# Strange Ripples

## The Bizarre Relationship Between Psychedelics and Dreams, Part I

By Danny Byrne

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**Notes from the author:**

If you do not make it all the way through, make sure not to skip watching these [[one](https://youtu.be/2J5OIqRdJ8E), [two](https://youtu.be/RikSCx4-fbM), [three](https://youtu.be/ol4zQ2nYCdE)] short clips. These should at least pique your interest until you are ready to digest this.

This material may be updated.

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It is nighttime. I am looking down one of the many canyons that form the hills of Hollywood, California. The Canyon opens to the expanse of the Los Angeles basin, with the lights of its city grid stretching out to the horizon.

In the sky above the city is an object of *prominence,* in the form of a large oval spherical cloud, protruding from the right side of my view. My attention is drawn to it, and just as suddenly, the *fear* is amplifiedwithin me. I am paralyzed, I seem to be gasping for breath. As this happens, the object appears to transform from a gaseous state into a gigantic solid disk, several miles wide. It motions inwards towards the center of my view. I can feel a clenching in my chest. The *fear* grows in intensity.

The sensation becomes so intense that I wake up.

I look around, I feel my bedsheets underneath me, and see the sun peeking into the window. It is May of 2015 and I am 31 years old. Just another day in the beginning of my thirties. Another day in the sprawl.

“Just a dream” I say to myself, or so I thought at the time. I am also completely oblivious to the turn that my life and view of reality will take in about a month’s time, set into motion by an encounter with a potent, mind-altering plant. This journey is also a journey of books and an exploration of ideas, preconceptions and misconceptions.

In his 1990 book ‘The Botany of Desire’, Michael Pollan (of How to Change Your Mind fame) examines humanity’s intricate relationship with plants. In a small passage in the introduction of the book, he describes the gardens that humans have maintained throughout history. Gardens that are tended purposefully to include plants that can heal, plants that can kill, and a few “...with the astounding power to alter consciousness—even to *plant dreams in the brains of humans.*”

This piece relates to psychedelic experiences with both Psilocybin mushrooms and Ayahuasca. They are my own accounts along with those of others, some of whom I know and others who I have never met. However, this piece is less about what happens in the immediate hours after one has been ingested, and more about the experiences that are detached, sometimes taking place *before* ingestion. I shed some light on dreams that surround these experiences. In my experience, these two are catalysts for these dreams. However, herein lies the conceptual challenge. When I refer to them as ‘catalysts’, our mind defaults to understanding it within the confines of temporal causality – the only framework we’ve come to trust, the ‘natural law’ we term as *cause* *and* *effect.* I’m here to show you something incredibly strange, and also something that you can experience entirely for yourself. If you’re about to drink Ayahuasca you might not want to read this. Though I know there really is nothing I could say that would ‘spoil’ the experience for you.

These plants and fungi would more appropriately be called ‘the dream team’, and an even more accurate roster of this team would include many more plants throughout the world, but this is not a Grimoire, and neither you nor I have all day. I am writing this because I have to start *somewhere.* The first of these dreams happened in mid May of 2015.

Fast forward to the time of this writing, in the Fall of 2023, at any given moment, someone somewhere is about to have their first experience with a psychedelic. And for that person, or even for the reader who researches just out of curiosity, when entering into the expanding informational realm of the psychedelic renaissance, a person can develop many expectations of what kind of experience they may have when it is *their* turn. It is only natural to build some sort of picture beforehand. The altered state carries with it a series of strange interpretations and anecdotes in our modern day culture that has undoubtedly been shaped by *misinformed* opinions of them in the past. Quite often these misconceptions wind up in our expectations.

So, for a newcomer to the ever expanding realm of the psychedelic, questions may arise.

“What will I experience? What are the effects?”

Eight years into my journey with ayahuasca and mushrooms, one thing that has struck me as the most odd about these experiences is a side effect, or a more appropriately titled *phenomenon*, that I had neither associated with these plants and fungi, nor even heard of before.

The phenomenon is a particular kind of dream, one that has been named many names: hypnagogic, oneirogenic, prescient, *prophetic*. There is something distinct about this dreaming as opposed to a standard dream that is quickly forgotten..There’s an intensity and lucidity to them, certain themes and images repeat themselves. The reason I hesitate to call this a psychedelic *effect*, or a side effect, is because of one important distinction.

Simply put, that reason is this: a side effect of a drug does not take place before a drug is taken. Or to spin one of the most prevalent of the modern misconceptions of altered states on its head, you can kind of grasp just how bizarre this phenomenon really is with the following statement:

An LSD flashback does not occur before one has ever taken LSD.

A few years into my journey, sometime in 2017, I heard Ayahuasca described by one of my teachers as being ‘*an intelligence that transcends time and space*.’ Eventually, I would learn exactly how. One month before I drank the pungent sweet brew for the first time on June 19th 2015, I had no idea I would be imbibing in it. I was not actively seeking it. I had heard of it and some of its effects, but I had little idea of what it actually entailed. Yet it was in this period that I had the most bizarre dream of my life up until that point. As I would come to realize, this dream with a disk in the sky eerily mirrored many facets and characteristics of the Ayahuasca experience itself.

