

Erowid Extracts

A Psychoactive Plants and Chemicals Newsletter

May 2003

Number 4

Erowid.org is a member-supported organization working to provide free, reliable and accurate information about psychoactive plants and chemicals.

The information on the site is a compilation of the experiences, words, and efforts of hundreds of individuals including users, parents, health professionals, doctors, therapists, chemists, researchers, teachers, and lawyers. Erowid acts as a publisher of new information as well as a library for the collection of documents published elsewhere, spanning the spectrum from solid peer-reviewed research to creative writing and fiction.

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Balancing the many elements of the Erowid Project that compete for our time and attention is probably our most difficult task overall. With the death of our friend and largest contributor last fall, fundraising again leapt to the top of our To Do lists.

With only two full-time and one half-time staff, we are unable to dedicate a person to fundraising. This means making hard decisions about time-slicing. Over the last eight years, we have worked to minimize the amount of time and money spent raising funds to keep Erowid going. From the outset, we have had the intention to grow slowly and to try to be efficient with our income, to avoid some of the problems inherent in rapid expansion. We have a strong vision of where the Erowid Project is heading and feel that some of the challenging choices we make (and believe in) would be difficult within a larger, more risk-averse, organization.

But, the last six months have involved a lot of re-thinking about how we can stay true to our vision and still afford to keep it alive. We have three primary ways we are trying to maintain our 2002 funding level in 2003.

First, we are trying to reach a goal of 800 members by the end of 2003. We currently have about 500 members so that would be an increase of about 50 new members per month for the rest of the year. To that end, we have designed a new Erowid mug and will likely have two additional membership incentives by the end of the year to try to entice current members to continue their support.

Second, we are trying to increase our “middle-tier” support. In 2002, we had only two people who donated between \$1,000 and \$10,000 and only a few more who donated over \$400. We spent time this winter working on a fundraising packet targeted at this level of contributors and have been working on asking people to consider

Erowid as part of their personal charitable giving plans. Many friends of Erowid have not seen it as a possible charity to which they could donate small monthly amounts or have as part of a corporate charity package.

Third, and perhaps most difficult, we are seeking an additional individual or foundation that would like to help support Erowid's mission. Despite the functional appeal of the project—over six million unique visitors in 2002—Erowid's work involves some extremely controversial

“To a historian libraries are food, shelter, and even muse.”

— Barbara Tuchman

principles which make it ineligible for funding from most mainstream sources. Finding new major donors is not the type of work we're used to.

Fundraising is about meeting people, being given introductions, and showing ourselves to be trustworthy, efficient, and hard-working. But for us, it is an alien and somewhat uncomfortable activity. Responding to our reticence to do fundraising for Erowid, Bob Wallace used to tell us that sales, in its purest sense, is simply making people aware of the availability of a solution to a problem they have. But to engineers, it often feels like a distraction from the “real work” that needs to be done.

We are absolutely amazed at how far we've been able to get on voluntary donations. Thank you to everyone. It is humbling and inspiring to have so many people willing to contribute to keep the project alive.

Fire & Earth

EYE ON THE MEDIA

by Fire & Earth Erowid

CBS NEWS “EYE ON AMERICA” REPORTS ON EROWID

On January 27, 2003, CBS Evening News ran a short “Eye on America” feature about “recreational drug websites”. Their report focused on Erowid’s role as an information source, presented the case of a young man they said had harmed himself after reading about information on Erowid.org, and questioned whether such information should be available to everyone.

The primary focus of the story was an interview with a young man being treated at the University of Massachusetts hospital. They described that he had overdosed on an “exotic combination of chemicals and plants”, the recipe for which he had found on Erowid. The young man was quoted as saying that he thought “hallucinogens were fun things to do on a Friday night.”

“It’s Erowid’s reports on side effects, on precise doses, and its long list of recipes that make it the encyclopedia of altered states.”

— Wyatt Andrews, CBS News Correspondent

No specifics were given about what he had ingested, but through a number of other sources we learned that he had purchased syrian rue seeds from which he made an extract. He ingested the extract orally (for its MAOI property) and then smoked 5-MeO-DMT.

The young man said that he had read about the combination on “Erowid dot org”, to which the interviewer replied questioningly “Erowid dot org?” and then the commentator stated the URL again flatly: “Erowid dot org.” It seemed as if the editorial intent was to advertise the location of the site as clearly as possible.

A physician from the hospital was interviewed, but provided no specifics on camera about what had happened. It is interesting to note that the physician, Dr. Edward Boyer, was the author of an article critical of Erowid in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2001 (*Erowid Extracts* No. 2). He told CBS News that he was “stunned” by the amount of information on Erowid.org

and that he thought some of the information on the site was not appropriate for children. He went on, however, to say how he himself found the site to be a useful resource.

CBS News included an edited and slightly reworded statement that we had sent them in email: “We are a library, with no interest in encouraging anything but learning and care.” They then included a brief on-camera interview with Rick Doblin (founder of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, MAPS) who countered the view that we promote irresponsible behavior: “Providing access to tools, is not the same as encouraging people to use them.”

The report ended on an ominous note, returning to the theme of dangers lurking on the internet: “For the young man who overdosed, and his parents, it’s a cautionary tale about the freedom of the internet. The web gave him access to unlimited information, but it was mixed with a brand new way to flirt with death.”

Overall, we were pleased with the story. Although we strongly dislike the fear-mongering advertisements that heralded the piece and the overall negative tone, the producers of Eye on America are to be commended for including elements of balance. The few facts were reasonably accurate, they included an extremely positive quote from Dr. Boyer, did not attack us personally, selected a fair quote from our email, and included the balancing opinion of a friend of the Erowid Project.

We have an ambivalent relationship to the news media. While we certainly want our resources to be available to those who need them, we believe that the issues raised by our site are not easily dealt with in one or two minute long news spots. With major news sources, often stories are more like advertisements or meme-bites than they are functional transmissions of fact.

For television news producers, there are severe conflicts of interest between ratings-success and depth of journalism. Financial motives push strongly against calm, neutral presentations and towards prurient, exciting stories about terrible lurking dangers to

attract the fickle, distracted viewer. CBS News added morphing, psychedelic graphics super-imposed onto images shown of our site; the story implied that Erowid somehow recommended taking MAOIs and smoking 5-MeO-DMT; advertisements for the piece warned about children’s safety on the internet; and Dan Rather led into the story with “Some websites can teach your children how to make mind-bending drugs that can kill them.”

It is worth noting that, as of the time of the story, Erowid included 7 experience reports from people who had combined these two substances, including reports with titles like “Baseball Bat to the Skull” and “A Bad Combination”. Several other reports mentioned worrisome effects like blacking out and vomiting.

Dr. Boyer believes that the young man experienced serotonin syndrome leading to severe overheating and subsequent rhabdomyolysis (toxic muscle damage). A case report documenting this incident is expected in 2003. Since there is a history of traditional use of South American brews that contain both an MAOI (harmala) and 5-MeO-DMT, this incident helps raise important questions about potential health risks. We look forward to future research on this topic.

“Every physician I know, every law enforcement person I know who wants to find out the very latest in drugs goes to Erowid.”

— Dr. Edward Boyer, M.D.

This was the most prominent television mention of Erowid to date, and it was not a complete trainwreck. The extremely controversial nature of these issues fosters misunderstanding and polarization in dialog and we are glad that CBS News chose to include balance as they raised valid medical and ethical issues for their audience.

For several days following this three minute television spot, Erowid’s traffic nearly doubled, leading to more than 40,000 visitors each day. ●

ESCOTTOLOGY

Peeking Out of the Closet

By Scott O. Moore

It was a very casual moment, almost surprisingly so. I had arrived at the dojo where I take aikido and was making small talk with that evening's instructor. We were talking about why I'd been missing more classes than usual recently, which led to my describing a sketch comedy DVD project I'd been feverishly working on for months, which led to my clarifying that this was a *psychedelic* sketch comedy DVD, which led to my clarifying further that it was being released via a magazine I write for, which is called *Trip*, and of course just to make sure she didn't think it was a travel magazine, I clarified further that *Trip* is the *Journal of Psychedelic Culture*, and voila, in under two minutes, I had outed myself as a psychedelic drug user to one of my aikido instructors.

Now let's be clear: in Seattle, this isn't such a huge risk. And this was the youngest of the instructors I have regular contact with. And when, a few minutes later out on the mat, a student described the work she was doing in her post-doctorate studies, and another student replied with a joke about whether or not that meant she could get us good drugs, and everyone laughed, it didn't immediately strike me as incongruous. The class that night was small, pretty young overall (I'm thirty), and Friday night classes are always a little casual.

Still, the moment stuck with me. On one hand, I've been very public and open about my psychedelic experiences, posting freely under what is essentially my own name to mailing lists, newsgroups, and the web, helping publish *Trip* and contributing approximately four hundred billion experience reports to Erowid (okay, slight exaggeration, but a boy's gotta have goals). On the other hand, naturally there are contexts when that kind of openness seems, if not wholly inappropriate, then at least rather irrelevant. Does my boss actually need to know that I use psychedelic drugs?

I have a bunch of friends who work at a large software company that has a generous matching program for charitable contributions. I remember my distinct surprise in learning that Erowid can actually take donations this way, via MAPS, which meets the requirements for the matching program.

This means all who donate to MAPS via the program are essentially outing themselves on the job, if not explicitly as psychedelic users, then certainly as those who feel that these substances have value, which, as you know from watching the tube, makes them all terrorists or something. Now everyone "knows" that the software industry is rife with drug use, and in particular, psychedelic drug use. But there's a big difference between covertly admitting your use to coworkers, and actually setting up payroll deductions to support psychedelic research. And certainly software is a much safer industry in which to do this than others, but it's still a progressive step for a behemoth corporate institution—and its individual employees—to take.

Which brings me back to outing myself to my aikido instructor. One thing I lost my appetite for many years ago was any kind of active proselytizing on behalf of the psychedelic experience. Introducing LSD into someone's life is not the kind of responsibility I want on my hands any more; that's just a personal preference. But this was only small talk with an acquaintance, someone I regularly train with and feel comfortable trusting my safety to, and I was simply letting her in on a little part of my life. After training at the school for a couple of years, making steady progress and building a rapport, it seemed natural and appropriate.

Perhaps the fact that I take psychedelics recreationally should be no more or less important to the people around me than whether I'm religious, or married, or like Broadway musicals. Obviously that kind of climate is nowhere in sight, except on a limited basis, and perhaps that basis is less limited than I anticipated. Making political progress on this issue will come in part from gaining recognition that many of us who *do* don't match the stereotypes created by popular media and by the government. Certainly the role of overt, aggressive activism can't be understated; but there is a wide range of considerably more subversive memetic reprogramming that needs to happen in the culture at large. And that work can only happen one person at a time. ●

<http://www.erowid.org/columns/scotto/>

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Know Your Body
Know Your Mind
Know Your Substance
Know Your Source

In recent months there have been a number of groundbreaking arrests and legal developments affecting the world of psychoactives.

Spore Vendor Arrested

According to media reports and a Department of Justice press release, on February 18, 2003, the owner of Psilocybe Fanaticus (Robert McPherson) and three others were arrested by Federal agents and McPherson's home was searched after a warrant was obtained. According to the Department of Justice, investigators found a growing operation for psilocybin-containing mushrooms. The DOJ press release says that McPherson admitted that he was growing mushrooms to produce spores which he sold through Psilocybe Fanaticus.

Robert McPherson, his wife Margaret McPherson, Stephen Coggin and Judith Kreigh were all indicted on February 25 on charges of conspiracy to distribute psilocin and the manufacture of psilocin.

One media report states that while the police recognize that the spores of psilocybin-producing mushrooms are not illegal, selling these spores with instructions about how to grow them is conspiracy to manufacture (or conspiracy to distribute) a controlled substance. This is only one interpretation, but federal prosecutor Doug Whalley compares this situation to selling the chemicals required to make methamphetamine along with instructions for how to produce it.

