



# MAPS

Bulletin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies

**S****ynchronicity**, a concept originated by Dr. Carl Jung, refers to meaningful associations between a person's internal mental processes and the simultaneous occurrence of external events that seem directly related. Though these occurrences in the outside world are not caused by the person's consciousness in any understandable, linear manner, Jung postulated an "acausal connecting principle." Rationalists prefer to interpret these coincidences as the product of chance and dismiss theories that rely on forces that modern science has yet to define and measure.

Whatever the explanation, a remarkable coincidence played a crucial role in the January 1997 decision by the Joe Barnhart Foundation to pledge \$58,000 to support a MAPS-sponsored study into the use of MDMA in the treatment of pain and distress in cancer patients. The study is to be conducted by Dr. Charles Grob and Russell Poland, Ph.D., Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. We expect to begin the study sometime this summer, as a result of the efforts of Dr. Poland who received a \$12,500 grant from MAPS in late 1996 to supervise and complete the protocol design and approval process.

## **Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President**

So, what happened? It occurred near the end of the Joe Barnhart Foundation's lengthy grant review process. On Monday morning, December 16th, I was notified by phone by a representative of the Foundation that the Board of Directors had voted 2-1 in favor of the proposal. Since unanimous agreement was required, the grant would not be awarded. However, I was also informed that the one director who had voted against the grant would be willing to reconsider if I could locate a respected medical/scientific authority in the Houston area, where the Foundation was located, who would support the project. This person would ideally be a faculty member in the medical school at either Baylor or University of Texas Houston. No such person came to mind or was in the MAPS database so I was left wondering if I would ever find a way to convince the Joe Barnhart Foundation that this controversial project was worth funding.

That afternoon, MAPS received a donation in the mail from a new member. Coincidentally (synchronistically?), she was from Houston and was on the faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston. I immediately contacted her and explained my search. She suggested that I contact a professor emeritus of pharmacology at UT Houston. I did so and was awed to discover that this professor had known Joe Barnhart, was close friends with one of the two members of the Board of Directors who had voted in favor of the proposal, was already familiar with MAPS since he had heard me speak at a conference and, sadly, had lost his daughter to cancer and knew firsthand the need for novel treatments for pain and distress in cancer patients. Several weeks later, after evaluating the protocol and supporting documents, he gladly rendered a favorable opinion to the Foundation, which resulted in a vote of 3-0 for the grant.

The process by which the Joe Barnhart Foundation came to support MDMA research has deepened my belief that there is an enormous potential reservoir of support for medical research with marijuana and psychedelics. It is up to us to catalyze this potential into actual research. With the continued support of MAPS members, whose contributions permit MAPS to allocate 100% of large grants to specific research projects, much can be accomplished. Best wishes for a spring-time filled with productive synchronicity. – Rick Doblin, MAPS President, April 1997.

**research updates**

**Medical Marijuana: Spring 1997 Overview. . . . .3**

**Rick Doblin**

**LSD Research at Orenda Institute. . . . . 4**

**Richard Yensen, Ph.D. and Donna Dryer, M.D., M.P.H.**

**Lecturing about Ketamine Psychedelic Therapy in the United States. . . . . 5**

**Evgeny Krupitsky, M.D., Ph.D.**

**conference reports**

**The Entheobotany Conference—San Francisco, October 1996. . . . . 6**

**Robert Segal**

**International Conference on Ecstasy—Bologna, Italy, November 1996. . . . . 10**

**Marianne D'Amore**

**1997 BPC Seminar on Ethnobotany—Palenque, Mexico, January 1997. . . . .13**

**Kate Chapman**

**in print and on television**

**Psychoalytic and Psychedelic Therapy 1931-1995: A Bibliographical Perspective. . . . .18**

**Torsten Passie, M.D., M.A.**

**On the crest of a wave: BBC's Psychedelic Science. . . . .20**

**Simon G. Powell, comments by Karl Jansen, M.D., Ph.D.**

**MAPS Membership and Renewal Information. . . . .22**

**F E A T U R E D I N T H E N E X T M A P S B U L L E T I N :**

**Interview with Dr. Albert Hofmann**

**Mini-Reviews of Non-English Publications by Jonathan Ott**

While we can be grateful that there is again considerable publishing activity on the subject of shamanic inebriants in the United States many books are being published in languages other than English, scarcely coming to the attention of aficionados in this country.

**Book reviews by June Riedlinger, R.Ph., Pharm.D.**

Two recent books by Michael Montagne and co-authors present valuable information on the drug discovery, development, and approval process in the U.S., which has great implications for the future therapeutic use of psychedelic drugs.

**Reports on a March 1997 European workshop on hallucinogenic drugs in experimental psychiatric research, *The Role of MAOIs in the Hallucinogenic Experience* by John H. Halpern, M.D., and much more...**

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MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) is a membership-based organization working to assist psychedelic researchers around the world design, obtain governmental approval, fund, conduct and report on psychedelic research in humans. Founded in 1986, MAPS is an IRS approved 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation funded by tax deductible donations. MAPS has previously funded basic scientific research into the safety of MDMA (3,4, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, *Ecstasy*) and has opened a Drug Master File for MDMA at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. MAPS is now focused primarily on assisting scientists to conduct human studies to generate essential information about the risks and psychotherapeutic benefits of MDMA, other psychedelics, and marijuana, with the goal of eventually gaining government approval for their medical uses. Interested parties wishing to copy any portion of this newsletter are encouraged to do so and are kindly requested to credit MAPS including name and address. The MAPS newsletter is produced by a small group of dedicated staff and volunteers. Your participation, financial or otherwise, is welcome. © 1996 Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, Inc. (MAPS) 1801 Tippah Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28205. Phone: (704) 358-9830. Fax: (704) 358-1850. Internet: [info@maps.org](mailto:info@maps.org), and <http://www.maps.org>

**MEDICAL MARIJUANA RESEARCH: SPRING 1997 OVERVIEW**

Rick Doblin

AS THIS WINTER comes to an end, so too, it seems, does the political deep-freeze that has blocked medical marijuana research. As readers of the MAPS newsletter know only too well, Dr. Abrams, UC San Francisco and MAPS have been working for over four and a half years to obtain permission for a study to investigate the use of smoked marijuana in the promotion of appetite and weight gain in people suffering from the AIDS wasting syndrome. MAPS recently donated \$5,000 to UC San Francisco to support the expenses and staff time involved in the preparation of Dr. Abrams' second National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant application requesting funding and a supply of marijuana for the study. Dr. Abrams' application is due in May. NIH's decision will be announced in August.

**NIH-sponsored meeting**

In an attempt to demonstrate that the Clinton Administration is prioritizing science over ideology, a *Workshop on the Medical Utility of Marijuana* was held at the main NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland on February 19-20, 1997. Structured as a series of presentations to an expert panel by researchers familiar with various medical uses of marijuana, its purpose was to review the scientific research on marijuana. Statements made by the members of the expert panel to the media at the conclusion of the meeting suggest that the formal recommendations of the panel will include the call for additional research, especially

into the use of marijuana in the treatment of AIDS wasting syndrome. Thus, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic that Dr. Abrams' second NIH grant application will be approved.

**Dr. Temple outlines study design**

The most useful and forthright part of the conference was a talk by Dr. Robert Temple, Associate Director for Medical Policy, FDA. Dr. Temple outlined a series of guidelines regarding the design of research protocols for various potential medical uses of marijuana. Dr. Temple acknowledged the interaction between science and politics and suggested that although FDA regulations do not require a drug to be more effective or safer than other drugs in order for it to be approved for prescription use, that it would nevertheless be wise for medical marijuana advocates to seek to conduct studies with people suffering from serious diseases in whom the currently available medicines are not sufficient or have intolerable side effects. Dr. Abrams' research agenda and design match Dr. Temple's suggestions almost exactly.

**NIH review still required**

The conference was not entirely without its setbacks. The expert committee assigned to review the scientific data will probably not recommend that NIH itself conduct studies or create a special grant program. NIH will remain passive and only respond to requests from outside research teams. Most importantly, NIDA will

continue to refuse to provide marijuana to FDA-approved studies unless the protocols have been submitted to the NIH for review and have been approved, despite the delays involved in the NIH peer-review process and the small percentage of proposals that get funded.

MAPS funded the printing costs for a booklet containing statements from a coalition of medical marijuana policy reform groups that was given to the media and to conference participants. MAPS' post-conference report to the expert committee can be found on the MAPS web site at [www.maps.org/mmj/](http://www.maps.org/mmj/).

**Migraine study**

In addition to supporting Dr. Abrams' protocol, MAPS has donated \$2,500 to Dr. Ethan Russo, U. of Montana, for expenses involved in preparing an NIH grant application for the study of the use of marijuana in the treatment of people whose migraines fail to respond to conventional medications. MAPS has an additional \$7,500 available to support the expenses of other research teams interested in applying to NIH for medical marijuana research. Dr. Abrams and Dr. Russo are the only physicians that we know of who are trying to obtain permission to conduct medical marijuana research. To apply for a grant, contact Sylvia Thyssen at MAPS. •



**T**HE DREAM BEHIND forming the Orenda Institute was to continue psychotherapy studies with psychedelics that began at Spring Grove State Hospital (1960-1965) and were carried forward at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center (1965-76).

