

# Psychedelic Thinking And The Dawn of *Homo Cyber*

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When I learned that my presentation at this conference was to follow such a distinguished panel of elders, the first thought that came to mind was, “What can I add to the topic of psychedelic thinking that won’t have already been covered?” In fact, that question became even more pressing when it dawned on me that this presentation also comes near the end of a very mind-expanding weekend.

The answer, of course, is that psychedelic thinking is like a multi-faceted jewel, reflecting the light of our individual consciousnesses as we hold it up for examination. Thus each of us brings a unique point of view to a subject that holds few, if any, absolutes. Like most of you, I have come to my view of psychedelic thinking after many years of conscious effort. I began my personal investigations of altered states of consciousness after first studying the teachings of those who blazed the early trails. Eventually, I got to know some modern-day psychonauts and learned from them as well. So what I am going to present today is a mosaic that has been assembled from a variety of sources, including my own work, but mostly the works of our elders, books I have read, and conversations with psychonauts like yourselves. The picture I will offer for your examination today is not the only picture that can be assembled from these pieces of information. It is merely the picture that most fascinates me at the moment. When this conference is over, I am sure we will all take these and other parts of the picture and reassemble them in other pleasing patterns as well. Now, here is my view of psychedelic thinking today.

## **Background**

I believe it is fair to say that never before in human history has Dickens’ famous line been so true, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” No matter how you see the human condition, you most likely agree that these are at the very least some extremely interesting times. What makes everything so different today is the fact that we now find ourselves in that magical time that only occurs between major ages in human history. The Industrial Age, with its materialistic outlook, scientific progress, and wage slavery is about to recede into the background. The coming age, which is being touted as the Information Age, is already visible on the horizon. Thus we find ourselves poised either to step boldly into an unknowable future or to tumble down the slopes of Western science and pseudo-democracy into the wells of chaos.

Under the category “best of times” we can point to the unprecedented doubling of human knowledge every ten years or so and the fact that so many of us seem to be waking up and seeing life on this planet from a more global perspective. Under the “worst of times” category the list is long. For example, our species has overpopulated this planet to the point where we have altered the balance of life in the biosphere. We are now experiencing the greatest mass extinction of species since a meteor or asteroid crashed into the Earth some 65 million years ago. This time *we* are the meteor.

As you already know, the combined effects of overpopulation and the increase in human encroachment on plant and animal habitats, along with massive amounts of human-created pollution, are causing species to become extinct at a rate some believe to be as high as 100 per hour. Even using the lowest estimate of the species extinction rate, twenty species have become extinct since the Panel of Elders began their presentation a little over three hours ago. During the course of this conference, somewhere between 330 and 5,500 species will have become extinct, never again to be seen in living form on this planet.

Now you may ask, “How does the extinction of a few thousand plants, animals, and insects impact me?” The answer lies in the fact that as life becomes less diverse on this planet, our biosphere becomes more rigid. Fewer opportunities for life to express itself causes a loss in flexibility when the time comes to recover from ecological accidents.

Recently we have come to understand the theory of keystone species, which explains how the loss of a single species, if it is a keystone species, can cause the loss of an entire ecosystem. I shudder to think that one or more of the hundreds of species that have become extinct since we began this conference might be a keystone species. Until they are gone, we simply cannot know for sure which species are the keystones. Once they are gone, we will never fully understand their importance in the overall functioning of our biosphere.

Last year I attended a conference that focused on one of the more important shamanic medicines, ayahuasca. One of the speakers at that conference, Constance Grauds, asked the most important question I have heard in a long time. It is a simple question, “Why *haven't* we saved the rainforest by now?” There are, of course, many answers to that question. Ultimately, all of these answers circle around to the fact that most of the people who seem to be running things these days are trying to solve our ecological problems by using the same kind of thinking that got us into this mess in the first place. What is required, if our species is to have any hope at all of long-term survival, is for us to step as far out of the box as we can to find new ways of thinking about these problems. We must expand our species-consciousness to include a long-term view with a global perspective. In short, our thinking must become psychedelic.

As you know, the topic of psychedelic thinking is so broad we could spend an entire conference investigating it and still not scratch the surface of this beautiful jewel. What I am going to do, therefore, is to touch on a few high points in the following areas:

- My personal view of what psychedelic thinking encompasses
- Where psychedelic thinking fits in our culture
- The dawn of a new species
- What is at stake right now
- Guerilla tactics for evolutionaries

Before I explain what I mean by psychedelic thinking, I should make it clear that I do not consider everyone who ingests a psychedelic substance to be a psychedelic thinker. Just like reading the Bible doesn't make you a Christian, taking a psychedelic substance does not automatically turn you into a psychedelic thinker. To develop the powers of psychedelic thinking you must first do some work in the mind space I call “entheospace.” I define entheospace as that sense of place you have at those special moments when, during an exploration of your inner landscape, you discover an entire universe. If you are technically inclined, you can think of

entheospace as an operating environment in which many forms of consciousness exist and interact.

What I am not going to discuss today is *how* you get into entheospace. There are many ways. Some people use chemicals. Others use plants. Some people enter entheospace “on the natch” by means of deep meditation practices, and others are skilled enough to use trance dance or yoga to launch their minds into the alternate state of consciousness where psychedelic thinking can begin. Before long it will be common to enter entheospace using virtual reality devices. There simply is no right way to enter this realm. What is important, and what I will concentrate on today, is what you do *after* entering entheospace. It is important, however, that you continue to keep in mind the distinction between a psychedelic thinker and a psychedelic substance user. It requires discipline, intelligence, persistence, and an unwavering commitment to honesty for a psychedelic substance user to become a psychedelic thinker.

