



Hallucinogens and the Evolution of Humankind

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In this expansive work of research, Karis Jones reviews a wide range scientific, artistic, and cultural evidence for the connection between consciousness-altering substances and human evolution. She argues, finally, that the West's contemporary stigmatization of hallucinogenic drugs threatens to diminish human progress. This essay was written for Senior Seminar under the direction of Dr. Brenda Brown.

THE RAPID PROGRESSION OF HUMAN consciousness throughout history has perplexed scholars for generations. The transition from a basic Neanderthal to a self-aware, creative human being is an anomaly that has effectively labeled humans as the most advanced species on Earth. While evolution occurs naturally in beings, the exposure to hallucinogenic drugs could be the missing link that led humans to become a conscious, expressive species. Specific research has emerged within the last forty years proposing that psychotropic drug use by *Homo sapiens*' ancestors has aided in establishing logical, religious, and artistic growth.

Naturally occurring hallucinogens have an intense ability to alter the brain's cognition, emotion, and perception. To fully grasp how influential psychotropic substances can be on an early *Homo*

sapiens society, one must first understand how the substances interact within the human neurological system. Psychotropic substances have the ability to mimic serotonin by linking to the coinciding receptors in the brain, ultimately exciting the performance of the neurons (Carhart-Harris et al.). The substance decreases activity in major subsections of the brain, such as the medial prefrontal cortex, the thalamus, and posterior cingulate cortex, which serve as information transporters throughout the brain. The decrease of activity in these portions of the brain allows neurological functions to be shared mutually, rather than the verbal cortex processing speech, the motor cortex processing motor action, and so forth. This decrease in activity in these regions unveils a more open, unrestrained version of brain function.

Upon MRI observation of the brain under the influence of psychotropic drugs, the networks within the brain became less distinct, inferring that they communicate more openly (Carhart-Harris et al.). Additional analysis also asserts that the brain operates with greater tractability and fluidity under the influence of hallucinogens. These studies imply that increased flexibility in brain functions allows for cognitive flexibility, creating powerhouses for creative thinking. A result of these changes in the neurological system involves a sense of “ego-disintegration,” forcing an emphasis on one’s sense of self and spiritual/religious presence outside of material existence. This unique grouping of changes in the brain allows for a higher-level human consciousness, which in turn has led to the belief that hallucinogenic substances could have the power to mentally alter the evolution of *Homo sapiens* as a whole.

The sheer power of psychotropic drugs allows for the “stoned ape theory,” which explains the rapid logical advances of early humankind. The stoned ape theory was first hypothesized by Terence McKenna in the 1970s to explain the rapid expansion of the neocortex in ancient humans, which is the most intense change of a major organ on fossil record (“Stoned Ape”). The expansion is estimated to have taken place around 100,000 years ago as early humans in

Africa began to migrate north. Within a period of a few thousand years, early hominids somehow evolved into advanced human beings. The theory asserts that this advancement is related to hominids adding wild psilocybin mushrooms that grew near the area to their diet. To this day, psilocybin mushrooms still grow along river ways in Africa, the same river-ways that are assumed to have supplied resources to the first sapiens. These low doses can increase visual accuracy, resource gathering, and arousal.

The stoned ape theory suggests that early hominids initially ate these mushrooms for sustenance and later noticed the drug's physical effects on their bodies ("Stoned Ape"). The increase in visual precision allows for a more successful hunt, which then results in a larger collection of resources. Consequently, this success in collecting resources allows for a lower infant mortality rate due to lack of malnourishment. Psilocybin is also a stimulant, thus increasing the libido in men and women, leading to increased occurrences of successful repopulation. McKenna hypothesizes that the newfound hunter-gatherer success and higher reproduction rate in those who partook in the substance caused the non-psilocybin consumers to die out.

Not only could psilocybin have increased the prosperity of living, but we now know it also has the ability to reorganize the brain's information-processing systems within a lifetime of exposure. This mental restructuring could have produced the first appearance of human self-reflection. A dimension of cognitive activity is opened under the influence of hallucinogens, consisting of thought, emotion, memory, and anticipation ("Stoned Ape"). Cognitive neurological structures related to conceptualization, visualization, signification, and association have evolved within the human species unlike any other organism on the planet. Psychotropic plants, therefore, could very well have played a role in establishing this higher sense of cognition and imagination in early hominids.

