

PSYCHEDELIC RITUALS IN THE PLANETARY ERA

Ana Flávia Nogueira Nascimento

A long time ago in isolated tribes around the world, the union and the symbolic communication of the group was established in social rituals. Every time someone was hurt or sick, rituals for healing were celebrated. Also when the tribe needed help from the God of nature to have a good plantation, or to receive rain, or to merci the help of God in their lives they made rituals to connect their selves with the fount of divine creation – Mother Nature.

This old rituals were based in some constant elements – trance music, collective dances, and in some occasions involved also the use of plants to open the doors of spiritual vision.

With the development of Occidental Society and capitalism a lot of transformations occurred. In association of a new way of thinking man started to be more value than nature and money started to be more value than man. So, with these new values our society lost the holly connection with Mother Nature and the consequence was devastated, because we lost the simple and perfect knowledge that already existed in Nature to worship only science and the material world.

Today we can see clearly that the Planet is sick because of how our specie has acted for constant years destroying nature for money and power. So what to do? Some people around the world are already waked in their soul and minds and are conscious of the important mission they have in helping our planet and the people how lives in it to build a new planetary society. So, how to help sick population and sick Planet?

One way that is possible is thrown touching peoples heart with love, art, culture, spirituality and with the simple contact with nature!

We live in a Planet that is connected, there aren't boundaries anymore. The development of technology and the evolution of our specie *Homo Sapiens Demens* have brought us a lot of transformations that can be observed thru the eyes of art, culture and spirituality.

This essay is an abstract of a thesis “Psychedelic Festivals in the Planetary Era” that presents an attempt to a further understanding of a social phenomenon known as psychedelic trance global movement which has been gaining more and more incomers in the whole country through ritualistic festivities focused on an electronic music style “psychedelic trance” which stimulates dancing and the altered states of consciousness. The manifestations of psychedelic trance festivals create and recreate an altered universe that involves art and psychedelic esthetics, within nature, as the backdrop for ecstatic collective experiences. This short article focuses in a discussion that is a result of the research (anthropology and psychology) and expresses itself through complex articulation.

The research had guidelines such as: Is there a chance of light in such a virtually chaotic dark atmosphere being constructed? What does this movement reflect upon current time? Which are the symbols and myths involved in this movement? Which are the beliefs and the values that guide psychedelic imagery? What needs are implicit in this new festive manifestation? What does this complex ritual express in the planetary era? The camp research was performed in a series of psychedelic trance festivals that took place in Brazil, between year 2003 and 2006. I took part as an observer in eight festivals, in which I gathered interviews and collected material. The research also encompassed the electronic net – Internet – the main means of communication used by the participants of such festivities. After concluding the thesis I traveled to Europe where I worked in Boom Festival (Portugal – had around thirty thousand people from all over the world) at *Cosmikiva*¹ (grounding space). This experience was very interesting because the team was composed by thirty five people from different countries, speaking different languages, and had some important researchers on the psychedelic area related to MAPS. You may find more information about this experience, in the article “A Grounding Space in Psychedelic Festivals”.

¹ The Cosmikiva Project is a community service that provides a safe space at large festivals and events for people having difficulties experiences while under the influence of psychedelic substances and other psychoactive substances. As well as a place to share information and engage dialogue about psychoactive and their potential uses and effects.

**THE CONECTIONS BETWEEN PSYCHEDELIC ART, GLOBAL
CULTURE AND TECNOLOGY**



Boom Festival 2006 – Portugal – Photo by: Author

So, what has changed in rituals that involve trance music, dance and psychoactive substances?

In the Planetary Era, the Earth is connected and the velocity that information travels makes possible to happens an interrelation between cultures that goes beyond boundaries and we have knowledge's of different origins being mixed and giving birth to many different kinds of manifestation in all kinds of levels of behavior, in art manifestation, in relationships, in science, in technology, in music, etc.



The main Dance Floor – Boom Festival – Portugal – Photo: author

This exchange of everything, creates a new form of interrelation, because the limits that existed before doesn't anymore. So, if we think about rituals. A long time ago, the tribes were isolated in areas in the forest, theirs small groups celebrated rituals as a form of participating in the order of life, for example, to be connected with the power of nature, to heal sick people, to ask "mother nature" a good plantation, etc. In most of the rituals that we have notated there were a relation between trance music, dance, and the use of a psychoactive substance. In the old societies there was a specifically knowledge about the use of plants that altered states of mind. And these "sacred" plants were used in the rituals only.