### ***My view of psychedelic thinking***

I recently heard the Governor of New Mexico, Gary Johnson, define insanity as doing the same thing over and over while continuing to expect different results each time. According to that definition, it seems fair to say that our entire species is borderline insane. The cause of such self-destructive behavior can often be traced to our inability to see the larger picture. Our species sometimes acts as if it exists in the two-dimensional world of Flatland. As you recall the story, everyone in Flatland is a two-dimensional being. When they were visited by a three-dimensional sphere, what the Flatlanders saw was a circle that had the ability to change its diameter as it moved up and down within the constraints of Flatland’s two dimensions. It wasn’t until the Flatlanders were lifted to the higher third dimension that they could fully comprehend the reality in which they lived.

By altering our normal state of consciousness and moving to the higher dimension of entheospace we see how interconnected we are. It is this higher state of consciousness that brings us to the clear realization that our personal concerns are intimately entwined with the fate of the planet and of our species. It is in this dimension, where psychedelic thinking is considered baseline, that we will eventually uncover the truth about our existence and our reason for being. It is also from this higher dimension that we can begin the process of integrating psychedelic thinking into our daily lives. Psychedelic thinking is what brought all of us together this weekend. As the subtitle of the conference makes clear, we have come here to investigate further perspectives on altered states of consciousness. In essence, we have come together this weekend because we are explorers of consciousness, making our way through seas of insanity, searching for new ways of being.

The writer, Henry James, once said, “The most profound discovery of my generation is that, by changing one's thinking, one can change one's life.” Those words lie at the core of psychedelic thinking, for a psychedelic thinker is intimately aware of the unlimited power of the human mind. As psychedelic thinkers we are not only more fully conscious than others, we also are people of action. We are the people who travel deep into entheospace and return with a renewed commitment to live more sustainably and peacefully on this planet.

A psychedelic thinker is not only a skilled navigator of the deeper realms of consciousness, but also someone who has decided to actively participate in the evolution of consciousness itself. The work of a psychedelic thinker begins by asking the hard questions that seem to be unanswerable while in unaltered states. More importantly, psychedelic thinkers never

assume that their current answers are final. People who believe they have uncovered the one and only answer to the eternal mystery of life form religions. Psychedelic thinkers have developed the ability to move beyond such earthly absolutes.

Every child born into this world arrives as a full fledged psychedelic thinker. A rare few, like the current Dalai Lama, never lose this perspective. For most of us, however, the universal consciousness with which we began life on Earth is gradually narrowed and boxed in until our view of existence conforms to that of our parents, teachers, friends, and family. By the time we have completed the first few years of schooling we are no longer creatures of the cosmos. We have become creatures of our culture, and psychedelic thinking has faded into the dim recesses of our minds. It is extremely difficult to break out of the mental prisons that are imposed upon us, largely as a result of the family into which we chose to incarnate. The reason we see so few adult psychedelic thinkers today is that the first step in restoring our cosmic identity is to ask a very difficult question. That question is, “*Why* do you believe what you believe?” Until you are able to understand why you believe a certain proposition, you are working in the dark.

Have you ever noticed how young children begin most of their sentences with the word “why?” “Why is the sky blue? Why are we going to church? Why do I have to go to school?” “Why, why, why” we hear until even the best parents one day lose their patience and say, “Because I said so, that’s why.” At that moment, the child’s cosmic world of psychedelic thinking begins to grow smaller. Culture has reared its ugly head, and another young human mind has learned that the best way to get along is to go along with the herd. Thus begins the process of applying mental filters on our thinking until it becomes second nature to believe that all of the answers lie outside of ourselves, and these answers, of course, are all carefully guarded by the keepers of our culture. Trust in personal experience eventually gives way to trust in the culture. Had only one human culture evolved on Earth, this survival strategy might have worked, but such is not the case.

Today we find ourselves awash in conflicting cultures. There are religious fundamentalist cultures that believe they are serving a higher purpose by destroying two-thousand-year-old works of art, which were created by believers in a competing religion. There are survivalist cultures that hoard supplies in preparation for Armageddon. We have spiritual cultures that attempt to rise above the trials and tribulations of earthly existence. And we have multinational corporate cultures that seek to control our minds by forcing us to submit to drug testing as a condition of employment. All of these cultures share a common element. They place someone else’s belief above your own personal experience.

This brings us face to face with one of the most fundamental aspects of psychedelic thinking. Psychedelic thinkers place their own experience above someone else’s beliefs. I once heard someone say, “Claim no knowledge for what you have not experienced.”<sup>1</sup> What a different world this would be if we all followed that admonition. Most of us, myself included, are happy to give others our opinions on a wide range of issues about which we have little personal experience. No wonder our public debates over environmental issues are so chaotic. For example, those who hold the reins of power in Washington today believe that CO<sub>2</sub> is not a pollutant. From my perspective, this seems akin to the Reagan administration’s classifying catsup as a vegetable. Like any state-supported fable, they both contain elements of reality. How then are you to gain the personal *experience* necessary to form an opinion about these issues

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<sup>1</sup> It was the enlightened Hollywood director, Lewis Carlin, I heard say this. However, I am not sure if it is an original quote or if he was quoting another source.

without first signing on to the beliefs of one group of scientists over another? For those of you who are familiar with the realm of entheospace, the answer to that question is very simple. To gain the personal experience necessary to come to an understanding of sound ecological practices you only need to enter entheospace with an open mind.

Although seldom commented on in detail, it is becoming obvious that psychedelic substances often transform their users into more ecologically aware people. If you share my view that by entering entheospace you also gain the ability to enter into full Gaian awareness, this greening of psychedelic users is understandable. Of course, I am also aware that it is impossible to convince an oil company scientist to change his or her opinion about global warming with information someone discovered in entheospace. It just isn't that simple.