The Psilocybe Fanaticus website (fanaticus.com) has been down since shortly after the arrests. Because of this case, many other online spore vendors appear to have reconsidered their selling practices. Many have removed psilocybin-mushroom producing spores from their inventories or stopped all sales entirely. While possession of these spores may be legal, growing psilocybin mushrooms is generally considered production of psilocybin or psilocin, an illegal act. Some speculate that the conspiracy charge may eventually be dropped and Mr. McPherson may be prosecuted only on the manufacture of psilocin charge.

Operation Pipe Dream

In March 2003, in joint operations titled "Operation Pipe Dream" and "Operation Headhunter", federal agents shut down a number of manufacturers and vendors who sold glass pipes, water pipes, and rolling papers. At least 55 individuals were indicted under charges that they were violating federal paraphernalia laws by selling pipes intended for use with *Cannabis*, a controlled substance.

While these operations have been widely reported in the national media, one aspect of the cases which has received less attention is the "confiscation" or "seizure" of the domain names used by some of the vendors. In an unusual step, the Drug Enforcement Administration requested a court order to redirect more than a dozen vendor sites to a warning notice at the DEA website. The warning states:

"By application of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the website you are attempting to visit has been restrained by the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(e)(1)(A)."

The cited statute permits the government to take action to "preserve the availability of property" that would be subject to forfeiture in the case of conviction.

But unlike a car or pile of cash, a domain name can't disappear if you stop paying attention to it. It's quite possible to gain control of a domain name after a conviction without ever redirecting it to a government site. Redirection of a website goes beyond "preserving availability" of an asset and instead effectively forces a particular type of speech by putting words in the mouth of the website owner, prior to their being convicted of a crime. It's akin to the government seizing a print publisher's company and publishing new books and government pamphlets under the publisher's name.

At this point, there is no known precedent for confiscating domain names or websites. We'll be watching this case carefully for further developments.

LSD Missile Silo Case

After nearly two years, a verdict has finally been reached in the case of Leonard Pickard and Clyde Apperson, who were accused in November 2000 of setting up an LSD manufacturing lab in a decommissioned missile silo in Wamego, Kansas.

On March 31, 2003, Pickard and Apperson were convicted of conspiracy and possession of LSD with intent to distribute more than 10 grams. The trial lasted more than eleven weeks but jurors deliberated for only six hours before reaching a guilty verdict. Each defendant faces a minimum of ten years in prison to a maximum of life in prison without parole. Sentencing is scheduled to begin August 8, 2003. According to Pickard's website, he plans to appeal the verdict.

There is unsupported speculation that the arrest of Pickard and Apperson in 2000 precipitated a shortage of LSD in the U.S. in 2002. However, it is common for availability of black market drugs to go through cycles. Erowid has received reports of LSD shortages since 1995 as well as recent reports from various parts of the country that LSD is plentiful: the laws of supply and demand at work.

RAVE Act Becomes Law

On April 10, 2003, the act previously called the "RAVE Act" passed both houses of Congress, and was signed into law on April 30. The act was first introduced in July 2002, but failed to pass before Congress adjourned for the year. In January 2003 it was appended to the "Amber Alert" bill in a slightly modified form.

The advertised intention of the act was to reduce the use of MDMA and other drugs by expanding the so-called "crack house" statute that allows prosecution of property owners who knowingly allow their buildings to be used "for the purpose of unlawfully manufacturing, storing, distributing, or using a controlled substance".

The changes enacted by the "RAVE Act" provisions are relatively minor, but have led to concern that the government is gearing up to go after rave promoters.

There are three primary changes implemented by the new law. The term “occupant” is added to “owner, lessee, agent, employee, or mortgagee” in the list of who can be held liable. The description of qualifying property is changed from “building, room, or enclosure” to simply “place”. This suggests that property where outdoor events are held can now be targeted. The new bill also changes the maximum allowable fine from \$500,000 to whichever is greater, \$250,000 or twice the gross receipts derived from each violation.

The original version of the act contained language specifically describing raves as the target of the legislation and the name itself clearly implicated rave promoters. After going through several incarnations, all of this language has been stripped from the text. The law as passed does not specifically name any targeted group, though there is still justifiable concern that raves are the implicit target.

DEA Tries To Ban Hemp Foods

Five months after the DEA originally issued an Interpretive Rule banning hemp seed and hemp oil based food products that contain any amount of trace residual THC, it published a Final Clarification Rule in the Federal Register that would ban hemp food products that contain “any” amount of THC.

The final ruling was scheduled to go into effect April 21, 2003. But in response to a request by the Hemp Industries Association, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a temporary stay on April 18, effectively blocking the DEA from implementing its new rule.

In a news release issued with their ruling, the DEA stated, “These cannabis products, which are referred to by some members of the public as ‘hemp’ products, often contain the hallucinogenic substance tetrahydrocannabinols (THC).” The DEA failed to acknowledge that trace amounts of THC have no psychoactive effect.

The hemp industry has established a TestPledge program, identifying companies that commit to quality control measures which limit the amount of trace residual THC. However, since the DEA has not specified a detection protocol and a corresponding limit of detection, companies have no way of determining whether their products would be legal under the DEA’s new rules.

The DEA also issued a Final Interim Rule exempting hemp bodycare and fiber products from DEA control; however, this rule does not allow hemp seed or oil to be imported into the U.S. for processing and manufacturing. The U.S. is the only large industrial nation that doesn’t distinguish between industrial forms of hemp and cannabis as a psychoactive.

JLF Case

As reported in the December 2001 issue of *Erowid Extracts*, JLF Poisonous Non-consumables, a vendor of plants, herbs, and chemicals, was raided by the DEA in September 2001. For years, JLF has required that customers agree that purchased products are not for human consumption.

Despite this fact, inventory and assets were seized and its owner, Mark Niemoeller, was arrested and indicted on eight federal counts of violating the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and five counts of violating the Controlled Substances Act.

There were three primary charges in the indictment. The first was that Niemoeller distributed “misbranded prescription drugs”—including L-Dopa, dopamine and clenbuterol—on eight occasions from 1999 through 2001. Second, it alleged that he distributed 2C-T-7 and 1,4-butanediol, which the indictment described as “controlled substance analogs”, on three occasions in 2001. And last, that Niemoeller distributed safrole, “a precursor chemical for the manufacture of MDMA”, on two occasions in 2001.

On January 30, 2003, Niemoeller was found guilty on the eight counts of distributing misbranded drugs. Sentencing has not yet taken place and the five additional charges have not yet gone to trial. ●

AMT & 5-MeO-DIPT EMERGENCY SCHEDULED

CHEMICALS SCHEDULED SINCE 1996		
CHEMICAL	SCHEDULE	DATE
AMT *	I	Apr 4, 2003
5-MeO-DIPT *	I	Apr 4, 2003
BZP / TFMPP *	I	Sep 20, 2002
Buprenorphine	V → III	Oct 7, 2002
2C-T-7 *	I	Sep 20, 2002
THC (clarification)	I	Oct 9, 2001
Dihydroetorphine	II	Nov 17, 2000
GHB	I	Mar 13, 2000
Zalepon	IV	Sep 15, 1999
Ketamine	III	Aug 12, 1999
Dronabinol	I → III	Jul 2, 1999
Modafinil	IV	Jan 27, 1999
Sybutramine	IV	Feb 11, 1998
Butorphanol	IV	Oct 1, 1997
Remifentanil	II	Sep 16, 1996

* Under Emergency Scheduling

On April 4, 2003, the DEA placed both AMT and 5-MeO-DIPT into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act by emergency ruling. The initial Intent to Schedule notice was published in the Federal Register on January 28, 2003. Both chemicals are now illegal to buy, sell, or possess in the United States without a DEA license.

Both AMT and 5-MeO-DIPT have been growing in popularity since they first became widely available in 1998 and 1999.

In their Intent to Schedule notice, the DEA noted that “both substances have commonly been found in both tablet and capsule forms.” There is some reason to believe that the sale of these chemicals in tablet form may have had an impact on the decision to schedule them. Material in tablet form is much easier to sell in single dose quantities, and is also much easier for the unscrupulous dealer to sell as “ecstasy”.

This scheduling follows relatively closely on the heels of the emergency scheduling of 2C-T-7, BZP, and TFMPP in September 2002 (see *Erowid Extracts* No. 3). In all, 15 chemicals have been scheduled in the last 7 years. ●

Weary of Elves

An experience with an Ayahuasca brew containing *B. caapi* and *P. viridis*

By Figment

I downed around 1000 ml of strong, noxious Hawaiian spirit juice, plopped down in a lawn chair next to a fire, and prepared myself beneath a warm, slightly overcast sky. I had taken the brew a few years before, and that trip was a remarkable rollercoaster ride of dense imagery, apocalyptic fore-flashes, and meta-psychedelic percepts, and it concluded with a sense of surfing through the cosmos as my own spirit monad, protected from fiercesome jungle gods by a galactic Bodhisattva brigade, and communing with the vast astro-Egyptian intelligences who had leapfrogged through the interstellar internet that awaits us on the far side of the coming. You know, Transformation.

But tonight a different dimension of vision lay in store for me, one which had little resemblance to the gooey, eco-religious accounts I had recently read in Ralph Metzner's book *Ayahuasca: Hallucinogens, Consciousness, and the Spirit of Nature*. This time it was more like a slowed-down unfolding of a fierce N,N-DMT trip, without much of the heart energy and terran visions that came before. It was if the floorboards of the psychedelic funhouse were stripped away and I was introduced to the gears, fiber wires and organic machines that actually produce the images. It was not very narrative or symbolic, but constituted more as a nested series of interlocking repetitions of various spaces, messages, and perceptions, including a few dire

cosmic traps that threatened to clutch me for eternity inside their pinball play.

"They" were also definitely in the house. It may be that Terence McKenna has simply seeded the meme-space that surrounds some tryptamines with his famous tales on self-transforming machine elves that proffer various alien objects/machines/languages with an almost malignant glee. But I certainly know what he is talking about, and these fellows now haunt the tryptamine realm for me. Tonight they leaned in quickly: "Oh you are back. We suckered you in here once again!" And they proceeded with their mischievous chattering bee-dance, as if they were coaxing me into some kind of hyperdimensional circuit that would leave sanity far behind. I never "gave in" though, whatever that means, and by the end of the trip, I was utterly tired of their cavortings.

There was nowhere to hide in the world fringed by these characters—everywhere was consciousness, was their consciousness of me, playing close attention to me. I became the apocalyptic subject at the end of time, all narratives of catastrophe and emergency (plane crashes, fires, eco-doom) ending in me. It seemed as if it were time to die and be phased into an infinite-math space of mind and machines. No jaguars or bejeweled jungle temples here—this was the Alien Impersonal, running the assembly code of creation.

It may be that I did not take enough (unlikely) or hold it down long enough (quite possible), but I actually found the whole show growing rather tedious despite its strength. I was "me" enough to sometimes yearn to return to the human realm, to quit these cycles, which did not seem to lead anywhere, or rather, were so outside of the space-time frames I am used to that I could not assimilate or understand. I felt as if I were seeing into DNA, even if this thought, like the machine elves, may simply be an artifact of my reading. Nonetheless, I perceived a realm of constantly folding and unfolding units, creating forms out of the liminal zone between abstract code and material molecule. This fecund and hyperactive generation of basic forms and patterns seemed to set the stage for "higher", more "conscious" forms of thought, intention, and memory—in other words, for the human spirit. But despite flashes of mudras and shamanic methods, I never felt I could climb up that ladder. Unlike my previous experience, where I was drawn up into a kind of Buddhaspace, this time I remained pretty enmeshed in a roiling matrix of multiplicities, which was frankly as idiotic and mechanical as it was profound. Creation is a blind wonder; we are in it, but not quite of it.

A kind of cosmic nausea settled upon me. At moments I felt the potential of integrating this material into a more organized, more "human" pattern, through singing, or gesturing, or adopting the sort of pristine, choiceless awareness I had learned from Zen. At moments I had flashes of inhabiting/being a god form, à la tantra, and I had the realization that the emphasis on pattern and proportion in so many religious traditions (mandalas, circles, spirals, trees, ladders, etc.) can be seen as ways to consciously organize the more blind, repetitive, and chaotic forces of this psychophysical realm of primal DNA reproduction. I found myself getting glimpses of the Kabbalistic tree of life, which seemed to temporarily coax the almost maggot-like code units into a gleaming array of sephiroth that coded within its Name the thousand names of God. I chanted my favorite Jewish chant. But I never booted out of the soup for long, and spent a lot of the trip locked in repetitive loops.

