

MAPS Members Share Their Experiences

We appreciate the overwhelming response from MAPS members. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we are able to only publish these few.

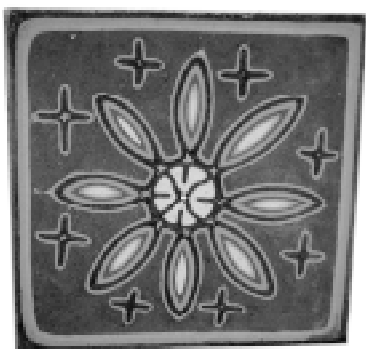
Treating Mental Illness with Psychedelics

WHEN WE STARTED studying LSD and mescaline our long-term goal was to increase our understanding of schizophrenia and what it does. We first examined the psychotomimetic properties of LSD on normal subjects. We never knowingly gave it to schizophrenic patients or to their first-order relatives. Our personal experience and seeing its effect on many normal subjects gave us a good deal of information of what it is like to be psychotic, but in a controlled setting and knowing that it would pass. We also adopted the effect of LSD on the biochemistry of normal subjects as a model for schizophrenia and discovered that some subjects and most schizophrenics excreted a substance in their urine, later identified as cryptopyrrole. This compound produces a double deficiency of vitamin B-6 and zinc. Our psychotomimetic experiments soon evolved into psychedelic experiments. Dr. Humphry Osmond first reported the use of this word at a meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences in 1957. This became our model for treating alcoholics and by 1960 we had treated around 2000 patients.

This research made me more sensitive and aware of the inner experiential world of schizophrenics and made me a better psychiatrist. In addition we observed that nurses and psychiatrists who also experienced the psychedelic reaction also became warmer, more sympathetic and better therapists. If these reactions can be covered by the term creativity, then I conclude that the use of these hallucinogens made us more creative.

With this enriched comprehension of the disease we were able to develop more effective treatments leading to the modern branch of medicine called orthomolecular medicine.

Abram Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D., FRCP(C) (Canada), author of *Common Questions about Schizophrenia and their Answers*



Painting With Light

“[Photography] had enough magical qualities that it [captured] my attention and my spirit, and so I entered into a love affair with photography...I guess I became acutely visually sensitive because of the psychedelic business. I mean when you go in and have that happen to your optic nerves... I had to follow it. There was no place to go except to follow that spirit of the incredible nature of the hallucinatory world. Just the fact that it was all internal made it all the more compelling. Photography, then, keeps drawing me deeper and deeper into an understanding of the beautiful and strange nature of what we see with our eyes and what reality declares in the outside world and then what we see, you know, within our minds in hallucinatory states. I guess that’s what drew me to ferret out in my medium a way that I could really tune in. It wasn’t enough that I was a photographer, you know. When you get turned on that way visually, you need to seek out that mystery.

“...The metaphor I have come up with to explain why I’m working with [light painting photography] is that, perhaps, psychologically speaking, my world was veiled in darkness prior to my first psychedelic experience and my initiation into the world of photography, and I had to plot a way to reach out of the darkness, which is the overarching dilemma of my life, and in many ways, of our era. I reached through the darkness and found light. That’s what we’re all doing alone anyway, seeking light within our spirits and minds. It became a way for me to make contact with the world as an artist and paint light myself.”

Dean Chamberlain (USA), photographer, from “Portraits of the Masters: Dean Chamberlain and Psychedelic Photography,” a 1999 interview by Russ Reising. Chamberlain’s portrait of psychedelic pioneer Oscar Janiger was featured on the cover of the Spring 1999 *MAPS Bulletin*. To view Chamberlain’s portraits of psychedelic pioneers, see www.deanchamberlain.com.