Nowadays, technology and science turned these "sacred" plants in synthesized substances that pass thru laboratory before getting into the people's mind all around the world. But what is complex and makes it uncontrolled is the fact that anywhere in the globe; people have access to many different kinds of psychoactive substances and the social stimulus to use it's now totally associated to pleasure and freedom.



Boom Festival 2006

Another big difference is that ciberculture makes it possible to get information about any kind of ritual or culture at the internet, and this information comes along with music, pictures and videos, it's a complete idea of what happens in different cultures.

Ritual were limited to a group of participants related to social community, to rhythmical music played specific by the tribe, and to a specifically use of psychoactive substance that was related to the knowledge of the group about how to use, the effects, how to control, and what to expect from it, the benefits that were given from Mother Nature. So, this context has failed into a complex interrelation that we find in the XXI century.

In many different kinds of ritual that we find in our Planetary Era, there are mixes of cultures, knowledge's, languages, etc. Even the religious ritual that tries with all the forces to control their participants, we may find an open space were a few people escapes and creates different kinds of participating. The psychedelic festivals that happen around the world are a different kind of contemporary rituals.

The Psychedelic Festivals are related to a global culture that is directed involved with ciberculture, technology, psychedelic art, trance music, dance and the use of psychoactive substances as ways of stimulating altered states of consciousness. The psychedelic culture values the old knowledge about the rituals, the use of psychoactive plants, the rhythmical music, and the trance dance experiences that may give to man the experience of ecstasy.

In the psychedelic festivals around the world there is something new happening that was not possible before. This music movement related directed to ciberculture, found out how to put together people from all different countries to gathering and share. In the areas where psychedelic festivals happens, people from different cultures have the opportunity to be free from the boundaries and laws that tries to control and limit behavior and creation of human kind.

In this meeting all is possible, and the atmosphere created is different from everything even experienced. Everything that is prohibited in our modern society gains freedom. And people have the opportunity to have experiences that where no longer accepted.

And who has already being to this kind of rituals knows that you are one before it and another one after it. This kind of festivals, involves a process of transformation. And when you go thru it and you experience your self in different ways you find out that your inner self contains much more than you believed. In psychedelic rituals, the relation between music, dance and psychedelic substances may give you a new perception of life. It's possible that in psychedelic rituals you may find a new way of felling your body, your soul; of experiencing your perception, of expanding your mind, and also getting more consciousness about what you are doing with your life.

Psychedelic rituals are changing everyday, with the same velocity of the changes happening around the world. Of course we may find also the bad side of our contemporary society included in this kind of meeting, because everything related to human kind contains the light and the darkness. What I observed in these meetings was a lot of egos trying to have more power, or trying to show more knowledge or more spirituality than others.

Also a bad side of these rituals is the big mistake of mixing different kinds of psychoactive substances, what puts a lot of people in bad trips and also give them a no safe experience that may end in losing their consciousness forever. **What makes a big difference between psychedelic rituals in Brazil and in Europe is that in the first one there is no money at all being invested in harm reduction or in safe spaces for people having difficult experiences (bad trips). While in Europe I worked with a group of 30 therapists from different countries, in a safe space created to support people in their psychedelic experiences. The result showed that grounded exploration of altered states can foster deeper personal awareness, insight and healing; but at the same time, what happened to some people who mixed substances was a bad trip with no safe ending.**

But let's end this article with the good vibrations of the psychedelic movement. Nowadays there are a lot of people involved with these rituals that are trying to make a difference in the Planetary Era. At Boom Festival 2006 I found out that most of the people, around thirty thousand from all around the world that was meeting there for one week, were very conscious about how serious are our participation in the healing of the Planet. The big ritual involved a group from Pirinópolis (GO) working with Permacultura, ecology, and sustainability. There was a lot of information about the importance of creating a different kind of consciousness to support sustainability and make it possible to live in the future.

Psychedelic rituals are very complex because it can't be limited to any concept, because it escapes from every kind and it's being re-created all the time with new information, new technology, new knowledge, new exchanges, new kinds of art, new forms of exchanging love and re-creating life in the Planetary Era.