Evidence of this cognitive advancement in ancient human logic can be seen in the development of language. Hallucinogens trigger

a phenomenon known as glossolalia, which involves sporadic acts of verbal outbursts of an unknown dialect (“Stoned Ape”). This occurrence is still experienced commonly in psilocybin consumers. Glossolalia is essentially a form of neuroleptic seizure that occurs when the speech cortex becomes converged with other cortexes in the brain. Our language-forming ability may have become active through the mutagenic influence of hallucinogens working directly on systems that are concerned with speech and recognizing patterns. These raw vocalizations became the early building blocks for modern human language.

To say that psychotropic plants lit the flame of human evolution can be a hard pill to swallow. McKenna and the stoned ape theory have faced a considerable amount of scrutiny and censorship from the scientific community. Common accusations revolve around lack of proof that these events ever occurred during the Stone Age. A common question about the theory is how the traits of outside sources (hallucinogens) entered the human genome to pass on to future family lines. In response, McKenna explains,

psilocybin in the hominid diet changed the parameters of the process of natural selection by changing the behavioral patterns upon which that selection was operating[,] . . . increa[sing] the numbers of random mutations being offered up to the process of natural selection, while the augmentation of visual acuity, language use, and ritual activity through the use of psilocybin represented new behaviors. (27)

Eventually the more successful styles of behavior sparked by the mushrooms would spread through the populations along with the genes that support them. This chain of events allowed the population to evolve genetically and culturally through outside substances (28-33).

As for historical evidence, a study in 2010 was performed on the 19,000-year-old fossilized molars of a woman who became known as the Red Lady of El Miron. Her remains were discovered in a cave

in Eastern Spain. Researchers at the Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology found microscopic evidence of psilocybin mushrooms in the hardened dental plaque (Straus et al.). The remains became known as The Red Lady of El Miron. She was believed to be of high status, as she was ordained with items and elaborate crimson paint in her burial site. This discovery could be earliest evidence of human consumption of hallucinogenic mushrooms to date.

The alternative history community excitedly pushed forward after making this discovery. Hallucinogenic scholars continued with the hypothesis that major cognitive growth experienced during the early hominid period can also be illustrated by an explosion of creative activity throughout the ancient world about 60,000 years after the speculated discovery of psilocybin. During this age of human advancement, one can see a major shift in the way early humans perceived creativity. Previously, tasks had been limited to essential needs: will this feed, protect, advance physical well-being, etc.? However, after the first evidence of human art was created, many scholars wondered what made caused this growth in creative cognition. A once meaningless act, creating works of art now had purpose, not for any physical gain, but for metaphysical growth. Arguably the most famous example of this spark of artistic necessity can be seen in the great painted caves of France, Lascaux, and Spain (Hancock, *Supernatural* 7).

Thousands of years after the logical explosion in early hominids came the first examples of humans creating art. The origins of these ancient cave paintings have been heavily debated. One twentieth-century theory that is commonly entertained is that the paintings were some way of tracking wild game in the area; however, recent discovery of animal bones within the caves of Paris contradict this theory (Hancock, *Supernatural* 68). Several bones discovered within the cave were not the animals that early hominids had painted on the walls. Furthermore, something curious about the illustrations also lies in the subject matter: depictions of half-men,

half beasts, also known as “therianthropics” flood the caves. These images are common experiences during psychotropic episodes within the neocortex. This raises several questions: What compelled these early hominids to create this art from their imagination, and how did they gain the cognitive ability to appreciate strictly aesthetic images? What motivated them to create art in such inclement locations? Who did they believe they were creating this for?