Characters on Acid Write Story

ONE DAY in the fall of 1971, I was tripping on acid, at a point in the trip past the intense peak—when I was still very high, but definitely starting to come down. I wandered into the kitchen and, for want of anything else to do, sat down at the table. On the table was the manuscript of a book of short stories that I was writing. The manuscript was ready for a final read-through before being sent to the publisher. Somewhat aimlessly, I began to read the book. Although the first stories that I had written had been done while sober, I had made a point of writing roughly the last half of the book while high on grass. I don't think I initially intended to edit the book while on acid, but I rapidly realized that I wasn't too high to do a proper job, and I got into the work. As I was reading the stories, I began to experience mental images of the characters acting out the dialogue scenes. The figures were small, perhaps six inches tall, superimposed on my field of vision perception. At first they spoke the words I had already written for them, but instead of the one voice of my own thoughts, they each began to have a distinct voice, with its own clearly modulated and accented tones, rhythm and cadence, and so forth. Next they started to say things that were not in the manuscript. Just as actors working with a script might do, the mental images of the characters corrected their lines, saying things that were more natural for them to say, that flowed better from their lips, and so forth. I copied down the new dialogue on my manuscript, as it was spoken by the characters in my imagination. This experience of the characters "coming alive" went on for a couple of hours, as I read through and edited perhaps 70 or 80 percent of the book. In a couple of instances, the vividness of the characters led me to re-write the plots, as I became aware that it was out of character for a given character to do what I had written for him or her. The next day, after the trip had ended, the changes that I made in the manuscript while on acid all seemed to me to be improvements; and so *Around and About Sally's Shack* went to press with the final editing having been done on LSD.

I have since run across four or five instances of other writers having the experience of characters "coming alive" in a similar way, due to the vividness and intensity of the creative inspirations. The only time that I have experienced it I was on acid.

For over a quarter century, I have used psychedelics only sparingly, and almost always for one of two reasons: either to seek a religious experience that will provide me with divine guidance in my life, or to seek a solution to a problem of literary creativity. While high, I will often spend some time having an intense experience of aesthetic appreciation, enjoying the creative work of others, but the major goals of my use of the sacraments are never merely recreational.

Dan Merkur (Canada) is the author of *The Mystery of Manna: The Psychedelic Sacrament of the Bible* [Inner Traditions, 2000] and *The Ecstatic Imagination: Psychedelic Experiences and the Psychoanalysis of Self-Actualization* [SUNY Press, 1998]

Cannabis-Inspired Inventing

I LIKE TO TAKE my briefcase with sketchpad, cell phone (off), Pentel 0.9 mm mechanical pencil, flannel sheet, beach blanket, sun screen, and my "Zeppelin Smokeless Pipe" filled with the strongest marijuana I can find to a deserted beach.

I get set up at the beach, go for a swim and then take a good toke. As I dry off in the sun I lay back and close my eyes. I soon get a feeling of some extra energy flowing through my body. Sometimes a thought comes up and I need to make a phone call or two to handle something. Sometimes I feel like stretching or doing some Hatha Yoga. When I am calm and relaxed I start sketching. I don't know what I'm sketching, I just make shapes. It doesn't matter. The mechanical devices I invent always have a definable input and output. There is also some design envelope that can be defined. I just sketch schematic notions of mechanical elements that solve some aspect of the problem. I don't try to solve it all at once. I just wander and watch and react as the sketches progress.

Then sometimes I get a kinesthetic notion that something is coming. Sort of like a speeding train that you can feel and hear but can't see yet because it's around the bend. This is where I hang on and stay focused. In a brief flash a complete solution goes off. So fast that I don't quite register it all consciously, but I feel like it's somewhere in the subconscious buffer—however faint and fragile. That's when I start sketching like mad. If I'm lucky I can draw it out in the sketch. I don't fully comprehend it until I'm finished.

