



A legendary day in baseball history—for sports fans and psychedelic enthusiasts alike—occurred on June 12, 1970, when the late Pittsburgh Pirates’ pitcher Dock Ellis hurled a no-hitter against the San Diego Padres while under the influence of LSD. For those who don’t know, a no-hitter is a baseball game in which one team doesn’t get any hits. In the world of professional baseball, this is an extremely rare accomplishment for a pitcher, as only 269 no-hitters have been thrown in Major League Baseball history since 1875.

Letter from the Editor — David Jay Brown



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Comedian Robin Williams does a hilarious standup comedy routine about this historical baseball game, where he follows the above-stated revelation about Dock Ellis’ altered neurochemistry with a plea to his audience, “For those of you who have done LSD, please tell the person sitting next to you how difficult this might be.” Amplifying one’s senses, and dissolving one’s conceptual mind, may seem like the last thing that one needs when under such stressful pressure to concentrate, focus, and discipline one’s body, but maybe, for someone who is already well-trained as a professional athlete, this wasn’t as hard as it first appears. In fact, some evidence suggests that perhaps Ellis pitched so well that day partially because he was under the influence of a psychedelic that sharpened his perception, dilated his sense of time, and strengthened the connection between his mind and his body.

Head coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, Phil Jackson (a.k.a. “Zen Master”)—one of the most well-known coaches in all of sports—has the highest winning percentage of any coach in the history of the NBA (both in the regular season and in the playoffs). In his book *Maverick: More Than a Game* (Playboy Press, 1975), Jackson says that an LSD-induced vision that he had in Malibu in May of 1973 helped him to see basketball in a new way that boosted his coaching performance. He said that the experience—which he called one of the peak experiences of his life—gave him a new love for the sport and a deeper appreciation of team play.

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In the recently produced *National Geographic Explorer* series documentary “Inside LSD,” two performance artists demonstrate the truly remarkable neurosomatic skills that they developed while under the influence of psychedelics. Together they practiced a hybrid of dance, juggling, and meditation called “flow,” and they credit psychedelics with improving their flow skills. In the documentary they put on a dazzling flow performance while under the influence of LSD. “I use LSD as a tool. It allows me to do things that I couldn’t normally do,” said one of the performers (Flow Master Dan) in the documentary.

A number of people who are well-trained in the control of their body, and in unifying their mind and body, have drawn inspiration from their psychedelic experiences, and, in some cases, like the flow artists who performed in the *National Geographic* documentary, they actually integrate the occasional use of psychedelics into their mind/body practice as a way of enhancing their connection to it.

It would be interesting to know if Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps—who caused such a huge controversy when photos of him surfaced smoking from a bong—ever used cannabis when he was swimming, but, unfortunately, he didn’t respond to my queries and remains quiet on the subject. Nonetheless, a whole underground subculture has evolved, where extreme sport enthusiasts—into skiing, snowboarding, skydiving, surfing, etc.—integrate low doses of psychedelics into their athletic disciplines. MTV sports correspondent and author of *Tryptamine Palace*, James Oroc, joins us in this special issue to cover this daredevil world of psychedelically-accelerated extreme sport enthusiasts.

This special *MAPS Bulletin* is dedicated to exploring how psychedelics affect the mind/body connection. Besides competitive sports and extreme athletics, some of the other mind/body practices that people have combined with psychedelics include Yoga, dance, martial arts, Tantra, tai chi, and massage therapy. In addition to these mind/body practices, some of the other areas that we’ll be covering in this special theme *Bulletin* include how psychedelics relate to psychosomatic medicine, psychic phenomena, genetic awareness, and quantum consciousness. We’ll also be looking at the fascinating relationship between the powerful psychedelic DMT and the brain, where it naturally occurs as a mysterious ligand, and how it might help to mediate the mind/body connection.

Yoga and Tantra

One of the oldest links between the practice of a physical discipline and psychedelic mind states can be found in the history of Yoga. Yoga

is an ancient practice that developed in India during 3300–1700 B.C., and there are numerous types, but they all hold certain principles in common, which are designed to help unify the body, mind, and spirit of the practitioner through meditation. The connection between psychedelics and Yoga can be found in the earliest texts on the subject, where it is described as a mysterious plant called “soma,” and the connection remains quite strong to this day. On the internet, for example, inserting the words “yoga” and “psychedelics” into Google currently yields around 5,790,000 results. Yoga teacher and author of *Yoga Beyond Belief*, Ganga White, joins us in this special issue to discuss this long and fascinating relationship.

