

## ABSTRACTS

### ERIKA DYCK – ALICE GUERRIERI, PSYCHEDELIC DOORS OF PERCEPTION. UNPACKING THE HISTORY OF PSYCHEDELICS

*Abstract:* The history of psychedelics is filled with rich and colourful depictions of curious seekers and even some destabilizing evangelists and self-motivated entrepreneurs. However, a closer reading of the history of some of psychedelics' most notorious figures reveals a more complex picture of individuals trying to make sense of their relationship to psychedelics and the world around them. In this article I revisit some familiar tropes about Aldous Huxley, Robert Gordon Wasson, and Timothy Leary. My intent is not to completely alter their reputations or excuse past behaviours, but rather to invite a more sustained assessment that places them in a slightly wider context and encourages us to think critically about how we use narratives to shape our understanding of the current psychedelic moment and the various characters that are shaping it.

*Keywords:* history of psychedelics, Humphry Osmond, Duncan Blewett, Robert Gordon Wasson, Timothy Leary

### EMILIANO LORIA, MIND INTROSPECTION AND THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP IN PSYCHEDELIC-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY. AN ENHANCEMENT, NOT A REVOLUTION

*Abstract:* Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy (PAP) is a mental health intervention that combines the administration of a psychedelic substance, such as psilocybin, with psychotherapy. PAP was extensively studied and valued for its therapeutic potential as early as the 1950s and 1960s, before being abruptly discontinued due to restrictive and dogmatic U.S. regulations that rapidly spread worldwide. Over the past two decades, however, we have witnessed a «psychedelic renaissance», marked by a renewed and robust wave of research on PAP and growing evidence for its effectiveness across a wide range of mental disorders. In this essay, I argue that the innovation of psychedelic treatment – that could be an efficient answer to the therapeutic non-adherence, and to drug-resistant mental diseases – lies in its paradoxical function as a «channel-drug», rather than in its seemingly revolutionary character. Far from constituting a psychiatric revolution, in my opinion PAP should be understood as an enhancement of the conceptual and methodological foundations of existing psychotherapies, particularly analytic, psychodynamic, and cognitive-behavioral approaches. I contend that no single psychotherapeutic model – especially not CBT, as some scholars suggest – should be privileged, since the clinical framework of PAP aligns more naturally, and perhaps more coherently, with the psychodynamic tradition. In other words, the promising outcomes of psychedelic treatment in conjunction with psychotherapy do not establish a new psychiatric paradigm. Instead, they reinforce the foundations on which both psychodynamic therapy and CBT are built, beginning with the concept of the therapeutic alliance, articulated through the now-classic processes of transference, countertransference, attachment, and interpretation.

*Keywords:* psychedelic-assisted therapy, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, therapeutic alliance, psychedelic renaissance

MATTEO GALLETTI, MORAL CHANGE FROM WITHIN. PSYCHEDELIC MORAL ENHANCEMENT AS A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

*Abstract:* This paper explores the philosophical implications of psychedelic moral enhancement (PME) within the broader debate on moral bioenhancement (MBE). Drawing on the work of L.A. Paul and others, it frames PME as a *transformative experience* – an experience whose nature and impact cannot be fully anticipated before undergoing it, thus raising challenges for rational deliberation. Unlike low-order MBEs, which risk mechanizing moral behaviour, PME appears to engage higher-order reflective capacities, promoting a first-person moral standpoint without overriding agency. The paper argues that when voluntarily chosen and critically integrated, PME does not threaten moral agency but can instead facilitate profound moral growth. It concludes that PME may be ethically acceptable not despite its transformative power, but precisely because it helps individuals reorient their moral identity from within.

*Keywords:* moral enhancement, automation, transformative experience, psychedelics

ELISABETTA LALUMERA, DRUG-IN-CONTEXT. EVIDENCE, VALIDITY, AND THE LIMITS OF EBM IN PSYCHEDELIC PSYCHOTHERAPY

*Abstract:* Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy (PAP) challenges standard models of clinical research. Treating PAP as a drug-in-context intervention, the paper proposes EBM\* as a context-sensitive extension of evidence-based medicine.