Sam Patterson (SRAM USA), inventor of the Grip Shift®, DB Road Bike twist shifter, recipient of 1996 Inventor of the Year Award from the US Patent Office

"There is no doubt that a psychedelic experience can be powerful enough to completely transform an artist's work; to even stimulate a latent creativity into objective materialization which had been previously dormant. Isaac Abrams, who had created nothing before his LSD experience in 1965, attributed his motivation to paint to 'a radical change in his overall world views.' ... Arlene Sklar-Weinstein, who was a professional artist before she took LSD, made drastic changes in the style and content of her work after a single psychedelic experience. She told the authors in an interview, '...the LSD made available again the 'lost and forgotten' visual modalities one has as a child.' ... Psychedelics have also been applied to enhance creative thinking for purposes not directly concerned with artistic expression, e.g., problem solving. Kyoshi Izumi, an architect, reported his use of LSD to gain insights into how to design a mental hospital in a way which would not antagonize existing mental aberrations of the patients. His suggestions for a more therapeutic design of the patients' surroundings were soon applied and worked so well that they have since been used in a number of other hospitals. The design was later commended by the American Psychiatric Association."

From "Psychedelics and Creativity" by Elvin D. Smith in the Summer 1983 Issue No. 4 of *The Psychozoic Press*.

Painting from the Heart

PSYCHEDELICS HAVE influenced my creativity in many areas. I can attribute most of my greatest creative breakthroughs to the use of such substances. I am a writer of poetry, prose, a fine arts painter and digital artist. Psychedelics influenced my prose and poetry. I found a well of being that was previously unknown that I could draw from to explain my understanding of self and being. My beliefs about self aligned to these new modes of thought enabling me to express this knowledge in an eloquent and entertaining manner. I noticed a great change in my ability to paint the spaces that I had visited whilst inside the psychedelic experience. I now paint the way I have always wanted to, creating on canvas the depth and emotion that I had gained through journeys into other realms. My work was also influenced. I used to work as a software engineer in artificial intelligence. Psychedelics were used in my team to solve problems and visualize better ways of software construction. I currently work in web design and marketing. My abilities gained via the use of psychedelics enable me to design efficiently and quickly, interpreting the clients desires intuitively. My personal creativity has extended into the digital realm and I now produce fine digital artworks of the spaces that I have visited. Psychedelics have allowed me the vision of transpersonal realms that I recreate in my digital work. Overall, I can easily say that psychedelics have been the single most influential item toward a greater expression of my creativity in all ways. The positive changes within myself inform me of the importance of this personal self-experimentation. I sincerely hope that one day these sacraments can be used and enjoyed by a greater population.

Christopher Barnaby (Australia)

www.realitybelief.com

Visionary Psychedelic Art by Christopher Barnaby

"I find that most of the insights I achieve when high are into social issues, an area of creative scholarship very different from the one I am generally known for. ... I am convinced that there are genuine and valid levels of perception available with cannabis (and probably with other drugs) which are, through the defects of our society and our educational system, unavailable to us without such drugs. ... The illegality of cannabis is outrageous, an impediment to full utilization of a drug which helps produce the serenity and insight, sensitivity and fellowship so desperately needed in this increasingly mad and dangerous world."

Carl Sagan (as "Mr. X") in *Marihuana Reconsidered* 1994 by Lester Grinspoon, M.D.

Psychedelics and Cartooning

I AM AN ARTIST, and I write and draw satirical comic strips. The most important thing I owe to psychedelics is the inspiration to start drawing again. I'd given up in my teens, convinced that my talent was worthless and that art was a bad career choice. Now there is no doubt that art has a magical purpose in my life that is beyond these mundane considerations. Secondly, psychedelic work facilitates a free flow of creative ideas. These are not merely random combinations of conscious material; I'm able to see connections that are normally hidden, and then harness meaningful coincidences. The ideas that still seem funny in the cold light of morning are the ones that get used. The psychedelic experience can allow me to see the culture I live in from the outside, to appreciate the strangeness and folly of our ordinary lives, and have some idea of where society is heading. This detachment also enables me to see my own work without familiarity, a good antidote for excessive self-criticism. Finally, I am grateful for those moments of boundless hilarity, when the world seems like a wonderful joke between me, you and God.