Before I had heard about this ceremony, Ayahuasca existed as something that I had watched a YouTube video about or heard some friends talk about in the years prior. I won’t kid you, some of those things sounded pretty strange. In all of those conversations and all the articles and books that I had read regarding the topic since, I had never heard one could enter or re-enter the experience not in the immediacy of ingestion, specifically in dreams. I had also possessed somewhat of a fascination with UFOs. I’d had an experience as a kid that I have never been able to explain. Up to that point I had never considered UFOs as being anything other than an ‘externalized’ experience. The intricate psychological layers underpinning such experiences, which I delve deeper into later in this narrative, had never crossed my mind.

In the middle of 2015, when I had this strange dream, the ‘psychedelic renaissance’ had not quite kicked off yet. A week or so after this dream a friend reached out proposing a dinner date. That evening, I learned of a local facilitator organizing Ayahuasca ceremonies.

Less than a month after this dream with the disk in the sky, I traveled to a property a few hours outside the city in a secluded area, and for the first of many times since, I drank the thick pungently sweet tasting brew. That night I died a death of sorts, and began what at the time of this writing has been an eight and half year journey into guardianship, co-facilitation, and leading groups myself.

It wasn’t until two years into this profound work that I connected the dots between those dreams and my experiences with Ayahuasca. It was at that point that these dreams returned, more vivid and telling than before. Through their content I put together a message about *my* life that absolutely shook me to my core in so many ways and on so many levels. As many of the more profound lessons of the plants come in retrospect, it was as if the message of the initial dream was “Knock knock, this will all eventually make sense.”

Quite often these dreams will contain some kind of *specificity* about objects, subjects, themes, and even explicit messages. And then, at some point after this we see that there is some truth or significance to what was shown to us in this dream, and a *real* physical occurrence or event either future, present or past, in our physical reality, which is always unbeknownst to us. The contents are always ‘out of scope’ in a certain weird way. If we are relying on conventional ideas about how information enters into our heads, our ability to ‘know’ or ‘observe’ these occurrences and commit them to conscious or subconscious memory isn’t quite there yet. These dreams and the experiences that spring from them confront us with the irrational. They defy logic. You could even say that they *defy the laws of physics*.

Not long after realizing the extraordinary nature of these dreams, I took note of some interesting anecdotes from various podcasts, suggesting that this phenomenon is part of the bigger picture of the psychedelic landscape that has not come to our awareness yet. There is no one speaking about this at psychedelic conventions yet. It speaks volumes to just how strange and mysterious the mushroom and plant’s interaction with the human mind really are, as well as to the power of these substances to connect us with these other aspects of our own reality normally not accessible to us. This includes encountering what some people have described as ‘*an intelligence that transcends time and space*.’

When I discovered these conversations over the span of several years, I took some comfort in the fact that I was not alone, and the others who experienced this found it just as baffling.

The following is a transcript from a conversation that aired Feb 26 2021, told by Kyle Buller of the ‘Psychedelics Today’ podcast. [[Spotify @ 44m11s](https://open.spotify.com/episode/11XZEAdrCiE8TEd2eQsqOD), [Youtube Clip](https://youtu.be/2J5OIqRdJ8E)] Take note of the passage “That dream was happening as the event was unfolding”

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“…This is one of my big dreams that I still scratch my head and go ‘I don’t know how to really explain this.’

Let me preface this, so I was in Hawaii studying plant medicine and indigenous stuff with Kat Harrison and whatnot, and I think that day she talked about the Mazatec people eating mushrooms in pairs.

My dream starts off, people have these mushrooms and I go ‘oh we gotta eat them in pairs because Kat told us that the mushrooms sing to each other.’

So, in my dream I eat these mushrooms in pairs and they start coming on, and I walk down to the convenience store in my town, and it just got robbed. And I go ‘man this town is going to shit’ and then I walk a little bit more and there’s this kid with this AK47 an he’s pointing at people and I’m like ‘Dude what are you doing’ and he’s like ‘Oh it’s just for fun’ and I say ‘No it’s not fun you’re scaring people, you can’t do that’ he’s like ‘No no no it’s all a joke its all for fun’ and I say ‘yea you can’t do that’.

So I grab the gun away from him and I stare down the barrel and it’s got like you know the red dot on it [that shows it as a toy], and I go ‘ok I can see why you think this is fun, you’re getting a reaction out of people. But you can’t do this, you’re really scaring people.’ So I grab the gun and I throw it away.

So, I wake up, and I’m in Hawaii, which is 8-7 hours time difference, I wake up at like 7 or 8 in the morning, and I grab my phone, and there’s a text message from my best friend, and he goes ‘Yo our town is going to shit, QuickCheck just got robbed and the whole town’s on lockdown, there is SWAT team everywhere, there’s someone saying they have an AK47 and they’re threatening to shoot the town up.’

And I just wipe my eyes and am like ‘Am I dreaming still? What the fuck is going on?’

