a characteristic „narrative tone“ (ranging from comic or romantic optimism to tragic or ironic pessimism), a unique quality of personal „imagery,“ pivotal scenes (called „nuclear episodes“), main characters in the guise of idealized self-personifications (called „images“), and an anticipated story ending that serves to „leave something behind“ for the next generation

Carl Rogers' personality theory is based the notion of self or self-concept, defined as “the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself.” This humanistic approach states that the self is composed of concepts unique to ourselves and includes three components:

- Self-worth (or self-esteem) – what we think about ourselves. Rogers believed feelings of self-worth developed in early childhood and were formed from the interaction of the child with the mother and father.
- Self-image – How we see ourselves, which is important to good psychological health. Self-image includes the influence of our body image on inner personality. At a simple level, we might perceive ourselves as a good or bad person, beautiful or ugly. Self-image affects how a person thinks, feels and behaves in the world. A person is said to be in a state of incongruence if some of the totality of their experience is unacceptable to them and is denied or distorted in the self-image.
- Ideal self – This is the person who we would like to be. It consists of our goals and ambitions in life, and is dynamic – i.e., forever

changing. The ideal self in childhood is not the ideal self in our teens or late twenties etc.

According to Carl Rogers we want to feel, experience and behave in ways which are consistent with our self-image and which reflect what we would like to be like, our ideal-self. The closer our self-image and ideal-self are to each other, the more consistent or congruent we are and the higher our sense of self-worth.

One can also see selves as the images or identifications we project to the outside world, James Fadiman⁸ uses this in his rather positive approach, where he sees our selves as potentials we can use for personal growth.

Erik H. Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development⁹

Erikson¹⁰ described three variables in the process of identity formation: neuroticism, dogmatism, and a sense of purpose in life. The normative conflict occurring in adolescence is the opposition between identity achievement and identity confusion. He stated that the stimuli and response patterns (in the social interaction with parents and people around) that create a defense/coping pattern (personality) that may be anchored in and constitute the developing identity. These opposites are what every child and person faces in life and are factors in the development of a more or less stable identity.

The stages he identified (from 1980) are:

- Trust vs. Mistrust (Infants, 0 to 1 year)
The first stage of Erik Erikson's theory centers around the infant's basic needs being met by the parents.
- Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt (Toddlers, 1 to 3 years)
As the child gains control over bodily functions and motor abilities, they begin to explore their surroundings. The parents still provide a strong base of security from which the child can venture out to assert their will and develop willpower.

8 *Fadiman, James & Gruber, Jordan; Healthy Selves: Who We Are and Why It Matters (working title, personal communication) (2018) now called: Your Symphony of Selves (aug 2020)*

9 *Stevens, Richard. (1983). Erik Erikson, An Introduction.*

10 *Erikson, E. H. (1959). Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers. Psychological Issues,*

- Initiative vs. Guilt (Preschool, 3 to 6 years) Initiative adds to autonomy the agency, the quality of undertaking, planning and attacking a task for the sake of being active and on the move. The child is learning to master the world around them, learning basic skills and principles of physics.
- Industry vs. Inferiority (Childhood, 6 to 12 years).
“Children at this age are becoming more aware of themselves as individuals.” They work hard at “being responsible, being good and doing it right.” They are now more reasonable to share and cooperate.
- Identity vs. Role Confusion (Adolescents, 13 to 19 years) The adolescent is newly concerned with how they appear to others.
- Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young Adults, 20 to 40 years) They become capable of forming intimate, reciprocal relationships (e.g. through close friendships or marriage) and willingly make the sacrifices and compromises that such relationships require.
- Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle Adulthood, 45 to 65 years).
Generativity is the concern of establishing and guiding the next generation. Socially-valued work and disciplines are expressions of generativity.
- Ego Integrity vs. Despair (Seniors, 65 years onwards)
As we grow older and become senior citizens we tend to slow down our productivity and explore life as a retired person. It is during this time that we contemplate our accomplishments and are able to develop integrity if we see ourselves as leading a successful life.

Erikson’s notions are related to the degree to which an individual has experienced the identity crisis.

Erikson’s model¹¹, however, does not identify the emergence of substitute identities, nor does it align with a biological or posture development like the chakra approach or Reich’s work and bio-energetics.

