





**SHAMANIC SNUFFS**  
*OR*  
**ENTHEOGENIC ERRHINES**

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[Wingbow Press, Berkeley, CA, USA, 1976,1979]

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by Donna Torres, 2024; photographed by Donna Torres.

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*OR*  
**ENTHEOGENIC ERRHINES**

*JONATHAN OTT*



**ENTHEOBOTANICA**  
TLALNELHUAYOCAN, MÉXICO  
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2001



*Virola calophylla* WARBURG [Myristicaceæ], E.W. Smith:  
source of the YA-KEE and YA-TÓ PSYCHOPTIC SNUFFS of the  
Colombian Vaupés; likely HAKÚDUF<sup>HA</sup> of the Venezuelan Orinoco.

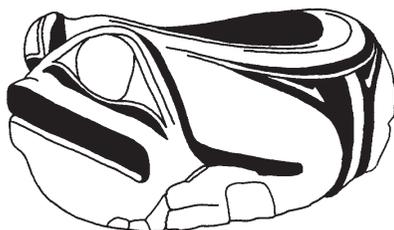
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Dedicated to the memory of

**BO HOLMSTEDT**  
1919–2002

Pioneer in SHAMANIC SNUFF-pharmacognosy and  
natural-products-chemical analysis



**SHAMANIC SNUFFS**  
*OR*  
**ENTHEOGENIC ERRHINES**

**BANISTERIOPSIS** *Caapi*

(*Spruce ex Griseb.*) Morton



*Banisteriopsis caapi* (SPR. EX GRISEB.) MORT. [Malpighiaceæ],  
E.W. Smith: additive to *ÑOPO*, *EPÉNA* and TOBACCO -SNUFFS;  
TOBACCO-PASTES; chewed as cohort to insufflation of *ÑOPO*-SNUFF.

INSPIRATION  
*The Ineffable Inflatu*s

Inside this house they have a finely-wrought table, round like a scimitar, in which is some powder that they place on the heads of these *ZEMIÉS*. . . then with a cane having two branches that they insert in their nostrils they snuff this powder up. The words they say none of our people understand. With these powders they go crazy and become as though inebriated.

Cristobal Colón [Columbus]  
Second Voyage to La Española [1493–1496]

Admiral Columbus himself described a practice of the Taíno Indians of the island of Hispaniola, in which shamans catalyzed their divinatory prowess by snuffing the powdered seeds of *COHOBA*, now known to be a species of *Anadenanthera*. This *route* to inebriation hitherto had been unknown to Europeans; likewise that practice of ‘swallowing smoke’, or *SMOKING*, also observed by Colón and his mariners on the Caribbean islands. It was *TOBACCO*, *Nicotiana*-spp., that the Taíno smoked, although their word *TABACO* (or *TABOCA*) apparently referred to the *SNUFF-TUBE* through which *COHOBA* and possibly *Nicotiana*-*SNUFF* was taken, *not* to the smoked leaves themselves, and a similar tube may have been used for inhaling smoke, both of *COHOBA* and ‘*TABACO*’. In any case, the actual herbs *SNUFFED* and *SMOKED* received less attention than these curious practices, which in consequence have been confounded. *Cohiba*<sup>™</sup> still is an important trademark for finest Cuban cigars, and it was not until the XX Century, that the Taíno’s *COHOBA-SNUFF* was shown to derive from seeds of *Anadenanthera*, rather than *Nicotiana*-leaves [Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; Safford 1916; Wassén 1967].

Meanwhile *TOBACCO*—*Nicotiana* *SNUFFED*, *SMOKED* or *CHEWED*—ravenously had become the first truly Pangæan inebriant, but mists of Mystery enshrouded *COHOBA*, within which it remained as abstruse as the day Colón’s barkentines landed on La Española 532 years ago. Although *SMOKING* today is the definitive mode of *TOBACCO*-consumption, in fact *TOBACCO-SNUFFING* enjoyed a fabulous *vogue* for two Centuries, and only peaked in 1861, at the outset of the US Civil War—in Sweden and Scandinavia in general, it was not until after World War II that smoked *TOBACCO* gained the upper-hand. Until seventy years ago, for any *NICOTIAN* Swede, the *only* *TOBACCO* ‘up to snuff’, so to speak, was a fine snuffing-*TOBACCO* [Goodman 1993]. Today, in contrast, *TOBACCO-SNUFFS* are almost unknown in some places, while insufflation of the illicit *COCAINE* presently is definitive of the snuffing-habit, so cast in disrepute thereby (not by *me*, of course, only some pharmacophobe might explain this!). Despite the ‘En-

theogenic Reformation› or contemporary *Renaissance* in use of shamanic inebriants, the venerable IntraNasal *route* has received short-shrift, and the scientific literature is rife with misleading—some downright false—‹facts› regarding the activity of SNUFF-psychoptics as ERRHINES/ptarmics: that is, *via* the IntraNasal *route*, snuffing.