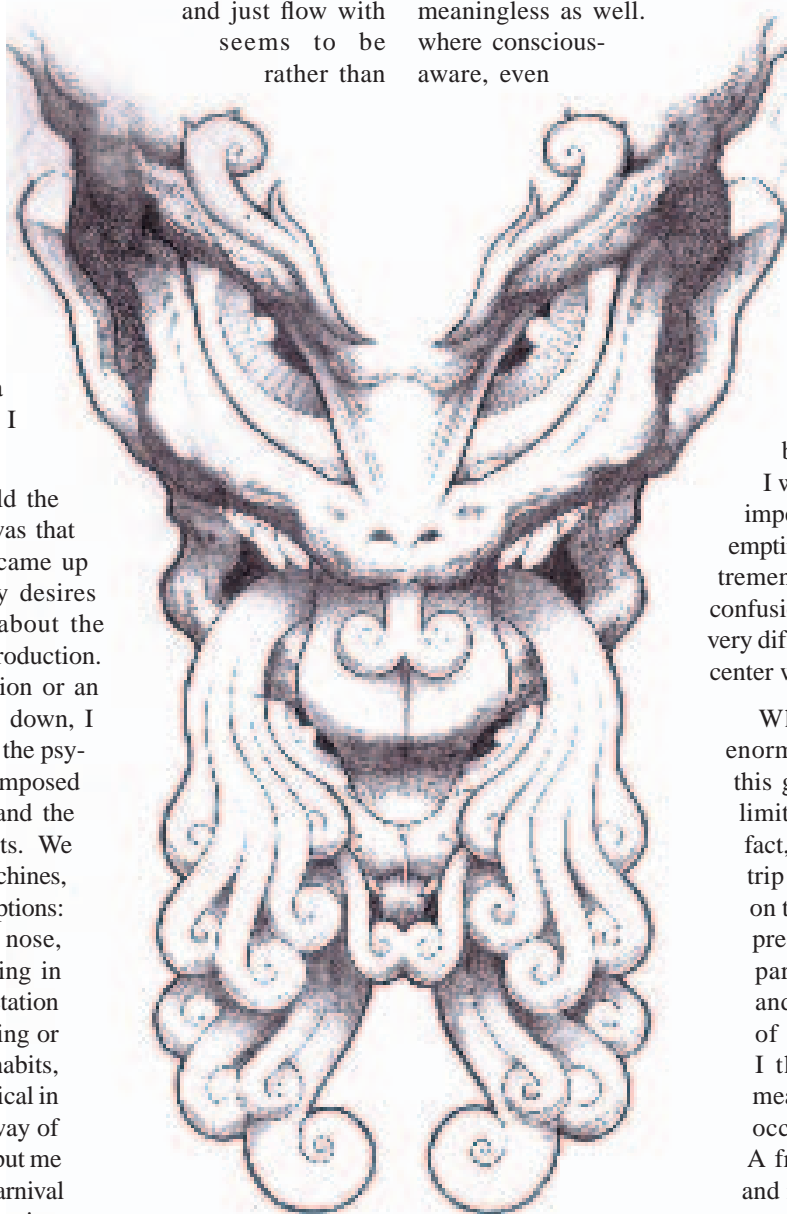
Once again I felt as if I were being offered some final choice. DMT almost always does this to me, creating the perception that I

am standing at some cosmic crossroads and must choose between different competing spaces/entities/techniques. The restless fluctuations of perception manifest as a form of doubt, so that even if I slip into a zone of Buddhist calm, I feel as if I were holding back or falling into a trap. Sometimes the sense of choice gets overlaid with the devil/angel dyad, but even then its never really clear who's wearing the white hats. Of course, this is most likely a magnification of my own psychological crap. Perhaps I need to let go and just flow with things, to give into whatever arising, however demonic, resisting, or feeling like I can resist. Or, on the other hand, play the game more consciously, through song, mudra, movement, spell. I felt that it would have gone better had someone shown me the ropes before I entered this space. As it was, I was blundering about without a map or compass, though I believe such things do exist.

One sign that I didn't hold the stuff down for long enough was that lots of personal psychology came up after the peak, lots of fleshy desires and impulses, all whirling about the central theme of the trip: reproduction. Is reproduction a joyful creation or an idiotic compulsion? Coming down, I recalled the Buddhist idea that the psychophysical personality is composed of five skandas, or "heaps", and the fourth one is dispositions/habits. We are just brimming with little machines, habitual actions/thoughts/perceptions: rolling the eyes, picking the nose, groping toward a breast, sighing in despair, whatever. One interpretation of enlightenment is the cleansing or awakening of all these little habits, so that we become less mechanical in our thought and action. One way of interpreting the trip was that it put me in touch with this whole crass carnival of the self, the biological unconscious that ghosts our every action and thought. It often seemed incredibly tedious, because these little autonomous agents are largely blind, with no internal momentum towards consciousness or development. Hence the "religious" need for integration, for "work": weaving the pattern, singing the song, drawing the magic sigil, chanting the holy name. The hope is that these practices can weave together the seething multiplicity of the psyche, alchemically producing an object that synthesizes and integrates the various levels of being. And my distinct impression was that the drug on its own was not going to do this work for me.

Or maybe not. Perhaps it's seething chaos all the way up and all the way down, from quantum cellular effects to the farthest reaches of

the Hubble Deep Field. In one of the more sobering visions of the trip, our universe was seen as a single bubble that grew and popped inside an endless series of bubbling and popping universes. There seemed no point, no rhyme or reason, just endless reproduction. Glimpsing this, I tasted the world-weariness that sparked early Buddhism's explicit quest for nirvana—which means, simply, "extinction", to snuff the light out. For the cosmos I saw was a cosmos of reiterative machines without end, novel meaningless as well. where conscious-aware, even



La Purga, by Matthew Wigeland

but when she gave up, I kept at it. It took at least a half hour to coax a real fire from such damp wood, but I kept at it, paying close attention to the fire, its points of intensity and promise, its constantly crumbling architecture, its need for oxygen gaps and channels of flow. It was good to have built the fire, even if it may have diminished some of the intensity of the visuals. I felt as if I had done the right human thing in the face of the immense chattering void—that zone of endless becoming I can't shake the suspicion that I will face again one day, come bardo time. ●

Erowid.org/experiences/exp.php?ID=23411

Take LSD 7 Times & You're LEGALLY INSANE ?

As we sort through incoming Ask Erowid questions and read submitted Experience Reports, some myths and misunderstandings stand out as persistent and widespread.

One of these myths, which we ourselves heard when we were teens in the 1980s, is that “Taking LSD seven times makes you legally insane.” The proposed number of times varies but is usually under ten. Another variant is that if you take LSD *n* number of times, “you can’t testify in court.”

Unfortunately, it is difficult to narrow down the earliest date of this word-of-mouth myth. Informal surveys of some of the educated subculture reveal that it was around by the early 1970s and was widespread by 1980. But the myth is not omnipresent. Many of those we asked, even experts in the field such as Darryl Inaba, CEO of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic and author of *Uppers, Downers, and All-Arounders*, said they had never heard this claim before.¹

The following is an attempt to provide a clear description of the misunderstandings inherent in the myth as well as to look at some of the fertile historical context out of which it grew in the United States.

What Defines “Legally Insane”?

As with many good myths, this one relies on the audience’s lack of familiarity with some highly complex system; in this case, both law *and* medicine. The first question, then, that springs to mind is how to find a definition of “legally insane” to check.

There is no legal definition of the phrase “legally insane”. The term “insane” has different meanings depending on the specific context in which it is used. Most often, “insane” is used as a casual lay-person’s term, like “crazy”, with no specific meaning.

When used in the context of the modern legal system, the concept of insanity has very limited application. There are a few specific places where a declaration of a person’s mental status can come into play.

For Commitment to an Institution

For many people, the most obvious implication of a diagnosis of “insanity” is the possibility of commitment to a mental institution. Interestingly, the word “insane” is seldom used in modern medicine or psychiatry. Instead, what used to be called “insanity” is now broken down into more descriptive groupings of medical diagnoses such as “mood, thought and mental disorders” or more specific diagnoses such as “psychotic episodes”, “schizophrenia”, etc. Modern psychiatric medicine generally frames these specific mental issues as disorders that can be treated and/or cured.

“Involuntary civil commitment” is the phrase used to describe being forced into a mental institution. The laws controlling this process vary from one jurisdiction to the next. With very few exceptions, involuntary commitment requires that an individual have a diagnosable mental disorder and either pose an “imminent threat” to themselves or others or be incapable of caring for their own basic personal needs. A few U.S. states allow involuntary commitment under slightly less stringent requirements, but all are based on current behavior or thinking, rather than on past activities.

There are no mental disorders defined in the standard diagnostic manual used in the United States that would allow a diagnosis of mental illness based solely on a person’s past use of LSD or any other drug.²

For a Criminal Trial

Insanity can be used as a specific—albeit rare—defense against an accusation of criminal conduct, resulting in a judgement of “not guilty by reason of insanity”. This finding generally requires that the defendant have a mental disorder that caused them: to not know what they were doing, to not know that what they were doing was illegal, or that compelled them irresistibly to commit the crime. Again, the requirements involve a current disorder that directly led to the individual committing a specific criminal act.

Past use of LSD, regardless of the number of uses, does not qualify as a mental disorder for the purposes of an insanity plea. In fact, the voluntary use of LSD during the commission of a crime can sometimes *disqualify* a defendant from using the insanity defense, as it can be argued that changes to or problems with their mental status were the result of the voluntary act of ingesting the drug.³ Although it is important to note that the laws governing the insanity defense vary by jurisdiction, there is no jurisdiction in the United States in which a court would find someone incompetent to stand trial simply because they had taken LSD in the past.

A simple analysis of this part of the myth was described by Bob Wallace on Usenet in 1998: “Since we never hear news stories such as ‘The accused murderer was set free, of course, since he had taken LSD 8 times and was legally insane’, and many defense lawyers are basically competent, it seems unlikely such a law exists in any state.”⁴

For Testifying in a Trial

Fact meets fiction with the variant of this myth that states that one can’t testify in court after having done LSD *n* times.

While there is no rule or law which requires disqualification of a witness based on past LSD use, a witness’s testimony can potentially be discredited by a hostile attorney in front of the jury if one’s “illegal drug use” is made an issue. But this depends on the personal biases of lawyers and jurors, not on formal legal rules.

When Applying for a Job

While it has nothing to do with being declared “legally insane”, admitting to past use of LSD could in some instances disqualify an individual for certain jobs or subject them to additional scrutiny or drug testing. For instance, the city police department of La Mesa, California lists “Use of any hallucinogenic drug ... LSD, acid...” as a disqualifying factor for being hired.⁵ But obviously this is a far cry from a declaration of “legally insane”.

When Did This Myth Start?

Based on feedback from people who were teens in the 1970s, it seems this myth has its roots somewhere between 1967 and 1975. Rick Doblin of MAPS reports that he remembers hearing a variant of this myth around 1970.⁶

LSD causing insanity became a prominent component of its public image in the late 1960s. In *Storming Heaven*, Jay Stevens writes, "It is difficult to pinpoint the precise moment when the LSD psychotic first entered the public consciousness, but a good starting point would be April 1966, when the FDA invited reporters in to examine its LSD dossier."⁷

Although we believe that there are earlier mentions, the first documentation we have found for this myth is a series of Usenet posts from 1990 in which one author claims to have heard the myth as early as 1974.⁸ Usenet posts discussing this myth have appeared every year since 1990.

How Did the Myth Start?

As LSD use spread in the 1960s, the public meme-space was ripe for LSD myths relating to insanity.

1) Widely publicized research in the 1950s classified LSD as a "psychotomimetic" creating "model psychoses" in those who took it.