My guess is that the majority of people in this audience know what it means to be in entheospace. If so, you will also understand what Tony Rich meant last year at the ayahuasca conference when he said, "We *do know* what we know." Make no mistake about it, what we call altered states of consciousness are every bit as real and substantial as the consensus reality we are now experiencing in this auditorium. While in deep entheospace, there is seldom any doubt about what we know to be true, and this knowledge comes from the deepest levels of our being. The problem psychedelic thinkers face when returning from an altered state is how to translate this unspeakable knowledge into words and actions that will be understood by others. Most of us have been in these interesting conversations where someone will say, "I can't put words to it, but I can assure you that for an instant I truly understood it all." And whenever someone in the tribe says that, we know *exactly* what they are talking about. This is where I see the first light of psychedelic thinking. It begins during that wonderful time in deep entheospace when you absolutely know the truth. From that first little spark can come a great flame. Whether or not you choose to nourish that flame is a decision that can determine your destiny. In times like these, however, your personal destiny may be more closely related to our species-destiny than at any other moment in human history. In addition to everything else that is going on right now, our culture has also begun an evolutionary transformation.

### ***Where psychedelic thinking fits in our culture***

Whenever I think of American culture, a line from an old Talking Heads song comes to mind, "And you may tell yourself, my god, what have I done?" How did we Americans get this way? We have the highest standard of living in the world, yet we also create more pollution, per capita, than any other nation. Are the two inexorably linked, or is there another reason for this state of affairs? I submit that the source of this dilemma is not some immutable law of nature but our culture. I once heard Terence McKenna say, "Culture is the ultimate cult." How true that is, for it is our culture that teaches us *what* to believe, *what* to question, *what* to long for, and *what* to avoid. Our culture is the filter through which we view the world. Like individuals and nations, cultures have moments of success and moments of failure. During the Sixties, our culture was in obvious crisis. For the first time in modern history, large numbers of our citizens discovered the potential of psychedelic thinking, but when they attempted to integrate that thinking into mainstream culture, violent clashes occurred. The culture simply was not resilient enough to absorb this new way of thinking. The failure of the Sixties, if there in fact was a failure, was the failure of our culture to absorb a new worldview.

Whatever your view of the Sixties, empirical evidence now makes it clear that American culture did, in fact, see a significant new subculture begin to emerge by the end of that period. In

their groundbreaking book, *The Cultural Creatives*, Sherry Ruth Anderson and Paul H. Ray track the evolution of American culture from the end of World War II to the present.<sup>2</sup> Their findings are striking.

In the years immediately following World War II there were two major subcultures to be found in this country, “traditionalists” and “moderns.” Basically, traditionalists long for a way of life that can only be found in utopian fantasies of pre-industrial times. Traditionalists see the world as black and white. They prefer absolutes in their philosophy and religion. In contrast, moderns reject the “one size fits all” point of view. Moderns include shades of gray in their worldview and for the most part are accepting of things just about the way they are. Moderns are first and foremost materialists. By the end of the 1960s, however, a measurable third subculture began to emerge. This is the group Ray and Anderson call the “cultural creatives.” Neither traditional nor modern, the cultural creatives bring a global perspective to the moderns’ shades of gray.

One of the most important findings of Ray and Anderson’s work is that the number of cultural creatives in the United States has been growing at an astonishing rate. By the end of the 1960s, about four percent of the adult U.S. population fell into the cultural creative category. By the end of the last century the ranks of cultural creatives had grown to 26% of the adult population of the United States. This means there are now 50 million adults in this country who share a global, ecological, humanitarian worldview, and who are willing to keep an open mind and hear all the facts before accepting or rejecting someone else’s point of view.

It is important for you to understand that cultural creatives are very different from groups you may think of as Greens, or New Agers, or whatever other label comes to mind. Cultural creatives come in many political and religious forms. They can be liberal or conservative. Some practice a religion while others follow an independent spiritual path. In short, cultural creatives can be found in all walks of life. It would be a big mistake to prejudge someone’s *cultural* position simply from the position that person holds in society, for becoming a cultural creative is a lifelong process. In fact, the majority of people who now fall into the category of “cultural creative” most likely evolved their way there from a previously modern worldview. Over time, these formerly modern members of our culture began to look beyond their own well-being and they began to question their personal worldview.

As Ray and Anderson point out:

Most of us change our worldview only once in our lifetime, if we do at all, because it changes virtually everything in our consciousness. When you make this shift, you change your sense of who you are and who you are related to, what you are willing to see and how you interpret it, your priorities for action and for the way you want to live. Regardless of whether you leave your home, change your job, or switch your career path, if your worldview changes, it changes everything.<sup>3</sup>

Cultural creatives are people who have found the modern way of life incomplete and unsustainable. The paths they took to arrive at this point of view are many and varied, but most often have been guided by what Ken Wilbur calls “the spiral of development” in his new book,

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<sup>2</sup> *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing The World* by Paul H. Ray, Ph.D., and Sherry Ruth Anderson, Ph.D., (New York: Harmony Books, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Ray and Anderson, pp. 17-18.

*The Theory of Everything*.<sup>4</sup> According to Wilbur's theory, our egos evolve through a spiraling series of developmental stages. Beginning with instinctual, we move through tribal, feudal, mythic, and scientific selves before arriving at the sensitive self, where the human spirit is freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness. Finally come the integrative and holistic stages of the spiral.

It is in stages five and six, the scientific and sensitive selves, where we find the majority of cultural creatives today. And an interesting lot they are. Fragmented, often feeling isolated, this minority of 50 million adult Americans share deep-seated beliefs in the importance of sustainable living above and beyond mere ecological soundness. The core of this group, consisting of approximately 24 million people, also share a deep interest in personal development and in expanding their awareness of life. Without an articulated agenda or conscious knowledge of the impact of their subculture, these people are gradually changing American culture through the little decisions they make about their own lives and how they interact with the world around them. It may also interest you to know that many of what Anderson and Ray call the "core" cultural creatives have used psychedelics at some point in their lives.

Just what kind of culture might these interesting people be creating?