So I immediately grab my phone to google what’s going on in town. They present this whole story that someone called on an untraceable number threatening to shoot up the town with an AK and they couldn’t find them or anything like that. [The authorities] finally wrapped up the investigation into this…It was a [prank **phone call** coming from South Korea](https://www.njherald.com/story/news/2013/07/02/officials-say-online-chatroom-led/4009544007/), and it’s just like, **that dream was happening as the event was unfolding**…and I go ‘What’s going on there?’ And I think to myself, did I check my phone? but I didn’t because the message would have been read if I had read through it, so the message was left unread, I didn’t see it. What’s going on there?

How did I get that through the dreamworld with so much accuracy?..”

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In this example, Kyle Buller had a dream where he witnessed events that, in a way, were unfolding in real life. A convenience store robbery, the phrase “this town is going to shit”, and a prank involving an AK47. Interestingly, within this dream, he also consumed psilocybin mushrooms.

It is important to note that besides the dreamlike state that the psychedelic produces in the immediate, these experiences mostly take place detached from any ingestion of any substance at all. In my experience they quite frequently occur in the run up to the two main psychedelics that I am involved with, Psilocybin mushrooms and the Ayahuasca brew. But, as you will see in the next example, the dreams can happen separated from any ingestion of a psychedelic, by longer periods, sometimes by *years.*

When I heard Kyle Buller’s account*,* I was reminded of something that happened to my wife and I not that long before. During a visit to the Big Island of Hawaii in February 2021, we spent a day exploring the eastern side of the island. We had a day planned visiting some of the lava tubes and caves that dot the landscape, and seeing some of the beaches north of Hilo. Our plan for later in the day was to venture up to the observatory on Mauna Kea to see the sunset and stargaze at 11,000 feet. We had planned to take some microdose mushroom capsules before sunset. People knew we were in Hawaii, but we had not mentioned our plans for that day to anyone.

Early on in our adventures, we got a text message from someone who had attended one of our mushroom ceremonies over a year prior.

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“I just woke up from an afternoon nap and you both were in a dream with me. We were in a cave near the ocean that you need to crawl into, and then it opened up inside. We had a fire going, it was beautiful, we dug through the roof of the cave so we could see the stars.”

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In this dream she pulled in three details from what we were doing that day: the beach, the cave, and the stars. To us, this was just another nod from something that expresses itself in this amazing way. This was just another reminder, another glimpse into a tremendous mystery that, as we have come to believe, has accompanied us even before we realized we were setting foot on this path, that has been with us since even before we took this ‘drug’.

The connection between Kyle Buller’s dream and the dream of our mushroom ceremony attendee seems to be psilocybin mushrooms. As Kyle had eaten mushrooms in his dream, and we had served our friend in ceremony approximately a year prior, almost to the exact date.

These occurrences leave us somewhat baffled. We can’t help but ask “What are the odds that this is a coincidence?” Such experiences lend themselves to the theory that these plants and fungi have *supernatural* qualities. The dream and the real life occurrence are always *out of time* or *out of scope* in a particular way. Events unfolding as we dream or unknown events from the past, and even more strangely, *sometimes* they are events that are yet to unfold. Of course, there is actually no such thing as ‘the supernatural’, there is only the natural, and the rest is just what we have yet to understand.

Delving deeper into the mysteries surrounding magic mushrooms, a narrative is shared by renowned mycologist and author Paul Stamets on the Joe Rogan Podcast #1035 from November 7, 2017. In this segment, Paul recounts a day in his youth when he and some companions stumbled upon a patch of mushrooms in the wild. Once identified as a strain of psilocybe, they decided to ingest them.[[Youtube](https://youtu.be/RikSCx4-fbM)]

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“So I go to bed and I’m laying in bed, and full blown experience, I can barely sleep because all the colors are keeping me awake and my mind is racing....and then I have a lucid dream. And I’m dreaming and I wake up and I go downstairs and I go ‘I had this crazy dream…I saw thousands of cattle, dead, baking in the sun…’

I said, ‘I think there’s going to be a nuclear war. What could kill all these cattle?’ …I know I was in Olympia and I needed to rush to Derrington to my cabin because my books were up there and my manuscripts were up there and I needed to save my research.

So they laughed and laughed and said ‘When’s the world going to end Paul?’

And I go ‘Well, it’s not this weekend, it’s next weekend.’ So they wrote on the calendar, December 1st. I put it in my book. I think it was 1975, ‘the end of the world’. They wrote ‘Paul predicts the end of the world’. So we forgot about it.

Massive rains the next week..huge amounts of snowfall. And then, on Wednesday and Thursday temperature inversion, and it flipped to 75 to 85 degrees. All the snow started to melt. All the rivers were flooding, and my little cabin was right next to this river that would swell from morning to night. It would go up 6 feet just from the snowmelt, because we are close to this Volcano and big glaciers. I said ‘oh my gosh I’m going to lose my manuscript, all my research I need to get up there, I need to get up there’.

And then I’m watching the news and the roads are being closed so I have to go through Rockport, Washington the back way in order to get back to my cabin. I get to my cabin and the bank had eroded about ten feet, I was only about ten or twelve feet away from the river now and my cabin was on the verge of falling into it and so I got my manuscripts and I got all my books and I rescued all the material I had, but I couldn’t get out of there because the roads had been closed. And so I had to wait two days and the roads then opened up and I drove out into the Snohomish valley, and I went around the bend and there the sun was a brilliant sunny day, a warm day, and there floating in the fields were hundreds and hundreds of dead cattle.”