Tantra, another mind/body practice that developed long ago in India, also aims to help its practitioners transcend the rewards and pains associated with life, but it takes the opposite approach from Yoga. Unlike Yoga, which seeks to constrict external outputs to achieve this inner state of independence, Tantra seeks to transform one’s relationship to them, so that whether or not to disengage becomes more of a choice than a compulsion. The aspect of Tantra that most Westerners are familiar with are the exercises that relate to sexuality, and this is where a lot of experimentation with psychedelics has occurred. Sexological bodyworker Margaret Wade joins us in this special issue to explore how psychedelics have influenced some Tantric sexual practice. (Also, see my article “Forbidden Knowledge...and Ancient Secrets” on the this subject in the Spring 2002 issue of the *MAPS Bulletin*.)

One of the best books that I know of that explores the different mind/body techniques that have been used by people throughout history is Esalen Institute cofounder Michael Murphy’s book *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature*, which provides an encyclopedic overview of techniques employed over the centuries to improve the mind/body connection.

Massage Therapy and Bodywork

Massage therapy is another ancient mind/body practice, which involves the manipulation of muscle and connective tissue to enhance the body’s function, as well as to promote relaxation and well-being. It arose independently in a number of different cultures around the world, and early writings on the subject have been found in many ancient civilizations, including those of India, Rome, China, Greece, Egypt, Japan, and Mesopotamia. Health benefits have long been reported from massage therapy, and recent scientific studies have confirmed many of these reported benefits.

As a California-certified massage therapist

(trained in Swedish massage therapy at Twin Lakes College in Santa Cruz) who has spent many hours giving and receiving hundreds of massages, I can tell you with complete assurance that a good massage—in the proper setting, with dim lighting, soothing music and herbal scents—can be pretty consciousness-altering all by itself, and is very similar to a cannabis high. So when massage therapy is mixed with the sensory-enhancing, boundary-dissolving qualities of a potent psychedelic, the results can be profoundly cathartic and unusually relaxing. In some cases, people have reported that they released deeply blocked emotions, which had long-lasting health benefits.

Esalen massage therapist and teacher Ellen Watson, who created the video *The Art of Essential Touch*, joins us in this special issue to share what she has learned about the combination of massage therapy and psychedelics. Also joining us is massage therapist Trevor Getsla, who will be discussing how psychedelics have influenced his bodywork practice.

Dance Ritual and Dance Performance

One of the very first things that a newly conceived embryo does when it enters the world is establish a sense of rhythm with its beating heart, and all human cultures share a passion for singing and dancing. Not surprisingly, there is a long and close association between psychedelics, music, and rhythmic movement, stretching all the way from the present day to prehistoric times. People have been dancing all night on psychedelics, at both primitive and modern festivals, since the dawn of human history.

From shamanic dances in ayahuasca ceremonies and peyote rituals, to boogying at Acid Tests and Grateful Dead concerts, acid house parties and techno raves, psychedelics seem to inspire, and to provide tremendous fuel, for all-night dancing. As would be expected, some skillful and imaginative people have masterfully developed this passion into dazzling art forms.

For this *Bulletin* I interviewed dance performer Phaedrana Jones and visual artist Andrew “Android” Jones about how their mesmerizing, collaborative dance performance has been influenced by their use of psychedelics. Also joining us is fire dancer Hana Theobald and an anonymous flow artist who discuss how psychedelics have affected their performance.

Mind/Body Medicine

Only in recent years has Western medicine acknowledged the important role that the mind plays in the health of the body. Thanks to the pioneering work of neuroscientist

Candace Pert, Ph.D., and others, we now know that our intentions and emotions can have a measurable effect on the functioning of our immune systems and other physiological processes in our bodies. This revelation opened the door to what has become known as mind/body medicine—a branch of health science which recognizes that both the mind and the body can causally influence one another—and it marks a giant leap forward in our medical understanding because, ultimately, mind and body are parts of a single, unified system.

When I was discussing ideas for this bulletin with MAPS President Rick Doblin, Ph.D., he told me that he thought that MDMA “really opens up the mind-body connection.” He said, “I’m specifically thinking of a guy that I was sitting for, maybe twenty years ago. During the process his arm became completely paralyzed, but we knew not to worry about it. As it turned out, he was a doctor, and he started telling us this whole long story about how his father had been on life support when he was dying, and his mother had asked him to pull the plug. So he actually was the one who pulled the plug. But he hated his father, and he wasn’t sure: Is he killing his dad? Is he doing it out of hatred, or is it out of love? Is it for his family? And as he worked through all those issues, he started to get feeling back in his arm—and then, all of a sudden, he was no longer paralyzed. But it took hours and hours to work through it.”