Susan Butcher (Australia)

Susan gave a talk on psychedelics and creativity at the 1999 National Young Writers Festival in Queensland, Australia.

"One's perception of time is profoundly altered by LSD. Whether that's necessarily an *aid* to the imagination, I *don't know*. I think *if* the experience *had* any value for me, I think it's that it simply gave my imagination another piece of material to work upon. But I think the imagination, *unfettered*, coupled with a powerful sense of the world *as it is*, is a far more powerful *tool* for the writer or artist, than a chemical crutch." — J. G. Ballard, author

"I mean, in some sense, what these substances do is they give you the visionary *hit*. And *that* is sort of what leads you on through the drudgery. Through the pain, through the, uh, not making any money, living on a margin of a society that in many ways scorns you as an artist. It's the visionary *hit*, that leads you on. And I think drugs have often times given them—brought [these people] into *why* they want to be artists in the first place. But it also mitigates, if they lean on them too hard, in to actually *doing* the work. Because unfortunately, art is about *doing the work*. It's not just having the vision. It's then being able to translate it into *this* consciousness."

— Jay Stevens, author

"Given that LSD frequently made the real world seem transparent, or meaningless, an artist's post-acid insights might genuinely be hard to express. All the normal points of reference would have suddenly become obsolete. As [Ken] Kesey intoned, "It might encourage one to make *life* an art, rather than art from life." — Bernard Hill, program presenter

From *The Art of Tripping*, a 1993 documentary on the influence of drugs on writers and artists, produced by the Jon Blair Film Company for the British Channel Four.

"It has been said of the ancient Persians that when they had some matter of real importance to consider they went over it once while sober and a second time while in an intoxicated state. Then they made their decision based on the best thinking and understandings gleaned from the two approaches. If a matter was important, they felt, it should not be examined solely by means of ordinary states of consciousness...

"...Psychedelics offer a means of gaining new creative insights into almost any kind of problem and there is considerable evidence that psychedelic experience also stimulates the creative process in many people. The problem-solving and/or new insight possibilities of psychedelics are such that they could probably increase the creativity and productivity of any culture or smaller unit in which their skilled use was encouraged."

Robert Masters, Ph.D., from the new preface to the 2000 edition of *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* by Robert Masters, Ph.D. and Jean Houston, Ph.D.

"I would take measured doses of 80 and later 120 mg in a plastic minibag with me to parties and a straw which I inserted into the bottom of the bag to dose myself... I would pace doses at least an hour apart by affixing an hour-burning incense stick to the back of my wheelchair and checking it so as not to accidentally overlap doses.

And it certainly helped to be sitting down, surrounded by mad dancers and throbbing music. I would also have many great revelations on the dance floor that would often relate to either a graphic design project, or a book I was writing, and I took to carrying a micro-cassette recorder to record these ideas for later development—

with great success..."

Anonymous ketamine user, from *Ketamine: Dreams and Realities* by Karl L.R. Jansen, M.D., Ph.D. [soon to be published by MAPS]

Drug Education

it WAS EARLY FALL in 1965, my fifth year as a high school English teacher in California's central valley, a year before LSD would become scheduled. At almost nine on a Thursday evening I heard an insistent knock on my cottage door. When I opened it, there was Dave, who had graduated last June, and Sulyn, his southern California girlfriend, both of them now students at UC Davis, about an hour away. He had been an enthusiastic, probing student in my Contemporary Literature course, and I'd met her when they'd come by a month or so earlier.

After exchanging some pleasantries, they launched right into the matter at hand: "Well, here it is! We talked all about it in class last year. And we finally did it last weekend!" They glowed. I soon realized what "it" was. I'd been fascinated even before two summers ago when I'd bought and devoured the first issue of the *Psychedelic Review*. Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, Watts' *The Joyous Cosmology*, and earlier, excerpted in the *Evergreen Review* in the late 1950s, Henri Michaux's *Miserable Miracle*, had riveted me with their visions of the human potential.