2) A couple of rumored and reported suicides in the 1950s associated with LSD primed negative expectations.⁹

3) The "Reefer Madness" anti-cannabis campaign provided a backdrop for the concept of LSD-induced insanity. In early anti-LSD campaigns, cannabis was described as a "hallucinogen", often in the same sentence with LSD.¹⁰

Senate Subcommittee Hearings

In early 1966, several senate subcommittees convened hearings on "the LSD problem". Testimony by concerned psychiatrist William Frosch about the prevalence of LSD-related admissions to psychiatric wards was dramatically exaggerated in the committee's findings. He reported that a small percentage of LSD users had abreactions and that, of those, a common problem was mild to severe psychosis. The reported version, however, missed the context and simply reported that "One of the most common recurrent reactions to LSD is a psychotic breakdown of an extended but unknown duration."⁷

Media Hype

Of course, the real carrier of the meme was the national media. Lurid, sensational, and exaggerated stories about LSD causing insanity exploded into the national psyche in 1966. A few of the highlights are: a *Time* magazine article in March of 1966 which declared that psychosis resulting from LSD use was "everywhere",¹¹ a March 25, 1966 *Life* magazine issue with a cover story about LSD titled "The exploding threat of the mind drug that got out of control: LSD",¹² and an August 1967 *Saturday Evening Post* cover story titled "The newly discovered dangers of LSD".¹³ These were accompanied by a large number of television and newspaper stories covering the "growing epidemic".¹⁴

Famous Court Cases

Although there was frequent reporting of LSD-related crimes in the news during the peak of the LSD hysteria, two cases stand out as possible seeds for this myth cluster.

First, the case of **Stephen Kessler** stands out because of the style and magnitude of the headlines in April 1967, which declared him a "Mad LSD Slayer" and "LSD Killer" because he reportedly said to the police as he was being arrested: "Man, I've been flying for three days on LSD. Did I kill my wife? Did I rape anybody?"¹⁵

Although it was later reported that Kessler had last taken LSD more than a month before the killings and had actually been on "three quarts of lab alcohol" and "one-and-a-half grains of pentobarbital", this data was trumpeted with somewhat less fanfare. Kessler was later found not guilty by reason of insanity, but LSD was not mentioned during the trial.^{16,17}

The second major LSD-related crime that splashed across televisions, newspapers, and magazines was that of the murderous cult of personality around **Charles Manson**. When several members of the group were indicted for high profile murders in 1969, it was big national news. The media carried extensive mentions of the use of LSD, *Datura*, and other drugs by the members of the "Manson Family".

It was the cross examination of Linda Kasabian, a former member of the Family, that is considered one of the key seeds to this myth. When she was first called to the stand, the attorney defending Manson reportedly blurted "I object, Your Honor, on the grounds this witness is not competent because she is insane!"¹⁸

Kasabian spent eighteen days on the witness stand during which Manson's attorney repeatedly returned to questions about her LSD use, trying to depict her as a person who could not tell fact from fantasy. Despite this attempt to discredit a witness for her admitted fifty LSD trips, Manson and his cohorts were convicted and sentenced to death (later converted to life in prison) for the murders, based substantially on Kasabian's testimony.

Conclusion

Over time, we hope that additional documentation of early versions of this myth can be found. Part of the mystique of LSD is that insanity hovers somewhere around the edges of its use, making myths like this difficult to put to rest. One part fact, one part vague thinking, one part misunderstanding, and some hyperbole mixed in form the glue that holds these threads together. ●

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DESICCANT

and the Storage of Chemicals

by Fire Erowid

Most chemicals that are in powder, crystal, or tablet form are best stored as dry as possible, whether for short or long-term storage. Unfortunately, many factors can make dry storage difficult. Dark and cool locations that are otherwise ideal for chemical storage tend to be damp. As containers are opened and closed or as seals age and leak, humidity can creep into a container, increasing the speed of degradation of materials stored inside. Many plastic containers are made from material that is permeable to water vapor over time. As temperatures go down, humidity trapped in a container may reach its dew point and precipitate out, potentially ruining the material.

One solution to this storage problem is the use of desiccant. A desiccant can be any material that is hygroscopic—meaning it will absorb water from the air. Desiccants can be purchased as loose powder, pellets or small sealed pouches of various sizes. These pouches—often made of uncoated Tyvek—contain the powder or pellets while still allowing air flow.

There are a number of desiccant products designed for different purposes. Some people use desiccant to keep delicate electronics dry. Gun collectors use it to keep their weapons from rusting. Pharmaceutical companies include desiccant packs inside medicine bottles, and shoe companies use it to keep leather dry. Home supply stores or craft stores often sell it for drying flowers.

Certain products are marketed specifically for the purpose of drying foods for long-term storage. These have the advantage of being approved for use with items that will be ingested. The most common commercially available desiccants are silica gel and clay.

Silica gel can absorb water from below freezing to past the boiling point, but functions best at room temperature. There are some varieties of silica gel that are approved by the FDA for use with food.

Indicating silica gel, which is normal silica gel with some of its granules coated with cobalt chloride, changes color as it becomes saturated with water. Cobalt chloride is a heavy metal that is NOT food-safe and should not come into contact with anything that will be ingested. Indicator silica gel is more expensive, but is very useful for determining when the desiccant has reached its saturation point and lost its effectiveness. It is often available at chemical supply stores.

Once they have absorbed humidity, both types of silica gel can be re-activated (re-dried for future use) by spreading them in the bottom of a baking dish and drying them in an oven at 220-250° F for about three hours. Lower temperatures will not dry the gel and higher temperatures can damage it. Silica gel packaged in Tyvek packets can be dried the same way.

Clay desiccants are less common than silica gel, but can also be less expensive. They work well at lower temperatures, but begin to release water at 120° F. This can be a problem for items stored in hot areas, but also makes it easier to re-activate them in the oven.

Calcium oxide is a caustic material, and inhalation or exposure to the eyes or skin should be avoided. Unlike silica gel or clay desiccant, calcium oxide expands as it absorbs water. It is slower than other desiccants, but can achieve lower humidity. When exposed to water or high humidity, it can release quite a bit of heat.

Calcium sulfate, also known as gypsum, is sold as “Drierite” commercially. It is relatively common and is available in an indicator variety, but is less efficient than

most other commercial desiccants. Calcium sulfate can be re-activated by heating in an oven for one hour at 210-425° F.



Calcium Sulfate Desiccant, photo by Erowid

There are a number of ways that desiccants can be used to help keep stored materials dry. The simplest is to put food-safe desiccant packs alongside the stored material inside a sealed container.

A second method is to put a layer of desiccant or desiccant packs in the bottom of a sealable container such as a glass canning jar or plastic box. The material to be stored is set into a separate and smaller sealed container. This smaller container is set on top of the desiccant in the first container, which is then sealed.

A third method is to make a do-it-yourself desiccant pack. A small glass jar can be half filled with desiccant pellets and then the top of the jar “sealed” with a piece of air-permeable fabric or two layers of coffee filter secured with string or a rubber band. This jar containing desiccant is then placed into a larger sealable container with the material or chemical being stored.

Other dry materials such as wood can also be used as a makeshift desiccant. A small piece of wood, dried in the oven until it becomes bone dry, can be placed in a container where it will suck moisture out of the air. While less effective than commercial desiccants, this method is also less expensive and can be done from materials found at home.

Most desiccant is fairly inexpensive, can be reused for years, and helps maintain the quality of materials stored over long periods of time. The key is to keep any non-food-safe desiccant separated from materials that might be ingested, while still allowing the desiccant access to the air that surrounds the stored materials. ●

TYPES OF DESICCANTS

- silica gel
- montmorillonite clay
- calcium oxide (quicklime)
- calcium sulfate (gypsum)
- molecular sieve
- activated carbon
- dry sawdust or dry wood

MEME CULTIVATION

Erowid Punctuation Policy: Data-safe Quotes

by Earth Erowid

One of the quibbles we have with standard English grammar rules pertains to the rules of punctuation for quotations. We believe that the current standard is not only clumsy, but actually harms the information it is charged with communicating, resulting in unacceptable data loss. For the past six years, we have implemented what we call (for the lack of a better term) Erowid Standard editorial style, including a non-standard quotation punctuation policy, which grammar-oriented readers may have noticed or perceived as errors.

Erowid Standard is based on the idea that quotations should remain as true to the original source as possible. The basic rule is that quotations may only contain the original quoted text, bracketed clarifications, and ellipses. All other added punctuation goes outside the quotes.

For example, lets say I want to include a quote from John in a sentence in which he originally stated:

I work for the DEA and believe that cannabis should remain illegal.

Now lets say I want to ask the question:

Why did John say "I work for the DEA?"

The above sentence uses standard punctuation rules, requiring the inclusion of the question mark at the end of the sentence inside the quotes, despite the fact that John's statement was not a question. Using Erowid's revised punctuation rules would instead result in:

Why did John say "I work for the DEA"?

We believe this style makes it much clearer exactly what John said. It seems unreasonable to include inside the quotes

punctuation that was not a part of the original text.

This policy protects against both adding and changing punctuation. If a quoted statement ends with a period, it is wrong to replace that with a comma inside the quotes (or remove the period entirely!) simply to follow arcane rules of grammar.

While we are aware that the vast weight of the Chicago Manual of Style and MLA rules are against this type of change, we feel strongly that rules which facilitate or induce corrupting quoted data need to be changed and the minor discomfort grammar-sensitive individuals will experience is worth the price of cultivating this meme. ●

Organizational Updates

Bluelight (bluelight.nu)

In April, Bluelight upgraded its bulletin board software. The new software features private messaging with a buddy list, ability to search all forums, invisible mode for user privacy, email notification for new posts and user images. In summer 2002, Bluelight was approached by a team of researchers from Texas A&M University to assist them on a NIDA-funded study about 'Technology, Youth and the Proliferation of Drug Use'. Bluelight helped to put together a survey designed to look at what resources individuals turn to for data on the subject of psychoactive drugs and related health factors.

MAPS (maps.org)

Since October 2002, MAPS has: 1) tried valiantly but unsuccessfully to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for its FDA-approved MDMA/PTSD protocol and is considering starting its own IRB, 2) completed research demonstrating benefits of marijuana vaporizers, 3) collaborated with Dr. Abrams, UCSF, on a grant request and FDA application for the first vaporizer study in human subjects, and 4) increased the pressure on DEA to license a MAPS-funded medical marijuana production facility at Umass, Amherst.

DanceSafe (dancesafe.org)

DanceSafe is launching a nationwide Club Safety Awareness campaign, designed to increase awareness and cooperation among club owners, promoters, and those who attend parties. Twenty-nine local groups promoting harm reduction at raves and nightclubs are now counted among DanceSafe chapters. DanceSafe won its complaint to ICANN in its dispute over rights to the dancesafe.com domain name. In new literature, they are finishing up a hyponatremia flyer, and a tri-fold on contraindications with pharmaceutical depressants.

SSDP (ssdp.org)

SSDP continues its work of involving "the DARE Generation" in the political process and promoting sensible and compassionate drug policies. The largest ever SSDP National Conference was held in November 2002 in conjunction with the Marijuana Policy Project. Three hundred of the 500 attendees were students. SSDP chapters have been more active this year than ever before, holding regional and state-wide meetings, activist trainings and press conferences around drug policy issues, particularly lobbying and organizing for the repeal of the Drug Free provision of the Higher Education Act. They are also focusing on replacing campus zero tolerance policies with harm reduction and drug education approaches, and on opposing drug testing, both on campus and on the job.

DrugSense / MAP (drugsense.org)

In the last twelve months DrugSense/MAP reached two significant milestones: over 100,000 drug policy reform articles archived in the Media Awareness Project (www.mapinc.org), and 10,000 published letters to the editor as a result of DrugSense media Focus Alerts. Additionally, DrugSense's Drug Policy Central now hosts over 80 social justice websites.

CCLC (alchemind.org)

CCLC continues to monitor and oppose federal legislative efforts to place *Salvia divinorum* in Schedule I. They filed an amicus brief in a U.S. Supreme Court case involving the government's attempt to forcibly drug a non-violent pretrial detainee with anti-psychotic drugs solely for the purpose of bringing him to trial. They argued that the first amendment guarantees freedom of thought and therefore bars the government from forcibly manipulating a citizen's brain chemistry.