This *Entheogenic Reformation* has focused ever-more on *natural* or plant-based inebriants, and as the Sun rises on this XXI Century, Amazonian AYAHUASCA-potions and ANAHUASCA, ‹AYAHUASCA-ANALOGUES› undoubtedly rule the roost, though such potions decidedly are *artificial*, the beliefs of the ‹organophiles› notwithstanding [Ott 1997, 2006, 2024]. Key to AYA/ANAHUASCA is a so-called ‹AYAHUASCA-effect›—in which TRYPTAMINES such as *N,N*-DIMETHYLTRYPTAMINE (D or DMT) and 5-METHOXY-*N,N*-DIMETHYLTRYPTAMINE (M, or 5-MEO-DMT), are rendered psychoactive ORALLY by a concomitant administration of MONOAMINE-Oxidase inhibitors (MAOI), such as the  $\beta$ -CARBOLINES of AYAHUASCA (*Vide* CHAPTER ONE), which inhibit MAO-metabolism of any TRYPTAMINES ingested, to allow their transport to the brain [Ott 1999A]. Leaving aside injection, likewise ‹SMOKING› (that is, inhalation of a free-base vapor), the AYAHUASCA-effect is come to be seen as definitive of ingestion of natural TRYPTAMINES, but a crucial piece of the psychonautic puzzle thus has been discarded or overlooked.

We commonly do not remember that it was in the context of the visionary SNUFFS, not AYAHUASCA, that Swedish chemists Holmstedt & Lindgren [1967] first proposed the existence of the ‹AYAHUASCA-effect›, which by rights we ought to call the ‹PARICÁ-effect› or the ‹psychoptic-snuff-effect›, and only later was this extrapolated, to encompass also AYAHUASCA in its purview. As I commented in my *Book*, AYAHUASCA ANALOGUES, nearly three decades passed, before their hypothesized TRYPTAMINE :  $\beta$ -CARBOLINE-synergy was put to the test, and effectively confirmed, in human PSYCHONAUTIC BIOASSAYS [Ott 1999, 2006, 2024]. Decades hence, the ‹ineffable inflatus› (with sincere apologies, to Elizabeth Barrett Browning) of SHAMANIC-SNUFF-PSYCHOPTICA continues to be well-nigh trampled underfoot—yea, beaten to SNUFF—in that resulting AYAHUASCA-gold-rush.

This *Book* aims to address this oversight by giving VISIONARY SNUFFS pride-of-place with barely a nod to AYAHUASCA. I shall commence by looking at the COHOBÁ/YOPO/NOPO-complex of the Caribbean, likewise the vast and possibly more important group of CEBÍL/HATÁJ/VILCA-inebriants of the Andes and Chaco (*Anadenanthera* species in the Leguminosæ). Also receiving detailed attention will be some kindred Amazonian SNUFFS known as EPÉNA/HAKÚDUF<sup>H</sup>/YÁ-KEE, mainly prepared from species of Myristicaceæ (or the nutmeg-family), mostly belonging to the *genus*, *Virola*.

Given the relative importance of TOBACCO-snuffing in our own cultural history, and the prominence of similar practices in South American shamanism, it is fitting that I then should turn my attentions to this still-widespread indulgence; and yet

another CHAPTER will be given to lesser-known SNUFF-sources, of which there exists a surprisingly large number: this will include a VISIONARY VETERINARY VADEMECUM of stimulating SNUFFS for hounds and horses! I hope thus highlighting such recondite SNUFF-lore will stimulate a renewed interest in novel «nepenthic nosebags», mayhap even lead to rhonchisonant changes in the lives of some of our suburban mascots—after all, if wo[man]’s best friend be entitled to organic foods and medicines, might heirs two-legged pack-mates long stint the occasional stimulating snoutful? Indeed, I met a dog named Cocaína, in a Bolivian prison, and he seemed all-too-happy to indulge «his master’s vice»... and although «puppy-uppers» and «doggie-downers» may be a laughing-matter for us, this ain’t so for subsistence-level hunting-Peoples!

Of course, it scarcely would be fair of me to approach the subject of the SHAMANIC SNUFFS whilst religiously *keeping my nose clean*, so to speak. Accordingly, punctuated by sniting and perfunctory emunctories, I have placed my proboscis at the service of pharmacology: exploiting one area of my anatomy at least, in which I justifiably can claim to be better-endowed than most! The long and the short of it is that I’ve embarked yet again upon an ambitious program of PSYCHONAUTIC BIOASSAYS designed to elucidate the human pharmacology of COHOBÁ/CEBÍL, EPÉNA/YÁ-KEE and other SHAMANIC SNUFFS. If the results are not «up to snuff» for our academic pharmacologists, who prefer sacrificing animals—when not tormenting helpless convicts or «mental patients»—in some obtusely (or obscenely) «objective» way, to sacrificing a feigned «scientific objectivity» (not to say any affectation of pharmacovirginity) to suchlike snively sacraments, I only can reply that they are *nothing to sneeze at*, either. Some pharmacorhinal research, by any analysis, is damned far better than *none*—which effectively is what the competition has proffered us with respect to these ENTHEOGENIC ERRHINES; the gist of which might be reviewed in that snoach betwixt a snuffle, and a sigh! Ere any grow snuffy, snuffle in disdain, perchance «flye out in a snuffe», as it might be... indeed, wish to «give me snuff» by «beating me to snuff», permit me at least to put my nose to the (SNUFF-)grindstone... give me but half a chance to sniff-out the sternutatory secrets of SNUFF! I apologize if my humour be more phlegmatic than sanguine, but promise that in the end we all shall be «in high snuff». And who can say?—in our mellifluous meander, nay, sedulous stampede, to the Entheogenic Elysian Fields... the ineffable inflatus of SHAMANIC SNUFFS just might win by a nose!

JONATHAN OTT

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