### ***The dawn of a new species***

Today we find ourselves on a planet whose biosphere is undergoing such severe stress that its species extinction rate is greater than has been seen for millions of years. We may have already exceeded the maximum number of humans this planet can comfortably support, yet our numbers continue to increase. Before too many more years, something must change. That much is clear. Things are not looking very bright for the human species. However, the end of the human species does not necessarily spell the end of life on this planet. In fact, the eclipse of the human species *in its present form* may signal the beginning of a new epoch for consciousness in this corner of the universe.

Historically, large-scale ecological crises climax with the appearance of new species that have higher cognitive abilities than had existed before the crises. The worst mass extinction we know of was followed by the rise of mammals. The extinction that eliminated the dinosaurs was followed by the rise of primates. What then might we expect at the end of our current period of rapid species extinction?

I think it is extremely egotistical to think that the current version of *Homo sapiens* is the end of the story of the evolution of sentient beings. If you believe that then you don't have a very high opinion of consciousness. Surely it can rise to higher levels, even when constricted to operating in biology.

It is my belief that when the dust clears, and our biosphere once again achieves equilibrium, we will see a new species of primate walking the planet. That species is what I call *Homo cyber*. Part human, part information, and a full-fledged psychedelic thinker, these cyberdelic beings will be as different from you and me as we are today from chimpanzees.<sup>5</sup> It is

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<sup>4</sup> *The Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality* by Ken Wilbur (Boston: Shambhala, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> See my book, *The Spirit of the Internet: Speculations on the Evolution of Global Consciousness*, pp. 48–52 (Matrix Masters, 2000) for a discussion of the concept of "cyberdelic."

very important to understand, however, that *you* have the opportunity to take part in the genesis of this new species. For the first time in known history, a new species is coming into being through an act of self-selection.

Each week now brings with it some new technological or scientific advance of major proportions. Before the first 25 years of this century are over, we will have experienced technological progress comparable to the combination of all of the advances made in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This is so because not only is scientific and technological progress advancing on an upward exponential curve, the *rate of change* has also become exponential. What this means is that between now and the year 2100 we will experience the equivalent of 20,000 years of scientific and technological progress. It is impossible for us to even begin to comprehend what the world will be like in 99 years. Even imagining the next 25 years is next to impossible.

Consider that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were no automobiles, airplanes, telephones, televisions, or Internet. Even the best science fiction writers in 1901 did not accurately describe the world in which we now live. At our current double exponential rate of change, the equivalent of all the technological advances of the last century are going to take place by 2025. Seen from that perspective, providing every child, woman, and man on the planet with a wireless Internet connection seems a trivial problem. As we now seem to be heading in that exact direction, we should consider what it will mean when those wireless devices are implanted directly into our brains. Already, there are researchers in several countries successfully “wet-wiring” elementary computing devices directly into human brains. This is no longer the realm of science fiction. If you are even an occasional viewer of *Star Trek*, I suspect the first thing this scenario brings to mind is the Borg.<sup>6</sup> In case you missed it, the Borg were part humanoid and part wireless computer. Their computers, of course, were all connected to a master machine, which eliminated the free will of the individual Borg. It is this fate that *Homo cyber*, as it creates itself, seeks to escape.

I do not think that our evolution into some form of Borg is inevitable. I believe we have a choice in the matter, now that consciousness has become a proactive participant in the processes of evolution. People who are aware of this new course of evolution have the rare opportunity to actually metamorphose into a new species. As I said, *Homo cyber* is a being that is part human, part information, and also a psychedelic thinker. This new branch of *Homo sapiens* is destined to take information processing to its next level.

In essence, human bodies already are the most complex information-processing machines around. From the DNA in our cells through the chemical signaling of neurons in our brains, our bodies are constantly processing information. It should be no surprise, therefore, to see evolution providing even more information-processing capabilities through the augmentation of our bodies with technology. That we will soon be seeing wearable computers, which have wireless connections to the Net, is clear. What is not so clear is how these devices are going to alter our species-consciousness. As these devices become ever smaller and more intimately interfaced with our brains, the more clearly will *Homo cyber* be defined.

If ever there was a time when psychedelic thinking is needed, it is now. As we stand here, poised to enter the Information Age, we are also witnessing the birth of a new life form. Part human, part machine, this new being will process information on a significantly higher plane

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<sup>6</sup> The Borg are a fictional race of beings who are cybernetically enhanced humanoids. Seen on the television program *Star Trek*.

than the one on which most humans now operate. It is going to take new ways of thinking and massive amounts of information processing for us to stem the current tide of ecological devastation that is convulsing our biosphere today. One strategy to save the Earth's biosphere may be to evolve as many of these new meta-humans as quickly as possible.

### ***What is at stake right now***

Which brings us back to the 50 million cultural creatives in the U.S. today and why they are so important. It should be the mission of all psychedelic thinkers to rally cultural creatives and encourage them to become prototypes of *Homo cyber*. By definition, cultural creatives are open to new ways of thinking and large numbers of them have already experienced what it means to be in entheospace. They should all be encouraged to return once again to that mystical dimension. Simply by entering into entheospace we become deconditioned from our culture. This decoupling from automatic responses to our culture is absolutely essential if we are to create new cultures. Of course, this is also why existing power structures are so fearful of substances and techniques that launch our minds into entheospace. To the existing order, any change from the status quo is a potential threat.

Fortunately, it doesn't take that many people to move the consciousness of society to a higher plane. In ancient Greece, a mere 15% of the free citizens were participants in the mysterious rites of Eleusis, which provided the cognitive foundation of their society. I have read estimates that 80 million Americans have used substances our current power structure has declared to be illegal. Although not all of these substances have psychedelic properties, it would be an interesting historical coincidence if one-half of these illegal substance users have used a psychedelic substance at least once. If that is the case, then approximately 15% of the U.S. population have now experienced a taste of the rites of Eleusis, for they have ventured into the marvelous realm of entheospace at least one time. What is needed is for the more advanced explorers of entheospace, the psychedelic thinkers, to contact those who were once familiar with this territory and encourage them to return to the world of psychedelic thinking and help us begin the difficult work of saving the biosphere and all the life it sustains.