The dream that we might carry on this pioneering research occurred to us in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1985. Now we are about to begin with an initial study of LSD-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of substance abusers.

On February 14th, 1997

The LSD was transported to the Orenda Institute safe, a class V equivalent safe, where it has been stored as required by Drug Enforcement Administration regulations. A class V safe resists forced entry by all means for at least 20 hours (ours weighs close to a ton). With the supplies safely tucked away we shall begin the real work of compassionately treating sixty patients who have significant problems around substance abuse. This begins with a careful screening of candidates to confirm their substance abuse is of a quality and duration to merit psychiatric diagnosis and to establish that they meet other criteria for inclusion in the study. Our initial subjects must be local residents with solid support from a significant other who is willing to accompany them through the ups and downs of psychedelic treatment. •

Richard Jensen, Ph.D. Director,  
Orenda Institute Baltimore, Maryland  
ryensen@orenda.org

## UPDATE: LSD RESEARCH AT ORENDA INSTITUTE

Richard Jensen, Ph.D. and Donna Dryer, M.D., M.P.H.

I (Richard Jensen) joined the research psychotherapy team at MPRC in 1972. When the MPRC was closed to further psychedelic studies in 1976, a small group of researchers began meeting to find a way to continue the studies that were suddenly interrupted by controversy regarding the administration of the research center. During the mid 1980's there was a small program that involved LSD psychotherapy and cancer patients conducted under the auspices of the University of Maryland and North Charles General Hospital.

the LSD was prepared in carefully labeled vials so that we will be blind as to the amount of LSD each of the subjects shall receive in their drug sessions (up to five per subject) until after our study is complete. Three hundred coded vials plus additional labeled vials are the result of careful dilution and bottling by Dr. David Nichols of Purdue University and the Hefter Research Institute. The starting point was 100 milligrams of pharmaceutical grade LSD Tartrate purchased from professor Rudolf Brenneisen at the University of Bern in Switzerland.

*The MAPS Bulletin will report on subsequent developments of this study, including subject selection and when the first psychotherapy session will begin.*

## IBOGAINE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

James Rodger, of the **Anthropology** Department, University College, London, is conducting a **study of the ibogaine visionary experience**.

If you've taken ibogaine and would be willing to fill out a short **two-page questionnaire**, it is available from the MAPS office and on the MAPS website at [www.maps.org](http://www.maps.org).

For more information, **contact:** James Rodger, 'Oak Trees', Pinley Green, Claverdon, Warwick CV35 8LU, England, email: [zchamc3@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:zchamc3@ucl.ac.uk).

**S**INCE THE SPRING OF 1996, I have been working in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University for a year as a visiting scientist (see MAPS Newsletter, Vol. VII No. 1). During this time, I was invited to deliver two major lectures. The first lecture, "Clinical Experience and Possible Mechanisms for Ketamine Therapy of Alcoholism" was delivered at a Columbia University (New York City) Substance Abuse Seminar chaired by Dr. Herb Kleber at the New York State Psychiatric Institute on December 18th, 1996. The second lecture, "Approaches for the Treatment of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Using Ketamine Psychotherapy, Transcranial Electrostimulation and Other Methods" was delivered to scientists from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on January 8th, 1997.

The first lecture was a one hour talk focused on our ketamine studies. The second lecture at NIDA/NIAAA was a longer three-hour presentation

where I discussed broader issues of alcoholism and substance abuse therapy in Russia. In both lectures I described in detail the results of our eleven year study of ketamine therapy of alcohol dependency; its clinical efficacy and underlying psychological, biochemical and

the design of our clinical trial which was not double blind. At the time that study was conducted, in the mid-eighties, the Russian research team was not yet skilled enough to set up a double blind study with a psychedelic. Nevertheless, I hope

### LECTURING ABOUT KETAMINE PSYCHEDELIC THERAPY IN THE UNITED STATES

Evgeny Krupitsky, M.D., Ph.D.

neurophysiological mechanisms. I also mentioned our plans to do a double-blind placebo controlled randomized study of ketamine assisted therapy in heroin dependent patients. With support from MAPS, this study will begin upon my return to my research lab in St. Petersburg in April.

Both lectures raised much interest among mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, psychopharmacologists, etc.) and brought about a vivid discussion after each talk was over. It seems that I was able to answer a major portion of the critiques excluding perhaps the critique of some features of

the whole set of rigorous scientific data from our ketamine studies was impressive enough to help further the idea of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy as a promising treatment in the professional mental health community. It seems that the scientific community and public opinion in the United States is getting a bit more tolerant of the idea of research with psychedelic-assisted therapy, and I would be happy if my lectures contributed to that process. •

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Dr. Krupitsky can be reached at  
kru@lond.spb.su

In mid-March 1997, MAPS donated \$8,000 to Dr. Krupitsky

to support the first year of his study of

### **ketamine-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of heroin addicts.**

MAPS has pledged to donate an additional \$8,000 per year

for the second and third years of the study.



## Plants, **Shamanism** and Ecstatic States

**A Report on The Entheobotany Conference,  
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, San Francisco, California,  
October 1996**

Robert Segal

### **Entheobotany:**

the science of plants that produce psychoactive substances which, when inhaled or ingested, awaken or generate mystical experiences.

### **The Conference**

The stated aim of the conference was "to discuss the history, and latest research on: ayahuasca, psychoactive mushrooms, tobacco, iboga, LSD-type drugs, entheogenic snuffs and their contained tryptamines, and peyote and the entheogenic mescalines." These discussions were well presented by an international array of anthropologists, chemists, art historians and neuroscientists. But the real importance of the conference extended beyond the podium into the lobby of the Palace of Fine Arts, where the presenters mingled with the audience and everyone shared information and experiences amidst exhibits of botanical plants and psychedelic artwork. The gathering itself was the most important aspect of the conference. There is an active psychedelic community in this country and this conference was an opportunity for people to meet each other, share ideas and information, and trade email addresses.

The gathering was organized by chemist and entheobotanist Jonathan Ott, and modeled after two previous conferences, the first held in San Luis Potosí, Mexico in 1992 the second in Lerida, Spain in 1994. Though the presenters and the presentations were very similar to those at the Lerida Conference (see MAPS Newsletter Vol. V No. 3), a distinguishing aspect of this third conference was that it was held here in the United States, the country which sets the agenda for international drug policy around the globe. This conference helped promote a clearer and more accurate understanding of the distinction between addictive and abusive drugs and the spiritual, religious use of nonaddictive sacramental entheogens.

Jonathan Ott opened the conference with a presentation entitled "The Natural Paradises." He recounted R. Gordon Wasson's unified field theory of anthropology, connecting shamanic ecstasy with the origin of all religion, from non-western shamanism to the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece, stating "visionary experience is the primal heart and soul of religious revelation. But somewhere in the history of western

civilization direct experience of the divine became the supreme heresy, taking all the religion out of religion, leaving an empty and hollow shell with no value or attraction to human kind." Contemporary drug prohibition can be seen as the modern secular expression of the ruling politics inquisition against direct personal experience of the divine. This taboo direct personal experience is what Wasson himself discovered in a quiet mountain top village in southern Mexico, which he aptly described as "religion, pure and simple, free of theology, free of dogmatics, expressing itself in awe and reverence."

The next presenter, Antonio Escohotado, Professor Of Sociology and Political Science, Universidad Nacional, Madrid, Spain, spoke on "Inebriation as Experience of the Spirit." He pointed out the important distinction between mere drunkenness and divine intoxication that is not readily acknowledged in our society. Certain states of inebriation can actually promote lucidity, rather than dull it. Inebriation threatens one's mask of composure, and Escohotado suggests that these masks can often be false personas, masks of duplicity and self deception. Inebriation pushes away the masks. Escohotado calls inebriation an occasion for self-diagnosis—the benefit of entheogens is to diagnose our degree of contact with the joy of living! The entheogenic path is not necessarily easy, it requires courage to take an honest look at one's life. This is not always guaranteed to be joyful, but it is instructional. Psychedelics cut through the masks of our defensive constructs and enable us, if we are willing, to examine and correct our way of living. Hence we can then find greater joy, not only in inebriation, but in all living.

### **Shift in tone**

The next presenter, chemist Kary Mullis, shifted the academic tone of the conference a bit. Mullis pioneered the technology of polymerase chain reaction (PCR), a technique that amplifies DNA for detection, diagnosis, and research, for which he was awarded the Nobel



Prize for Chemistry in 1993. Mullis strode up to the podium, cocktail in hand, and began a rambling account of his journey from Georgia Tech to UC-Berkeley to study biochemistry in the early sixties. He was curious and eager to learn about LSD after reading accounts in *Time* and *Life* magazines describing it as a therapeutic tool with great promise. He went to Berkeley with a degree in chemistry and "a fairly unexamined faith" in the fact that the universe is comprised of energy and matter and anything that needed to be explained could be explained in terms of these two things. He described his journey from a "very dry philosophy" of technical prowess, concerned with how to "make things," to a new and profound understanding of "how holy" these things really were. Reexamining his faith in science, Mullis recognized that the universe does have some order to it but it is not the order suggested by the classic models of physics or the stuff taught to him at Georgia Tech. "It's weird stuff, holy stuff, its the body of God is what it is, and I didn't learn this at the university but on my couch after taking 500 mics. (of LSD)" One result of his psychedelic speculations eventually became his Ph.D. thesis, "The Cosmological Significance of Time Reversal," published in *Nature* in 1968. Mullis accompanied his presentation with a slide show of computer representations of fractal equations, which he feels are a more accurate description of atomic structure than the little round balls surrounded by whirling electrons. After speaking for 45 minutes, Mullis ended his presentation as the slide projector screen slowly rose to reveal a four-person electric band, *Frida's Circus*, which played a brief set of reggae and rock and roll.