These paintings are between approximately 35,000 and 17,000 years old (Hancock, *Supernatural* 68-69). One of the most fantastical depictions of a hybrid creature is known as “The Sorcerer” (69). The ominous painting was discovered in 1952 by Henri Breuil in Trois Freres cave in France. The image depicts a creature with the ears of a wolf, feet, legs and body of a human, eyes of an owl, antlers of a deer, and tail of a horse and the claws of the lion, as seen in figure 1 (Hancock, *Supernatural* 69). Not only does the imagery depict something fictional, but the amount of effort put into the image truly shows the appreciation humans had for the image and its permanence. The carving is engraved a quarter-inch deep into the stone and the illustration was curiously placed on the ceiling of the cave (73). An intense level of imagination and physical endurance was put forth while creating these paintings; many skeptical scholars have begun to question if hallucinogenic visions really did influence the early hominid.

Depictions of hybrid beasts are scattered throughout the ancient caves of Europe. Remarkably, several of these “monsters” are breathtakingly similar, though they appear thousands of miles apart from each other and were created thousands of years apart. Specifically, this can be seen by the Bison-Man illustrations, as seen in figure 2 (Hancock, *Supernatural* 70). The paintings all portray the head of a horned bison with the arms and mid-section of a human. This representation can be seen in the Chauvet caves in France, the El Castillo caves in northern Spain and the Fumane cave of Northern Italy (7). The oldest in France is nearly 35,000 years old, the oldest in Chauvet approximately 32,000 years old, and the most recent in

El Castillo around 15,000 years old. This “supernatural” image must have truly been sacred to these ancient humans to be repeated continuously throughout the span of 20,000 years.

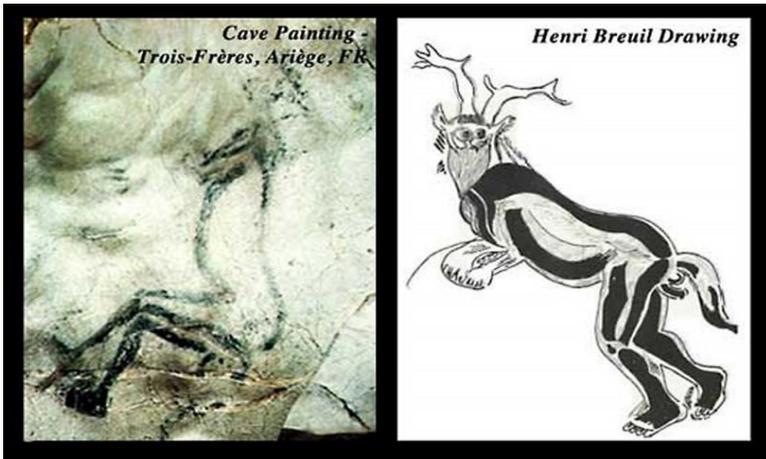


Fig. 1. Photographic and artistic rendering of “The Sorcerer” by Henry Breuil in 1952. Image retrieved from lrdrobinson.blogspot.com/2010/07/art-history.html (see also Hancock, Supernatural 69).



Figure 2. Bison-Man of Chauvet (left) and Bison-Man of El Castillo (Chauvet et al.).

One may question how these cave illustrations connect to ancient hallucinogenic consumption. Archaeologist David Lewis-Williams has performed interesting research in attempt to connect the two occurrences (Hancock, *Supernatural* 71-74). During neuropsychological tests on subjects under the influence of hallucinogens, Lewis-Williams observed an oddity that became known as “entoptic phenomena.” Entoptic images are visual patterns that occur naturally within the retina. Unlike hallucinations, entoptic images are not created by the brain; they occur via outside influences such as light and color. The volunteers all reported seeing similar patterns during their hallucinations, developing the assumption that the experiences could be a combination of entoptic images in the eye and neurologically influenced visualizations. The volunteers also commonly reported encounters with half-beast, half-human creatures during altered states of consciousness (71). These images continued to appear far past the Paleolithic era and into the more sophisticated rock art of South Africa approximately 14,000 years later.