As I look at our culture today, I see a society that is littered with souls who once held high ideals and wanted desperately to make this world a better place. Some of these people are former 1960s activists, some are socially conscious conservatives. They come from all walks of life and exist in all levels of our society. These time bombs of idealism can be found on our factory floors and in our boardrooms. They include farm workers and white collar workers. No matter where we look, we can expect that one in every four persons we see has changed their personal worldview to that of a cultural creative. Many of these people are at least passingly familiar with the power of psychedelic thinking. It is now up to us, the psychedelic thinkers who are consciously evolving into a new species, to be the ones who undertake the work of arousing the rest of our species from sleep.

I would like to point out that it was only a small fraction of the number of people who are in this room today that signed the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Think of it, there were only 56 signatures on the Declaration of Independence, yet the combined spirit of those 56 people had a profound effect on the entire world. I think it is fair to say that our Founding Fathers were psychedelic thinkers. Seeing as how both Washington and Jefferson grew hemp on their farms, I suspect they, too, were familiar with entheospace.

With millions of people who have tried psychedelics at least once, we have a unique situation in our country, one that may have never occurred in a human culture before. As a result of the popularity of LSD during the 1960s, when it was still legal, millions of young people used it at least once. From what I know of entheospace, seldom do you return from it to this world with quite the same point of view you had before you left. Often a memory from a voyage into entheospace will return years later when sparked by a scent or sound or word. In addition to the millions of people who tried psychedelics during the 1960s are the millions of others who at one point in time believed their lives held a higher purpose than mere success at a job. Many of these people are now cultural creatives, and they are slowly coming awake. In a way, they bring to mind the medieval mummers in Ireland.

During the Middle Ages, the power elite in Irish villages converted the then current folk plays into morality tales with which they brainwashed the masses into subservience. These players, the mummers, always wore masks while performing, and their performances took place in the homes of the persons to whom a particular play's message was directed. Although the audience knew that the players were their shopkeepers and town officials, they did not know the actual identity of persons playing specific roles.

Today I see almost a mirror image of the ancient mummers in our society. Instead of the power elite donning masks and entering the homes of the citizens to enact their morality plays, today's mummer is a citizen who puts on a mask and goes into the dens of the power elite. The only thing that prevents this situation from being a true mirror image of the ancient mummers is that the modern mummer has forgotten that they are the ones who should be writing the lines they deliver. Instead, we have a situation where 50 million mummers are evenly distributed throughout the land but who are still speaking lines given to them by those in power. One mission of *Homo cyber* should be to teach these modern mummers that they must write their own lines.

Earlier, I discussed the fact that we are now in a period of double exponential technological growth. Both technological change and the *rate of change* are growing exponentially. This means that in just 100 years, sentient beings on this planet will be living in a world that is as different from our world today as ours is from that of a caveman. Such a tremendous amount of technological change in so short a time may well approach a technological singularity.<sup>7</sup> The promise of such rapidly accelerating technological change should bring with it hope for an idyllic future for humankind, and in many ways it does. But there is a dark cloud on the horizon, one which casts a shadow over this exciting future. This cloud is the cloud of war.

The other day I was walking on a beach just south of a large Marine base where they were conducting military exercises. In the distance I could hear the dull thud of bombs and other ordnance exploding. What struck me was the fact that none of the people who were also enjoying the beach that day seemed to notice the sounds of the explosions. Perhaps they didn't realize what they were hearing. Had any of them ever been in a battle, they would have realized that they were hearing the sounds of war. And you hear the sounds of war only when the front lines are very near.

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<sup>7</sup> The concept of a technological singularity is explained more fully in my book, *The Spirit of the Internet*, pp. 89–94.

As a child growing up in the 1950s, I lived in constant fear of the outbreak of World War III. In school, we conducted “duck and cover” drills where we would hide under our desks and await that blinding white flash that was sure to come. In those years, our schools also taught us that if America lost the next world war, we would end up living in a Soviet gulag. Now, almost fifty years later, I realize that while the threat of a world war was real, we were being misled as to who the enemy was. Today I find myself living in an American gulag.

With 100 million fewer people than live in the nations that make up the European Union, our country has *six times more* citizens locked in jails than they do. We are incarcerating over 1,600,000 people each year for drug-related offenses, over one-half of whom are arrested for merely possessing marijuana. That the War on Drugs is totally insane is born out by the following facts:

Each year in the United States

- over 400,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses
- over 150,000 people die from alcohol-related illnesses (this does not count driving-related deaths)
- over 100,000 people die from prescription drugs

Tobacco, alcohol, and prescription drugs are, of course, all legal.

And yet, in the same time frame, the number of deaths from cocaine, crack, and heroin combined was only 8,000. What is even more revealing is that there has not been a single marijuana-related death in this country in the last 50 years! What is wrong with this picture? Arresting 1.6 million citizens each year for using substances that are orders of magnitude more safe than their legal alternatives looks very gulag-like to me.

As Josh Wickerham recently wrote:

The war on drugs is not a war on substances; it's a war on states of mind. Entheogens<sup>8</sup> are not illegal because a loving government is concerned that you're going to hurt yourself by smoking pot or tripping in your bedroom. Entheogens are illegal because they make you question authority. They break down socially constructed fables and cleanse the doors of perception. They make you question the wrongs of society in a fundamental way, making you dangerous. You're like Neo in *The Matrix* when all of the illusions of reality have been irrevocably stripped away.<sup>9</sup>

Although it began in the United States, the War on Drugs has now become World War III. What makes this world war so different from the previous ones is that instead of pitting nation against nation, this time we see the nations of the world pitted against their own citizens. Recent polls show that a substantial majority of Americans believe the War on Drugs is a total failure, yet our drug warriors continue spending more and more money each year in the insane

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<sup>8</sup> An entheogen is a substance which, when ingested by humans, facilitates the realization that the divine infuses all of creation.

