

# Psychedelics

**OPEN**

## EDITORIAL

# Psychedelics, Yes—but Not Only: Redefining the boundaries of consciousness research as part of humanity's ongoing attempt to transcend our incompleteness

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Launching a new journal is rarely the beginning people imagine it to be. It is not the first word, but the latest entry in a conversation already unfolding; in fits, in fragments, and in contradictions. *Psychedelics* enters the scholarly domain not with a thesis, but with a question: How should we think, write, and research consciousness in a landscape where definitions erode faster than they are drawn?

From the outset, our journal's indexed title, *Psychedelics*, has served a practical purpose. It signaled the core of our focus: compounds that alter perception, interrogate the self, and hint at pharmacological poetry once dismissed as hallucination. But even in our earliest planning, we knew this name alone could never hold the full scale of what we hoped to publish.

So we edited our subtitle. Not for flair, but because the original left something unsaid. It is now:

### The Journal of Psychedelic and Psychoactive Drug Research

This is not rebranding. It is a quiet correction of what was always slightly misaligned. In truth, we were never just about psychedelics. We were always about the pharmacopeia of mind alteration: about those molecules, interventions, and subjective thresholds that force psychiatry, neuroscience, and the humanities to speak to one another, often uncomfortably.

There is, of course, precedent for this kind of reframing. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) has passed through successive editions in search of definitional coherence. Yet with each attempt, as I have written elsewhere, it manages only to get ready an unfinished and unconvincing edition (1). Borrowed from Drummond de Andrade that metaphor states: "The problem is not to concoct [ourselves]. [The problem] is to be concocted hour after hour without ever attaining our own convincing edition<sup>1</sup>" (2) (see Fig. 1). It is not only about the DSM. It is about science. About our journals. It is about us. We are forever concocting a version of ourselves that will never be a satisfying and finished product. At a deeper level, are psychedelics the latest tools in our endless search for the unattainable best version of ourselves?

And so, this editorial is not an announcement but an acknowledgment. A statement of publishing continuity masquerading as change. *Psychedelics*? Yes. But not only. Not only serotonergic. Not only hallucinogenic. Not only the easily narrativized compounds that lend themselves to funding cycles and headlines.

We are interested in MDMA. In ketamine. In ibogaine. Not because they fit a model, but because they do not. They exist at the margins as compounds that resist categorization, pharmacologically unruly, never quite settled within any taxonomy. What exactly makes something "psychedelic"? Is it its receptor target? Its cultural trajectory? The kind of story it provokes in the clinical encounter? Each of these is partly right, and wholly insufficient. The boundaries we rely on are "concocted hour af-



**Figure 1.** The unfinished process of creation. The image illustrates the endless process of revision and reformulation described by Drummond de Andrade, where humans continually attempt to compose definitive versions of knowledge and self without ever reaching completion. From "Diagnosing Madness," by Julio Licinio, 2013, *Science*, 340(6139), p. 1406. Illustration by Joe Sutliff/[www.cdad.com/joe](http://www.cdad.com/joe). Reprinted with permission from AAAS.

ter hour without ever attaining our own convincing edition." Those boundaries may be useful, but they are never final. Ultimately, our compounds of interest are part of humanity's ongoing attempt to transcend our incompleteness. We invite our readers to consider not just the classifications of these substances, but their deeper meaning in human experience.

So we reframed a subtitle. Not to embellish, but because the original title left something unsaid.

Let me then say this clearly, if not plainly. Our expectations remain exactly where they have always been. The work we publish must show its thinking. It must stand up, not through flourish, but through reason, through structure, and through data that does not fall apart when looked at closely.

But this is also true: ideas do not always resolve on schedule. Some arrive half-shaped. Others take the long way around, circling the issue until something more honest begins to take form.

We have room for writing that resists the urge to wrap things up. Sometimes, staying with the discomfort tells us more than reaching a

<sup>1</sup>"O problema não é inventar. É ser inventado hora após hora e nunca ficar pronta nossa edição convincente."





quick conclusion. It may take longer. It may feel unfinished. That, in itself, can be a form of clarity as we accept the unattainability of “our own convincing edition” – the permanently elusive ideal version of ourselves.

We know what it is to work inside incomplete systems: clinical, diagnostic, and epistemic. And we know that even in their perennial incompleteness, these systems shape lives. That is why we publish. Not to finalize, but to keep going. To revise the conversation, rather than to end it.

So to our readers, authors, and critics: anticipate contradiction. Some compounds will not fit. Some theories are still in the middle of becoming something else. Because the mind, like the molecules we study, was never meant to be confined to the box it arrived in.

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