The evening program began with Johannes Wilbert, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, UCLA, who gave the talk *Illuminated Serpents: Tobacco Hallucinations of the Warao*. Wilbert spoke on the culturated visions of snakes this indigenous people of South America people experience after extreme nicotine toxicity. Following a seven day fast, the aspiring shamans hyperventilate the smoke from three foot cigars of tobacco with a nicotine content of about 16% (American cigarette tobacco contains around 1% nicotine). Wilbert acknowledged taking part in the ceremony, but gave no account of seeing serpents.

#### **Richard Evan Schultes honored**

The final evening presenter who was scheduled to speak was Richard Evan Schultes, pioneer ethnopharmacognosist and retired

Director of the Botanical Museum, Harvard University. However, Dr. Schultes was ill and could not attend. Instead, Jonathan Ott read a paper from Albert Hofmann, Swiss chemist and discoverer of LSD, reminiscing about his years of collaboration with Schultes. Then Ott, Peter Furst and Bo Holmstedt presented a panel discussion recounting anecdotes about Dr. Schultes and entheobotany in general.

Bo Holmstedt, Chemist from Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, opened Saturday's series of presentations with a retrospective of a 1967 conference on the search for psychoactive drugs held almost 30 years ago in San Francisco. He was followed by Rob Montgomery, co-sponsor of the conference, who recalled how that conference in 1967 was the starting point for his interest in founding the Botanical Preservation Corps. He presented an adventure travelogue of stories and slides from his expeditions collecting rare plant species throughout Central and South America. He spoke of plant teachers and plant spirits and told stories of sleuthing through markets in out of the way villages, tracking down exotic plants, and meeting local curanderos. Montgomery spoke with such awe and enthusiasm that one could feel his emotion for the power and beauty of these plants.

#### **Ibogaine**

Julie Staley, neurologist, University of Miami, Florida presented in lieu of her advising professor Deborah Mash, Ph.D. on their current research with the drug Ibogaine. Ibogaine is a psychoactive alkaloid derived from the bark of the iboga shrub of west-central Africa. The drug has far-reaching socio-religious importance among the people of the Congo and Gabon. It is used in small doses as a powerful stimulant, and at larger doses as a means to enter into the spirit world. In western medicine Ibogaine holds great promise as a treatment for addiction to alcohol, heroin, cocaine and nicotine. Mash hopes to research the effects of Ibogaine on disrupting chemical dependency disorders in humans. In 1993 she received FDA approval to administer Ibogaine in Stage I safety and efficacy trials at preliminary dose levels. These trials were completed and approval has been granted for further dose-level studies, but all grants for funding have been denied by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Further research of Ibogaine treatment is in limbo, caught up in the politics of NIDA and American drug policy. In view of the social costs of chemical dependency, controlled scientific

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research of ibogaine should be carried out with government support. MAPS donated \$25,000 to Dr. Mash and Dr. Sanchez-Ramos' Phase I ibogaine research project.

#### **Talks on ayahuasca**

Saturday afternoon began a series of talks on ayahuasca, the sacred tea of the Amazon. Luis Eduardo Luna, anthropologist, Universidade do Florianópolis, Brazil, gave a cross-cultural overview of its use among the shamans of the Amazon Basin, and as a sacrament in the syncretic religions of Brazil. Luna outlined two underlying principles of the shamanistic universe: first, the existence of a complex, temporal, intelligent reality not immediately accessible to everyone; second, the existence of techniques to have access to these realities. Ayahuasca is part of the technique to access these realities. Luna explained how one ayahuasca shamanic initiation requires 49 days of repeated usage. At this point the shaman may meet the ayahuasca spirit as an intelligent being, described by the shaman guide as a "very sympatico" little man. Luna explained that ayahuasca creates a dialogue between the shaman and the world of nature, manifested to him by means of anthropomorphic and animal forms. The language that is used is often music, song and poetry. In a curious irony, Luna told how one Indian shaman complained to him how the young people of his village who go off to the city and learn to read and don't take hallucinogenic drugs often return to the village as disaffected youth: their behavior is anti-social, including fighting, drinking and having sex out of wedlock.

Dennis McKenna followed with a less poetic presentation explaining the chemistry and pharmacology of ayahuasca. McKenna reiterated the difficulty of pursuing research due to the lack of government funding. He provided a quantitative analysis of the active ingredients in ayahuasca: harmol, harmine, harmaline, and DMT.

Next James Callaway, neurochemist from the University of Kuopio, Finland provided more quantitative analysis, with facts, figures, graphs and charts. His presentation was very technical, "just mopping up," as he described it, and reviewed the data from the Hoasca Project, a multidisciplinary effort to examine the human pharmacology of ayahuasca as used by members

of the União do Vegetal Church. He accented his presentation with photographs of the UDV churches and the members who participated in the research, and a few personal anecdotes of the gastrointestinal disorders that these sacraments produce along with ecstasy.

Peter Furst, anthropologist, SUNY, New York, presented a very thorough and academic slide presentation on Native American Entheogens in Art and Archaeology. His talk was followed by an energetic introduction to basic psychoactive chemistry by UC Berkeley lecturing professor Alexander Shulgin. Shulgin gave an enthusiastic arm-waving demonstration of the chemical structures of phenethylamines and tryptamines and shared stories, anecdotes and subjective observations from his own research. In reference to the "purity of sources" debate between naturally occurring plant substances vs. synthesized chemicals created in the laboratory, Shulgin presented two points in support of chemistry. First, structurally there is no difference between a chemical that occurs naturally in the plant and one he produces in the lab, second chemicals created in the lab have a precise level of purity, therefore dosage can be measured with precision and accuracy. This second point was made in reference to Callaway's analysis of the ayahuasca brew used in three syncretic churches of Brazil, which showed the percentage of active ingredients varies greatly from church to church, and even within church groups the active ingredients vary from batch to batch.

#### **The scientist and the shaman**

Both Sasha Shulgin and Kary Mullis represent a twentieth century synthesis of science and shamanism, a framework that I find the most satisfying model for describing non-ordinary experiences of chemically altered consciousness. Both the scientist and the native shaman share some similarities in their respective quests to understand the world and universe we live in. The scientists simply describe it in terms of the world view of western science. For our society to be able to understand and accept the benefits of entheogenic use it would be useful if more scientists who have explored psychedelics would share their impressions and insights.

Sunday morning Stacy Schaefer, anthropologist, University of Texas Pan-American,



delivered a presentation on Pregnancy, Children and Peyote in Huichol Culture. She provided an interesting perspective of women's roles with the use of entheogens based on her work with the Huichol Indians of Mexico. Besides the biochemical aspects of peyote consumption during pregnancy, she discussed the beliefs and personal experiences of the Huichol women who take peyote throughout their pregnancy. The women described fascinating accounts of communion with their unborn children.

#### **Incense, smoking and sacred drink**

Christian Ratsch, anthropologist from Hamburg, presented on Entheogens Among the Lowland Maya, a native perspective of psychoactive plant use, drawn from the Mayan speaking indigenous peoples of southern Mexico, based on his 20 years of research among the Lacandón Indians of the rainforest. Ratsch outlined three principle practices in the current Mayan religion for mediating with the gods; burning incense, smoking tobacco, and drinking *balché*. Archeological finds suggest that these practices have ancient origins and represent a continuous heritage. Incense burning artifacts have been found in all Mayan ruins. According to legend, when incense is burned the smoke rises to heaven and is transformed into a delicious drink that the gods cannot make themselves—they need human help to offer it. The "heaven incense drink" intoxicates the gods. If kept happy, the gods will in turn provide that which is in their power to benefit the people on earth.

The tobacco smoked by the Maya, *Nicotina rosica*, has a nicotine content of about 16%. When Ratsch commented to an elderly indigenous man that in the west we are experiencing an epidemic of health problems associated with tobacco consumption, the old man replied, "that is because they inhale."

Finally Ratsch spoke about the sacred drink, *balché*, a combination of honey, water and the bark of the *balché* tree. The most essential ingredient of this drink is the prayer or magical spell invoking the souls of all the plants and animals of the forest which is recited over the steeping mixture. The Lacandón believe it is the correctness of the prayer which determines the strength and potency of the brew. After

steeping for a few days, the brew is consumed until it is all gone. Ratsch described the initial effects as euphoria, along with diarrhea, and vomiting. After the initial bodily discomforts pass the people sing and tell stories and recite the history, myths and lore of their tribe. The specific psychoactive effect, according to Ratsch, is not very visual but is very emotional and empathogenic, facilitating tribal unity and bonding.