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Rogan lets out an audible gasp.

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“..How do you explain that? I entered I think into the multiverse.”

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After a moment of disbelief, supernatural claims in the air, Joe chimes back in.

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“Now as a scientist I think you realize that when you say these things that you open yourself to a lot of ridicule, do you feel hesitant to communicate these ideas?”

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Paul responds…

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“To a degree yes and you know, at one point I realize I just don’t care. This is true, this happened to me. And you know, I can push the envelope on these ideas because the credibility of my research is well established..So I’m telling you things and I’m not making these things up. I don’t have to.”

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He then states probably one of the most important observations that one may eventually reach in a journey into the realm of psychedelics, which could also be seen as the crux of this exploration:

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“Just because you can’t explain it doesn’t mean it’s not true. And I think that we need to accept the fact that reality is not limited to the perception that we have traditionally used.”

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It is not every night that you dream of fields of hundreds of dead cattle, and not every day that you see one less than a week afterwards. So, what are the chances?

Again, we find a mushroom as a strange companion. Paul Stamets actually did eat the mushrooms in real life, and did fall asleep and had that dream within the effect of the mushroom journey itself. However, the *context* of that dream had not happened yet. In Paul’s dream he had to rush to his cabin to save his research (presumably about mushrooms), then the scene cuts to a field full of dead cows. Both of which is what he experienced the following week.

His dream is a bit different from the dream of Kyle Buller, and our friend’s dream, but they all share the same characteristic, a familiar pattern. How would any of them have known? If not them, then *what* did?

If I suggested “an intelligence that transcends time and space”, would you believe me yet?

Dreams are not talked about as a wider part of the narrative within the psychedelic renaissance because dreams are not what we expect or look for when we think of the wider *effects* of a drug. We may not even think to associate the two because of this. Some may scoff at the idea and write it off as hallucination-persisted perceptual disorder, aka “flashbacks”, or even psychosis, or relegating it to the often too easily lauded excuse of simply being ‘projections of the subconscious’.

Conceptualize this phenomenon as I do with this statement:

The ripples from a stone thrown into a pond don’t form before the stone penetrates the water.

If you had gone through one of these experiences, what would you think?

This dream phenomenon is not limited to psilocybin mushrooms, in fact some of the most interesting cases of this, including my own, revolve around the ingestion of the amazonian plant brew Ayahuasca.

The third example comes from another episode of the Joe Rogan podcast, this time with Aubrey Marcus. This was really the first podcast interview that I had seen after having had my own experience that gave me a bit of reassurance that I was not alone in experiencing this. The preceding anecdote with Kyle Buller and Paul Stamets came to me in the years after this realization. And they keep coming in.

In the following, Aubrey is describing a dream he had a month before traveling to the Amazon to make documentaries on Huachuma Cactus and the Ayahuasca brew. [[Youtube](https://youtu.be/ol4zQ2nYCdE)]

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“...So anyways, we’re going to Peru to drink Ayahuasca, we’re going to meet Don Howard who we’ve done two documentaries with now..Awesome guy, he’s like Gandalf the White Wizard.

But I knew this one was going to get interesting because about a month before, sometime in August (we were going in September) about a month before, I woke up sometime in the middle of the night, from a dream. And in this dream I look over and to my left hand side I see this demon head, this gnarly looking demon head-nosferatu looking thing, and he’s just looking away, and in my dream he looks at me, stares at me dead in the eye and goes *‘I’m going to kill you on September 23rd…’*

So I wake up and I’m a little freaked out and thought ‘damn that was specific’ right?. And I know that our Peru trip was right over that time period, so I go to the calendar of events, the itinerary, and that night [September 23rd] is the night we’re drinking Ayahuasca, for the first time…I played out all the scenarios [thinking] what was that? Maybe it was a metaphor? Hopefully it wasn’t for real, you know maybe I might have known that date in my head so I’m not saying that this is supernatural, it’s all kinda metaphor, but it was very specific. So, by the time we get out there I had this feeling like ‘man somethings going to come up here’, because something is in my psyche that’s incredibly specific about this…”

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He would drink a month later on that date and experience just one of the many reasons why the word ‘Ayahuasca’ translates from Quechua as ‘the vine of the dead’ or ‘vine of death’.

Aubrey Marcus’ dreams included the context of a date on which he would drink Ayahuasca. While in Peru, during his experience with Ayahuasca on that particular date, the same ‘entity’ that visited I’m in his dream returns, appearing as the same ‘demon-head nosferatu looking thing’. The entity comes to Aubrey and rips his heart out of his chest, holding it in front of him, all while giving him lessons about the power of his heart. After imparting this wisdom upon him, the entity seals his heart back inside his chest and sends him on his way not as a nosferatu like creature, but as a big, smiling buddha-monkey, with the message “we are the pleasure monkeys”. At the time of his dream, he was aware that he would be drinking Ayahuasca ‘sometime around that date.’

The dream that I opened this chapter with also occurred about a month prior to my first time drinking Ayahuasca. The big difference between Aubrey’s and my own experience is that a month prior to my first time drinking the brew, I had no idea that I would be partaking in a ceremony. My dream did not reference a date as Aubrey’s did. My dream’s *context* was sensory in nature.