Psychoactives in History

A Sample of Some of
the Earliest Evidence
of the Use of Psychoactives


by Fire Erowid

One of the main challenges when collecting entries for a timeline is sorting through the various levels of documentation available for different facts. It is quite possible to find hundreds of published articles and web documents that give a consistent date for a historical event and yet have none provide a reference to an original or verifiable source for the information.


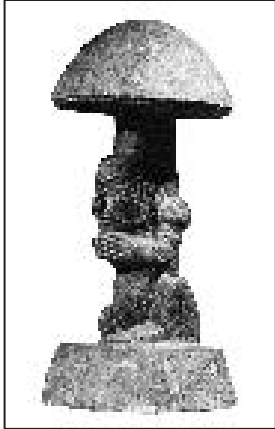
If we ask the simple question “When was *Cannabis* first used?”, we can choose from several different dates. The answer is based on whether we accept speculation, or want archeological evidence such as an ancient pipe, or require that the ancient pipe contain burned *Cannabis* residue. Or maybe what we want is the date *Cannabis* was first mentioned in a print publication.


This timeline is an attempt to collect a list of some of the earliest documented evidence of the use of psychoactive plants and chemicals by humans, as well as to characterize the type of evidence available for


each given event. One of the key differentiations is between indirect and direct evidence. “Indirect Archaeological Evidence” is defined as archaeological evidence that does not prove that humans used the substance in question (e.g. a clay pipe). “Direct Archaeological Evidence” is defined as evidence which requires human use to exist (e.g. burned cannabis resin inside a pipe). “First-hand Reporting” is a description by a person who saw an event happen. “Second-hand Reporting” is one person’s recording of another person’s first-hand experience. “Third-hand Reporting of a Contemporary fact” involves someone reporting on an event they did not witness *nor* had they communicated with anyone who was present. “Third-hand Reporting of a Non-contemporary fact” describes someone relating a story of an event from a different time period (e.g. your father telling stories about what his great-grandfather is said to have done). The weakest of the evidence types is that of “Legend”, which involves events for which no real evidence exists.


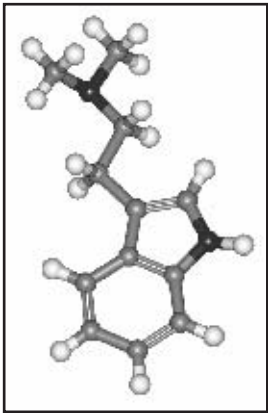
DATE		DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT
9000-6000 BCE	IAE	Betel nut (<i>Areca catechu</i>) dating to this period has been found at spirit cave in north Thailand. Because it was found with <i>Piper betel</i> leaves, with which it is traditionally used, this is thought to indicate early betel nut chewing. ¹	
6000-4000 BCE	IAE DAE	Viticulture, the selective cultivation of grapes for wine , begins in what is present day Armenia. ² The oldest archaeological evidence of wine is residue found inside of jars from Hajji Firuz Tepe in northern Iran. ³	
c. 4200 BCE	DAE	At a site, known as ‘Cueva de los Murciélagos’ (Bat Cave) near Albuñol in southern Spain, human remains were buried with grass bags containing, among other items, many poppy seed pods . Subsequent carbon dating established the date of the burials at around 4200 BC. ⁴	
4000-3500 BCE	IAE	Imprints of hemp textiles and cordage mark several fragments of pottery found in the ruins of Xi’an Banpo village in central China. ⁵	
3500-3100 BCE	DAE	The earliest evidence of brewing is beer residue found inside a pottery vessel at the site of Godin Tepe in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran. ⁶	
3000-2100 BCE	IAE	Vessel containing powdered lime (believed to have been used in conjunction with coca chewing) suggests the use of coca in Ecuador. ^{2,7}	3000-2000 BCE - Egyptians develop hieroglyphic writing.

IAE	Indirect Archaeological Evidence	EDP	Earliest Direct Publication	TRC	Third-hand Report of Contemporary fact
DAE	Direct Archaeological Evidence	FR	First-hand Report	TRN	Third-hand Report of Non-contemporary fact
EIP	Earliest Indirect Publication	SR	Second-hand Report	L	Legend

c. 2737 BCE	L	Emperor Shen Nung of China is attributed with discovering the medicinal uses of thousands of plants. No written record exists from this period.	2600 BCE - Construction begins on the great pyramids in Egypt.
c. 2100 BCE	EIP		Sumerian tablets discussing “the joy plant” are believed by many to be the first written reference to the opium poppy . ⁴
1800 BCE	EDP		The oldest known recipe, a recipe for beer , appears on a cuneiform tablet in an epic poem to Ninkasi, the Sumerian goddess of beer. ⁸
1550 BCE	EIP		One of the oldest known complete books, the <i>Ebers Papyrus</i> from Egypt, describes the medical use of hundreds of plants including a recommendation for what is believed by some to be the opium poppy to induce sleep. It also mentions aloe and henbane . ^{4,9}
1400 - 1100 BCE	IAE		Poppy goddess idol from the Mycenaean culture near Gazi on Crete bears three poppy capsules on her head. ⁴
c. 1300 BCE	IAE	Carvings from the Chavín culture in northern Peru depict mythological beings holding the visionary San Pedro cactus . ¹⁰	1340 BCE - Tutankhamun is buried in Egypt.
1200 - 800 BCE	TRN	Soma is described as a psychoactive ambrosia in the orally transmitted Rg Veda hymns. Modern scholars variously identify Soma as entirely mythical, <i>A. muscaria</i> , <i>Cannabis</i> , alcohol, water lily or lotus, <i>P. harmala</i> , and others. ^{11,12,13}	c. 1200 BCE - Written language has been developed in China.
1200 - 800 BCE	TRN	Bhang (dried <i>Cannabis</i> leaves, seeds and stems) is mentioned in the verses of the Hindu Atharva Veda as “Sacred Grass”, one of the five sacred plants of India. It is described as both a medicinal and ritual offering to Shiva.	
c. 1000 BCE	IAE	Mushroom stones crafted in Guatemala are believed by many to represent psychoactive mushrooms . ¹⁴	
c. 1000 BCE	IAE	Tubular pipes from the Marajó Islands of Brazil are believed to be some of the earliest evidence of tobacco use. ¹⁵	
600-250 BCE	DAE	Ceramic teapot with <i>Cacao</i> residue shows that the Maya of Belize drank a chocolate -containing beverage. ¹⁶	
400-200 BCE	IAE	A ceramic snuff pipe from this period—in the shape of a deer holding a peyote button between its teeth—is found at Monte Albán in Oaxaca, Mexico. ¹⁴	
500-300 BCE	DAE	A tobacco -containing pouch from this era was found at Niño Korin, Bolivia. ⁷	
430 BCE	EDP DAE	Herodotus reports on both ritual and recreational use by the Scythians of a plant believed to be <i>Cannabis</i> . ¹⁷ <i>Cannabis</i> remains have also been found in Scythian tombs from this period. ¹⁸	c. 350 BCE - First Greek herbal is written by Diocles of Caryotos. Only fragments remain. ¹⁰
301 BCE	EDP	Theophrastus, a student of Aristotle, writes about the hallucinogenic effects of <i>Datura stramonium</i> . The text contains one of the earliest references to the concept of tolerance to a drug. ¹⁹	c. 270 BCE - Construction begins on the Great Wall of China.
25-221	EDP	Earliest writing on the effects of hundreds of herbal medicines, including the stimulant effects of <i>Ephedra</i> , appear in the <i>Pen Ts'ao</i> attributed to the legendary Shen Nung. ^{20,22}	c. 100 BCE - First illustrated herbal, by Greek herbalist Krateuas.

65	EDP	<i>De Materia Medica</i> published by Dioscorides, and now considered the foundation of herbal literature, contains references to <i>Ergot</i> , <i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> (henbane), foxtglove , aloe and others. ²¹	105 - Paper as we know it was first made in China by Ts'ai Lun.
347	EDP	The earliest known reference to tea is the <i>Erh Ya</i> , an ancient Chinese dictionary annotated by Kuo P'o, which defines tea as "a beverage from leaves made by boiling" and describes different tastes based on when the leaves are picked. ²²	150 - Ptolemy publishes <i>Geographia</i> , which introduces latitude and longitude.
386-534	EDP	The earliest Chinese agricultural text, the <i>Xia Xiao Zheng</i> , mentions hemp as one of the country's main crops. ²³	354-430 - St. Augustine writes formative Christian theology.
500	DAE	In a tomb from the Tiahuanacoid culture of Bolivia were found flattened and bundled leaves from the Guayusa plant—the caffeine containing plant used as the source of Yerba Maté . Along with the leaves were mortar and pestle for grinding the leaves to powder, storage containers, snuff trays and tubes used for snorting the powder. ²⁴	375-500 - Roman Empire collapses and Rome is sacked by waves of northern European armies.
c. 850	L	Ethiopian legend describes the discovery of coffee beans by a goat herder named Kaldi. One night he finds his goats dancing around a shrub with red berries. After trying the berries himself, he too starts dancing. ²²	742-814 - King Charlemagne conquers and rules western Europe.
c. 1000-1100	TRC	Arabian doctor Ibn Sina (Avicenna) reported on <i>Datura metel</i> under the name 'Jouzmatal' (metel nut) in his book <i>As-Qanum</i> . ¹⁴	
1161-1189	DAE	Earliest known distillation apparatus, made of copper and dated to this period, was found in China. There is speculation and some evidence that the Chinese knew the art of distillation much earlier. ²⁵	c. 1150 - <i>The Physica</i> , by Hildegard of Bingen, is the first herbal written by a woman.
c. 1200-1400	IAE	Vienna Codex depicts the ritual use of mushrooms by the Mixtec gods, showing Piltzintecuhtli and seven other gods holding mushrooms in their hands. ²⁶	1250 - <i>On Plants</i> is written by Albertus Magnus.
1271 - 1295	SR	<i>Journeys of Marco Polo</i> is published, detailing second-hand reports of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah and his "assassins" using hashish . This is the first time <i>Cannabis</i> has been brought to the attention of Europe. ²⁷	1220-1250 - Ghengis Khan creates an empire from Hungary to China.
c. 1350	TRN	The oldest monograph on hashish , <i>Zahr al-'arish fi tahrir al-hashish</i> , by Az-Zarkashi, is written. It has since been lost.	1450 - The printing press is invented.
1492	FR	Two of Columbus' crew, de Jerez and de Torres, are the first Europeans to witness tobacco smoking by Native Americans. ¹⁵ De Jerez becomes the first European tobacco smoker and brings the habit back to Europe. It is said that de Jerez was accused of demonic possession and imprisoned by the Inquisition after frightening a neighbor by blowing smoke from his nose and mouth. He is released years later after smoking becomes widespread in Spain. ²⁸	1483 - Apuleius' herbal, first published in 350 AD, becomes the first herbal printed on the printing press.
1496	EDP	Friar Ramon Pane, travelling with Columbus, documents the use of a psychoactive snuff called cohoba among the Taino who inhabit the island of Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic). It is now agreed that cohoba was almost certainly made from <i>Anadenanthera peregrina</i> , which contains N,N-DMT , 5-MeO-DMT , and Bufotenin . ²⁹	
1499	EDP	First accounts of Coca use are recorded by Dominican missionary Thomas Ortiz in Venezuela in 1499. ³⁰	
1519	EDP	An influential book on the distillation process, <i>Das Buch zu Distillieren</i> , is published in Germany by Hieronymus von Braunschweig. Distillation allowed for the concentration of herbal ingredients into medicines as well as the development of drinkable spirits such as brandy. ³¹	