Dr. Albert Hofmann was scheduled to deliver the closing address but did not attend the conference due to an injury and subsequent surgery. His spot was filled by Wade Davis, the ethnobotanist who first analyzed the voodoo drugs of Haiti and published his studies in the book *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, but due to scheduling constraints I was not able to attend this presentation. Others reported Davis's talk to be fascinating.

#### **Summary**

The 1996 Conference on Entheobotany explored the current state of shamanic plant sciences. The evidence presented by scholars of art and culture suggests that entheobotanical plants have played a far greater role in the development of our civilization than historians have previously suspected. From anthropology we see the roles that these plants still play in direct visionary experience used in healing, communion with nature and the Divine, and simply for ecstatic enjoyment. From chemistry and neuroscience we learn the bio-physical description of how these plants work in the human body. The most important thing left to explore is how we can best use these remarkable substances in contemporary western culture. Their usefulness as a sacrament in religious practice is time honored and, as we are discovering, neurochemically valid. Can modern industrial civilization recover the spiritual wisdom that was lost in the mad rush to master and control the material world? Can a real expression of awe and an awareness of the infinite mystery of life guide and mediate the use and choices of our technological prowess? If we hope to truly advance as a species and live up to our remarkable potential as human beings, it must. •

For additional information on future conferences, contact The Botanical Preservation Corps at (818) 355-9585.

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substances in contemporary

western culture.

# Ecstasy and Psychedelic Substances:

**Research, Intervention and Perspectives  
Bologna, Italy, November 18-19, 1996**

Marianne D'Amore

**On** November 18-19, 1996 the government of Regione Emilia-Romagna hosted an **International Conference on Ecstasy and Psychedelic Substances: Research, Intervention and Perspectives** at the Royal Hotel Carlton in Bologna, Italy.

The heavy and frequent use of MDMA by the young people of Italy, to the tune of 10,000 young people each weekend in the discos of Rimini, a resort town on the Adriatic coast, has raised the interest and concern of government officials. MDMA use throughout Europe has, in fact, reached such proportions, with an estimated 500,000 to one million users each weekend in Great Britain alone, that it is being described as the largest youth movement in history.

**E**XPERTS IN MDMA use and abuse were invited to share their findings. Gianluca Borghi, the Assessore of Social Politics of Emilia-Romagna, gave the opening address. The conference was chaired by Celeste Giannotti, Emilio Sternieri, Flavio Bonfa and Sergio Semprini Cesari. The presenters from Italy were Fabrizio Schifano, Edoardo Polidori, Andrea Vendramin, Augusto Palmonari, Marcella Ravenna, Emanuela Vezzali Bergamini and Umberto Nizzoli. Charles Grob and George Ricaurte were invited from the United States to present the results of their research and investigations, as were Julio Bobes and Juan Jose Llopis from Spain, Christian Sueur and George Lapassade from France, Harry Shapiro from England and Eric Fromberg from Holland.

The conference was open to the public. Over 1,000 people attended. Health professionals such as psychotherapists, medical doctors, hospital and emergency room staff, nurses,

social workers and law enforcement personnel were present. Only a handful of young "trippers" attended.

#### **Perspective of the conference**

In general, the speakers at the conference came from the perspective of addiction and toxicity. They spoke of the need to educate the young people to the dangers of regular use, the dangers of dehydration, the dangers of mixing MDMA with other substances and the dangers associated with the operation of motor vehicles after a long night of dancing and tripping. Most of the studies presented were retrospective studies on social aspects, prevalence of use, mortality, morbidity and purity. In the discos of Rimini, the MDMA was found to be 90% pure with each tablet containing between 40 to 85 mg. MDMA. Because of the variance in dosage the young people titrate their own dosages based on personal feedback. It was stated that in the course of one evening an individual might

eat eight tablets while waiting for the MDMA to take effect. As MDMA may take up to 45 minutes to produce the desired result self titration can lead to serious overdosing. There are reports of some individuals taking between 10 and 20 tablets per evening. Harm reduction policies were discussed but as so little is understood at this time each country must create the most efficacious policy possible based on theory and minimal experience. It was of great interest to see that many of the European countries recognize and are curious about the lack of observable toxic effect among the young people despite the high usage.

#### **Alternative view**

Dr. Charles Grob presented the results of his Phase I safety and dose-response study of MDMA in human volunteers to a rapt audience. As this is one of the only studies done to date on human subjects, interest in the results of his study was high. His lecture was fully attended. Dr. Grob gave a dynamic discussion of his findings and was the first speaker at the conference to introduce the possibility of therapeutic uses for MDMA in a clinical setting. Most attendees of the conference seemed unaware that MDMA had originally been coined with the name "Empathy." Initial clinical studies of MDMA yielded positive results in the areas of relationship counseling, insight into behavioral patterns and increased flow of communication between individuals. These studies occurred prior to MDMA becoming popularized as "Ecstasy." There was a ripple of interest and surprise in the audience as this alternate view was introduced. Dr. Grob emphasized the importance of controlled studies and expressed concern that the dosages taken by youth in some cases far exceeded the recommended normal human dosage. He quoted Paracelsus by saying "The difference between a medicine and a poison is in the dosage." The attendees expressed interest in Dr. Grob's continuing research. A Phase II efficacy study would significantly further the level of understanding as to the beneficial or deleterious effects of this popular substance. The results from a clinical trial are anxiously awaited by scientists throughout the world.

#### **Pharmacology and toxicity**

The pharmacology and toxicity of Ecstasy was presented by Andrea Vendramin of Italy. Aspects of neurobiology were addressed by George Ricaurte. Although his studies indicate neurotoxicity in that the neuronal axons are destroyed by excessive use of MDMA, data

shows that the cell body is not destroyed. When asked what long-term behavioral changes were seen in his subject animals who were given 160 times the human equivalent dose, he replied that he saw no behavioral changes and had little interest in that line of questioning.

#### **Sociological aspects of use**

The sociological aspects of MDMA use and the psychopathology of abuse as presented by Fabrizio Schifano, Edoardo Polidori, Augusto Palmonari and Marcella Ravenna of Italy indicated that the young people participating in this movement generally maintained a relatively high degree of functionality in daily life. They were employed at 40 hour per week jobs. They showed up for work on time Monday morning and acted responsibly in their daily lives. The cost of attending an all-night disco, including the purchase of the MDMA and travel expenses, is estimated to be approximately \$100 per weekend. This high expense reflects a significant dedication by the young people towards participation in this dance scene.

Abuse issues presented indicate that increasing use of MDMA results in a decrease in sensitivity to the drug so that in time the individual becomes inured to the experience. Ingesting MDMA too frequently will not produce the desired result. Too frequent use seems also to result in depression, fatigue and a lack of interest in life. In a certain percentage of users the individual isolates themselves from family, relationships and social groups after excessive use of MDMA.

#### **Prevention issues**

Prevention issues were discussed by Julio Bobes and Juan Jose Llopis of Spain, by Harry Shapiro of Great Britain and by Christian Sueur of France. France has maintained the most repressive laws and penalties against illegal drug use in Europe. Chirac's government is insisting that the European Union's drug policy be harsh and unrelenting. As a condition for membership in the EU, Chirac is placing pressure on the government of Holland to replace its current drug policy with a harsher, stricter policy more in line with the United States' punitive approach towards governmental regulation of personal freedom. Spain's approach is more relaxed, as is Great Britain's approach. However, the impression given was that of a 'wait and see' attitude. There continues to be a rising awareness among the authorities that MDMA use reduces violence and that the number of deaths associated with MDMA use is far less than that associated with alcohol use by

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the young. As an example, at a typical rave or disco with 6-10,000 people present, the number of law enforcement officials required will be half a dozen or less. Whereas, at a pub with half a dozen young men consuming alcohol, the likelihood of a violent episode is extremely high. However, if an increase in automobile accidents, deaths or other toxic reactions should occur or if political pressures increase, these more relaxed stances may change.

**Harm reduction**

Harm reduction was addressed by a number of speakers. Eric Fromberg spoke of Holland's public service approach of providing on-site analysis of the purity of the tablet, water and counseling services at the raves. Transportation services are also provided in some cases. Determining the amount of MDMA in any given tablet remains a difficult issue as the tablet is sacrificed in the analysis. Until standardized production of MDMA begins, the threat of overdose will continue. Emanuela Vezzali Bergamini discussed ideas of transportation to and from discos for the young. She spoke of the possibility of providing bus services to Rimini as a means of preventing automobile accidents.

**A successful conference**

The government of Emilia-Romagna provided an excellent opportunity to share information about this important topic. All talks were translated into English, Italian, French and Spanish. The conference was free to any interested parties. In fact, as an audience of 500 people was expected, the conference had to be videotaped and shown in another theater to accommodate the additional 500 attendees. The organizers of the conference requested that all presenters provide a copy of their papers. A conference abstract will be published and made available to interested parties.

