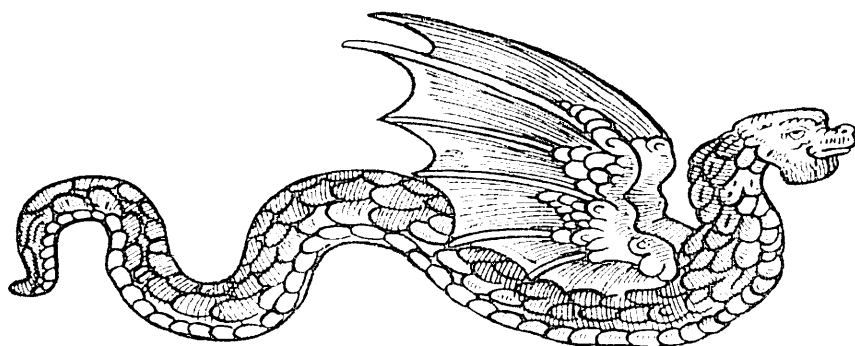


MAPS READERS' FORUM



Dear MAPS,

I subscribe to Tricycle and I am pleased to see an open discussion of the subject of Psychedelics. "Here there be Dragons" is a good analogy for today's attitude toward psychedelic research and individual experimentation. Another example that may apply is the "Inquisition." During the Middle Ages, men and women who challenged the accepted world view had their property confiscated, were imprisoned, tortured, and/or burned at the stake. To

challenge the accepted world view was heresy. The idea that the sun might be at the center of the known universe rather than the earth brought swift retribution. So little has changed since then. Ideas and concepts that challenge the accepted world view still meet with persecution. When the psychological reality as defined by today's culture is challenged, there can still be an inquisition.

"Here there be Dragons" states that our knowledge of the physical world has grown

beyond belief. The reason for this growth is that the rich are made richer. The New World has been plundered. The ancient culture in the Americas, Africa, India, China, Australia and Polynesia have all but been destroyed, as has been the natural world. Will support of your research eventually lead to similar destruction and exploitation of our souls? Or will this research help humanity to willingly and compassionately consider other world views? Will this research help

humankind redefine the meaning of wealth and draw us to a more benevolent relationship with life?

I will support your research. But I do so with deeply mixed feelings of reservation and expectation. Historically you can see why. I look forward to receiving the MAPS newsletter. As I come to understand your work I will support it as best I can.

Best Wishes,
Bill

Dear MAPS,

After reading the MAPS/California NORML Waterpipe Study, I began wondering about the relative dangers of inhaling anything into your lungs. Calling government agencies and searching the Internet, I found that smoking marijuana isn't as hazardous as breathing the air in, say, the San Fernando Valley. It's safer to inhale pot than the air in the San Fernando Valley.

Or Manhattan. Or most any other urban center.

A recent study by the Natural Resource Defense Council reported that 64,000 people in major American cities may die each year from lung or heart problems aggravated by breathing particulates, the gritty pollution in our air. The Los Angeles-Long Beach area and New York

City have the highest death rates blamed on particulates, about 6,000 people per year...

Marijuana smoking, on the other hand, hasn't killed anybody. Despite 80 million Americans who've tried pot and 11 million using it regularly, the U.S. Department of Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and the American Cancer Society have no data linking marijuana with any deaths.

Particulates still have a way to go beat alcohol and cigarettes—alcohol kills 100,000 a year, cigarettes 400,000. Illicit drugs account for 20,000 deaths a year.

So if you live in a big city and want to avoid health problems, take Bob Dole's advice and "just don't do it." Breathe, that is.

—Alan