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Psychedelics, and the Search for Higher Consciousness

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UWO Inspiring Minds 2021 Submission

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Title: “Psychedelics, and the Search for Higher Consciousness”

Description:

Can psychedelics induce a higher state of consciousness? Much of our conscious experience comes from what we see -- our visual system takes basic features like shape, texture, and motion, to create the vivid objects and scenes that make up our world. Much of what we see, however, is also influenced by our prior expectations. For instance, would you believe me if I told you this mask was actually hollow? All of the faces we have ever seen were ones that 'stick out'; our brain finds it so unlikely for this face to actually be hollow, and so we see it as sticking out. Scientists have argued that psychedelics release us from these kinds of expectations -- this means that someone on psychedelics might actually be able to tell the difference between a hollow and regular face. Do psychedelics reveal 'true reality'? Could this be some form of 'higher consciousness'?