It was inspiring to see the level of openness, curiosity and objectivity in an area that is all too often fraught with reactivity, fear and misinformation. It would be appropriate for the governments of the world to follow the lead of the Italian government and adopt an attitude of scientific curiosity towards this important frontier of neurochemistry. •

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**1997 ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE**

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|---|--|
| Pre-conference<br>of the 1997<br>ATP conference:                  | <p><b>The Psychedelic Vision at the Turn of the Millenium</b><br/>                 Andrew Weil, Ralph Metzner, Terence McKenna, Dennis McKenna, Laura Huxley, Charles Grob<br/>                 July 31 - Aug 1, 1997 • Monterey Beach Hotel</p>   |
| 1997 Association<br>for Transpersonal<br>Psychology<br>Conference | <p><b>Thresholds of Creativity: Eros, Shadow, and Spirit</b><br/>                 August 1-3, 1997 • Asilomar Conference Center<br/>                 This conference will explore how transpersonal awareness of Eros, Shadow, and Spirit furthers our mental, physical and social health.</p> |

**For more information** about both the pre-conference and the conference, contact the Association for Transpersonal Psychology, PO Box 3049, Stanford, CA 94309, Phone: (415) 327-0437, email: atp@igc.apc.org.

# 1997 Botanical Preservation Corps Seminar on Ethnobotany and Chemistry of Psychoactive Plants

Kate Chapman

**T**HE 1997 BOTANICAL PRESERVATION CORPS seminar on psychoactive plants and mushrooms, the eighth annual meeting, featured a fascinating, eclectic assortment of psychonauts and experts in the field. Lecturers included: Jonathan Ott, Deborah Mash, Alexander and Ann Shulgin, Brett Blosser, Manuel Torres, Ken Symington, Rob Montgomery, Christian Rätsch, and Terence McKenna.

Two identical seminars were held (January 11-17 & 20-26), each limited to the intimate size of 100, in the lush, rainforested area of southern Mexico, near the Mayan pyramids of Palenque, Chiapas. There was plenty of quality time the group spent together, time for the speakers to go into detail with their subject matter over the week, and time for everyone to ask questions and open discussions on critical points of debate. The bright days and the sounds of the crickets, birds and howler monkeys of the night offered a lively place to stretch one's mind and imagination.

## Jonathan Ott

This man strikes me as a virtual psychedelic, oops!, I mean, *entheogenic* encyclopedia. (Ott prefers the word "entheogen," from "entheos," the divine within, over "psychedelic"). His views on how language affects the connotation of certain drugs and on how these drugs were historically introduced to Western culture unearthed the roots of many pharmacological misunderstandings that exist in our society. His historical accounts reevaluated our culture to understand how these substances have been sanctioned and profaned, held sacred and held under scrutiny.

His first lecture included material from the first chapter, "Pharmacophilia," from his forthcoming book, *The Natural Paradise*. He gave a detailed criticism on the impact of the book, *The Artificial Paradise*, written by the mid-19th century French author Baudelaire. He attacked

Baudelaire's use of the word "artificial" in reference to the intake of inebriants and called it a natural paradise instead for two reasons: (1) inebriation is a diverse phenomenon across various animal species ("zoopharmacognacy"), (2) there is neurochemical evidence that many of the entheogens are molecularly similar to (if not the same as, such as the case with DMT) endogenous compounds found in the brain. He then went on to discuss more of the historical literature on psychedelic compounds and their cultural implications, such as the belief in certain religious dogmas that equate pleasure with sin.

## Entheomycology

His second lecture was on entheomycology, or the study of entheogenic mushrooms. Having done some collaboration with R. Gordon Wasson, he knew much on the rediscovery of these curious fungi. One notable piece of evidence presented of early Mayan use of entheogens (which most likely included mushrooms) was of the ancient images of the disembodied eye drop trees and flowers, or

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For additional information about future seminars, The Botanical Preservation Corps can be reached at (818) 355-9585. Kate Chapman can be reached at [chapman@virtu.sar.usf.edu](mailto:chapman@virtu.sar.usf.edu).



vision-breeding plants covered with eyes.

Overall, Ott was filled with facts and offered many of his own theories, constructing and deconstructing terminology.

#### **Brett Blosser**

Brett Blosser, ethnobotanist and anthropologist, gave lectures with guided tours of the Mayan ruins and the surrounding rainforests. It was a very valuable experience hiking up and down Mayan pyramids, such as the smoking god's temple, with noteworthy psychonauts and unearthing ancient mysteries of a culture that used psychedelic plants sacramentally. On his tour of the rainforest surrounding the ruins, we



**Brett Blosser collecting DMT-containing plants in the rainforest**

learned much about the thriving ecology and the wide variety of plants, some of which he identified, that contain high percentages of DMT. We came to understand, as Alexander Shulgin likes to point out, DMT is everywhere.

Unfortunately, I missed his final talk, which was entitled "*Salvia divinorum* in Mazatec Shamanism."

#### **Rob Montgomery**

Rob Montgomery is the founder of the Botanical Preservation Corps, which was responsible for making the event happen. He co-lectured with Brett Blosser on the rainforest walk and identified many tryptamine-containing plants. He appeared to be quite a knowledgeable psychedelic botanist; we learned of psychoactive plant preparations used by indigenous cultures of South America, with the

visual aids of plant specimens that Rob had collected in the Amazon and other areas of Latin America. His specimens were displayed for the remainder of the seminar for identification.

#### **Terence McKenna**

Terence is a fascinating story teller, philosopher and historian. His psychedelic-inspired lectures gave reports from the "Other Side," including his notion that alien sightings are products of the human psyche, like the alien-like entities that he has encountered with the use of DMT. His discussion on "Plants, People and Otherness" defined God as being wholly, totally the "Other" and suggested that psychedelic plants, such as *Salvia divinorum*, connect the one who ingests them with the force of the Other. From this, one might infer that McKenna's affinity toward psychedelics is on the level of religious sacrament. In that lecture, he went on to discuss in detail a nonlocality theory that goes beyond the regular forces of Newtonian physics.

His two subsequent lectures were entitled "Chemical Perspectives on Evolution" and "Mind and the Future." His assertion that there has been a coevolution with humans and psychedelics is based on the idea that there has been a development of receptors (and possibly a further distribution of existing ones) in response to the intake of mind-altering plant alkaloids. He also suggested that when early man moved into the grasslands, the successful ones benefited from ingesting psilocybin, since it may have had aphrodisiacal qualities (promoting outbreeding), and small doses increase visual acuity. I didn't catch what evolution he thought the psychedelic plants and mushrooms were going through in response to humans, but I inferred that he meant that there might be some type of symbiotic relationship, where the higher quality psychedelic strains of plants were farmed, protected, and selected for. In his final lecture, he discussed psychedelics as molecular technology ("nanotechnological machines") that may aid in synchronizing homeostatic circadian rhythms with periodicities in atomic structures, periodicities which are the basis for the passing of time. And, of course, this diverged into his timewave theory, the chaotic order of time and history. Everyone there enjoyed Terence, donned in his "Strange Attractor" shirt, and listened avidly to his theoretical tangents. His personality precisely fits what he quoted from Hunter S. Thompson: "When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro."

### Christian Rättsch

Christian gave two lectures on psychoactive drinks. The first included colorful personal accounts of having lived with the Lacandón Mayans near Palenque and sharing in their *balché* potion ceremonies. *Balché* induces subjective feelings of bonding and togetherness, much like what is said to be produced during group MDMA sessions. The process of drinking usually lasts all day, since a large quantity must be consumed for any effect to take place. His second lecture was on psychoactive beers and meads used in Germany and other places in Europe before the spread of Roman Catholicism. It was a bit of history and folklore of which many people are unaware. In old Europe, beers and meads were often made with herbal additives, such as hallucinogenic mushrooms, mandrake, cannabis, and henbane; the alcohol served primarily as a preservative and was secondary for inebriating effects. Many of the old gods and goddesses were associated with psychoactive herbs, mushrooms, and the beers that were made with them; they also represented inspiration, blissful love, fertility, and connection. Remnants of the annual spring fertility holiday of those days can be found in the current Christian holiday, Easter; these remnants include eggs and bunnies, both of which have more to do with fertility than to do with Christ. He mentioned that the sexual rites of this pre-Christian holiday (carried out with town orgies) often included the use of cannabis and *Amanita muscaria* (which begins to grow in an egg shape and turns phallic). Of course, the church changed the practices of how the beers were brewed in their suppression of Pagan culture and herbal knowledge; aphrodisiac cannabis was replaced with hops that suppress male virility (through increased estrogen production), and the men took over the women's traditional role of brewing while women with herbal knowledge were condemned as witches. In the end, Christian gave us a good recipe for henbane beer to brew at home.

### Alexander Shulgin

Best known for his heroic book, *PIHKAL*, which is about various phenethylamines he has worked with and discovered, Alexander (Sasha) Shulgin is a true alchemical wizard, full of wit and charm. With much hand-waving, gestures like a conductor's, and rapid excitement in his speech, Sasha made organic chemistry comprehensible and entertaining to the layperson.

In his first talk, Shulgin went over structure-activity relationships of phenethylamines, a family of molecules to which the compounds MDMA, MDA, MDE and 2-CB belong. He gave a basic overview of organic chemistry with excellent clarity to discuss the activity differences of members of the phenethylamine family and made note of how the slightest molecular change could produce a drastically different psychoactive experience.