"It's now or never, Willy baby," Dave, barely eight years my junior, nudged. All of a sudden it didn't matter that the hour was almost ten, that I had teaching tasks the next morning. I knew it was time.

And what a time it was! Within minutes the micrograms were turning the notes of a Brandenburg Concerto into sinuous luminous rainbow ribbons. Every corner of my house was transfigured, transformed, numinous. When I tried to communicate this to Dave and Sulyn they only laughed: "Complete sentences, Will, complete sentences!" I'd look at my watch's frozen time; I wondered briefly if everything would remain relentlessly ineffable.

The next morning students were in groups, putting together the week's work in portfolios. Standing in the middle of my classroom I found I could tune in one group as I tuned out another, just like dialing radio stations. I realized my classroom was my home and my home was my classroom; sharing art and music, our lives and our stories became ever-increasing aspects of my curriculum. Subsequent psychedelic lessons in the next months profoundly influenced my next 30 years of teaching here and abroad, chairing departments, mentoring beginning teachers, knocking down my own and others' illusory walls, co-creating exquisite ways for my students and me to love reading and writing, empowering creativity and higher consciousness through the language arts in our lives.

Will Penna (USA)

Bringing the Goddess Home

In A SACRED RITUAL, Mother's Day, Machu Picchu, Peru, I ingested a capsule created by an urban shaman. In silence, meditating for four hours, I was inducted into the regenerative encounter with eternal life.

Hiking to the summit of Huayna Picchu, I spied a small, 12th Century goddess buried head down. Ethereal instructions encouraged me to go beyond old habits: "You are not going back the way you came!" Acquiescing to guidance, and descending 2600 feet into the jungle, doors of inner equanimity opened. I walked through delight and darkness. Facing death in a state of grace, with no halluci-



nations, I crossed the Urabamba River on a pulley, helped by natives... crossing the River Styx and winding up the Hiram Bingham Road, to see Home with new eyes for the first time.

My former palette of many colors transformed. Oil paintings of "101 Views of Mt. Tamalpais," seen through the lens of extrasensory perception, one day shifted into these black lines on white paper. Regenerative, meditative visions emerged as a current of intuitively knowing our natural state of "interbeing."

I encircled the holy mountain with a loving spirit, intensified by 100 mg of what the Secret Chief named "Adam." If ever there was an Eve in the Garden of positive delight, I am her disciple, roaming through obstacles and opportunities—a pathfinder on the trail of global compassion. Sacred rituals, amplified by visionary tools, inspire artistic awareness of the whole in everyday life.

Martye Kent (USA)

"...[T]he Witkin Embedded Figures

Test...measures the degree of field-independence of perception, a characteristic supposedly related to fluency in the formation of new concepts and resourcefulness in ambiguous situations...

Willis W. Harman and his colleagues conducted the most interesting experiment on the use of psychedelic drugs in creative problem-solving. They chose 27 talented people—engineers, physicists, mathematicians, a designer, and an artist—and tried to measure their creativity by tests before and after giving them a moderate dose (200 mg) of mescaline. Scores improved on the Witkin Embedded Figures Test, on a test of visualization, and on the Purdue Creativity Test, in which the subject is asked to find as many uses possible for pictured objects. Then the subjects were allowed to work on problems that they had brought with them. Several found solutions or new avenues of exploration with what they regarded as remarkable ease... The solutions included improvements in a magnetic tape recorder, a chair design accepted by the manufacturer, design of a linear electron accelerator steering-beam device, and a new conceptual model of the photon. Some subjects reported heightened creativity in their work weeks later. Since the experiment was not controlled, there is no way to be sure that the results were produced by the drug and not by preparation, concentration, and expectation. The FDA cut off this research in 1966..."

From *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered* 1997
by Lester Grinspoon and James B. Bakalar