11 Erik Erikson: *Gandhi's Truth* (1969)

Marcia's Ego-identity Statuses¹² and Formation

James E. Marcia¹³ was another well known personality development researcher. His research and writings have largely focused on adolescent development. His work was to identify and classify processes that adolescents go through when they experience identity crises. James Marcia expanded Erik Erikson's concept of ego identity. Marcia suggested a stage consists neither of identity resolution nor identity confusion, but is better understood as the extent to which one has both explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains including ideology and occupation, but also religion, intimate relationships, friendships, and gender roles.

Marcia's four stages in his identity status model are:

- Foreclosure

The status in which the adolescent seems willing to commit to some relevant roles, values, or goals for the future, and conform to the expectations of others regarding their future. The foreclosure status is when a commitment is made without exploring alternatives.

- Identity Diffusion

Some adolescents become overwhelmed by the task of identity development and neither explore nor make commitments; this describes individuals who have neither explored nor made commitments across life-defining areas.

- Moratorium

Identity moratorium is the status of individuals who are in the midst of a crisis but whose commitments are either absent or are only vaguely defined.

- Identity Achievement

Once a crisis has become, a likely progression would be from diffusion through moratorium to identity achievement. The latter is thus the status of individuals who have typically experienced a crisis, undergone identity explorations and made commitments.

12 *Marcia, James, Identity and Psychosocial Development in Adulthood, in Identity, in International Journal of Theory and Research (Volume 2, 2002)*

13 *Marcia, James E. "Ego-Identity Status", in Michael Argyle, Social Encounters (Penguin 1973)*

James Marcia's measure of ego identity is the assumption that his four ego identity statuses are developmentally ordered along a continuum from "being identity diffused" (adolescents) to "achieving" an ego identity. James Marcia¹⁴'s four identity groups include foreclosures/gatekeepers, identity achievers/pathmakers, moratoriums/searchers, and identity diffusions/drifters.

Marcia has been criticized as often there is not a clear development along the stages, they are not always sequential and identity achievement also happens without conscious exploration of the identity. Also the emergence of substitute identities (the SIM model as explained in this book), each with their own independent development process, and the influence of the core identity is not part of his model.

Typology

When talking about personality, the various strands of what can be indicated as typology (of character, traits, temperaments inclinations) are somewhat relevant. Approaches like the Big Five, the MBTI (Myers/Briggs), the enneagram and many others have developed into schools, with avid believers and strong opponents. An integrated and definitive concept of personality types and personality development has not emerged.



One of the reason most of these typology approaches don't yield consistent, repeatable and solid results is because they do'n take into account that we often have more, multiple personalities. Our answers to questionnaires are coming from these personalitis, from memories that relate to a specific state. The result, except for people with additional substitute identities, is therefore a mixed bag. The followers of the various schools have then devised all kinds of adaptation to the original models to explain this away. In the enneagram one talks about wings, subtypes,

14 Marcia, James; "Ego-Identity Status", in Michael Argyle, *Social Encounters* (1973)

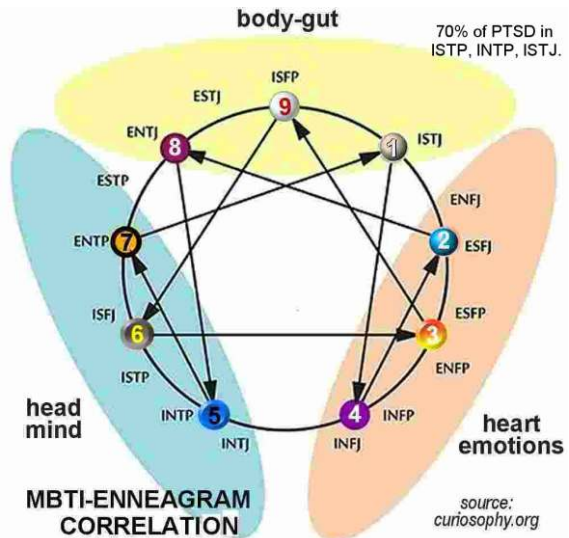
ISTJ practical logical quiet serious earn success by thoroughness and dependability	ISFJ quiet friendly responsible outcast/loner	INTJ original minds driven to achieve skeptical independent	INFJ often feel misunderstood loyal open-minded can appear cold but really warm-hearted
ISTP quiet observers until a problem appears value efficiency flexible	ISFP quiet friendly sensitive kind loyal	INTP quiet flexible analytical focus in depth to solve problems	INFP idealistic adaptable accepting curious quick to see possibilities
ESTJ practical forceful decisive focus on getting results follow logical standards and want others to also	ESFJ warmhearted cooperative loyal provide for others	ENTJ Frank decisive assume leadership ready	ENFP warmly enthusiastic imaginative spontaneous flexible
ESTP focused on immediate results theorize bore them enjoy being active with others	ESFP outgoing friendly accepting lovers of life adapt readily to new people and situations	ENTP quick ingenious stimulating alert outspoken	ENFJ warm empathetic responsive responsible attuned to the emotions, needs, and motivations of others