<sup>9</sup> “You Hip To The Entheogen (R)evolution?” by Josh Wickerham, *The Michigan Daily* (Thursday, April 5, 2001).

belief that eventually they will see different results. Just who are these people who want to continue waging this war, and what are their true objectives?

One thing we know for sure is that the War on Drugs is not about public safety. If it was, we would see an expansion of the war to include the really dangerous substances, like cigarettes and alcohol. What the drug warriors are actually trying to do is to take away the freedom of specific classes of people. Take a look at the statistics and you will find that of the last 800,000 people arrested for possession of marijuana, over one-half of them were Hispanic. Seven times more African-Americans are put in jail than are Caucasians arrested for the same drug possession offence. It is time to come to terms with the fact that the War on Drugs is still the race war it was when it began. However, the war has now spread into the homes of white America as well.

Ask any DEA agent today what his biggest problem is and he will most likely tell you that it is the use of MDMA by affluent white children at raves. As any honest scientist or doctor will tell you, there are no serious medical consequences that follow from intelligent use of MDMA. Yet our corporate owned and controlled media, including Trojan horse outfits like MTV, are trying to convince people that MDMA causes holes to develop in human brains. As you already know, these reports are worse than mere misstatements. They are bald-faced lies. Thankfully there are websites, such as Erowid and the MAPS site, where you can go to learn the truth about MDMA.<sup>10</sup>

What is it about this substance that has the power elite so concerned? Maybe it is nothing more than intellectual laziness, for it is much easier to believe the lies of government shills who make a good living from their bogus science than it is to dig up the facts for yourself. Our leaders, however, may also recall the secret research the government did on MDMA during the cold war. In these studies, over 800 compounds were tested as chemical and psychological warfare agents. When they got to MDMA they quickly discounted it for the reason that using MDMA turned their test subjects into pacifists. No wonder our government is afraid of it! After all, how can a military empire survive if its citizens are pacifists?

As World War III now enters its final phase, we see that Gaia has not only enlisted Greens, New Agers, and the cultural creatives on her side, she has also begun to evolve a new meta-human species to take up her cause. Interestingly, the new species *Homo cyber* is making its appearance just as human history is about to enter what Jean Houston calls “jump time.”<sup>11</sup>

Few people will deny that we are now living in a period of unusually rapid change. At times our news programs take on a surreal sheen, and fiction is hard pressed to be as interesting as fact. This is the environment into which we are delivering *Homo cyber*. In her book, *Jump Time*, Jean Houston has this to say about the age in which we are now living:

We are heirs to an extraordinary speeding up of the evolutionary process. We jump to new professions, partners, lifestyles, and religions seemingly at will. Nothing, it seems, is impossible for us. Nature, through us, seems to be entering a new epoch not so much *biological* evolution but *conscious* evolution. We have

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<sup>10</sup> Erowid's website may be found at [www.erowid.org](http://www.erowid.org), and the address of the MAPS website is [www.maps.org](http://www.maps.org).

<sup>11</sup> *Jump Time: Shaping Your Future in a World of Radical Change* by Jean Houston, Ph.D. (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 2000).

become conscious of our capacity to direct the next phase not only of our personal lives but of the world's destiny as well.<sup>12</sup>

I believe that it is of *Homo cyber* Dr. Houston is speaking, for only beings with the power to gather and process vast amounts of information will be in a position to shape a future in which some semblance of human life can survive. A benign symbiosis of living matter with machines that gather and process information is perhaps the inevitable result of the continuing evolution of consciousness as it penetrates ever more deeply into matter. I am confident that evolution places a high value on wisdom and intelligence and that higher forms of consciousness will ceaselessly continue to evolve.

Many signs point to a major shift in consciousness taking place in the not too distant future. Over a thousand years ago, the Mayans prophesied a major alteration in human consciousness that would take place in the year 2012.<sup>13</sup> The Native American Hopi also saw significance in the year 2012, although their prophecies for that year are much more dire than are those of the Mayan. This is the same year in which Terence McKenna's Timewave Theory forecast the end of time as we know it. On the scientific front we have Vernor Vinge, who has predicted that we will experience a technological singularity sometime before 2030. The singularity Vinge foresees is the creation of machine intelligence that exceeds the cognitive abilities of humans.

In my book, *The Spirit of the Internet: Speculations on the Evolution of Global Consciousness*, I expand on Teilhard de Chardin's concept of the noosphere, and speculate on the possibility that the Internet is, in fact, the mechanical infrastructure of this membrane of thought encircling the Earth. When I look to the near future, I see billions of people carrying around wireless devices that are constantly connected to the Internet. Think about it for a moment, billions of people are going to have continuous access to unimaginably vast amounts of information. Already there are serious researchers discussing the implications of creating a global brain that is part massive database, part robotic information-processing agents, and part human. This is no longer the realm of science fiction, this is serious science. And make no mistake about it, the final battles in the war over freedom of thought are going to be fought in cyberspace.

It is no secret that some of our best minds are working overtime on the development of what can be called digital drugs. This new generation of virtual reality devices will be able to launch you into entheospace just as effectively as does LSD today. The commercial availability of these devices will most likely signal the beginning of the last battle in the War on Drugs. Finally, we will be able to reframe the issue into what it is really all about, the right to control our own state of consciousness. The Alchemind Society calls this "cognitive liberty" and defines it as ". . . the right of each individual to think independently, to use the full spectrum of his or her mind, and to engage in multiple modes of thought and alternative states of consciousness."<sup>14</sup> When the first government hearings are held in an attempt to ban these new silicon-based cognitive tools, the power elite are going to be forced to confront the fact that it is human thought they want to control. It is not the *substances* that mainstream culture fears, it is the psychedelic thinking these substances promote that is under attack.