He discussed more about chemical relationships in his second talk, about tryptamines, and gave us a preview of a chapter in his forthcoming book, *TIHKAL (Tryptamines I Have Known And Loved)*, sequel to *PIHKAL*, called "DMT is Everywhere." He suggested that since DMT is found not only in seaweed, flowers, lawn grass, etc., but also in our brains and spinal columns, we are all Schedule I. He went on to discuss the different permutations of the tryptamine molecules and their different physiological effects. He also spoke a bit about the legal clauses of the Analog Drug Act, and how it is a very vague, fuzzy law. Dipropyl tryptamine (DPT), for example, is a somewhat legal compound that narrowly escaped the analog law, by virtue of not being an analog of biological activity to DMT, although they are chemically related. Another reason he suggested why it may still exist without scrutiny is that it is used by a church based in New York, the Church of the True Inner Light, and the DEA might not wish to publicly acknowledge the religious use of a psychedelic.

Overall, Sasha is a true scientist with a maddening curiosity that drives his critical analysis and experimentation into new frontiers. The man can rip through information like a tsunami.

### Ann Shulgin

Ann, coauthor of *PIHKAL*, gave a passionate account, entitled "Transforming the Monster." She talked about the use of MDMA as a tool to face the dark side of inner problems (which she calls "monsters"). In her story, a "demonically possessed" woman was emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healed with an MDMA psychotherapy session. The patient addressed the demon as a hurt child, mothering and nourishing it. This is what Ann calls "shadow work." We came to understand what a great aid MDMA can be for psychological healing.



Ann and Sasha Shulgin

### Constantino Manuel Torres

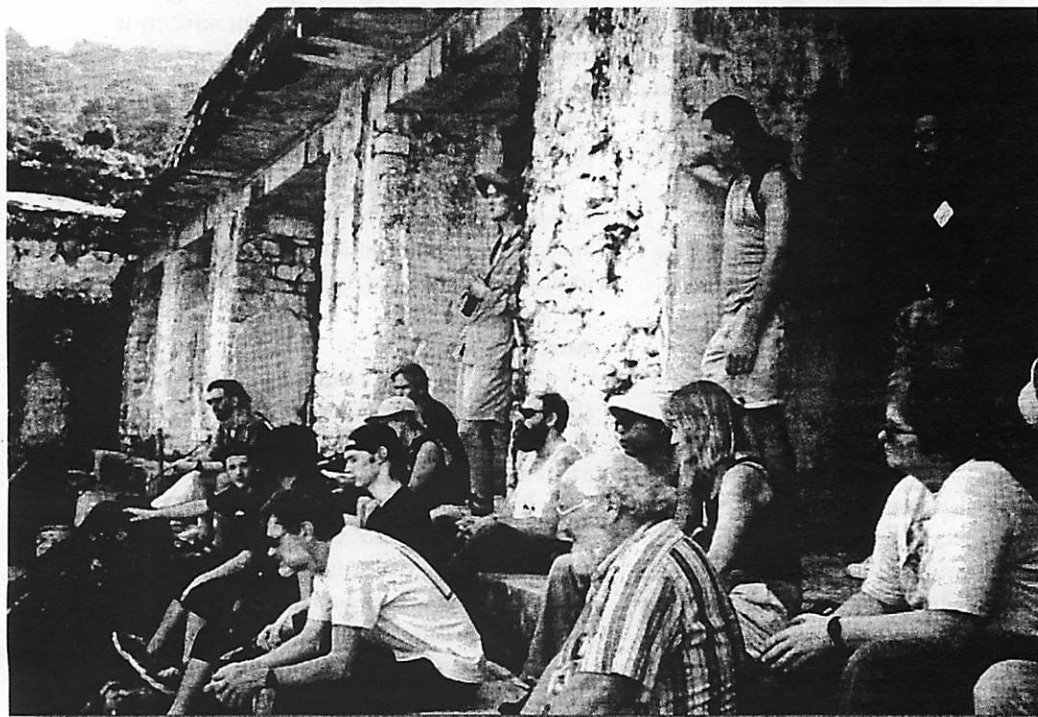
Torres' lectures were about psychoactive plants in Pre-Colombian South America and psychoactive snuffs. His archeological accounts of Pre-Colombian South American Indians using psychoactive plants gave us an understanding of the cultural importance and centrality the preparations of these plants had in their lives. The slide presentation highlighted the ethnographic distributions of snuff and ayahuasca use and artifacts that alluded to the use of psychoactive compounds in Pre-Colombian times. These items included an array of various snuff kits, with trays, tools, finely woven pouches, and other objects discussed in his book, *The Iconography of South American Snuff Trays and Related Paraphernalia*. He also spoke quite a bit about the preparation and admixtures used in a common snuff, *Virola*, and his recent discoveries of tryptamines found in 1,200 year-old samples of *Anadenanthera* snuffs. Unfortunately, much of the indigenous use of psychoactive plants ended with the Spanish Catholic settlement's war on drug use; their decrees and destruction of paraphernalia uprooted much of the native culture.

### Deborah Mash

For several years, Dr. Mash has been researching the physiological and neurological effects of ibogaine, a psychedelic anecdotally

reported to have great efficacy in curing cocaine and heroin addictions. She is trying to clinically prove its anti-addictive properties. MAPS donated \$25,000 to this effort in 1996 (see MAPS Vol. VI No. 3).

Her excellent historical account of the religious use of *iboga* (the plant from which ibogaine is derived) in indigenous cultures set the stage for the story of ibogaine use in the western world. Notable figures and events in the use and research of the drug were discussed, such as Howard Lotsof's offshore treatment programs and George Molliver's research findings. She addressed and criticized Molliver's theory that recreational and therapeutic doses of ibogaine cause cerebellar damage, an idea that may not be true (she found the methods used in his study to be questionable). In fact, she said she was able to obtain the brain of a woman who died of natural causes and who had taken ibogaine within days before her death, and she found no signs of damage to the cerebellum. Dr. Mash's research is critical for the evaluation of this unique compound as a very effective tool in overcoming addiction; it has the potential for saving many lives. There was an emphasis on what paradigm shifts ibogaine might bring to the legal system and to the medical community, financially (having a better cost-benefit ratio) and socially (people might changed their



Group of seminar attendees at the Mayan ruins, absorbing information about archaeological evidence of ancient psychoactive plant use (Terence McKenna in foreground).



generalizations about psychedelics and see that every compound is unique in its medical benefits and risks). Everyone at the seminar applauded Dr. Mash for her steadfast crusade.

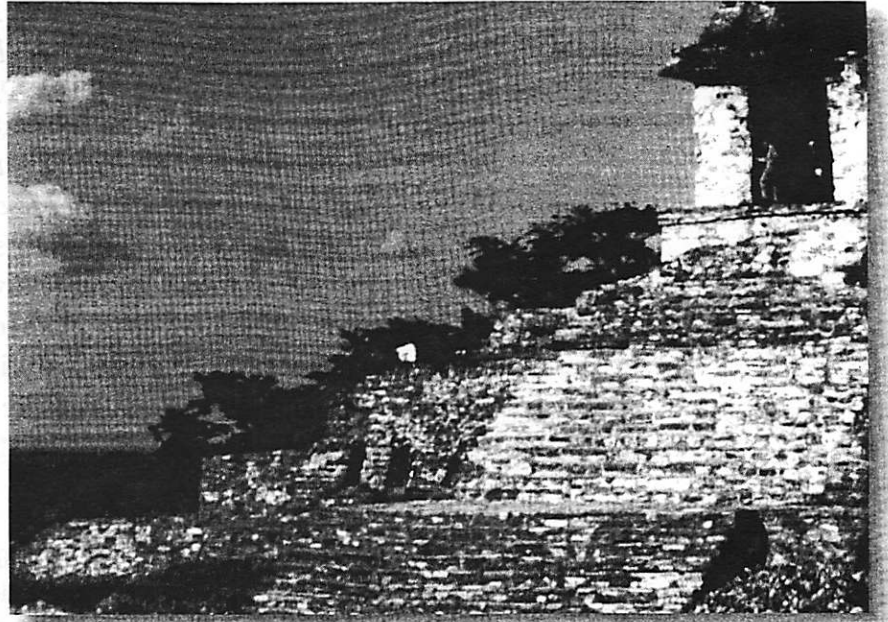
#### **Ken Symington**

Ken is the BPC registrar and one of the organizers of the seminar. Having studied ayahuasca in the Amazon with mestizo and native healers for many years, he was able to convey some of the teachings of the vine in his session of poetry and mystery of ayahuasca. We gathered out by the poolside for his talk, where lovely incense and candles burned. He drew relationships between the outer and the inner worlds and discussed the group energy balances that are experienced in an ayahuasca ceremony. Dietary and health restrictions for partaking in the ceremony were also covered, and he answered any questions we had. He truly brought back some of the magic he has encountered in the ceremonies of the Amazon.

#### **Summary**

Overall, the seminar was highly informative and covered many aspects of the study of psychoactive plants. I would strongly recommend attending the BPC seminars in the future for those who wish to gain expert opinions from qualified researchers in the field. For a couple of years, there have been scholarships awarded for attending their meetings, for those who aren't

able to cover all of their expenses (so, if you are in need of a scholarship to attend in the future, it's best to register early). It was quite a treat to be informed of the history, anthropology, chemistry, neuroscience, botany, psychology, and philosophy of psychoactive plants in the lush setting of Palenque, just down the road from rainforests and Mayan pyramids. •



**The Smoking God's Temple at the Mayan ruins of Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico**

#### **Next Entheogen-related Conference:**

The 17th Annual Telluride Mushroom Festival • August 21-24, 1997

Contact: Fungophile, P.O. Box 480503, Denver, CO 80248-0503,  
phone: (303) 296-9359

Speakers at this year's conference: John Corbin, Gary Lincoff, Linnea Gillman,  
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A \$1300 registration fee covers tuition, hotel (double occupancy) and meals for the week. Contact: Entheobotany Seminars,  
P.O. Box 4, Sierra Madre, CA 91025, (818) 355-9585.