1522	EDP	Betel nut chewing recorded by Pigaphetta after visiting Indonesia. ³²	
1535	EDP	First printed reference to tobacco smoking appears in Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés's <i>Historia General y Natural de las Indias</i> .	
1560	EDP	Spanish priest Bernardino de Sahagún writes in the <i>Florentine Codex</i> about the use of peyote and hallucinogenic mushrooms by the Aztecs, estimating that peyote has been in use since at least 300 BCE. ^{33,45} He later documented the ritual use of ololiuqui (morning glory) as well. ³⁴	
1576	EDP	Nutmeg's inebriant effects are first recorded in a story about a pregnant woman who ate 10-12 nutmegs—in an effort to induce abortion—and became “deleriously inebriated”. ³⁵	
1658	EDP	Polish prisoner of war writes about the use of <i>Amanita muscaria</i> in a culture from Western Siberia (Ob-Ugrian Ostyak of the Irtysh region): “They eat certain fungi in the shape of fly-agarics, and thus they become drunk worse than on vodka, and for them that’s the very best banquet.” ³⁶	1590-1609 - first compound microscope invented in the Netherlands.
1792	EDP	Dr. Pierre Ordinaire writes a recipe for absinthe , and becomes one of the first to promote the virtues of the wormwood drink. ³⁷	1796 - First inoculations/vaccinations.
1800	EDP	Humphrey Davy publishes the book, <i>Researches, Chemical and Philosophical: Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide</i> , in which he describes inhaling nitrous oxide and obtaining a degree of analgesia from a painful condition he was suffering. Davy is responsible for coining the term “laughing gas”. ³⁸	1800-1815 - Napoleon wages war across Europe.
1805	EDP	F.W. Sertürner, a German pharmacist, is credited with isolating the active ingredient of opium, which he later names morphine . ³⁹	1812 - Grimm Brothers collect German folklore.
1819	TRN	Caffeine is first isolated by German chemist Friedlieb Runge. ²²	1815 - Stethoscope is invented.
1831	EDP	Atropine is first isolated from <i>Atropa belladonna</i> by Mein. ⁴⁰	1844 - First intercity telegraph message is transmitted; “What hath God wrought!”
1851	EP	First Western record of the psychoactive effects of Ayahuasca (<i>Banisteriopsis caapi</i> or yage) in Peru and the Brazilian Amazon. ⁴¹	1853 - Hypodermic syringe with a needle fine enough to pierce the skin is invented.
1850s	TRN	Cocaine is first isolated from <i>Erythroxylon coca</i> . Scholars dispute whether Niemann or Gaedeke was first to do this. ⁴²	1859 - Darwin & Wallace announce theory of evolution.
1864	TRN	First report of the use of Tabernanthe iboga root as a stimulant and aphrodisiac in Gabon and the Congo, made by Griffon du Bellay, who took specimens to Europe. ⁴³	1868-1873 - First typewriter is designed and produced.
1869	EDP	Sleep-inducing effects of chloral hydrate are discovered by Liebreich. ⁴⁴	1869 - Suez Canal opens.
1874	EDP	Heroin is first derived from morphine by C.R. Alder Wright at St. Mary's Hospital in London. ³⁹	1869 - American transcontinental railway is completed.
1887	EDP	Ephedrine is first isolated from <i>Ephedra sinica</i> by Japanese chemist, NM Nagai. ¹⁰	1887 - First mimeograph is produced.
1889	EDP	The genus Tabernanthe is established and the botanical description of <i>T. iboga</i> is made by Henri Baillon at the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. ⁴³	1889 - Eiffel Tower built for centennial of French Revolution.

1896	EDP	Mescaline is first isolated from <i>Lophophora williamsii</i> (peyote) by Arthur Heffter. Heffter used self-experimentation to determine which of the chemicals isolated from peyote were psychoactive. ⁴⁵	
1897	EDP	Heroin is synthesized by Felix Hoffman at Bayer Pharmaceutical. Bayer immediately recognizes its potential and begins marketing it heavily for the treatment of a variety of respiratory ailments. Within a few years, doctors and pharmacists begin noticing that patients are consuming large amounts of heroin-containing cough remedies. ⁴⁶	
1903	EDP	Barbiturates are first introduced into medicine by Fischer and von Mering. ⁴⁷	
1918	EDP	Ergotamine is first isolated from <i>Claviceps purpurea</i> by Stoll. ⁴⁸	
1931	EDP	N,N-DMT is first synthesized by British chemist Manske and named “nigerine”. ⁴⁹ Notably, this synthesis predated its discovery in the plant kingdom.	1920 - Prohibition Amendment takes effect in the United States.
1935	EDP	Amphetamine 's stimulant effect is first recognized. ⁵⁰	1927 - First television broadcast across phone lines.
1943	FR	Albert Hofmann discovers the psychoactive effects of LSD . ⁴⁸	
1947	EDP	First article on LSD 's mental effects published by Werner Stoll in the Swiss Archives of Neurology. ⁵¹	1943 - Los Alamos National Lab opens.
1955	FR	N,N-DMT is identified as one of the psychoactive ingredients of the <i>Anadenanthera peregrina</i> seeds used to make cohoba snuff. This is the first time that N,N-DMT is discovered naturally occurring in a plant or animal. ⁵²	1953 - Crick & Watson describe double-helix structure of DNA.
1957	EDP	R. Gordon Wasson publishes an article about psychoactive (psilocybin-containing) mushrooms in <i>Life</i> magazine, the first popular media coverage of their existence. ⁵³	
1957	EDP	Gordon Alles describes the MDA experience at a conference in Princeton, New Jersey, sponsored by the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation. ⁵⁴	
1957	EDP	PCP is tested for the first time on 64 human subjects. Worrying side effects such as hallucinations, mania, delirium and disorientation manifest. ⁵⁵	
1962	EDP	Wasson first publishes about the psychoactive properties of <i>Salvia divinorum</i> . ⁵⁶	
1963	EDP	The first published report of 4-methylaminorex appears in <i>The Journal of Medicinal Chemistry</i> . ⁵⁷	
1965	FR	First accounts of the recreational use of Ketamine . Professor Edward Domino describes it as a potent psychedelic drug and coins the term “dissociative anesthetic”. ⁵⁸	1968 - Computer mouse first demonstrated by Doug Englebart.
1970	FR	First reported recreational use of MDMA . Six years pass before a scholarly article is published about MDMA's effects. ⁵⁹	1969 - First human walks on the moon.
1975	EDP	First published mention of 2C-B appears in an article about phenethylamines by Alexander Shulgin and Michael Carter. ⁶⁰	1969 - First ARPANET (internet precursor) trial successful.
1991	EDP	Alexander and Ann Shulgin publish <i>PiHKAL</i> , documenting over 250 phenethylamines, including 2C-T-7 and 2C-T-2 . ⁶¹	1989-1992 - WWW invented, implemented, and launched.

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- Pg 12 top: Grapes. Calwer CG. *Fruits & Berries*, 1854.
- Pg 13 top: Poppy Goddess. *Consuming Habits*. Eds. Goodman J, Lovejoy PE, Sherratt A. Routledge, 1995.
- Pg 13 center: Mushroom Stone. Wasson RG. *Wondrous Mushroom*. McGraw Hill, 1980.
- Pg 14 bottom: Distillation Woodcut. von Braunschweig H. *The vertuose boke of the distyllacyon of the waters of all maner of herbes*. 1527.
- Pg 15 top: Peyote. *Botanical Magazine*. 1847. Reprinted in Stewart OC. *Peyote Religion*. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1987.
- Pg 16 top: Vin Mariani. Babor, T. *The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Drugs: Alcohol*. Chelsea House, 1986.
- Pg 16 center: N,N-DMT Molecule. Erowid.org.
- Pg 17 center: Papaver somniferum. *Köhler's Medicinal Plants*. 1887. Missouri Botanical Garden Library.

Boundaries in Question

The *Vesica Pisces*, formed by the intersection of two circles or spheres, represents the common ground between two objects or concepts.

Examining “Visionary Art”

by Sylvia Thyssen

To better understand the Erowid Visionary Art Vault [www.erowid.org/art], we asked its curator, Christopher Barnaby, about his understanding of the bounds of visionary art. His response led us to dig deeper, and the ensuing discussions yielded an unanticipated pretzel of definitions.

From just a few moments of searching on Google, it is evident that the term Visionary Art is used for a wide variety of genres, and there are largely two definitions of the term. The first is represented in the Mission Statement of the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, MD:

“Visionary Art [...] refers to art produced by self-taught individuals, usually without formal training, whose works arise from an

innate personal vision that reveals foremost in the creative act itself.”¹

In this context, the definition of Visionary Art is similar to Outsider Art, but without the specificity of that term. Sometimes it also includes tribal art and folk art traditions.²

A second definition, perhaps more familiar to some visitors of the Erowid Vaults, is described in the *First Draft of a Manifesto of Visionary Art*, by Laurence Caruana, an artist who studied with Ernst Fuchs:

“[T]he Visionary Artist uses all means at his disposal—even at great risk to himself—to access different states of consciousness and expose the resulting vision. Art of the Visionary attempts to show what lies beyond the boundary of our sight. Through dream, trance, or other altered states, the artist attempts to see the unseen—attaining a visionary state that transcends our regular modes of perception.”³

“One makes oneself a visionary by a long, immense, and reasoned disordering of the senses.”

— Rimbaud

The first definition focuses on the work of artists outside of the traditional fine art system. The second definition emphasizes the exploration and depiction of other realities that are accessed in non-ordinary states of consciousness. The Art Vault may represent the *vesica pisces* of these two directions of Visionary Art—a place where these definitions overlap and inform each other. It includes the work of unschooled as well as formally trained artists, and largely features imagery that has been inspired by deliberately modified awareness.

Visionary Snapshots

By Erik Davis

The term Visionary Art could be said to define artworks that are directly inspired by non-ordinary states of visual consciousness, or that depict a world of such expanded or intensified imagination that the only comparison that can be made is to such states of consciousness. The earliest Visionary Art may have been imprinted onto the rock surface of cave walls. In the 15th century, Hieronymus Bosch painted fabulous and terrifying otherworlds; his *Garden of Earthly Delights* is unquestionably Visionary Art. The 19th-century poet William Blake, who regularly experienced spontaneous and powerful mystical visions, also created Visionary Art. What produces the state of consciousness that precedes the creation of Visionary Art is less important than the freshness and air of authenticity that can allow visionary works to transcend the fantastic or merely weird.

Within this definition, Visionary Art would include a few big name artists, but it would also include some Outsider Art, some fantasy illustration and comic book stuff, as well as the so-called “psychedelic” art. One source for such art, Erowid’s Visionary Art Vault seems to focus specifically on the last category. We don’t know for certain, but we can assume that many if not most contributing artists have been inspired by personal experiences brought on by the use of psychoactive drugs. In that sense, these works are the visual equivalent of “trip” experience reports. They are valuable not only for their aesthetic power (which varies considerably), but also as an anthropological record of subjective experience. Like trip reports, they represent both information and creative revision—as well as the occasional tendency to drift into clichéd and derivative forms.



Mystic Man,
by Chris Dyer



**The Oracle of the Pearl,
by Andrew Gonzalez**

The grand tradition of Visionary Art—and Erowid’s more humble visual record of psychoactive experiences—are both of crucial importance, because our own visionary experience is “seeded” by our exposure to powerful imagery. This visual feedback loop can be good or bad—it can help amplify and clarify the resonance of psychedelic trips or afternoon reveries, or it can thrust you into the cheesiest romper rooms of the “cartoon continuum”. In either case, it’s best to keep your eyes open.

On Psychedelic Art

By Jon Hanna

The term Visionary Art can refer to a large number of sub-genres: the works of the mentally ill, Outsider Art, Folk Art, Fantastic Realism, new age, sacred geometry, and many others, including psychedelic art. Similarly, psychedelic art itself can be broken into various categories. It is no longer reasonable to pigeonhole this art into a particular style that first emerged in the late 1960s, evident in the work of artists such as Peter Max, Rick Griffin, and Stanley Mouse. Contemporary psychedelic art sometimes pays homage to these roots, by using barely legible text, bright colors, and complex patterns. But these aspects can also be seen as inspired by the psychedelic experience itself, rather than merely being derivative of work from previous decades.

