



The Psychedelic Policy Quagmire: Health, Law, Freedom, and Society (Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality)

From Praeger



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Edited by two preeminent scholars, this book provides coverage of the policy issues related to the increasingly diverse treatments, practices, and applications of psychedelics.

- Covers history, law, social use, intellectual and sacramental practice, and current medical research, bringing the debate about psychedelic drugs up to date for the 21st century
- Summarizes evidence regarding the positive therapeutic effects of psychoactive drugs to show why regulations need to be changed
- Encompasses the work of the leading international researchers in the field
- Includes personal observations, vignettes, and narratives

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Editorial Review

Review

"It is inevitable that this book will be a catalyst for lively and robust debate. Recommended to academics and researchers in various fields, including psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, and the arts, this work should challenge many long-held assumptions about these fascinating substances." - **BJPsych Bulletin**

"[A] fascinating, important, and timely book. It has particular relevance for American psychologists." - **PsycCRITIQUES**

Review

"This thorough, thoughtful review of the history of psychedelics, from drug policy and religious ramifications to our current understanding of its potential, powerful use in psychotherapy, is a must read. An impressive gathering of scientific minds and experienced clinicians offer the most up-to-date and detailed insider analyses of whence we've come, where we are, and the path to be forged ahead in integrating knowledge from these sacred substances." (Julie Holland, MD, Editor, *Ecstasy: The Complete Guide. A comprehensive look at the risks and benefits of MDMA*. Editor, *The Pot Book: A Complete Guide to Cannabis*.)

"This is a very valuable collection of essays on the public health and policy implications of research on psychedelics. Starting from the premise that individuals have a constitutional right to change their consciousness by pharmacological means, the contributors discuss a range of issues that arise as society attempts to integrate the uses of psychedelics into an evolving social system. Psychedelic experiences can provide unique insights into the complex relationships between mind and body, especially when studied from multiple perspectives and paradigms. Yet their use in treatment or research is unusually tightly controlled and therefore subject to enormous political challenges and methodological puzzles. This volume gives an excellent overview of the range of issues involved, pointing the way to new possibilities in the area of drug policy." (Ralph Metzner, Ph.D., Psychotherapist and Professor Emeritus at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Editor/Author of *Sacred Vine of Spirits - Ayahuasca*, *Sacred Mushroom of Visions - Teonanacatl*, *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* (with Ram Dass), *Maps of Consciousness*, *Green Psychology*, *The Well of Remembrance*, and the 7-volume series *The Ecology of Consciousness*.)

"No topic in the study and analysis of emergent spiritualities has more potential to change what we think about pretty much everything than psychedelics. Perhaps not surprisingly, no topic is also more heavily disciplined and policed than this one. What a welcome intervention into this situation by such a gifted collective of writers, so full of hope now with new possibilities, new reasons, new words and new worlds." (Jeffrey J. Kripal, J. Newton Rayzor Professor of Religion, Rice University)

"A society that has so grievously failed persons with mental illness is in no position to prohibit rigorous research on a whole range of drugs. I very much hope that this book will aid in helping the long-delayed reconsideration of these policies that is now taking place." (Jonathan D. Moreno, PhD, Professor, University of Pennsylvania, Senior Advisor, Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Author, *Deciding Together: Bioethics and Moral Consensus*.)

"We are a strange culture, priding ourselves on openness and discovery of new knowledge to advance humanity, yet we almost wiped out the opportunities for new knowledge that psychedelics can bring. This

book is vital to resuming our march forward in the search for knowledge, both practical/therapeutic and spiritual." (Charles T. Tart, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, University of California at Davis. Author of more than 200 scientific journal articles and books including *Altered States of Consciousness: A Book of Readings* (1969), and *The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal is Bringing Science and Spirit Together* (2009).)

"We clearly need a sane, scientifically and clinically informed approach to public policy issues around psychedelics and this book offers a valuable exploration of the issues." (Roger Walsh MD, PhD, Professor, University of California Medical School)

"Psychedelic drugs are some of the most fascinating substances known to man. However, for many years their use has been restricted because their unenlightened legal status. It is now time to sweep away the cobwebs and reconsider how psychedelic drugs can be widely employed for the benefit of mankind. This excellent volume provides cogent arguments as to why a review of the situation is urgently required." (Richard J Miller, Alfred Newton Richards Professor, Northwestern University Medical School)

"*The Psychedelic Policy Quagmire* is highly recommended for those who are willing to have their taken-for-granted assumptions about psychedelics deeply challenged. In this provocative, timely, and fascinating text, J. Harold Ellens and Thomas B. Roberts have assembled a stellar collection of thoughtful essays that address the crucially important, and dauntingly complex, ethical, cultural, therapeutic, and religious issues that arise in the face of the resurgence of psychedelics in our contemporary culture. After suffering from decades of political, social, and legal repression, it is time for an intelligent re-evaluation of the transformative potential of mind-altering substances, which the authors of this lucid text courageously provide." (Dr. G. William Barnard, Professor of Religious Studies, Southern Methodist University; author of *Exploring Unseen Worlds: William James and the Philosophy of Mysticism* and *Living Consciousness: The Metaphysical Vision of Henri Bergson*.)