The MBTI categories

and tritypes, while just assigning an enneagram type to every identifiable personality would be much more insightful.

Another problem is that the typologies do not directly address issues such as personality dynamics, personality development, life changes, life histories, the development of self, and the social and cultural

environment of a person. (McAdams, 1992)¹⁵. The “vertical dimension” is mentioned, but not really integrated in the various models.



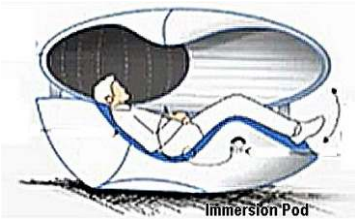
15 Berzonsky, M. D. (1988). *Self-theorists, identity status, and social cognition*. In D. K. Lapsley & F. C. Power (Eds.), *Self ego, and identity: Integrative approaches*.

Appendix: Virtual reality (VR) and psychedelics

Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy (PAP) is also exploring immersive technologies like VR. Creating an artificial environment with immersion tools like immersion pods, VR goggles, head-mounted display, haptic feedback, omnisound and ways to maneuver and act in that virtual world is one of the technological miracles of our time. It started in the late eighties, and benefitting from ever faster computer hardware has become a really new medium. Applications range from augmented reality as a visual overlay to the omniverse, a shared reality.



From the start it was seen by the pioneers, most of them well versed in psychedelics, as potentially an electronic drug. Operating in a realm where “normal” limitations of gravity and sensorial cues can be overcome, does resemble the psychedelic experience and offers a visceral (embodied, instinctive and emotional) rather than a cognitive experience. The development at first didn’t go in that direction, one aimed at technical applications like design, at the entertainment market (games) and had to overcome some negative physiological effects (lagging, overstimulation, cyber-sickness, dizziness, and seizures in epileptic



patients). As the quality of the experience grew, the medical and therapeutic potential became more interesting and VR has been used to deal with for instance phobias.



This is a growing field, many application in which a person experiences VR environment aimed at for instance dealing with trauma or fears. This is not psychedelic therapy but “like psychedelic therapy”. Using VR to enhance a trip is different, here the technology is used in connection with the trip.

Psychedelics and VR have a lot of common features, this was noted early on. Both aid relaxation and reduce anxiety; buffer from external stimuli; promote a mindful presence; train the mind to achieve altered states of consciousness (ASC); evoke mystical states; enhance therapeutic alliance and encourage self-efficacy. VR’s use as an electronic drug was mentioned by many VR pioneers, but the comparison with psychedelics (and dildonics) was made and experienced at length in those days.¹

Applications

What can VR do to make a psychedelic trip more “productive” destroying preconceived notions and achieving “growth” :

- An addition to cognitive and talk therapy
- Overcome fear for the psychedelic process, Helping to surrender
- Simulate or enhance visual hallucinatory experiences
- to optimize the environment in psychedelic session
- alter a participant’s perspective and disrupt the rigid patterns of mental experience
- Help to consolidate and integrate the experience, anchoring.
- Improve the sense of agency, self esteem
- Allow sensual and sexual experiences without a human therapist
- Using the sense of awe for transformation
- Using virtual patients for training
- Palliative care for terminal patients

VR can be used while being “high” and many people experience with this and report anecdotal experiences (like on Reddit). It can be used during the trip, but the more common approach at the moment is to look at VR in the context of psychedelic therapy, as a tool to be used in preparation for a trip, like to start with a relaxation (like guided meditation)

1 *John Perry Barlow & Luc Sala; Virtual Reality : de metafysische kermisattractie : magische spiegel van de Hyper-Cyber-Age ziel. 1990, ISBN 90-73107-02-4 (only in Dutch)*

procedure and at the end of a trip, to help relaxing again and integrate the insights.