This type of psychosomatic processing is not uncommon during psychedelic therapy sessions. Joining us in this special issue to explore these ideas further is integrative medicine expert Andrew Weil, M.D., author of *Spontaneous Healing*, who I interviewed about mind/body medicine and psychedelics, and Spanish clinical psychologist Ana Maqueda, who discusses the relationship between psychosomatic medicine, psychoneuroimmunology, and psychedelics. Ralph Metzner, Ph.D., author of *The Unfolding Self*, and Vietnam vet Ed Ellis, are also here to discuss how MDMA can affect psychosomatic processing with PTSD, and Steve Rooke, shares his story about how MDMA helped to cure him of rheumatoid arthritis.

Also joining us is anthropologist Stephen Beyer, Ph.D., author of *Singing to the Plants*, who shares some of his experiences with ayahuasca-based Amazonian shamans. Ayahuasca-based shamanism has been widely reported to help heal people from a variety of difficult-to-treat illnesses. The body’s innate ability to heal itself from illness is often brushed aside in medical research trials as “merely” the placebo effect; however, with ayahuasca-based shamanism the body’s innate healing ability

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takes center stage, where it seems to become magnified, and there are numerous, well-documented stories of people who have had long-standing medical illnesses suddenly and miraculously vanish, or vastly improve, after an ayahuasca healing ceremony.

ESP & Psychic Phenomena

Few people are aware that there have been numerous, carefully-controlled scientific experiments with telepathy, psychokinesis, remote viewing, and other types of psychic phenomena, which have consistently produced compelling, statistically significant results that conventional science is at a loss to explain. It's also interesting to note that many people have reported experiencing meaningful telepathic communications, as well as verified remote viewing abilities, with ayahuasca and other psychedelics—not to mention a wide range of paranormal events and synchronicities, which seem extremely difficult to explain by means of conventional reasoning.

A questionnaire study conducted by psychologist Charles Tart, Ph.D., of 150 experienced marijuana users found that 76% believed in extrasensory perception (ESP), with frequent reports of experiences while intoxicated that were interpreted as psychic. Psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, M.D., and psychologist Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., have collected numerous anecdotes about psychic phenomena that were reported by people under the influence of psychedelics, and several small scientific studies have looked at how LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline might affect telepathy and remote viewing.

For example, according to psychologist Jean Millay, Ph.D., in 1997, students at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands did research to establish whether or not the use of psilocybin could influence remote viewing. This was a small experiment, with only 12 test-subjects, but the results of the study indicated that those subjects who were under the influence of psilocybin achieved a success rate of 58.3 percent, which was statistically significant.

Dr. Krippner, and psychologist David Luke, Ph.D., join us in this special issue to summarize these fascinating studies and explore these possibilities further. Also joining us is investigative journalist Peter Gorman, author of *Ayahuasca in My Blood*, who describes some his personal healing experiences with remote viewing on ayahuasca.

DMT and the Brain

One of the most mysterious puzzles in all of nature—in the same league as questions like “What existed before the Big Bang?” and “How did life begin?”—revolves around the fact that the extremely powerful psychedelic substance

known as dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is naturally found in the human body, as well as in many species of animals and plants, and nobody knows what it does, or what function it might serve, in any of these places. Because natural DMT levels tend to rise while we're asleep at night, a role in dreaming has been suggested. But this is pure speculation, and even if true, it may do much more. DMT is also one of the primary ingredients in ayahuasca, the potent hallucinogenic jungle juice from the Amazon, and, because of its endogenous status and unusually potent effects, many people have considered it to be the quintessential psychedelic.

Psychiatric researcher Rick Strassman, Ph.D., who conducted a five year study with DMT at the University of New Mexico, has suggested that naturally elevated DMT levels in the brain may be responsible for such unexplained mental phenomena as spontaneous mystical experiences, near-death experiences, non-human entity contact, and schizophrenia. Strassman and others have even gone so far as to speculate about the possibility that elevated DMT levels in the brain might be responsible for ushering the soul into the body before birth, and out of the body after death. Neuroscientist Adam Halberstadt, Ph.D., from the University of California, San Diego, joins us in this special issue to summarize what we know about endogenous DMT, and helps us to unravel the strange mystery of what it is doing our bodies.

Perhaps endogenous DMT fluctuations in the brain naturally help to modulate certain types of mind/body experiences, and this may be why a low dose of a psychedelic can sometimes be helpful in facilitating a better mind/body connection. Whether through dance, yoga, meditation, or massage, harmonizing the mind with the body has been a goal shared by many people, across time and cultures. Psychedelics—when wisely used in the proper set and setting—may be helpful toward achieving these ends, and there's certainly plenty of evidence to suggest that synchronizing the mind and the body more effectively and more harmoniously may help to improve personal health and enhance spiritual growth, i.e. make us better people. In a world that's so obviously in need of balance, restoring and improving the order within ourselves first always seems like a good idea. •