"This important book will reinvigorate discussions about the meaning and value of psychedelic drugs at a time when new research is showing great promise. The essays assembled by Roberts and Ellens address thought-provoking issues across the curriculum, including matters of politics, religion, cognitive science, and medicine. Everyone who reads this collection with an open mind will find much to reflect upon, gain a richer understanding of the psychedelic experience, and begin to see why these drugs have been the source of so much curiosity and inspiration." (Wayne Glusser, Professor of English at DePauw University, author of *Cultural Encyclopedia of LSD*.)

"An insightful compendium that does not shy away from the difficult questions, *Quagmire* truly exemplifies the vast extent to which psychedelic research has matured over the last two decades. While significant emphasis is placed on the myriad obstacles that have impeded the extensive investigation of psychedelics, this book is, at its core, about progress in a complex field that has come to redefine inter-disciplinary collaboration. Any book that places psychedelics atop the nexus between the individual, society, and the human race as a whole will undoubtedly find its detractors, but *Quagmire* confidently illustrates how psychedelics have transcended seemingly outdated academic, cultural, and spiritual paradigms. Ellens and Roberts have constructed a cutting-edge anthology that is sure to give rise to honest and, above all, informed discussions about the potential roles psychedelics can take on in the near future." (Adam G. Van Hagen, AfrikaBurn Sanctuary Community of Practice)

"Psychedelics have been ridiculously outlawed for far too long. Careful research indicates multiple benefits psychedelics can provide to society's mental health. To continue our repression of psychedelics for psychotherapeutic and medical usage is irrational and irresponsible. I enthusiastically endorse the vision and

goals of *The Psychedelic Policy Quagmire*." (Hank Pellissier, director of Brighter Brains Institute, author of *Brighter Brains: 225 ways to elevate or injure IQ*)

Drugs like psilocybin, peyote, ayahuasca, LSD, and MDMA (ecstasy) have guided spiritual quests, inspired artistic creation, assisted healers, and even aided scientific discovery for centuries. Yet they are (debatably) classified under the "Controlled Substances Act in the category reserved for the most dangerous drugs?those with a high potential for abuse, no currently accepted medical use, and lacking accepted safety for use under medical supervision. This classification along with other policy decisions has led to the Catch 22 situation which has made research about medical, spiritual, and intellectual usefulness extremely difficult. Ellen and Roberts have pulled together a thought provoking collection of scholarly articles, invited lectures, and policy discussions that illustrate how we got into (and how we might get out) of what they correctly call the "The Psychedelic Policy Quagmire." The time has come to develop safe and productive policies that will generate rather than suppress inquiry, and this book makes a significant contribution to this discussion." (Stanley G. McCracken, Ph.D., LCSW, Lecturer, The University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration)

" *The Psychedelic Policy Quagmire* is a thoroughly engaging journey into the political and ethical issues surrounding the use of psychedelics and entheogens in the present social environment. The authors of these chapters clarify just how damaging our current repressive policies have been in terms of intellectual inquiry, educational possibilities, therapeutic opportunities, and even to our personal freedoms. However, the chapters are not simply a recitation of the damages done, they also provide solutions to the challenges facing research on psychedelics and entheogens. The solutions offered are not only creative and pioneering but they are also practical and offer the opportunity to shift the current paradigm in Western science." (William C. Compton, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University. Author of: *An Introduction to Positive Psychology*, *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing* (with Edward Hoffman), and *Eastern Psychology: Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism*.)

"Courageous and insightful. . . exposing the utter nonsense of current drug policies blocking research that might lead to effective treatments for PTSD, compulsive and addictive behaviors, and disabling anxiety. Contributors to this volume explore past and present research involving psychedelics, including the latest evidence showing that psilocybin reliably "occasions" profoundly meaningful spiritual or mystical experiences. As we enter a new era of "spiritual but not religious," we need a new science of spiritual experience. But first of all, we need new drug laws. That's why we need this book." (Ron Cole-Turner, Professor of Theology and Ethics, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary)

About the Author

J. Harold Ellens, PhD, is a retired university professor of philosophy and psychology, a retired Presbyterian theologian and pastor, a retired U.S. Army chaplain (Colonel), and executive director emeritus of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies.

Thomas B. Roberts, PhD, is an emeritus professor of educational psychology at Northern Illinois University, where he taught Foundations of Psychedelic Studies as an Honors Program Seminar.

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