Lewis-Williams was the first to connect South African rock art and the Paleolithic cave paintings; these paintings became known as San rock art (Hancock, *Supernatural* 72). The San people, also known as Bushmen, are indigenous African tribes, spanning across a large portion of Southern Africa, who represent the first recorded human civilization in Africa (Lewis-Williams and Challis 10). The ancient illustrations were believed to be painted by South African shamans who were ancestors of the San people; this shamanistic practice is still performed in the modern San villages (Hancock, *Supernatural* 72-73). While the oldest evidence of South African rock art is upwards of 27,000 years old, the most fantastical images of San rock art appear along the Drakensberg mountain range and are radiocarbon-dated to be approximately 3,000 years old (Lewis-Williams and Challis 18).

Shamans in modern San society openly experiment with hallucinations, so it is understandable that these paintings of their ancestors shared that same influence (Lewis-Williams and Challis 13).

The San way of life focuses heavily on the marriage between the physical world and the “spirit world”; the San shamans work as a bridge between these two realms (Hampson). Ancient San shamans believed that to fully enter the spirit world, one must embrace the traits of various animals (Lewis-Williams and Challis 23-24). This raises the theme of therianthrope art, similar to the half-man, half-beast entities depicted in the Paleolithic caves (Hancock, *Supernatural* 68). Shamans emphasized the need to paint the visions they experienced into the mountainsides for the community to witness. This alludes to the idea that hallucinogens were the fuel that compelled the early hominid to create art. A modern recreation of this metamorphosis is displayed in figure 3.



Fig. 3. South African therianthropes by Kalahari artist Vetkat Regopstaan Kruiper. Image retrieved from rozenbergquarterly.com/rock-art-research-in-south-africa-ethno-archaeology-oral-narratives-and-rock-art/.

Entopic imagery also makes a second appearance in San rock art. Textbook examples of entopic visuals can be seen in the ancient San Shaman illustrations of the human form (Lewis-Williams and Challis 26-28). Human appendages were portrayed in an unrealistically fluid, zig-zag pattern (26). These specific lines and sharp zig-

zag arrangements reflect entopic shapes that appear during hallucinatory episodes (Hancock, *Supernatural* 72). The lines, being processed by the eye first, are *then* interpreted by the brain to form a humanoid figure (Lewis-Williams and Challis 26-28). These illustrations, as seen in figure 4, are the product of the human brain witnessing entopic lines in the eye, then interpreting these lines through the hallucinating neocortex, which is constantly looking for human-like figures and faces in random shapes and patterns. When comparing the pieces of art created during the Paleolithic era and in the early South African tribes, one can begin to see the repetition of unearthly themes that these very different civilizations shared; humans had become fully symbolic.



Fig. 4. Conception of a human; Drakensberg rock painting (Lewis-Williams and Challis 26).

As humans became more aware of varying types of hallucinogenic plants, a new drug-fueled art form was established approximately 2,500 years ago, 500 years after the rise of San rock art (Braun). Prominently produced by Amazonian tribes, the art involved developing pieces of sculpture to accessorize portable amounts of ayahuasca, derived from a vine that grows specifically in the Amazonian province (Braun; Metzner). The leaves and bark of the plant contain psychoactive alkaloids that induce heavy bouts of hallucinatory effects for hours at a time (Metzner). Ayahuasca accessories were ceramic sculptures that allowed the plant to be consumed quickly and easily (Braun). The creation of these beautiful

ceramic pieces not only shows that hallucinogens continue to encourage artistic creativity, but also entertains the idea that hallucinogens induce artistic practicality, as seen in figure 5.

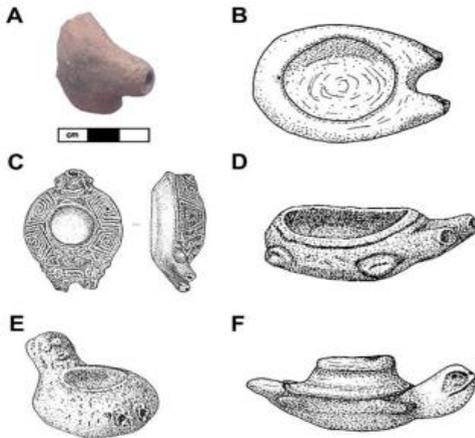


Figure 5. “Inhaling bowl variations from the Caribbean”; figure 5f depicts a “buff-colored ceramic zoomorphic (turtle-shaped) inhaling bowl” from Barbados (Fitzpatrick et al. 600).

