

**It's MY PLEASURE** to welcome you to this special, themed issue of the *MAPS Bulletin* focusing on psychedelics and ecology, guest edited by David Jay Brown.

As my wife likes to tease me, I can take practically any topic of conversation and relate it to psychedelics, usually with just a few leaps of logic. With psychedelics and ecology, the connection is so direct and fundamental and so inherently present that it requires no intellectual acrobatics to perceive the connecting threads. Albert Hof-

mann, the inventor of LSD, spoke about the connection between psychedelics and ecology to psychiatrist Stanislav Grof during an interview in 1984. He said, "Through my LSD experience and my new picture of reality, I became aware of the wonder of creation, the magnificence of nature and of the animal and plant kingdom. I became very sensitive to what will happen to all this and all of us." According to Craig Smith, the reporter who wrote Albert's New York Times obituary, "Dr. Hofmann became an impassioned advocate for the environment and argued that LSD, besides being a valuable tool for psychiatry, could be used to awaken a deeper awareness of mankind's place in nature and help curb society's ultimately self-destructive degradation of the natural world."

Our exploration of the link between psychedelics and ecology in this special issue of the *MAPS Bulletin* is part of our larger idealistic, yet realistic, view of the potential of psychedelics to catalyze beneficial individual and social change. One mechanism of individual change is through the research that MAPS is sponsoring administering MDMA and other psychedelics in a clinical, therapeutic setting. Right now MAPS is sponsoring research exploring MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder in the US, Switzerland, and Israel, with more studies in development in Jordan, Canada and Spain. MAPS and an allied organization, the Heffter Research Institute, are investigating the use of MDMA, LSD or psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy in people experiencing anxiety associated with end-of-life issues stemming from cancer and other illnesses. MAPS is also sponsoring a study of ibogaine in the treatment of people dependent on opiates, and seeks to overcome the suppression of medical marijuana

research. With these studies, we hope to show the FDA, the European Medicines Agency, and society at large that these drugs have a legitimate place in our world. When enough individual patients in a society have been successfully treated, there will be a perceptible impact on society itself. Aside from psychedelics' therapeutic applications in treating illnesses, the Council on Spiritual Practices has sponsored research at Johns Hopkins into psychedelic mystical experiences catalyzed by psilocybin. The articles in this *Bulle-*

## From the desk of Rick Doblin, Ph.D.

*tin* demonstrate that the link between psychedelics and ecology comes primarily from the long-term changes in attitudes and behaviors flowing from these mystical experiences, which of course can and do occur sometimes in therapeutic studies and can certainly be produced without the use of psychedelics. These are core human experiences that psychedelics can help facilitate. The essence of the mystical experience is a sense of unity woven within the multiplicity, forging a deeply-felt and unforgettable common bond between humans, other life forms, nature and matter. This common bond can generate respect and appreciation for the environment, for caretaking and wonder. Mystical experiences also have political implications, as seen by Robert Muller, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, who called the shaping of a global spiritually to be key to humanity's survival of the fierce passions produced by national, religious, racial, economic and gender differences in a world with technologically-advanced weaponry of ever-increasing destructive capacity.

This issue of the *MAPS Bulletin* points toward the larger implications of building a society that incorporates rather than suppresses psychedelic experiences. While MAPS' work is most frequently focused on time-sensitive details of our political, scientific, therapeutic and financial struggles to develop medical applications of psychedelics and marijuana, the link between psychedelics and ecology explored in this *Bulletin* offers a refreshing glimpse of the vaster horizons available to us all. As the Beatles wrote, "And the time will come when you see we're all one, and life flows on, within you and without you."

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