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<sup>12</sup> Houston, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> See *The Spirit of the Internet*, pp. 83–89, for an overview of Mayan prophecies for the year 2012.

<sup>14</sup> The Alchemind Society's website may be found at [www.alchemind.org](http://www.alchemind.org).

The reason I am optimistic that *Homo cyber* will ultimately become the dominant branch of the human species is that *Homo cyber* possesses a weapon of unequalled power, psychedelic thinking. We have reached a point in the evolution of life on Earth at which the human species has firmly established itself at the top of the food chain. Unfortunately, our species is not intelligent enough to live sustainably and without warring among ourselves. Into this evolutionary chaos we now see the genesis of a new contender for the top of the food chain. This time, however, consciousness itself has taken a role in the processes of evolution. This time, the evolutionary jump that is about to take place on this planet is going to bring with it a quantum change in consciousness itself. The changes we are about to witness will be more than revolutionary. They are going to be *evolutionary*.

### ***Guerilla tactics for evolutionaries***

There is an old cliché that says, “It is always darkest just before the dawn.” While I question the correctness of that statement, I think we can all agree that the forces of darkness seem to be running things with a firm hand at the moment. For example, in Washington we now have two former oil company executives in charge of our nation’s energy policy. Not only have they refused to restrict our greenhouse gas emissions, they actually intend to give federal subsidies (in other words, your tax money) to oil companies to help them build more refineries. And where do you suppose they are going to get the crude oil to process in these new refineries? They intend to pillage it from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, currently the most pristine land the U.S. taxpayers own. These masters of the Big Lie are telling us we must despoil our ecological treasures to solve California’s energy crises. Yet they obscure the fact that only 0.02% of California’s electricity comes from oil. In fact, only 3% of the electricity in the entire country comes from oil.

What is more, these swashbuckling industrial pirates are acting as if the voting public gave them a mandate to despoil our land, water, and air. Already they have forgotten that not only did it take a divided Supreme Court to place them in power, they didn’t even receive the majority of the popular vote. Darth Vader has conquered Washington. Now how are we going to take it back?

I once heard Ken Kesey say that one of the most important things he learned from the Sixties was that there is no reason to go head on with a dumb guy carrying a gun. That seems quite wise to me. In fact, I believe we should take that advice to an even higher level. Not only should we not go head to head with these dumb guys with guns, we should not even engage them in guerilla skirmishes. The mistake that was made by some activists in the 1960s was to try to ferment a revolution. Revolutions seldom bring true and lasting change to the daily lives of most citizens. What is required, if the human species is to have any chance whatsoever for long-term survival, is evolution, *conscious* evolution. *Homo cyber* is an evolutionary, not a revolutionary. It is not our government that must be overthrown, it is our culture that must be recast to value sustainable living and to consider the Earth as a whole when making decisions that impact the biosphere.

Our job as psychedelic thinkers is to do everything we can to nudge our culture into a more Gaian state of mind. It is up to us, the prototypes of *Homo cyber*, to remain steadfast and to stand up and be counted whenever we encounter the Big Lie. For some of you this is not going to be easy. I know this because not long ago I, too, was a modern mummer, working under deep cover in a Fortune 100 company. It is not always safe when you are so deep behind enemy lines.

For example, when someone at work reinforces a Big Lie by saying MDMA burns holes in you head, what do you do? Do you simply keep your mouth shut for fear of blowing your cover, or do you directly confront your co-workers with the truth?

As I said at the beginning of this presentation, a psychedelic thinker is also a person of action. Psychedelic thinkers are people who are willing to stand up and be counted. This doesn't mean they have to throw open the door to their boss's office and shout, "I'm mad as hell about drug testing, and I'm not going to take it any more!" My suggestion is to maintain at least some of your cover. Remember, one in every four adult Americans is now ready to accept the truth about our environmental crises and the War on Drugs. These people are everywhere, yet they mistakenly believe their numbers are few. This is why it is important to have as many psychedelic thinkers as possible infiltrate every nook and cranny of our society. We already have the critical mass necessary to act as a catalyst for the transformation of the consciousness of our entire species. Let's not miss this unique opportunity to propel consciousness to its next level.

Before I leave you with my guerilla tactics for psychedelic thinkers, I would like you to do a little time travelling. Come with me, if you will, to the year 2301, and imagine that we are in a natural history museum of the time. Visualize yourself looking at an exhibit of ancient humanoids similar to exhibits we see in natural history museums today. This exhibit shows cave men and their families gathered around a fire. Now let's move to the next exhibit, which shows another stage of human development. The title of this exhibit is "Prototypes of the species *Homo cyber* as they appeared in the year 2001." One of the wax figures would be intently using a laptop, another looking at her pager, while several others would have wires coming out of their ears and connected to cell phones on their hips. Of course, there is a poster from this conference in the background to show that these people are psychedelic thinkers.

Got the picture?

Now I would like you to shift your attention from the exhibit and focus on the form of being *you are* as you look at these wax figures of your ancestors. Do you see yourself in the meta-human form of *Homo cyber*, or do you see yourself as a form of Borg? My guess is that almost everyone here sees themselves as *Homo cyber*. Such a positive outcome, of course, is not assured. During this jump time between ages in which we now find ourselves, many outcomes are possible. The only thing we can be sure of is that the next 25 years promise to be the most significant period of time our species has yet encountered.