# Psycholytic and **Psychedelic Therapy** 1931-1995: A Complete International Bibliography

Torsten Passie, M.D., M.A.

**in** THE LAST THREE YEARS, much of my time and energy has been devoted to compiling and editing the *Psycholytic and Psychedelic Research 1931-1995: A Complete International Bibliography*, which is now available in print. Besides the electronic bibliography project co-sponsored by the Albert Hofmann Foundation, Heffter Research Institute and MAPS, this is the first project of its kind since the *Catalogue of the Literature on Delysid* by Sandoz Ltd. (1960-63) and *A Bibliography of LSD and Mescaline* by Janiger and Paltin (1971). Unlike the earlier bibliographies, this new volume focuses on therapeutic applications and is more comprehensive.

The bibliographic assessment of published material was intended for three purposes: to collect and organize the widely dispersed material, to illustrate the breadth of international research and to make published studies available for future research—especially for “meta-analysis” of older studies.

The incompleteness of new computerized medical and psychological bibliographies (i.e. *Index Medicus*, *Psyn dex*, etc.) for different reasons made it necessary to use a kind of “snowball” approach of checking references of publications to go more deeply into the earlier, less widely known publications and conference proceedings.

To organize references, three categories were used: General Approach and Basic Research, Psycholytic Therapy, and Psychedelic Therapy. This was necessary because psycholytic and psychedelic therapy differ

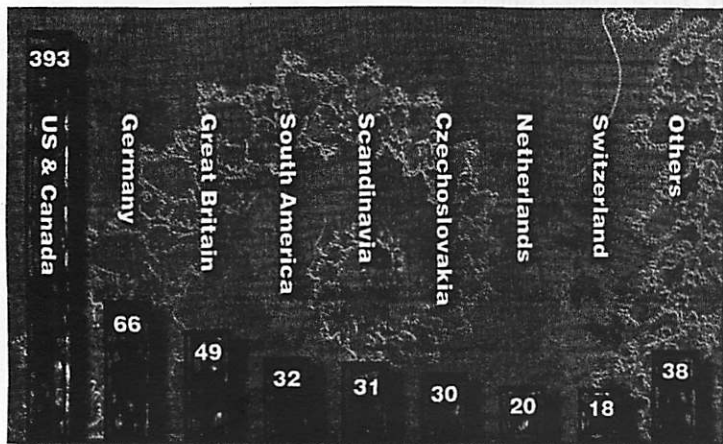
significantly in their therapeutic paradigms and practices, so that they have to be distinguished from one another. All publications were personally examined by the author to classify them for the comprehensive subject index.

**Origins and methods**

The first publication about the use of psychedelics in psychotherapy was the *Confessions in Mescaline Inebriation* of the Italian psychoanalyst Baroni in 1931. He used a mixture of mescaline, seeds of *Datura stramonium* and Cognac to facilitate the emergence of unconscious material. Along with the technique of “Narcoanalysis,” which used barbiturates in therapeutic interviews, Baroni’s work marks the origins of the psycholytic approach in Europe.

Further development of the field was facilitated by the discovery of LSD and lead to the standardized practice of psycholysis, which is based on psychoanalytic concepts and repeated low dose sessions in long-term psychotherapy. After a wave of publications, psycholytic treatment was practiced at 18 European—and several American—treatment centers and by many private practice physicians.

Psychedelic treatment favored personality change by one high dose session, a quasi-religious patient preparation and a specialized treatment setting. References show that development and use of psychedelic therapy



**Table 1: Geographical distribution of Publications**



was almost entirely restricted to the United States and Canada. This may be due to the fact that the psychedelic approach originated from the ritual use of peyote by Native Americans and the unconventional American therapist Al Hubbard, who inspired clinicians to use LSD in the treatment of alcoholism. Later research projects in psychedelic therapy conducted by Grof, Yensen et al. at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center (MPRC) concluded that a more effective future approach should combine features of both approaches. They conceptualized the "psychedelytic" approach which was used in their last studies in the mid-70's and a few from 1988-1993 in Switzerland. This seems to represent a higher synthesis of research in Europe and the United States.

#### Trends

Table 1 illustrates how most of the basic research was done in the U.S., Canada and Germany. One trend noted is French researchers have done a lot of research on psilocybin.

The 687 publications included included in the Bibliography show a specific distribution pattern over time (Table 2). At first, it is the typical picture of a new scientific and therapeutic approach, with steadily growing numbers of publications and peaks when experiences were exchanged at scientific conferences. Statistics also show the abrupt decline of research when problems with non-medical use arose at the end of the sixties.

In regard to the types of substances mentioned, it seems that in the United States, Canada and England LSD was primarily used. In Europe, LSD was also dominant, but its use decreased as milder and shorter-acting substances like psilocybin gained favor.

By today's standards, the more than 100 efficacy studies on hallucinogen-assisted psychotherapy conducted in the fifties and sixties had very low methodological standards. This may be due to the low standards of psychotherapy evaluation at that time as well as to the experimental character of the method. Nevertheless, some late studies by the MPRC group and in Germany by Leuner et al. presented evidence which is worth further study.

The number of treated patients extrapolated from all publications (excluding double counting) shows that approximately 7,000 patients were treated with the psycholytic method and around 2,500 with the psychedelic method. Another 1,000 patients were treated by Roquet et al. with another unconventional method.

#### U.S. and British surveys

Larger surveys into possible dangers and safety issues of therapeutic work with psychedelics were done in the United States (Cohen 1960) and in England (Malleon 1971). These studies showed very low rates of complications: attempted suicides - 1.3:1000 (Cohen and Malleon); completed suicide - .4:1000 (Cohen) and 2.1:1000 (Malleon); psychotic reactions - 1.8:1000 (Cohen) and 4:1000 (Malleon). This seems low in view of the problems encountered in the experimental phase of work with a new substance and approach, and was steadily lowered by optimization. Furthermore, these numbers are comparable to incidents arising in conventional psychotherapy or in neurotics who remain untreated. Both the authors concluded that LSD treatment under controlled conditions is a safe procedure. Results published on psychedelytic psychotherapy with over 170 patients in Switzerland also showed no serious incidents such as hospitalizations or suicides (Gasser 1995).•

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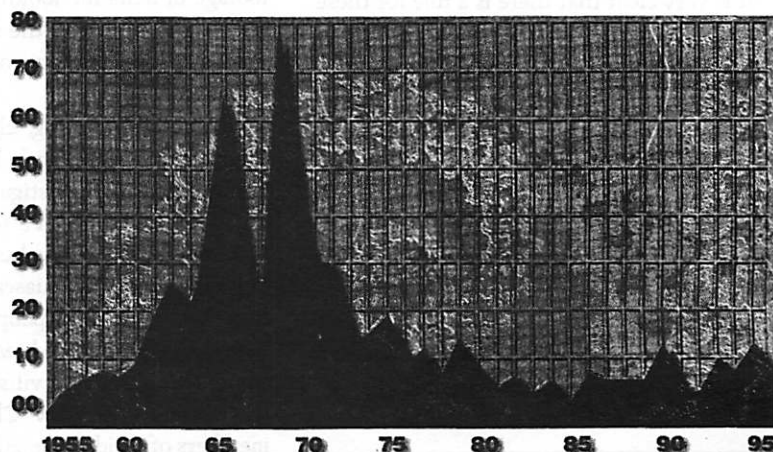


Table 2: Number of scientific publications about psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy per year. (Year of prohibition: 1967).

## ON THE CREST OF A WAVE: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE BBC'S HORIZON SPECIAL, PSYCHEDELIC SCIENCE

Simon G. Powell

ONE WOULD NOT EXPECT Britain's traditionally conservative and oft-staid BBC to screen a 50 minute film on the new wave of psychedelic research in humans. Yet, astonishingly enough, such a state of affairs recently came to pass. Before it aired on February 27th, 1997, *Psychedelic Science* was heavily featured in the media, even getting elaborate treatment in the *Radio Times*, a mass publication as institutionalised as the BBC itself. The *Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Independent*, Britain's three leading broadsheets, all carried major pieces announcing the film.

Bill Eagles—the man who filmed and wrote the documentary—did a commendable job. We were treated to coverage of all the main scientists in the field along with colorful images and a rather lively ambient soundtrack. Perhaps the deliberately blurred interview shots were too contrived, yet the essential feel of the film was that of a highly effective PR job on behalf of the psychedelic science community.

At the outset, viewers were introduced to FDA spokesman Dr. Curtis Wright who came across as an amiable enough fellow. Speaking on behalf of the policy-makers who control what research options are available to scientists, Wright noted:

"It is very clear that there is a role for these [psychedelic] agents in the understanding of how the mind works," adding that "...there is also a role for them as potential ways to help people."