That particular dream’s sensory nature was quite similar to the animate and sensory nature of the Ayahuasca experience in the immediacy of ingestion. I have even experienced little hallmarks of that very first experience later on in Ayahuasca and Mushroom journeys, i.e. a reference to a known location, and physical/emotional sensations. It is as if the same artist were using the same brushes to create it. As with Aubrey’s experience, the dream was the preview and later, the Ayahuasca “journey” itself was the continuation. In both his experience and mine, there was another ‘presence’ in the dream, which seemed to have control over what *we* were experiencing. As crazy as it sounds, this is an attribute of the Ayahuasca experience. I did not make the connection for a while. It was like getting a preview of what was to come a month later. The contextual clues from my first pre-Aya dream would not return for close to two years, at which point I had been drinking Ayahuasca almost monthly. The dreams came back, and they continue to this very day.

In my experience, Ayahuasca is an artist and a curator, and our mind is the gallery and the canvas. You could also say that Ayahuasca is the playwright, the stage and the characters. You may notice one character that stands out a bit more than the others, one that is more prominent. When psychedelic detractors discuss the *entities* that are sometimesencountered in these states, they ask ’*Is what you experience real?*’ I would respond to it with, ‘Is Mickey Mouse real? No. Is the intelligence that drew Mickey Mouse real? Yes.’

The dream team makes us think outside of the box, it breaks internal barriers. And of the many other things that Ayahuasca does, I think one thing that all who have experienced it would agree on is it makes us confront our fears.

As humans, we have a pretty specific set of fears related to unknowns or ‘big questions’ surrounding our existence. One is the fear of death, and another one of those fears is uncertainty of what else is out there in the universe. Are we alone?

A month after I dreamt of a disk in the sky, I experienced a death of sorts. And with it I came to the intense realization that there were many other ways of experiencing and much more to this existence than I could ever have conceived of prior. In the years since, I have experienced the myriad ways that this ‘other’ intelligence can present itself. Including a somewhat reliable way of encountering what I now confidently describe as “a*n intelligence that transcends time and space.*”

At the age of 33, two years into my journey with the plants, I had a series of dreams that came straight from the mind of Ayahuasca. Little multi-sensory clues, little dots that at some point I realized I had no choice but to connect.

The impetus came in the form of approximately five of these dreams. About a year and a half into my journey with the plants, the dreams started happening again. It seemed to me like I had to recognize their importance, their relevance.. I had to realize that this was not a flashback. This was not ‘dream psychosis’. This was not a ‘projection of my subconscious’. This was a very ‘real’ phenomenon. Once I formed that realization, the rest of the dreams started rolling in. Like being fed little bite sized chunks of information to digest.

This series of dreams which took place over two years were book-ended by dreams where I was in the presence of *disk shaped objects,* the first of which I detailed at the beginning of this piece. The second was a dream that happened approximately two and a half years later. This dream would form the terminus of the most bizarre and significant sequence of events in my life.

In this dream, I was holding onto a liquid metallic disk-shaped object. Accompanying me was someone else that I knew well, but they appeared as they were when I was just a young child. We had our arms extended outwards, seemingly connected to this object. We stood seemingly still but were at the same time traveling *through the surface* of an uphill slope of a mountain. The ground below us crumbled and the trees in front of us split into pieces, and moved along a disc shaped path around us and reformed in our wake. We crested the mountain and shot up into the sky.

Then the entire scene changed. I was instead viewing a dimly lit room from a distance, almost as if staring into a shoebox diorama. I experienced a full body emotion of pure *disgust*. I physically felt things I can never un-feel, and was shown an image that I can never forget. And like that very first dream, the sensations became so intense that I woke up.

“Another disk”, I thought.

I sat with that for a few weeks, wondering, ‘What did *that* one mean?’ I knew at that point that there must have been some reason as to why this was happening but I had not yet heard of any other examples of this. In these experiences and the conversations that they led to, I pieced together something about my own life that shook me to my core. I can confidently say that this was one of the most significant events of my life. Understand that this information is deeply personal, and I will share more details when it is all ready to be shared.

It had not yet taken on this dimension.

There are various schools of thought regarding unconscious and subconscious memories and traumas. Some branches of thought do link UFO experiences with traumatic memories recollected from other parts of the experiencer’s life. I don’t particularly subscribe to one or another of them, although they are interesting. They must hold some tiny truths in relation to this extraordinarily strange puzzle.

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In his essay “UFOs: A Modern Mystery of Things Seen in the Skies”, first published on New Years Day 1958, the psychologist Carl Jung discusses the *psychological* aspects of the UFO phenomenon*.*

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“Not only are Ufos seen, they are of course dreamt about. This is particularly interesting to the psychologist, because the dreams tell us in what sense they are understood by the unconscious…Certain objects are seen in the earth’s atmosphere, both by day and by night, which are unlike any known meteorological phenomena. They are not meteors, not misidentified fixed stars, not ‘temperature inversions,’ not cloud formations, not migrating birds, not aerial balloons, not balls of fire. And certainly not the **delirious products of intoxication** or fever, not the plain lies of eyewitnesses. **What is as a rule seen is the body of round shape**, **disk-like or spherical**, glowing or shining fierily in different colors, or more seldom, **a cigar shaped or cylindrical figure** of various sizes. It is reported that occasionally they are invisible to the naked eye but leave a ‘blip’ on the radar screen. **The round bodies in particular are figures such as the unconscious produces in dreams, visions, etc**..this is not by any means a new invention, for it can be found in all epochs and in all places, and it reappears time and time again, independent of tradition..”