It can also help to optimize the setting, the environment in a clinical setting is usually not very “warm” and comforting. A VR environment, with goggles or in an “immersion pod” can create a more appropriate atmosphere, it helps to abstract from external cues and to surrender to the experience.

Self respect and lack of self-esteem are often root problems, as VR can be adapted and personalized it may be a good tool to help there and pre-conceived notions and beliefs.

As the issue of abuse (sexual or otherwise) is an issue with psychedelic therapy, but the sexual history and trauma of people is very relevant, the use of visual and haptic feedback (dildonics) in VR might be a way to deal with this in a “safer” way.

There are a number of companies like VirtualPsychedelics², Enosis³, Trip/PsyAssist, Entheo Digital, Klarsana, Incannex Healthcare, Resurgent Biosciences busy expanding the academic work in VR to applications in combination with various psychedelics.

Companies like Klarisana suggest VR could improve a patient’s medical trip on ketamine. the company is working on virtual reality assisted ketamine infusion therapy with Virtual Dissociative Remodeling (VDR). *“There are two schools of thought about how (ketamine) works,” says Carl Bonnett (Klarsana). “One school of thought is that it’s purely a biochemical thing — you give ketamine, it hits the receptors, and it improves somebody’s mood or PTSD. Now, the other school of thought is that, yes, there is a biochemical component, but the ‘psychedelic experimental’ kind of stuff is not a side effect but that is actually part of the therapy, part of the treatment.”*

Klarisana supports the trip with soothing and tranquil VR worlds, as they believe too little stimulation while on ketamine can act as a blank slate for the brain’s hallucinations to run wild. It’s meant to enhance

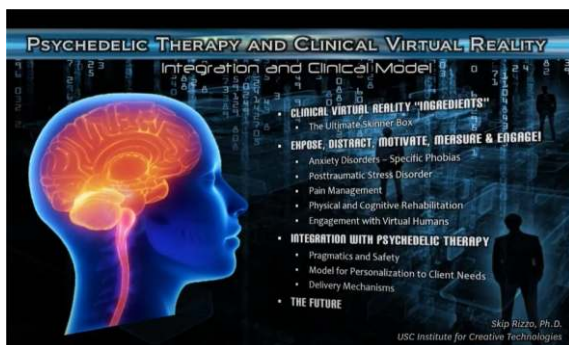
2 <https://www.virtualpsychedelics.com/>

3 Agnieszka D. Sekula,, Luke Downey and Prashanth Puspathanan’; *Virtual Reality as a Moderator of Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy*, in *Front. Psychol.*, 04 March 2022; *Sec. Psychology for Clinical Settings* <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.813746>

“the experience of ketamine with the hopes of leading to a lasting perspective change.”

Models are developed to outline the interaction between the VR and the trip like Skip Rizzo’s “Expose, distract, motivate, measure, engage”. Rizzo, with an academic background and involved as a partner in VirtualPsychedelics:

This is a complex and uncharted field, with some potential, but also risks. The side effects and limitations, like sensory overstimulation, cyber-sickness, triggering memories of past traumatic events as well as distracting from the inner experience or influencing its contents. The merger of Virtual Reality as a complimentary tool for enhancing a clinical psychedelic experience is now a viable



and compelling option. To support this vision, a model that informs the safe and thoughtful integration of VR-delivered content with therapeutic psychedelic experiences is needed.

The combination of VR and psychedelic journeying is fascinating and for now mostly experimental. The why is obvious, the how a matter of exploration and discovery. Breakthroughs are more likely to come from individual experimentation than from institutional experiments, because of the risk factor.

