

Myth, Mind, and Molecule

ENTHEOS: The Journal of Psychedelic Spirituality

A welcome addition to scholarly and scientific publications about entheogens is *Entheos*, whose printed-on-demand premier issue came out in July 2001. As it presents itself: “*Entheos* is a community of enthusiasts, scholars and scientists who share a common interest in the role of entheogens as it pertains to human spirituality.”

The first article is a reprint of the 1979 article that proposed the word “entheogen” as a more socially acceptable replacement for the word “psychedelic.” With its “strong ‘Wassonian’ slant toward academic questions in anthropology, religious studies, art history, and history,” *Entheos* hopes to span at least two readerships, both specialists and a wide popular audience. Judging from its premier issue, it looks like it will be able to accomplish this.

Among the shorter more popular articles, are two brief tributes to entheogenic pioneers (R. Gordon Wasson and Richard Schultes), an informal dialogue between the editor and his mother about folk traditions of *Amanita muscaria* use in northern Germany, and Blaise Staples’s reminisces about a visit to Wasson in his Danbury, CT, home.

Other short articles are an interview with Rick Strassman and Staples’s new translation of *The Phoenix* by early Roman-Christian Lactanius. In addition to a colorful cover, both back and front, visual attractions of this issue include several pages of color photographs of *Amanita muscaria* near the center of this issue. These are, I suppose, *Entheos*’s contributions toward erotic centerfolds.

Two articles “Conjuring Eden” and “Old Gods in New Bottles” are scholarly additions to the growing literature that present a Wassonian interpretation to classical times and Western religious history. Both are heavily referenced, but numbered by endnotes so that reading flow is not interrupted. I particularly liked the presentation of the numerous pictures in a two-step process. First the whole item (painting, sculpture, artifact) is shown; nearby is a detailed close-up of, say, the mushroom depicted in the larger work. *Entheos* harmonizes their print publication with an electronic publication, enriching the print version by providing additional images that are “web-noted” and can be found at

the publisher’s web site.

In keeping with their impressive scholarship in *The Apples of Apollo*—which examines with admirable thoroughness leads on entheogens in ancient Greek and related area culture—in this issue of *Entheos* Ruck, Staples, and Heinrich extend their myco-sleuthing into the Middle Ages and Renaissance. I expect we are getting an early view of information that will make its way into another book on the hidden story of entheogens during these periods.

I hope so.

Mark Hoffman, *Entheos*’s editor, has recruited an interdisciplinary group of contributors, which establishes *Entheos*’s credibility. Ruck, Staples, and Heinrich form the *Entheos* Executive Committee, and its Advisory Board consists of Frank Barron, Jay Fikes, Robert Forte, Mark Kaspro, Stanley Krippner, Dale Pendell, Daniel Perrine, and Peter Webster. These pretty well sample entheogenic interests from myth to mind to molecule.

I hope *Entheos* will be able to publish articles on these topics for the general reader without getting too specialized in its vocabulary or requiring its readers to have extensive background knowledge. The premier issue manages it.

Entheos: The Journal of Psychedelic Spirituality joins *Eleusis: Journal of Psychoactive Plants and Compounds* and *The Heffter Review* as the strongest journals dedicated to general entheogenic/psychedelic scholarship. It’s a welcome contribution, and its appearance marks another milestone in psychedelic/entheogenic scholarship. •

– Thomas B. Roberts

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