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The imagery of the disk, the sphere, the golden wheel, the mandala, is something that transcends time periods and cultural backgrounds. Maybe It is an image that something deep down inside of us comprehends in a strange way. If anything, what this also indicates is that I am far from the first person to experience a UFO or disk like object in a dream.

In today’s culture, mentioning disk shaped objects in the sky or UFOs, or their more contemporary acronym UAP (unidentified aerial phenomenon) brings up quite a lot of baggage.

I have also had UFO encounters while awake. Four times I have seen something anomalous in the sky, including a blinking or flashing ball of light(twice), a pulsating light. And most mysteriously, a dark and completely silent disk like object with no visible means of propulsion that traversed the length of Highway 29 from our view about a kilometer off of the road, as we were set back amongst the rocks. This particular one occurred in broad daylight, the middle of the day that my wife and I saw, two hours before we were to provide music for an Ayahuasca group.

I think it not to be a coincidence that of those four times, three of these occurrences have happened either in the hours *before* an ayahuasca ceremony or in the hours after the major effects have subsided. Never in the immediacy of ingestion has this happened (but *something else* happens within the major effects that I think will be of utmost importance in truly understanding this overall phenomenon).. If I include the experiences of my friends, that number grows, and also includes similar sightings surrounding psilocybin mushroom experiences.

*Correlation* is defined as ‘a mutual relationship or connection between two or more things.’ In regards to the wider UFO phenomenon, there isn’t a whole lot of correlation in the overall accounts. In these examples we have three data points: dreams, tryptamine based psychedelics, and UFOs. A venn diagram with the three would have each overlapping with a big question mark in the middle.

<img id=magonia />

Jacques Vallee is a well known scientist and author, and has long been regarded as one of the most respected and senior scientific investigators of unidentified aerial phenomena. A main character is based off of him in Steven Spieldberg’s 1977 film “Close Encounters of the Third Kind”. Vallee is well known for researching the commonalities in UFO reports in modern times with those from before the ‘modern era’ of this strange phenomenon. He is one of many who notice the same patterns in the accounts. He compares modern UFO encounters with tales of apparitions from the middle ages, and faerie lore from Europe and Asia. In a nutshell, same script, different costumes, worldwide, and not confined to the post WWII ‘Roswell’ era. This phenomenon goes back to prehistory, at least to the time of our cave dwelling and hunter gatherer ancestors.

In Vallee’s book “Passport to Magonia”, he mentions a case where a farmer dreams every night for a week that a UFO will land in his field, and then on the final night, one does. According to Vallee, this particular *dreaming* detail places that particular case ‘in the best tradition of the fairy faith’. Vallee was well known for proposing the interdimensional theory of UFOs, which stated that the craft and beings were possibly from different dimensions, rather than being advanced biological beings from planets in our own universe. He states:   
  
<div id=quote>

“There exists a natural phenomenon whose manifestations border on both the physical and mental. There is a medium in which *human dreams* can be implemented, and this is the mechanism by which UFO events are generated...We could also imagine that for centuries some superior intelligence has been projecting into our environment (chosen for reasons best known to that intelligence) various artificial objects whose creation is a pure form of art. Perhaps it enjoys our puzzlement, or perhaps it is trying to teach us some new concept. Perhaps it is acting in a purely gratuitous effort, and its creations are as impossible for us to understand as is the Picasso sculpture in Chicago to the birds that perch on it. Like Picasso and his art, the UFO master shapes our culture, but most of us remain unaware of it.”  
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Dr. Jacques Vallee proposes that there is a genuine UFO phenomenon, partly associated with a form of non-human consciousness that manipulates space and time. The phenomenon has been active throughout human history, and seems to masquerade in various forms to different cultures, over different time periods.

He states:

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“If it were possible to make three-dimensional holograms with mass, and to project them through time, I would say that this [is the UFO phenomena]. And with that theory we could explain many of the apparitions. In numerous UFO cases and in some religious miracles, the beings appeared as three dimensional images whose feet did not actually touch the ground…It is tempting to assume that the witness, far from witnessing by chance the maneuvers of interplanetary visitors, was deliberately exposed to a scene designed to be recorded by him and transmitted to us.”

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<img id=hynekVallee />

Jacques Valee was a student of J. Allen Hynek, of *Project Blue Book* fame*.* This wasa government program whose stated purpose was to investigate the UFO phenomenon, which has since become the subject of much scrutiny, even by Hynek himself.

After Project Blue Book ended, he wrote of his experiences investigating the broader realm of anomalous experiences. He later proposed the idea that some UFO sightings and encounters might be related to psychological and dreamlike experiences rather than physical phenomena. Hynek suggested that the interpretation of such experiences should consider the psychological and emotional factors involved, and he explores the possibility that some UFO encounters may be rooted in dream states or altered states of consciousness.