*Keywords:* psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, evidence-based medicine, epistemology of medicine, context, medicalization

EUGENIA CARFORA, MATTEO LIPPI, RAFFAELLA RINALDI, STEFANO FERRACUTI, THE THERAPEUTIC ROLE OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE. RETHINKING INFORMED CONSENT IN PSYCHEDELIC-ASSISTED THERAPY

*Abstract:* Recent research on psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy (PAP) has renewed interest in the therapeutic role of altered states of consciousness, while simultaneously raising pressing ethical and conceptual questions. Among these, the validity and scope of informed consent occupy a central position. Psychedelic experiences are often described as ineffable, highly subjective, and potentially transformative, capable of altering personal values, beliefs, and self-conception. These features appear to challenge standard models of informed consent, which presuppose a stable agent able to anticipate and evaluate the relevant risks and benefits of a medical intervention. This article argues that such challenges do not justify a form of “psychedelic exceptionalism” that would exempt PAP from established ethical standards. Rather, they call for a philosophical reconfiguration of informed consent that remains grounded in core bioethical principles while being responsive to the distinctive

phenomenology and relational dynamics of psychedelic therapy. The article defends an enhanced, processual model of informed consent, supplemented by Psychiatric Advance Directives and relational forms of decision-making. These tools are proposed as ways to safeguard patient autonomy before, during, and after psychedelic sessions, without reducing consent to a merely formal or procedural requirement. The paper concludes that a philosophically informed approach to consent in PAP can reconcile experiential depth with ethical rigor, contributing to a more responsible and person-centered integration of psychedelics into contemporary clinical practice.

*Keywords:* psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, informed consent, transformative experience, psychiatric advance directives

#### PAOLO PECERE, THE EUROPEAN (RE-)DISCOVERY OF YAGÉ IN THE AMAZON. NARRATIVES, RESEARCH, CRITIQUE

*Abstract:* In this essay, I examine the uses of yagé or ayahuasca in a historical, ethnographic and critical perspective. I first show how the experiences produced by yagé and its uses, from its first discovery among Europeans to 20th-century ethnology, depended on a layered sequence of narratives and polarized evaluations. I argue that the focus on the medical and “spiritual” aspects of plant use and shamanism, typical of the rediscovery of yage at the time of the Psychedelic Renaissance since the 1960s, obscured the larger variety of traditional ritual uses and meanings of the plant. I compare these historical precedents with field observations in the region of Colombian Putumayo (Northern Amazon), drawing some conclusions concerning a transcultural and critical approach to psychedelics.

*Keywords:* yagé, shamanism, legalization, self, politics

#### SIMONE CAPOZZI, DYING TO BE REBORN. PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEYS AS RITE OF PASSAGE

*Abstract:* The recent rediscovery of the therapeutic uses of psychedelics, known as the Psychedelic Renaissance, has reignited general interest in these substances. Nonetheless, the path toward the approval of protocols for psychedelic therapies remains long. Internationally, the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Vienna Convention are the pillars of the current international drug regulatory framework. While these treaties effectively ended scientific research on psychedelic substances, they have proven ineffective – and even harmful – in regulating informal social consumption. In Europe, recent data suggest a notable shift in usage patterns: an increase in informal or unauthorized practices where psychedelics are integrated into wellness, therapeutic, or spiritual contexts, often outside formal healthcare settings. Based on my current ethnographic fieldwork, I present a specific case: that of Lorenza (a pseudonym), a 36-year-old Italian woman whose psychedelic experience at a music festival and the consequent involvement in psychedelic integration circles helped her heal symptoms of severe post-traumatic stress disorder. She then became involved in a psychedelic community with a particular focus on health and nutrition. Although not a traditional rite in the ethnographic sense,

the experience contains all the symbolic and structural elements of a transition from one state of being to another, akin to many initiation or transformative rituals.

*Keywords:* psychedelics, ego, ego diffraction, rite of passage, festival

## DARCY FORSTER, “THE WORLD LOST IN OUR INTUITION”. A METAPHYSICAL REAPPRAISAL OF THE EGO-DISSOLUTION HYPOTHESIS

*Abstract:* There have been a number of recent attempts to scientifically validate the ego-dissolution hypothesis, which seeks to explain the unitive nature of the psychedelic experience by way of subtracting the self or ego from the self-world dyad. Such attempts, however, have tended to ignore the dialectical theory of consciousness which argues that consciousness develops and functions always in opposition to an external world or not-self. According to the dialectical view any dissolution of self is necessarily and simultaneously a dissolution of the world from a first-person phenomenal perspective. The significance of this for thinking about the psychedelic experience is that it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to determine on the basis of the experience alone whether I have dissolved in the world, or the world has dissolved in me. Studies that fail to recognise this indeterminacy risk skewing results toward one particular interpretation at the cost of the other. By drawing on the tradition of German idealist philosophy this paper attempts to bring into question the underlying assumptions of the ego-dissolution hypothesis in order – not to dismiss it as invalid – but to reveal its theoretical indeterminacy. It concludes by suggesting that one way forward involves making a pivot from theory to praxis and distinguishing between metaphysical positions not on the grounds of their theoretical validity, but rather their practical utility: specifically, the moral and psychological benefits they might sustain in the context of psychedelic-assisted therapy.

*Keywords:* ego-dissolution, unitive experiences, Schelling, psychedelic-assisted therapy, metaphysics