The lines are now being drawn for the final battle in the War on Consciousness. The battle that is going to determine the future of consciousness on this planet for the next millennium is the one that will be waged over the soul of *Homo cyber*. Will the species *Homo cyber* remain pure, always a product of psychedelic thinking, or will the species mutate and become cybernetic slaves of primitive minds like the ones that now control this country? The answer to that question is up to the psychedelic thinkers alive today. Do we really have what it takes to stand up against the forces of darkness that threaten to stifle our inner lives?

Until recently, the reemergence of psychedelic thinking has been primarily an underground phenomenon. Even today, with the exception of news about conferences like this, mainstream American culture remains largely unaware that a subculture of psychedelic thinkers even exists. If you ask them, some moderns and almost all traditionals will tell you that a single toke of marijuana will cause you to go insane. Believe it or not, a significant percentage of our

population still believe “Reefer Madness” to be the final scientific word on psychedelic substances. Ignorance on such a massive scale is difficult to overcome.

A new variable has entered the equation, however. A third subculture has evolved, and the people in this group are ready to accept the truth about psychedelic thinking. With such an audience now numbering in the tens of millions, the day has arrived for psychedelic thinkers to become more vocal. This is not a call to the barricades, for psychedelic thinkers are not revolutionaries. Psychedelic thinkers are *evolutionaries*, and their mission is to accelerate the evolution of consciousness on the planet Earth. Even if the time is not right for all psychedelic thinkers to drop their mummies masks in public, they can put them aside at home and transform themselves from mummies into memers.

As you know, Richard Dawkins coined the word “meme” to mean a replicator that was to culture what the gene is to biology. He settled on “meme” to convey the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.<sup>15</sup> The way I look at memes is to think of them as the DNA of consciousness. It is still not clear why one meme grows more quickly and stronger than another, but there is little question about a meme’s power to influence a culture. Thus we have a powerful, but unpredictable, tool for psychedelic thinkers to use as guerilla activists on the front lines of the evolution of consciousness.

The memes I am about to suggest are far from final form. Frankly, they aren’t succinct enough to catch on. My purpose in putting them forward right now is only to give you an idea of the kind of action psychedelic thinkers can promote if they plant the right meme in the right mind. Here are some examples of memes that may interest psychedelic thinkers:

- Rather than reducing our taxes so we can use that money to pay higher gasoline prices, why not nationalize the oil companies and reduce prices by eliminating their obscene profits?
- Each time you email an elected official about an issue, send a copy of your message to world leaders who might agree with your point of view. It was reported that last year over 55 million pieces of email to the White House and Congress went unread. Wouldn’t it have been interesting, when the German Chancellor flew to Washington to harangue Bush for abandoning the Kyoto Treaty, if the Chancellor had copies of a million emails from U.S. citizens who supported his position?
- If you are in a position at work or school where an honest discussion of these issues would compromise you in some way, print a copy of this talk, or something from MAPS or the Erowid site and leave it in a conference room, or on a friend’s desk.<sup>16</sup>
- Promote a “vote against the incumbents” campaign for the next national elections. Imagine, if you will, that it is election day 2004. Now think what it would mean if *every* incumbent for a federal office was voted out. What a powerful message this would send to our political leaders.
- Refuse to work for a company that does drug testing. Simply remove your mind from service to the military/prison/industrial complex. This is not so easy to accomplish

<sup>15</sup> *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins, p. 192 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> A copy of this presentation is available at [www.matrixmasters.com](http://www.matrixmasters.com). Although the author retains all copyrights to this work, permission is given to reproduce this document in printed or electronic format, only in its entirety, for noncommercial uses.

these days. In my own case, it took almost three years from the day I made my decision to not work for drug testers until I made my actual escape from that world.

- Whenever possible, don't purchase products or services from companies that do drug testing.

These are only rough approximations of the kind of memes psychedelic thinkers need to inject into our culture. While most new memes will arrive stillborn, occasionally one will live, and our culture will begin to evolve in yet another new direction. As I said earlier, our job as psychedelic thinkers is to do everything we can to nudge our culture into a more Gaian state of mind. Fortunately, we now have ways to influence our culture without engaging in the confrontational politics that failed us in the past.

So what is it going to be, the best of times or the worst of times? I firmly believe that the answer to that question lies in the hands of today's psychedelic thinkers. It is clear that a small but very committed minority can make a significant impact on the course of history. If you have spent some time in entheospace you already *know* the truth. Hold fast to that knowing, for it will surely set you free.

Today, as our species inches its way up the beautiful mountain called consciousness, it is the psychedelic thinkers who are the advance scouts. Although we are far from the pinnacle, we have reached a ledge that is high enough for us to see that we have already made much progress. The choice we now face is whether to continue our climb, slide back down the mountain, or hew out a life on this ledge. I believe that by being here today, your choice is clear. You have elected to continue the climb. I cannot tell you where to find your next handhold. Some of you may decide to make the conscious decision to begin your evolution into *Homo cyber*. Others may continue their work as modern day mummies, working under deep cover and writing their own lines. We must all choose the path that is best for us. What is important is that psychedelic thinkers the world over end their silence. The day has arrived for us to stand up and be counted.

The noosphere is now intensifying its focus within the structure of the Internet. Human history is about to enter a new age. We find life accelerating at an ever-increasing pace and our species dancing on the edge of chaos. Yet this is precisely where evolution does her best work. The choice is up to us. Do you take the blue pill and go back to sleep, or do you take the red pill and accept the challenge of consciously evolving to a higher state of being? Borg or *Homo cyber*, which will it be?

I am quite sure that most of the people in this audience have already taken the red pill. That is why you are here today instead of following the mainstream cultural traditions of this holiday weekend. As if by magic, that little red pill you took has released you from being a lowly creature crawling on the ground, and transformed you into a beautiful butterfly that finds itself flying along the edge of chaos. Perhaps it will be *your* wings that cause a disturbance that propels human consciousness to its next level. You have chosen to take your place as an evolutionary, operating on the front lines of consciousness.

As they say in the movies, "May the force be with you."