Innovations evolved from the increasing availability of a wider variety of art mediums,

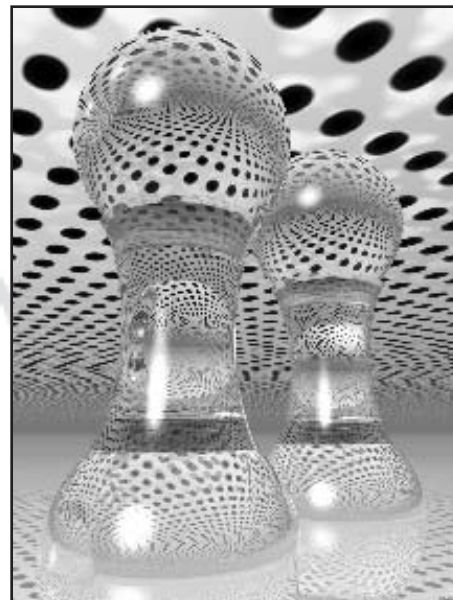
popular culture surrounding developing music styles, and even newer psychedelic compounds themselves, have made their marks on contemporary psychedelic art. Such influences keep the visions fresh, moving them in different directions. Today’s psychedelic artists can even use computers to create their art while on drugs, due to the rapid results possible with this technology. Relegating psychedelic art to a style of graphic design born of a specific era is not a valid approach. It is constantly evolving, reinventing itself, and expanding.

Accessing Hidden Realms

By C.J. Barnaby

Visionary Artworks intimately relate to altered states of consciousness brought about by mind-expanding materials or spiritually-enhancing life experiences. This seems inevitable considering that the visionary trance state draws its energies from the deepest recesses of the subconscious mind. In Hawaiian Huna practice the subconscious is believed to be the direct link to the higher self, which is linked again to infinite consciousness.

Visionary or psychedelic experiences touch on our personal relationship with the transcendent “other”. Visionary Art bridges a perceived—yet illusionary—gap between ourselves and this “other”. Its purpose is to heal this perception and to allow others access to this point of attention. Visionary Art inspires a mind toward the dissolution of boundaries and an expansion toward



**Dayce, © 2003 Rene Ertzinger
www.ArtByMath.com**

Outsider Art

“Outsider art consists of works produced by people who for various reasons have not been culturally indoctrinated or socially conditioned. They are all kinds of dwellers on the fringes of society. Working outside the fine art “system” (schools, galleries, museums and so on), these people have produced, from the depths of their own personalities and for themselves and no one else, works of outstanding originality in concept, subject and techniques. They are works which owe nothing to tradition or fashion.”

— Michel Thevoz,
Curator of the Collection
de l’Art Brut in Lausanne

the infinite self, in the same way that a psychedelic or visionary substance itself can allow for penetration into occult/hidden realms.

Artworks that can facilitate a dialogue between ourselves and these spaces or have been inspired by a dialogue or personal experience of these spaces are most often visionary. They open doors of the subconscious mind, allowing others a taste of the infinite by dissolving boundaries between various states of being.

I personally believe that Visionary Art is a purest source projection of self into a creative endeavor. This is part intellectual and part trance. I feel that the Visionary Artworks that I have done were channeled through me. I become the vessel for the creation of the work. I am most happy when I feel this pulse of creation beating through me. Many times I enter trance states and will work for hours without food or water in frenzied excitement, as if possessed by the act of creation. This is an undeniable altered state of consciousness, a state of alignment with source. ●

1. “What is Visionary Art?” *American Visionary Art Museum*. <http://www.avam.org/stuff/whatsvis.html>
2. “What is Outsider Art?” *Raw Vision*. <http://www.rawvision.com/outsiderart/whatisoa.html>
3. Caruana, L. “First Draft of a Manifesto of Visionary Art.” 2001. *Visionary Revue*. <http://visionaryreuve.com/webtext/manifesto1.html>

imminent death and enlightenment

AN EXPERIENCE WITH
PSILOCYBE CUBENSIS

BY WAY

Time: Friday, 18:00

Substance: 8 grams dried, powdered *Psilocybe cubensis* mushrooms mixed in 500mL of juice.

Set: I fasted for two days prior to the experience. This was going to be the biggest dose I'd ever taken, but I was extremely excited about it. To be honest, I did have a slight tinge of anxiety about entering this uncharted territory, but mostly I was excited.

I must note here some sub-conscious programming that I wasn't fully aware of which profoundly influenced my trip. Please take this as an example of the fact that you may not realize all the programming you have that may surface once you are in the highly suggestible beshroomed state. First of all, I am not a worrying person in general, although it is my nature to be somewhat paranoid, which I feel helps me be prepared. However, before this experience I let it be known that it would be a big trip. This, along with the fact that we would also be camping in the cold,

“The more time passed, the more convinced I became that we were dying as we sat there doing nothing, waiting for the mushrooms to wear off.”

led many friends and family to express their concern. I certainly felt the influence of this later. Also, the day before I tripped my friend sent me an Eminem song called 'My Fault', in which, after eating an enormous dose of mushrooms, having never tripped before, a girl proceeds to drink a bottle of Lysol and dies. There was also some programming from even further back: I grew up in New England where I gained a healthy respect for the cold and the dangers of hypothermia.

Setting: A campsite in the low-lying mountains. We hiked 2.8 miles in to the spot. Some high school kids were camped a few sites away but no one else was around

for at least two miles. I was tripping with Rob, who is taking only 4 grams.

While we were preparing to take the mushrooms, a park ranger came along to do his sundown rounds. We had our sacrament in bags on the table, so I got up and walked over to meet the ranger, allowing Rob to grab the bags from the table and place them in his pocket. Although we talked only briefly with the ranger before he went on his way, it made me very nervous. Even when I'm not engaging in any "criminal" activity, law enforcement officers make me nervous due to their inherently oppressive nature.

[T+0:00] We built the structure for our fire before taking the mushrooms, but didn't try lighting it until after we had ingested them. This was a big mistake that we won't make again. We couldn't get the fire started because the wood was damp and wouldn't stay lit. Rob and I worked on the fire together for about 10 minutes after which he was too non-functional to continue. He went to lie down in his sleeping bag in the tent while I continued attempting to build a fire for another 20 minutes. All the while, I was slowly becoming more and more non-functional until I reached the point where I realized I would not be able to get the fire started and had to give up.

[T+0:30] As night was coming on concurrently with our inebriation, it was also getting colder (about 50 during the day, down to the 30s that night). I got my sleeping bag and pillow from the tent and proceeded to lie down on the bench of the picnic table at our campsite.

Rob reported that he was having CEV's and later related that he was also experiencing 'phantom' music. I was having some OEV's in the trees and the sky, but it was difficult to see much with so little light. And although I was having visuals I didn't have the 'mushroom feeling'.

[T+1:00] I started wondering if this batch was impotent, although I couldn't think of any reason they would be. Rob began to complain about the cold, though at that time I felt fairly warm curled up in my sleeping bag. This

is where my pre-programming, combined with my, by this time, highly suggestible state, came into play, turning the trip into what some would term a 'Bad Trip'. Still, I am personally grateful I had this experience and I learned much about myself during the following stage of my trip.

At this point I went into the tent to see if I could make Rob any warmer but when I got there I started feeling colder so I went back out to the picnic table. All this time I was still coming up and becoming progressively more confused and non-functional.

[T+2:00] The bad programming started affecting me during this period. As I was lying on the bench listening to some music, looking up at the sky, I started feeling extremely drowsy. Now, this is an effect mushrooms have had on me many times before, but by this time my normal brain functioning was almost completely impaired. I also noticed how cold I felt and how delirious my thought processes were becoming. Fear started to overtake me. I had lost faith—in the mushrooms and in my ability to keep myself safe. I was afraid I had not properly prepared, that I had made a mistake and that the temperature was too low and we were suffering from hypothermia (although in my earlier sober state I recognized my ability to easily survive the temperatures we experienced that night). The cold can be insidious; it creeps into you and makes you numb, clouds your thoughts. In fact, many of the symptoms of mushroom inebriation and hypothermia are similar—clouded thoughts, loss of functionality, drowsiness.

In my inebriated state I convinced myself that not only were we inebriated, but we were also suffering from hypothermia. However, I was too non-functional to really do anything. I started talking to Rob, trying to make sure we didn't fall asleep, because I was frightened that we wouldn't wake up. This was difficult because I was so sleepy. We agreed to wait until the mushrooms wore off and then collect ourselves, but I was afraid we would die of hypothermia before the effects wore off. The more time passed, the more convinced I became that we were dying as we sat there

doing nothing, waiting for the mushrooms to wear off. Rob was trying to calm me down, but I was convinced. I absolutely believed it was imperative we make it to civilization, or get outside assistance, or we would die.

My thought processes continued to degrade, which served to increase my now mortal fear. I tried, to no avail, to find the flashlight so I could walk out of the campsite and seek some help. I felt extremely helpless, as if I had made a mistake that would cost me and Rob our lives. I believed I had inadvertently committed suicide. Some time around here I made myself vomit, hoping it might speed up my recovery time.

[T+2:30] I heard someone call out, and I responded back asking for help. I shouted for my life that we were suffering from hypothermia, our camp site number and to come immediately to save our lives. It turned out to be the high school kids we had seen earlier. They must have heard us being non-functional, and were kind enough to come over, for which I continue to be grateful. They also happened to have a video camera with them (I can't wait to get a copy of the tape). We asked for their help. They quickly ascertained that we were inebriated and assumed we had been drinking alcohol. They asked what we had been drinking, to which we didn't respond, and then asked if we couldn't remember, which I responded to affirmatively (even though I did remember). They said they had a fire, and I asked them to take us to it, which, understandably, they did not want to do. I however saw no physical proof of their claim.

They started talking about building us a fire, but did not. They just kept talking about it with no action. I believed we were all suffering from hypothermia, so that even though they had not taken any inebriants they were likewise not in their 'right minds'. They made a couple of feeble gestures towards building a fire, without success. Now I was afraid all four of us were going to die. This was the only time in my life I have honestly believed my death was imminent. They kept talking about a fire, but still there was none. I tried to explain that *saying* you can start a fire is not the same as having one. I thought they were all delirious like me, but just didn't realize it. The high school kids (rightly) told me that if I kept saying we were going to die then they would leave and not help us. So I limited my comments about dying to myself from that point.

No one else seemed to believe that our existence was going to end and this was very

frustrating for me. I was preparing to meet God without being ready and they were all just standing around, doing nothing, speaking of inconsequential things. I knew I was too inebriated to get to civilization and the high schoolers had a video camera, so I started saying my goodbyes, so I could at least leave a message to those I was leaving behind.

Waiting to die was excruciating, enough so that I briefly thought about suicide as a way to speed up the process. I understood for the first time how afraid I am of death, even if that fear stems from a belief that I'm not yet prepared to take that journey. Thankfully, while I was off by myself, Rob talked to the students, told them to ignore me, and implored their help in starting a fire. He told them that we were inebriated on mushrooms and that we would be grateful for their assistance. They finally started a fire, for which I owe them a debt of gratitude.



Mushroom by anastacio rivera
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The fire very much helped to ground me and allay my fears. Rob told them our inebriation would subside in several hours and they returned to their campsite. Being by the fire, I slowly started to believe I would continue this existence.

[T+??] After some time in front of the fire I slipped into a transcendental state. I became fully immersed in the mushroom reality. I have had several strong mushroom tryps before, but this was my first experience of a nearly full loss of reality. The 'mushroom feeling' was now in full effect, stronger than

ever. I experienced all the gratefulness, humility, love, connectedness, awareness of grace and awe of previous tryps, but magnitudes greater. I lost all sense of time because I was too busy with the immediate experience of living. I was caught up in the mystical, ecstatic experience the mushrooms were generous enough to provide. They truly are my greatest teacher, an invaluable gift from God. I came to a better appreciation and understanding of Buddhism. I perceived the real power, elegance and truth of the yin-yang symbol and how its dichotomous yet joined nature pervades everything. I understood that all life is suffering and why the Buddhist masters laugh despite this. I could perceive the pervasive hidden patterns running throughout existence.

I learned once again that the purpose of existence is simply to exist. Existence has always been there and will always be there. I could truly understand the awesome power of cooperation and love. And I was aware of how powerless I am, and how dependant I am upon God's grace.

Rob and I talked across the campfire, sharing this amazing state—we had the most wonderful, honest, insightful conversations. We explored the nature of reality and of each other.