The Amazonian people often ingested ayahuasca through the nasal cavity. This custom led to the creation of “snuff pots” (Braun). These inhaling bowls were largely seen in the Chavin culture of Peru and in parts of the Caribbean (Fitzpatrick et al.). The ayahuasca root would be grounded up with a pestle and mortar and placed in the dome of the piece. The bowls usually contained one or two spouts that would be placed into the nose in order to snort the contents. As figure 5f demonstrates, humans are still embracing therianthrope themes in these snuffing devices that were seen in the ancient cave paintings thousands of years before.

There has been a traditional belief within most of South America that Amazonian ancestors frequently consumed ayahuasca (Fitzpatrick et al.). Scholars also have found sculptural works evidently showing therianthrope beings with mucus or blood streaming down their noses, as seen in figure 6 (Beyer). The design choices on the inhaling bowls evoke a familiar shamanistic trance atmosphere that

has been illustrated since the beginning of time. The drug is still legally used by shamans in many South American countries (Hancock, *Supernatural* 43-44). Inhaling pots can be seen as a metaphor for the evolution of drug use into a sophisticated tool that slowly advances to a practical, organized society.

With practicality comes the construction of reason. This newfound quality in humans compelled the mind to search for life's answers. Scattered throughout the *Homo sapiens* timeline, humans have been inspired by psychotropic hallucinations to establish mysticism as an institution. Early civilizations attempted to find those solutions through spirituality and organized religion. A newfound sense of consciousness allowed humans to *create* the answers to the unsolved questions themselves.

Egypt was one of the earliest empires to practice versions of a hallucination-dominated religion. Ancient Egypt was firmly rooted in the spiritual world, emphasizing the importance of the soul and the afterlife (Hancock, *Supernatural* 361-64). Shamans and oracles were considered holy entities within the civilization. Egyptians worshipped “dream-like” states of consciousness (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”). Egyptian ideology involves the theory of “Maat,” which is the spiritual journey to connect with the soul. This necessity for spiritual interconnectedness makes it very reasonable to believe



Fig. 6. Ancient Chavin humanoid expelling fluid from the nose (Beyer).

the ancient Egyptians felt compelled to enter altered states of consciousness. This altered state of consciousness is suspected to be what the Egyptians referred to as the “*ankh*” or immortal life. Egyptian art illustrates this obsession over consuming the “*ankh*” to expand on spiritual awareness, as seen in figure 7.



Fig. 7. Isis feeding ankh (immortal life) to Pharaoh Seti I (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”).

Egyptological research has revealed that plants containing the psychotropic chemicals can be directly correlated with Egypt’s religious practices. Recent studies by biologist William Emboden have revealed that a plant known as the blue water lily, *Nymphaea caerulea*, was found to have hypnotic and hallucinogenic effects (Hancock, *Supernatural* 360-64). This lily grows abundantly along the Nile. The consumption of *Nymphaea caerulea*, is often illustrated in Egyptian hieroglyphic, along with mandrake and opium pods, as seen in figures 8 and 9.

Egyptian hieroglyphics serve as an astonishingly detailed record regarding hallucinogenic drug use. For instance, the hieroglyphic depiction of the Judgement of Osiris, which depicts the mortal’s soul value being weighed against the feather of truth, as determined by Osiris’ scale of the Gods (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”). One can again observe the theme of the half-man, half-beast, as seen in figure 10 that is repeated often in history. This legendary religious

lore in ancient Egyptian culture could very well be a hellish-themed hallucination that broke past the internal walls of physical rationality and was interpreted as a mystical reality (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”).



Fig. 8. “Meriton, consort to Semenhkara, offers him two mandrake fruits and a bud of narcotic blue water lily. More of these flowers are held in her left hand” (Hancock, *Supernatural* 361).



Fig. 9. “A scene of ritual mourning in which dust is thrown upon the head of a grieving widow as she squats before a totem of narcotic blue water lilies and incised capsules of opium poppies. Both facilitate a trance state appropriate to mourning” (Hancock, *Supernatural* 362).