While dreams were not a central focus of Hynek's work, he acknowledged their relevance to the study of UFOs and the experiences reported by witnesses. His writings expressed a broader interest in understanding the subjective aspects of the UFO phenomenon and the potential role of human perception and psychology, and he examined altered states of consciousness as carriers to these experiences. I can certainly attest to that.

The connection between plants, dreams, altered states of consciousness is deeply rooted in indigenous traditions. In the book “The Secret Teachings of Plants: The Intelligence of the Heart of Nature”, author Stephen Harold Buhner talks about how indigenous healers from all over the world know about the plant Yarrow’s healing abilities, even on different continents, independent of each other. When asked how they knew, they all said the plant ‘came to them in a dream, and told them.’

This archetypal experience is alive in the origin stories of Ayahuasca itself as well, as the instructions on which plants to use to make the brew are frequently said to have been delivered in a dream. In his excellent book on Amazonian Shamanism “Singing to the Plants”, Stephen Beyer mentions one of his teachers, Doña Maria. He states:

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“Many indigenous peoples assert that their knowledge of plants and their uses comes from some other-than-human person who appears in a vision or a dream. These spirits may, as in the mestizo tradition, be the plants themselves, but not necessarily; when Doña Maria was young, for example, it was the Virgin Mary, not the plant spirits, who appeared in her dreams, showed her the healing plants, and taught her the plants to heal specific diseases.”

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Such narratives highlight the profound connection between the dream realm, altered states of consciousness induced by plants and fungi, and a tremendous mystery. The intertwining of dreams, molecular compounds produced by nature, and human perception underscores the intricate relationship between the mind and the mysterious forces that co-inhabit this world with us, forces that humans have encountered repeatedly across cultures, locations and historical epochs.

An accepted theory referred to as *the* *neuropsychological theory of cave art* states that our earliest encounters with these intelligences are immortalized in archaic cave art the world over. These primitive humans encountered what is still today regarded as one of the most impactful experiences a human can have. They have undoubtedly shaped humanity for eons, and manifests currently as the UFO experience, unbeknownst to us in this modern age.

What Ayahuasca and Psilocybin mushrooms have in common are specific chemical compounds within their makeup. Psilocin, found in mushrooms, contains 4-hydroxy-N-dimethyltryptamine. And Ayahuasca, made from the vine which is it’s namesake, contains Beta-carboline alkaloids, including compounds like harmaline, harmine, or d-tetrahydroharmine. The leaves of plants like Psychotria viridis or D. caberana, which are used in Ayahuasca brews, contain the powerful psychoactive compound N, N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT). Dimethyltryptamine has garnered various nicknames, such as "The God Molecule", and "The Spirit Molecule," highlighting its profound effects on consciousness. A common myth in the psychedelic realm is that DMT is the active component in Ayahuasca. I would argue that it’s not that simple.

Interestingly, the dream experiences seem to be unique to Ayahuasca and mushroom journeys, and are not typically reported with synthesized or extracted DMT experiences. This observation suggests that there might be more complexity to the molecular combination DMT and harmala and beta-carboline alkaloids than a purely materialistic or reductionist perspective can explain. The interplay between these compounds and the human mind remains a captivating mystery. Of the many things that I am trying to demonstrate here, this is one that I would underscore the most: There is a schism in the psychedelic renaissance between materialists who believe that these compounds can be synthesized in a lab, and those who do not think that the full experiential potential of them can be synthesized. They believe that the true expression of these compounds comes from the ground.

The common thread among the dreams experienced by individuals like myself, Paul Stamets, Aubrey Marcus, Kyle Buller, and our friend lies in the consumption of DMT containing plants and fungi.

From an evolutionary perspective, the common ancestor of plants and fungi is estimated to have existed around 1.1 billion years ago during the Proterozoic Eon. This organism likely possessed characteristics similar to both modern plants and fungi. Over time, these lineages diverged, leading to the diverse plant kingdom and fungi we recognize today. Before plants existed, the earth was covered in mushrooms that were as tall as houses and trees. While the earliest plants grew out of the ground, fungal mycelium acted as their roots.

As stated, the re-creation of these profound experiences with synthetic counterparts remains a topic of debate in the psychedelic community. However, current studies often do not delve deeply into the intricacies of these experiences before the drug is taken. After all, why would they? A side effect of a drug doesn’t happen before the drug is taken.

Does any given person know when they are wearing ideological blinders? Does an entire scientific establishment?

This raises questions about the potential loss of essential aspects of the psychedelic experience due to a lack of data or the hesitancy to explore those realms of the experience that may be regarded as too ‘woo-woo’. It is essential to recognize the significance of these experiences and their potential impact on our understanding of human consciousness. Ignoring or dismissing these aspects could prevent us from making groundbreaking discoveries about the human mind. It would be a shame if this aspect of the psychedelic experience got lost in the sauce simply because of the reluctance of our minds to want to *go* *there*.

Let’s re-conceptualize this phenomenon as I do with these statements:

The ripples from a stone that we throw into a pond do not arrive before the stone penetrates the water.

And it is not reasonable to think that these experiences are the result of the power of suggestibility.