As an example of the first wave of therapeutic research, Drs. Abram Hoffer and Humphry Osmond were interviewed about their pioneering LSD work in the 50's in treating alcoholics. Hoffer spoke of how his team had hoped to give patients "one or two peak experiences" in order to help them break their addiction. We learn that some 2,000 patients were treated with about 50% of them achieving sobriety thereafter.

In a similar vein, smartly dressed and well-preserved Stanislav Grof detailed his work in Prague in 1967 where LSD was used to treat heroin addicts. The aim was to facilitate deep mystical experiences and the entry into consciousness of unconscious information so as to induce rehabilitation. Grof asserted that one third of his patients were treated successfully.

It became clear that therapy was not the only application for psychedelics. Yet another 60-something academic, Willis Harman, former Professor of Engineering at Stanford, explained how architects and designers of the Ph.D. type were given psychedelics in the early 60's as an aid to creativity. "Almost everybody...had a rise in creativity as measured by tests," said Harman. [Ed. Note: Willis Harman died January 30, 1997]

At this point, the public might have been wondering why the research stopped. The mood of the film suddenly changed as we learned via Hoffer and Grof how mainstream science rebelled against these strange new neurochemical tools. Hoffer and Osmond's research was undermined by badly replicated experiments which were carried out by other scientists who wished to verify their claims of LSD's therapeutic efficacy. Only this time patients were given excessive doses of LSD and were literally handcuffed to their beds.

There was no disguising Hoffer's despair at such a clumsy move by his peers. Grof also noted that the attempted inclusion of psychedelic drugs into mainstream psychotherapy and psychoanalysis was akin to moving from Newtonian to Quantum physics. No less than a paradigm shift was required.

But was there not more to the cessation of psychedelic research than that? Could a finger not be pointed, say, at one single individual? Especially if that individual, say, had recently departed this mortal coil?

Switch to a shot of a lanky dishevelled man lumbering across a snow-filled lawn in front of a large mansion. Of course, it is Millbrook and the man is infamous Tim Leary with his regrettable call for people to "drop out." The narrator explains how pills were given out willy-nilly to the youth populace in the 60's and how many a bad trip ensued which led, of course, to the banning of psychedelics in 1966. To drive the point home, we even see archive footage of demonic-looking LSD-user Charles Manson. However, refusing to linger on the downside of psychedelics, the film proceeded to the new improved variety of cautious psychedelic researcher.

First up is young, clean and lean physician Charles Grob. Ignoring his work with MDMA, the film focuses instead upon Grob's scientific investigations of Brazil's ayahuasca-using União do Vegetal Church. We see fascinating film taken inside a UDV Church whilst their ayahuasca ritual is in full swing. A row of large bubbling pots of ayahuasca "tea" stand at the front of the congregation. Average looking people, young and old alike, step forward and take the DMT-imbibed tea. They sit back and then let the visions come. This is a most civilised-looking ritual. Indeed, Grob explains the normalcy of UDV Church members, that these people are members of "Middle Brazil" as it were.

Any worry that the viewer might have that ayahuasca is harmful to health is swiftly dealt with by Grob as he explains the various physiological and psychological tests that he and his col-

leagues have carried out on long-term ayahuasca users which have shown no detrimental effects. We are even repeatedly informed about how ayahuasca improves social conduct and how it stops drug use, especially the use of alcohol. Grob muses whether such a socially-bonding wholly natural botanical medicine/sacrament such as ayahuasca might in some way be integrated into Western culture.

Eagles next pays a visit to Rick Strassman who is interviewed in what looks like his garden with conifer trees waving majestically behind him. His two year struggle to get permission to undertake human-based studies with pure DMT is documented, Strassman coming across as a bit of a hero.

FDA spokesman Wright remembers the events that led up to the granting of permission to begin research with DMT. Over authoritarian shots of police motorcyclists and American flags, Wright recalls the day the FDA met to debate Strassman's controversial study application. It was a fateful day, but, as Wright explains, such a cautious approach has worked well enough since it is apparent that human-based hallucinogen studies can be undertaken without detriment to those subjects involved.

Dr. Deborah Mash and her research with ibogaine was also treated in depth in the film. Mash explains how ibogaine can be used to break cocaine habits although, as with ayahuasca, we do not learn much about the actual phenomenology induced by ibogaine—suffice it to say that patients experience transformative insights into themselves which can break their patterns of addiction.

The single flaw in the film lay in what British psychiatrist Dr. Karl Jansen had to say with regard to the neurochemical modus operandi of psychedelic drugs. According to Jansen:

"Psychedelics can block the transmission of messages from the outside world to the inside... by selectively blocking the action of chemical messengers."

Jansen then talks of a "vacuum" being created in the mind and that Nature abhors a vacuum such that the mind generates its own perceptions.

This is a rather poor account of one of the most important psychological issues raised by entheogenic agents. The literature shows us that far from simply blocking neuronal firing activity, psychedelics can increase firing patterns in certain areas of the brain (such as the locus coeruleus), and that this increase in information processing might underly the feelings of more enhanced perception reported by many psychedelic users.

Towards the end of the film, the viewer is informed that LSD has never been more popular amongst the high school population. However this is not discussed any further and we are left in a quandary. For although the film makes it clear that scientific research can be done and that we can gain salient medical and neurophilosophical knowledge from these substances, the fact that some are used recreationally anyway ruins any notion that science is the only enterprise validly equipped to deal with them.

In a sense, the film makes it appear as if the scientific community is a modern priesthood, that it should only be under the guidance of science that an individual be allowed to ingest a psychedelic. Many grown adults would argue that it is a personal choice and, for that matter, that shamans have employed psychedelic plants for millennia without recourse to state control. But

since all parties can probably agree that risk reduction and technique are the most important factors mediating effective and constructive use, then perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned from the film is from the UDV Church who seem to have successfully integrated ayahuasca into Brazilian culture with full approval from the Brazilian government.

Whatever the case, the last word goes to Abram Hoffer who ended the film by comparing the cessation of psychedelic science to a Rip Van Winkle-like sleep. Hoffer expressed his delight that "...old Rip Van Winkle is waking up." The film was itself evidence for this welcome process. •

## DR. KARL JANSEN

### COMMENTS:

*"Sasha Shulgin and other persons primarily identified with MDMA were omitted (from Psychedelic Science), as was all reference to MDMA. This was a politically necessary step because of the hysteria which now surrounds this drug in the U.K. It is impossible to make any positive statements about the drug in public without calls for one's resignation which resemble the true spirit of McCarthyism more than any other aspect of the so-called "war on drugs" in the U.K. to date.*

*The situation with respect to LSD is in fact quite calm in the media at present, although huge jail sentences continue to be handed down routinely in LSD cases. Psychedelic Science has already attracted a great deal of negative criticism and demands for cuts from the BBC legal department, who have viewed the program as much too positive about drugs. Excluding MDMA at least avoids the number one hysteria producer in the U.K.*

*It is unfortunate that my comments about sensory input being shut off were edited in such a way as to appear as if they refer to psychedelic drugs such as LSD. In fact, in the original interview these comments were made with respect to ketamine, in which I have a special interest. LSD, psilocybin and mescaline can sometimes lead to a sensory deluge and even greater engagement with the environment than usual. Ketamine, by blocking glutamate transmission, can result in complete dissociation from the environment."*



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MAPS is a membership-based organization working to assist psychedelic researchers around the world design, obtain governmental approval, fund, conduct and report on psychedelic research in humans.

Founded in 1986, MAPS is an IRS approved 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation funded by tax-deductible donations from about 1,300 members.

MAPS' founder and current president, Rick Doblin, is currently in the Ph.D. program in Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and has previously graduated from Stan and Christina Grof's Holotropic Breathwork 3-year training program.

Sylvia Thyssen is responsible for member services and coordinates MAPS' outreach efforts. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she majored in Art History and French.

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

Albert Einstein wrote: "**Imagination is more important than knowledge.**" If you can even faintly imagine a cultural reintegration of the use of psychedelics and the states of mind they engender, please consider joining

MAPS in supporting the expansion of scientific knowledge in this area. Progress is possible with the support of individuals who care enough to take individual and collective action. In addition to supporting research, your contributions will return to you the following benefits:

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Each publication will report on MAPS research in progress. In addition to reporting on MAPS studies, the publications may focus on psychedelic research both in the U.S. and abroad and on conferences, books and articles of interest. Issues raised in letters and calls from members may be addressed, as may political developments that affect psychedelic research and usage.

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Rick Doblin,  
MAPS President



Sylvia Thyssen,  
Networks Coordinator

"The potentialities of these substances [psychedelics] for facilitating the understanding of our own consciousness have not yet been adequately explored, and in view of the precarious state of our society, the need for that exploration is particularly acute."

(p. 40, *Noetic Sciences Review*, Autumn 1995)

— Willis Harman

August 16, 1918 – January 30, 1997



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For Dr. Charles Grob's study of  
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To support the preparation of Dr. Donald Abrams'  
second NIH grant application for the study of  
**marijuana in the treatment of people with AIDS wasting syndrome,**  
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To support the preparation of additional NIH grant applications  
**for studies into the medical uses of marijuana**

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