

Hats off to the list administrator

I would like to take this opportunity to express my pleasure in the range, diversity, and content of the MAPS-forum. Nowhere on the Internet have I found the depth of discussion which has been presented here on a topic of such pressing national interest. Special regards to Jon Frederick for undertaking the task of forum moderator. Most graduate students would not have either the maturity or the time to do the quality job which he has done. Well done, hats off.

Received via e-mail

The importance of amateur research

I am *not* a scientist. However, we were all raised and educated in a culture that values "Science" as *the* primary tool of our age. But Science is just that—a *tool*. Keep in mind the saying, "When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a lot like a nail."

Science is based on the ability to quantify. Human behavior is notably difficult to quantify because of the vast number of variables that must be accounted for. We are not objects, but a complex symbiosis of interactive "systems." *And* taking a cue from Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the method used (to study a particular phenomena) directly determines not only the type of result, but affects the subject as well. When the reason we are investigating these substances is to get a better picture of *how* the brain works, (that's quantifiable...) then scientific inquiry is the best tool we have for the job.

But... Perhaps not all inquiry into enteogens is meant to be "scientific" inquiry. I would propose and suggest perhaps, "poetic" inquiry, "mystical" inquiry, "noetic" or "gnostic" inquiry could also provide us with some valuable results. Much of the "amateur" research that is being carried on falls into these categories.

Hofmann and Shulgin (both scientists) have proposed that the reintroduction of enteogens into the stream of human activity at this point in history may be some sort of "response message" or antidote to our dangerous infatuation with some of the "fruits" of science. The purpose of this message may well be to alert us to become more aware of those areas that cannot be defined and quantified by science.

I would like to know what those "researchers" who use the poetic, mystical or gnostic approach to enteogens have "learned." This may provide us with useful information. Reading (or listening to) the personal accounts of many explorers one so often encounters the phrase "I learned a lot," or, "It taught me so much," that it has become a psychedelic cliché. I would like to know, *what is it you learned? What was that "so much" you were "taught?"*

How has that affected your life and your day-to-day? Can it be distilled into twenty (or 100) words and can you share it with the rest of us?

Knowing that "n" milligrams of substance "x" will precipitate response "y" in the brain certainly has its value. *But*, what else? How did you acquire this new knowledge you refer to? What was the method of transmission? Did you hear disembodied voices? *Who* or what is it that speaks to you? *What* is the content of the message? Are there common themes in the experiences of numerous reporters? What are those themes? Are those themes affected by cultural background or are they "universal?"

One last thought about amateurs: Consider the role of the "outlaw" (or "amateur researcher") in the history of humanity. Since the first arboreal primate descended to the ground ("*looks like some good fruit laying down there...*") while his family called from the limbs above, "get back up here, the lions will eat you," every significant step on our long road from those trees has been made by an "outlaw" or "amateur researcher" (and miscellaneous other misfits) who defied conventional wisdom, challenged the dominant paradigm and made each important incremental step that is part of what we have come to call "progress." Looking back through history at that first "amateur researcher" who climbed down from the tree, aren't we all his/her children? Thanks for your indulgence.

Onward...

Mark Plummer

Received via e-mail