The idea, that VR is as “immersive” as psychedelics as reported by MIT⁴ seems a little overoptimistic. It is based on David Glowacki’s Isness-D experiments with a small sample (58 people) and only self-reporting with scales like the inclusion of community in self scale, ego-dissolution inventory, communitas scale, and the MEQ30 mystical experience questionnaire, no “hard” data. The results do not support what I and the pioneers in VR explored and experienced since the 80-ties and what recent VR games bring. As the research did not differ-

4 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-12637-z>

entiate between those who had psi experience and who didn't, I feel it's more about promoting the Isness-D approach offering shared VR (energetic coalescence) for groups of four to five people anywhere on the world. Interesting and artistic, it's certainly a step towards emotional immersive imaging. I however agree with Agnieszka Sekula (Enosis founder) "there's definitely differences between what a psychedelic experience feels like and what virtual reality feels like."

Reduced (fMRI scan) activity in the brain's default mode network (the ego-reaffirming neurological network) as the result of awe induced by immersive videos is not really proving the point that VR and psi are interchangeable either. Awe is a powerful emotion and helps to deal with identity perspective problems, and useful in all kinds of e-health applications, also with VR, but it's very personal and can backfire.

There are other interesting questions, like how would group-VR with psychedelics work out with more haptic feedback than ?

Could VR and extensive bio-feedback (monitoring body functions and brain-activity) be combined and lead to more safe and insightful tripping?

What can augmented reality do to ease psi-tripping?

VR and microdosing, using it as a daily "guided" meditation of sorts, would it work?

What is the relation between auditory and visual VR, and what does haptic (touch) or olfactory (smell)- stimulation?

Literature, more information

Want to know more?

Magazines, some out of print or as e-zines

Lucy's Rausch (German), Psychedelic Illuminations, High Times, Psychozoic Press, The Entheogen Review, Dragibus Magazine, PsypressUK: Anthology of Pharmacography, The Psychedelic Review, Mondo 2000, BoingBoing

Books: General and Philosophy

Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle. C. G.Jung, 1955

The feeling of what happens, by Antonio Damasio (1999)

The Golden Bough by Sir James George Frazer

The Rebirth of Nature by Rupert Sheldrake 1990

The Science Delusion by Rupert Sheldrake (2012)

The secret life of plants by P.Tompkins and Bird, 1973

The Selfish Gene, by Richard Dawkins (1976)

The Emperor Wears No Clothes: The Authoritative Historical Record of Cannabis and the Conspiracy Against Marijuana by Jack Herer, 1992

Inner Paths to Outer Space: Journeys to Alien Worlds through Psychedelics & Other Spiritual Technologies by Rick Strassman, 2008

The Age of Entheogens & the Angel's Dictionary by Jonathan Ott, 1995

Breaking Convention: Essays on Psychedelic Consciousness, 2013

Breaking Convention: Neurotransmissions, 2015

Not of the apes, 1971 by Björn Kurtén

Non-fantasy and Fiction

Books of a.o. Robert Anton Wilson, Carlos Castaneda, Timothy Leary, Terence and Dennis McKenna, The Electric Kool-Aid Test by Tom Wolfe

Classics:

The Doors of Perception 1954 & Heaven and Hell,1956 Aldous Huxley

Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, Richard Alpert. 1964

My Problem Child by Albert Hofmann 1979

Psychedelics Encyclopedia by Peter G. Stafford, 1977

True Hallucinations by Terence McKenna, 1993

Food of the Gods by Terence McKenna (1992)

Birth of a psychedelic culture;Conversations about Leary, the Harvard Experiments, Millbrook and the Sixties by Ram Dass en Ralph Metzner.

Plants of the Gods; Christian Ratsch, Richard Evans Schultes 2001

Pharmacotheon by Jonathan Ott

Frontiers of Psychedelic Consciousness: Conversations with Albert Hofmann, Stanislav Grof, Rick Strassman, Jeremy Narby, Simon Psford, and Others - *David Jay Brown* 2015

Psychology

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Shambala, C.G. Jung Foundation. ISBN 1-57062-426-7

Authentic Happiness. by Martin Seligman (2002/4).