Fig. 10. *Judgment of Osiris* (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”).

Outside of hieroglyphic evidence, there is an abundance of scientific evidence accumulated by Emboden to support this theory as well. Opiate residues have been discovered in burial vessels in the Eighteenth Dynasty tombs of Egypt (Hancock, *Supernatural* 361). Autopsies of mummified remains have also discovered traces of narcotics such of opium and nicotine, while it has recently been proven that the Egyptian “Tree of Life” is actually the *Acacia nilotica*, a DMT-producing shrub (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”). When it comes to scientific evidence, unfortunately, DMT leaves no trace in mummies; excess amounts of DMT are eliminated from the human body within two hours of ingestion (Hancock, *Supernatural* 359-64). Currently, the only sources of evidence to support the use of DMT-containing plants, such as the blue water lily, are the detailed depictions of the psychotropic plants in hieroglyphics.

Over 1,000 years later, in the year 800 BC, East Asian civilizations began spiritual practices in this same manner with the establishment of Hinduism. Reference to a holy substance known as “soma” is riddled throughout the Vedic scripture of Hinduism (Hancock, *Supernatural* 338). Soma is one of the most notable religiously used drugs in human history. Many mycologists believe soma to be ergot, a species of psilocybin mushrooms that grows in small purple clusters. These cluster-forms may explain why the Vedic scripture often describes the soma as “fruiting bodies.” The Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedic scriptures, describe the soma as a beverage that is pressed from a plant that transmutes the consumer into a supernatural existence: “We have drunk the soma, we are become Immortals, we have arrived at the Light, we have found the Gods” (qtd. in Hancock, *Supernatural* 339).

Work by ethnomycologists Gordon and Valentina Wasson has discovered isolated shamanic mushroom cults, consuming the same psilocybin suspected to be the soma (McKenna 58-59). This is the same breed of psilocybin that was hypothesized by McKenna to have initiated the rapid evolution of human consciousness some tens of millennia before (58). The ritual of drinking of soma is referenced

continuously throughout all four ancient Vedic scriptures and is a sacred rite in the shamanic tribes of India (54). The hallucinogenic practices in early Hinduism are inherently familiar to the religious trance obsession in ancient Greece.

As hallucinogens continued to modify how humans interpreted their own existence, an interesting transition occurred: that of practiced spirituality, as seen in Egypt and Hinduism, to organized religion, as seen in Ancient Greece. The concepts of traditional religion started to take hold of the Greek society. While Greece still employed a polytheist belief system, the concepts of early churches, ritualistic gatherings, and religious prophets, more similar to the Western notion of religion, started to take form. Greek ritualistic gatherings, such as those in the Eleusinian Mysteries, showed those common signals of psychotropic drug use that have been observed in virtually every *Homo sapiens* society prior.

The Eleusinian Mysteries of Greece were initiations held within the cult of Demeter, who is the mother goddess of harvest and agriculture (Wright 17-19). The cult centered on the promise of life after death. According to Plato, the goal of the initiations was to “restore the soul to the state at which it fell,” stressing that men must separate the soul from human life and allow it to be joined with the gods (Warburton 197). At a certain point, initiates would drink a thick communion known as “cyceon.” This concoction allowed them to enter into the final stage of the ceremony (Wright 70-71). This elixir has recently been discovered by scholars to be a hallucinogenic brew (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”). After drinking the brew, the initiates claimed they could see life after death (Wright 70-71). Scholars like McKenna have acknowledged Greek cultures’ heavy affiliation with poppies and hypothesized that an opium tea may be the source for the religious visions (McKenna 69-70). Scholars like Carl Ruck have also conjectured that the cyceon could have elements of the parasitic fungus known as ergot (Hancock, *Supernatural* 336). Ruck’s hypothesis is supported by recordings dating back to the early seventh century in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, listing

barley and mint as cyceon ingredients. Both of these substances have the ability to produce hallucinogenic ergot.

