

Psychedelics and the **Evolution of Ecological Consciousness**



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Photo by David Jay Brown

Psychedelics rejuvenate our sense of novelty by exposing us to things we have never encountered before. They reconnect us with the curiosity most humans lose shortly after childhood, and are not likely to find again unless they travel the world, spend loads of time in solitude, or go to Burning Man. Psychedelics give us instant access to a sense of childlike curiosity, which reminds us that we have not seen all there is to see, thought all there is to think, dreamed all there is to dream, or know all there is to know. It seems that the human ecosystem could not progress without this awareness. Beyond giving us the awareness that we do not know more, psychedelics give us the eagerness to discover more, turning experiencers into willing candidates for the evolution of human consciousness.

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I was on LSD when I first encountered the giant redwood trees of Northern California. It was nighttime as we drove up the coast, and the sight of these otherworldly giants compelled us to stop our car and have a closer look. They seemed higher than the stars. When I stood before them and tilted my head so far back that the back of my head touched my shoulder blades just to behold them in their tremendous entirety, I was stunned. I felt so tiny that I lost my balance. I grabbed onto the arm of the friend standing next to me to stabilize, and physiologically reacted with what felt identical to a fear response. But I was not afraid; I was in awe. I wanted to drop to my knees in reverence.

In that eternal psychedelic moment, I saw the Earth as otherworldly, with features one might expect to see on some other planet. And I realized that just as I was awestruck by its stunning characteristics, a traveler from another planet might witness this and be reduced to

a mush of reverie, as well. To someone from elsewhere, the giant redwoods are indeed otherworldly, and who knows how rare this species is in the galaxy or the universe. Our Earth may be as unique as a snowflake. It could be renowned as a psychedelic travel destination for psychonauts throughout the universe. And for us, it is home.

People who use psychedelics often report feelings of oneness, peace, love, joy, and gratitude. Perhaps the most fascinating way psychedelics impact the Earth's ecology is by engendering the thoughts, feelings, and emotions which have been shown to have a measurable impact on the physical world. According to Dr. Masuru Emoto's research, which found that thoughts change the molecular structure of water, these feelings have measurable effects on the environment around the experiencer. Our negative thoughts have an equally impactful effect. Thoughts can create chaos as equally as they can create order, as evidenced in the geometric

shapes formed in the water after being exposed to thoughts of love and gratitude, and the shapeless blobs that appear in response to negative thoughts. We can only imagine what impact our thoughts are having on the rest of the physical world, and our own water-based bodies.

Through the connection that joins all things, scientists have shown that the ‘stuff’ that the universe is made of—waves and particles of energy—responds and conforms to the expectations, judgments and beliefs that we create about our world. The key to awakening such an awesome power is... to make a small shift in the way we see ourselves in the universe. We must see ourselves as a part of everything, rather than separate from everything. Beyond merely thinking of ourselves from this unified view, we must feel ourselves as part of all that we experience. (Braden)

This feeling of oneness
is one of the most
commonly reported effects
of psychedelics.

Psychedelics give us an opportunity to choose the course of our own evolution, to consciously evolve--the implications of which are immense. Psychedelics prepare us for future realities by reminding us of our ancient connection to nature. They reconnect us to the beauty of our planet, compelling us to realize our place in nature and protect the environment. Psychedelics, moreover, engender thoughts of oneness, love, and gratitude, and can thereby be the catalyst to create positive physical effects on our planet. Indeed, psychedelics seem already to be accelerating the evolution of the human ecosystem. It is up to us, however, to decide what we will become, and what will become of the Earth. •

References for this essay are available on the MAPS Web site: www.maps.org

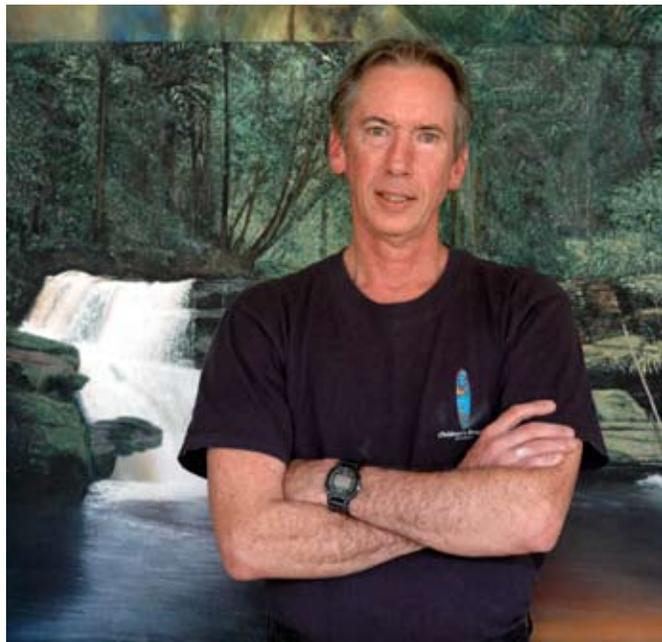
Dragonfly de la Luz is a fashion model, travel writer and psychedelic festival reporter for *Cannabis Culture* magazine.

From the **Inside Out**

Rick Harlow created the beautiful art on the cover of this Bulletin. –DJB

For the past 23 years I have been traveling to the Colombian Amazon. Much of this time I spent along the rivers Apaporis and Mitití Paraná, living with Macuna, Yucuna, and Tanimuca peoples. They taught me to feel at home and at ease in the forest, how to walk without falling down, how to hunt, fish and gather food. They taught me about the different plants, insects and animals. They showed me which ones are useful, which are dangerous and which are sacred. They told me their stories of how their world was created, stories of how they came to live there, stories that explain their relationship to all living things and their place and purpose in the web of life. Stories that contain great lessons on how to live correctly, stories of the spirits that live in the rivers, in the forest, in the underworld and in the Milky Way. They invited me to participate in their rituals, dances and sacred ceremonies. They initiated me into the tribe and gave me a new name. They introduced me to the teacher plant Yajé (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) or Ayahuasca as it is more commonly known. I was taught that this sacred plant is the umbilical cord that connects us to the cosmos.

These experiences have served as the main inspiration for my paintings. In creating these works, I do my best to paint not only what I have seen, but also what I have felt or sensed. Often, as is the case with “From the Inside Out”, I combine observed landscape imagery with visions revealed to me during Ayahuasca rituals. •



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