Understanding the Enneagram by Don Richard Riso (1990)

LSD

Mystic Chemist: The Life of Albert Hofmann and His Discovery of LSD, by Dieter Hagenbach, Lucius Werthmüller, Synergetic Press 2013

Neuropolitique by Timothy Leary with R.A. Wilson (1988)

LSD: Doorway to the Numinous: The Groundbreaking Psychedelic Research into Realms of the Human Unconscious by Stanislav Grof, 2009

Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research by Stanislav Grof, 1975

Insight Outlook by Albert Hofmann, 1985

Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream by Jay Stevens, 1987

Acid Dreams, the complete social history of LSD; Martin A Lee, Bruce Shlain (1985)

XTC

The Secret Chief (Leo Zeff) by Myron Stolaroff, 2005 MAPS

Ecstasy: The Complete Guide, A Comprehensive Look at the Risks and Benefits of MDMA by Julie Holland

Ecstasy, Dance, Trance and transformation by Nicholas Saunders and Rick Doblin, 1996

Generation Ecstasy by Simon Reynolds

E for Ecstasy, by Nicholas Saunders, 1993

Ecstasy : The Complete Guide : A Comprehensive Look at the Risks and Benefits of MDMA by Julie Holland (Editor), 2001

Mushrooms

Shroom: A Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom, Andy Letcher, 2006

Mushrooms of the World: An Identification Guide, by Paul Stamets, 1996

Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World, Paul Stamets, 2005

Many publications by Der Grüne Zweig, Werner Pieper

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

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

Ayahuasca and DMT

Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge by Terence McKenna

Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey Into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism by Daniel Pinchbeck, 2002

Ayahuasca Analogs by Jonathan Ott, 1994

DMT: The Spirit Molecule by Rick Strassman, 2000

Heavenly Highs: Ayahuasca, Kava-kava, DMT & Other Plants of the Gods by Peter G. Stafford, 2005

The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens & the I Ching by Dennis J. McKenna, 1975

Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience by Benny Shanon, 2002

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Psychedelic Healing: The Promise of Entheogens for Psychotherapy and Spiritual Development by Neal M. Goldsmith, 2010

The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide: Safe, Therapeutic, and Sacred Journeys by James Fadiman, 2011

Manifesting Minds: A Review of Psychedelics in Science, Medicine, Sex, and Spirituality by Rick Doblin (Editor), 2013

Drugs - Without the Hot Air: Minimising the Harms of Legal and Illegal Drugs, by David Nutt, 2012

Shamanism and anthropology

Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge by Carlos Castaneda

Hallucinogens and Shamanism by Michael Harner (Editor), 1973

Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind by Graham Hancock, 2005

Demystifying Shamans and their world; Stan Krippner, Adam Rock (2011)

Experiences

Tripping: An Anthology of True-Life Psychedelic Adventures by Charles Hayes (Editor), 2000

Moksha: Writings on Psychedelics & the Visionary Experience by Aldous Huxley, 1977

Magic

Access to Western Esotericism, by Antoine Faivre, 1994

An ABC of Witchcraft Past and Present by Doreen Valiente (Author), 1988

Compendium Maleficarum

Le Totémisme aujourd'hui by Claude Lévi-Strauss,

Liber de potestate et sapientia Dei: Corpus Hermeticum I-XIV, Hermes (Trismegistos), Marsilio Ficino , S.P.E.S. (1471)

Magick in Theory and Practice by Aleister Crowley

Psychomagic, the transformative power of Shamanic Psychotherapy by Alejandro Jodorowsky (2004/2010)

Religion

The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross by John Marco Allegro 1970

DMT and the Soul of Prophecy by Rick Strassman 2014

Voodoo in Haiti by Alfred Métraux, (1972)

Wicca: The Old Religion in the New Age by Vivianne Crowley, 1989

The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries, by R. Gordon Wasson, 1978

Cleansing the Doors of Perception: The Religious Significance of Entheogenic Plants and Chemicals by Huston Smith, 2000

Entheogens And The Future Of Religion by Robert Forte (editor), 2000

Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers by Richard Evans Schultes, 1992

Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics by Allan Hunt Badiner (Editor) 2002 updated 2015

Your Brain Is God by Timothy Leary, 2001

The Encyclopedia of Religion (16 Vols. 1993) by Mircea Eliade

Videos

There are many interviews and reports of conferences recorded on video like YouTube or Vimeo. There are, on youtube etc. 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.

Internet-sites

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www.tripsit.me

www.psychonautwiki.org

www.psychedellicmag.com

www.realitysandwich.com

www.disinfo.com

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www.ultreculture.com

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www.vice.com

www.thegooddrugsguide.com

www.drugsforum.com

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