In the final days editing this piece, I take note of [another anecdote](https://youtu.be/uM7gp7CP9eY), this time from author Brian Muraresku, again, from the Joe Rogan podcast.

Brian is a lawyer turned author with a background in classical languages. Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. In his debut book *The Immortality Key*, Brian Muraresku writes about historical role of mind altering plants and fungi in the Ancient Greek world up to the present day. ever having experienced a psychedelic substance himself , to ‘maintain objectivity’.

Despite this, he has dreamt of drinking this ancient Greek potion, twice.

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“I’ve had a couple dreams where I’ve imbibed the potion and uh, it’s very strange actually man. I don’t have visions, there isn’t a breakthrough experience but there’s this sense of overwhelming calm and serenity. And so I never felt like I was hallucinating things that weren’t there, maybe I got the wrong potion. But, when I’ve had these experiences in the dreamworld, it’s like the dreamworld wraps itself around me in a cocoon.

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The two get into the reluctance researchers in academia who do not want to tarnish their reputations want to be public about their experimentation, thus reinforcing the stigma.

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“But also it’s like very unpopular until recently to even suggest anything about psychedelics. Think of all the people whose careers suffered because they did bring up psychedelics.  
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Brian continues…

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That’s who I write about in the book. Professor Ruck, 88 years old. He’s still at Boston University in the late 70s when they unleashed that hypothesis and it really impacted his career in the eighties and nineties and beyond. I was aware of that. That’s partly the reason why I haven’t tried psychedelics. I wasn’t personally called to that experience.

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Joe chimes in

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“If you were a guy who did psychedelics and then you’re reporting on psychedelics,then people be like ‘oh this is confirmation bias. This guy wants to believe this’, but instead, since you haven’t it’s probably better for the overall acceptance of your research that you’re looking at it purely from an academic perspective. You’re just looking at fact-based evidence-based historically-based and trying to find the data.

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In *The Immortality Key,* Brian examines the pagan continuity hypothesis, which in his book’s context, is the theory that the Christian tradition of a wine based sacrament is descended from the Eleusinian Mystery tradition of the Ancient Greeks. The premise is that in that time period, alcoholic beverages were different, and quite often, medicinal and mind altering plants were often mixed in, which served to preserve and decoct the chemical components from the plant materials into the wine itself. In short, the point was not to get drunk. The fermented juice was merely a carrier of something else, which produced an experience that is closer to Ayahuasca than to the wine and beer that is prevalent today.

An important detail of his account is that though he has never consumed a psychedelic in real life, he has consumed the *Kykeon* in his dreams, and even felt its effects in his dream. I would argue that he is experiencing the same phenomenon as myself, Kyle Buller and Audrey Marcus.

A common practice among Greek philosophers was the practice of *pharmakon*, the knowledge of medicinal plants and fungi. In Eleusis, initiates would drink a powerful potion called the *Kykeon,* and would go through some sort of an experience*.* Muraresku’s work is a continuation of Professor Carl Ruck of the Boston University Classics department, who published “The Road to Eleusis” in 1978.

He also points out that if you are an author, scientist, or even a person with academic credentials, but you have consumed a psychedelic, your credibility is automatically questioned by your peers. This is the *stigma* that these altered states carry unfortunately. You cannot be trusted if you’ve done drugs. You can be a drunk, but if you experienced any of the other states of mine that this world has to offer you, you’re demonized. You’re discredited.

It is not *a* shame, it is *the* shame. It is the ultimate failure of our imagination.

So, why do we drink psychedelic potions in our dreams? Why do we dream of UFOs?   
  
I browse Reddit one day and I come across a post appropriately titled [“Had a dream about taking ayahuasca”](https://www.reddit.com/r/Ayahuasca/comments/14wsk3q/had_a_dream_about_taking_ayahuasca/). Another strange echo of a sound I’ve heard before.

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“[I have] never tried ayahuasca but for the past year had a strong desire to experience it. Last night I had a dream which was really weird and twisted and hard to explain, where I tried ayahuasca. The main logic and context behind it was that after trying it, my mind got rebooted and I had to start opening different doors with different classrooms and learn new principles from scratch. I felt as if I was a new but empty person who had to experience life all over again.

I know this is strange but that’s what happened. Also the way I described it is quite vague, but the dream was very unordinary and words can’t describe the full extent of it. Something like a mushroom trip where you can’t clearly explain what happened but gained a bunch of insights all of a sudden.

Has anyone else had this? What could this dream have meant?“

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Another term that the indigenous to describe Ayahuasca is ‘plant teacher’*.* In many of these experiences, it is like encountering a very old, very wise teacher.

These ideas may seem weird, but at a certain point, they only reinforce themselves. These experiences point to something larger than just the effects of drugs. They pertain directly to some of the most profound questions that we as humans face regarding our existence. There is a bias in the psychedelic research world towards materialistic consciousness. And as the psychedelic renaissance marches onwards, it is possible we are only scratching the surface of these profound connections.

With all of this we can re-imagine that age old question, “Is it ‘real’ or is it ‘imagined?’” Maybe the answer is ‘both’.

This is where I find my purpose in this renaissance of sorts.

Aya Dreams