Ancient Greek religion focused heavily on religious visions. The Oracle of Apollo at Delphi was a perfect instance of this preoccupation with hallucinations. Delphi was a significant religious sanctuary in Greece that housed the famous oracle of Apollo (Cartwright). The oracle was a religious entity who spoke for the god Apollo, giving predictions to city-states and individuals. The oracle would drink a holy water before making the predictions, while inhaling a gaseous material from a bowl, as seen in figure 11. The way she received these visions is still debated, but many scholars believe edible hallucinogens or a gaseous drug to be the most rational explanation. Recent geologists have even discovered noxious vapors that rise from fault chasms below the area where the ruins of the Temple of Apollo lie.



Fig. 11. Oracle of Apollo performing a prediction ceremony. Image retrieved from www.coastal.edu/intranet/ashes2art/delphi2/misc-essays/oracle_of_delphi.html.

When one experiences the awesome power that psychotropic drugs could have had on human history, a valid question may arise: If hallucinogenic drug use accelerated the evolution of human consciousness, why are we not evolving as quickly in the modern era? An answer to this question could stem from the dominant institution that is the Western War on Drugs. Years of conditioning against conscious-altering drugs has made it laughable for any modern westerners to imagine a spiritual society, like that of their ancestors, in the modern era. Though these same civilizations that emphasized altered states of consciousness established the foundations for humankind, ritualistic drug use is now synonymous with cult activity and third-world tribes. This once sacred activity now can result in years of incarceration.

One of these illegal substances is DMT, which, ironically, is now known to naturally be produced in the human brain (Hancock, “War on Consciousness”). While contemporary Western society demonizes altered states of consciousness, big pharma continues to over-prescribe tranquilizers to control undesirable mental “syndromes” to children as young as five. Western society also continues to proudly express its love of mind-altering drugs like alcohol, sugar, and caffeine, which are all valued because of the way they alter consciousness. Graham Hancock goes as far as to say that this demonizing of hallucinogenic drugs has caused a stunt in human growth; stating this “single-mindedness” has caused the increase in global pollution, capitalism, nuclear war and world hunger (“War on Consciousness”). Hancock believes that only a naïve, one-sided, global sense of consciousness could ever let these world atrocities occur. These immense problems in modern society could be resolved by common practices in problem-solving states of unconventional consciousness.

When Hancock asked Eastern shamans about the sickness of the West, they said the explanation was fairly obvious: “You [westerners] have severed your connection with spirit. Unless you reconnect with spirit and do so soon, you’re going to bring the whole house of

cards down around your heads, and ours” (qtd in. “War on Consciousness”). These same shamans believe the holy ayahuasca is the answer to this concern. Millions of westerners are beginning to notice the importance of this substance and travel to Amazonian ayahuasca centers to find this new sense of consciousness. Yet, even renowned scholars like Hancock and McKenna are denounced for proposing psychotropic-related historical theories; Hancock’s Ted Talk on altered states of consciousness (“War on Consciousness”) was even banned later after being published. It is a tall glass to swallow, but it is possible that this demonization of hallucinogenic plants is the sole reason that humankind does not seem to be growing logically, artistically, or spiritually like our ancestors proficiently did thousands of years ago.

In-depth research into the role hallucinogenic drugs played on ancient humanity may seem repetitive, and that is because it is. Instances of psychotropic drugs constantly appear and reappear throughout the ancient world. One can truly only observe these patterns in ancient art. In a period of humankind where most recorded history has been lost, art becomes the only language of the ancient world, and serves as the only evidence to support our theories. Without art to lead our assertions, theories around the Oracle of Apollo, therianthropic imagery, and Amazonian shamanism would be lost without their illustrative accounts.

The human brain has been exposed to an incredible factor that has allowed the definition of consciousness to span limitless paths. Hallucinogens act as a facilitator in the development of creative thinking, fueling the creation of internal strategies and aspirations that may well have stimulated the emergence of logical thinking, creative activity, and religious practice. These three fundamentals were once unimaginable concepts that the human mind could never attempt to grasp. Psychotropic plants have inadvertently reorganized human consciousness and created the colossal power that

has lasted thousands of years and has come to be known as the modern *Homo sapiens*, allowing us to recognize a characteristic we now associate with “humanness.” ▶▶

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