[T+4:30] As we talked the mushrooms began to fade and we slowly returned to the other, everyday, reality. Around this time the high school students returned, with video camera in tow. We were thankful for the opportunity to document in some small way our experiences and to try to explain to them the other, mushroom, reality, despite its inherent ineffability. They must have thought we were extremely strange, but they were curious and helpful. They asked questions about the mushroom reality which we did our best to answer. Finally, they helped us find our flashlight and left for the night. We cleaned up our campsite, ate a little, smoked some cannabis and went to bed.

Summary: This experience was the most powerful and profound in my life. The mushroom can be an incredible helper and teacher, although they may teach things that are hard to learn or that you don't want to learn. This tryp was both my "worst" and "best" ever. I certainly transcended everyday reality and had powerfully terrifying and enlightening moments. I hope I can learn from and integrate these experiences into my everyday existence to grow to be a better person. Peace and love to all of creation. ●

Clarifying Erowid's Vision

Part of our ongoing work with Erowid includes working to raise the necessary contributions and donations to support the continued maintenance and growth of the site. As part of this year's fundraising efforts we put together a 16 page packet which helps describe the Erowid Project and our funding needs. A major part of the difficulty in producing this packet was trying to coherently describe in writing the ideas and visions which motivate us to work in this complex and difficult field. The following are excerpts from the current drafts of our mission and vision statements.

Vision Statement

We imagine a world where people treat psychoactives with respect and awareness; where people work together to collect and share knowledge in ways that strengthen their understanding of themselves and provide insight into the complex choices faced by individuals and societies alike. We believe that truth, accuracy, and integrity in publishing information about psychoactives will lead to healthier and more balanced choices, behaviors, and policies around all psychoactive medications, entheogens, herbs, and recreational drugs. Erowid's vision is to facilitate and create resources that are part of the evolution towards this goal.

A World Full of Psychoactives

We believe it is important for people to understand that human consciousness is a chemically-mediated process that is subtle, difficult to define, and constantly in flux. There are no simple lines between "psychoactive" and "non-psychoactive". In concrete, measurable ways, almost everything affects consciousness. The food we eat, the air we breathe, the work we do, the games we play, and the people we meet all affect our thoughts, feelings, and reactions.

In addition, people in consumer cultures are faced with choices about strong psychoactive medicines and technologies on a daily basis. Overlooking the ubiquitous presence

of caffeine and refined sugar, as well as cold, flu, cough, and allergy medications, people are faced with how to relate to alcohol, nicotine, and an ever-increasing cornucopia of psychopharmaceuticals. Novel pharmaceuticals continue to make inroads into the general population and diagnoses develop to fit the available treatments. The variety and availability of both mainstream and subculture psychoactives are increasing dramatically and it seems we are in the early stages of an even larger explosion in psychoactive technologies.

Yet, as use increases, the dominant educational models suggest that intentional mind-alteration is aberrant and immoral. People are not trained or educated to make informed, rational decisions around managing their own consciousness. Erowid works to dispel the myth that there is any such thing as a well-defined class of things called "drugs" or that there is a single, universal "sober state" shared by everyone. We believe it is key that

Mission Statement

Erowid is a member-supported organization providing access to reliable, non-judgmental information about psychoactive plants and chemicals and related issues. We work with academic, medical, and experiential experts to develop and publish new resources, as well as to improve and increase access to already existing resources. We also strive to ensure that these resources are maintained and preserved as a historical record for the future.

people learn to differentiate between different psychoactives based on rational, articulable characteristics, and to understand the uses and risks associated with these substances.

A Shared Dataset

Erowid would like nothing more than a world in which psychoactives are discussed honestly and openly at all levels of society: among friends, between curious adolescents and their parents, within the extended family, within the community, and at the level of government and social policy. The issues that drugs present to society can only be addressed once users and non-users agree on the facts and engage with each other in collaborative

problem-solving and policy making. While Erowid does not have the answers, we hope that by providing a source of high-quality, accurate, and multi-perspective information, we can help reduce the contradictory claims that block productive problem-solving.

Balance and Multiple Viewpoints

One of Erowid's founding design principals is to include documents that represent multiple viewpoints. We believe that representing conflicting opinions or facts side by side promotes awareness of the multiplicity of viewpoints and helps to highlight specific areas of conflict.

Critically Reviewed Content

Providing critical review of published information is nearly as important as providing access to the information. Our goal is to have all documents that are published on Erowid reviewed by at least two crew members. We are also working to develop systems that will allow a wider community of experts to verify the quality and accuracy of information and documents on the site, and would increase the number of people who can add to the collection without degrading the overall reliability of the library.

It's a Library

The mission of Erowid is explicitly academic and we work to avoid becoming involved in specific legislative or political issues except to comment on factual matters touched on by these issues. While we believe that our work has harm reductive effects in the long term, harm-minimization is not the primary consideration we make when choosing what and how to publish. Erowid is a library. We believe that the creation of this nonpolitical library has desirable effects and is its own political statement. ●

To see Erowid's Spring 2003 fundraising packet online, visit: http://www.erowid.org/extracts/n4/2003_fundraising_packet.pdf

THE DISTILLATION

Along with the daily maintenance and upkeep of the site, we are always working on a number of interesting projects. Here is a list of the largest of these projects.

EcstasyData.org

The EcstasyData project, administered by Erowid, is facing a drastic cutback. Because of lack of funding, we now require that samples of street ecstasy tablets sent in for analysis be accompanied by a minimum of \$20 cash. Results of analyzed pills will continue to be published on the EcstasyData website as long as analysis can be subsidized by people interested in seeing this information public. If you are interested in making a targeted donation, or if you know of a possible granting organization to which we could submit a grant application for further support of this important harm reduction project, please send a note to admin@ecstasydata.org.

ECSTASYDATA STATISTICS				
2003	Daily Visitors	1,489	Daily Page Hits	10,082
	Daily File Hits	180,068	Tablets Tested	58
	Tablets Tested		Testing Results (1999-2003)	
	2003	58	Total Tablets Tested	1125
	2002	300	MDMA Only	472 (42%)
	2001	332	MDMA + Something	143 (13%)
	2000	333	No MDMA	510 (45%)
	1999	69	Nothing	84

Families & Psychoactives

This vault is in the process of being expanded and reorganized. Topics we are addressing with the updates are archetypes of family dynamics regarding psychoactives, traditional uses of psychoactives in family settings, a structured family-related experience report submission form to encourage short summary comments by a large number of contributors, problems and benefits of family interactions around the topic of psychoactives, legal issues including age of consent around the world, and an expanded bibliography. If you have queries, suggestions or content to contribute on these topics, please send them to families@erowid.org.

Foreign Language Resources

We sporadically receive submissions from visitors to the site who have translated pages from Erowid into other languages. The Psychedelic Crisis FAQ and Mushroom Basics were recently translated into French. To provide context for these pages, we try to research and compile off-site foreign-language resources as well. This was also done when a crew member prepared a German-language experience report submission form that has resulted in a small number of reports now being submitted in German. Foreign-language links are included in a number of plant and chemical vaults, but we are hoping that over time we can continue to expand and improve this realm. Spanish and Italian resources, in particular, would be good to review and compile for the languages vaults. These efforts are obviously limited by the small number of languages familiar to the Erowid crew. Suggestions or support for foreign language resources can be sent to submissions@erowid.org.

Experience Reports

Crew members continue in their valiant effort to keep up with the unflagging stream of experience reports. An average of 25 reports are submitted each day, and the list of reports that go unreviewed continues to grow unabatedly. In this section of the site the signal-to-noise ratio is daunting. We've exceeded 11,000 reports to be considered for publication. Based on existing estimates, one half of these reports will eventually be deemed not worthy of publication and will be deleted. Most reviewers spend some time picking and choosing which reports to review from among the 11,000 waiting reports. This is because the imperative is to find publishable reports, especially those with data not represented elsewhere on the site. Precedence is also given to submissions that report on verifiable hospitalization or deaths, as these reports can help shed light on empirical facts related to toxicity and individual susceptibility to bodily harm. We continue to encourage authors to submit well-written experience reports, and are preparing a guide for authors who want to improve their chances of having their reports published.

Ask Erowid

Well-researched answers to pertinent questions are one of the best features of Erowid. The overarching mission of Ask Erowid is ultimately to generate new content, or replies to questions that haven't been adequately answered elsewhere. Over 2,600 questions posed over the last few years form the pool that crew members browse when considering what to answer. Many questions are ones that could be fairly easily answered by browsing the Vaults. Others are questions that potentially require numerous reviewers' input to come to a conclusion. A third type of question is one where answers would be pure speculation, because scant scientific data exists to answer them. Often, the questions most worth answering require many hours of research and editing. Currently, questions are sporadically answered, since Ask Erowid is but one of countless Erowid projects. However, we would love to be able to commit more time to answering questions that are overlooked by existing data sources.

SITE STATISTICS				
CURRENT	Content Pages	21,000	Daily Visitors	27,023
	Archived Images	4,200	Daily Page Hits	354,269
	Current Members	507	Daily File Hits	1,484,065
BY MONTH		Avg Daily File Hits	Avg Daily Page Hits	Avg Daily Visitors
	Apr 2003	1,484,065	354,269	27,023
	Mar 2003	1,440,256	367,933	25,642
	Feb 2003	1,419,614	362,651	26,647
	Jan 2003	1,411,527	343,709	25,097
	Dec 2002	1,144,505	284,240	21,116
	Nov 2002	1,291,837	302,529	23,300
	Oct 2002	1,303,615	314,237	23,658
BY YEAR	2002	1,206,855	283,541	23,042
	2001	798,400	207,427	17,300
	2000	462,000	126,000	12,000
	1999	135,800	37,000	4,100

VERBATIM

"If you wish to make an apple pie truly from scratch, you must first invent the universe."

— Carl Sagan (1934–1996)

"Data is what distinguishes the dilettante from the artist."

— George V. Higgins (b. 1939)
in *Guardian*, June 17, 1988

"It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data."

— Sir Arthur C. Doyle (1859–1930)
in *Scandal in Bohemia*, 1892

"It is the mark of an educated mind to rest satisfied with the degree of precision which the nature of the subject admits and not to seek exactness where only an approximation is possible."

— Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity."

— Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

"No great advance has ever been made in science, politics, or religion, without controversy."

— Lyman Beecher (1775–1863)

"Difference of opinion leads to enquiry, and enquiry to truth; and that, I am sure, is the ultimate and sincere object of us both. We both value too much the freedom of opinion sanctioned by our Constitution, not to cherish its exercise even where in opposition to ourselves."

— Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are."

— Anaïs Nin (1903–1977)

"Wine is bottled poetry."

— Robert L. Stevenson (1850–1894)

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

— Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

"Thoughts are free and are subject to no rule."

— Paracelsus (1493–1541)

"Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night."

— Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)

Ancora Imparo

[Still Learning]

— Michelangelo
(1475 - 1564)

"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers."

— Voltaire (1694–1778)

All explorers are seeking something they have lost. It is seldom that they find it, and more seldom still that the attainment brings them greater happiness than the quest."

— Arthur C. Clarke (b. 1917)

"Nobody realizes that some people expend tremendous energy merely to be normal."

— Albert Camus (1913–1960)

"Normal is in the eye of the beholder."

— Whoopi Goldberg (b. 1950)

"Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army."

— Edward Everett (1822–1909)

"Few things have done more harm than the belief on the part of individuals or groups (or tribes or states or nations or churches) that he or she or they are in sole possession of the truth."

— Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997)
in *Notes on Prejudice*, 1981

"Pay attention and keep breathing."

— Terence McKenna (1946–2000)

"Tobacco, coffee, alcohol, hashish, prussic acid, strychnine, are weak dilutions: the surest poison is time."

— Ralph W. Emerson (1803–1882)
in *Society and Solitude*, 1870

"Smoking a joint is harming democracy."

— John Walters, U.S. Drug Czar,
interview with Jan Russell, 2002

"Whether drugs lead to illumination or degradation depends on the spirit in which one takes them."

— George Andrews
in *Drugs and Magic*, 1975

"How many laws can we really have to stop crime, if people are determined in their heart to violate them no matter how many there are or what they say."

— Ari Fleischer, White House press secretary, arguing against finger printing for gun purchases, 2002

"LSD will never die."

— Albert Hofmann (b. 1906)

"If I cannot smoke cigars in Heaven, I shall not go."

— Mark Twain (1835–1910)