



Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception into the Dreaming of Earth

Stephen Harrod Buhner

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A manual for opening the doors of perception and directly engaging the intelligence of the Natural World

- Provides exercises to directly perceive and interact with the complex, living, self-organizing being that is Gaia
- Reveals that every life form on Earth is highly intelligent and communicative
- Examines the ecological function of invasive plants, bacterial resistance to antibiotics, psychotropic plants and fungi, and the human species

In *Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm*, Stephen Harrod Buhner reveals that all life forms on Earth possess intelligence, language, a sense of I and not I, and the capacity to dream. He shows that by consciously opening the doors of perception, we can reconnect with the living intelligences in Nature as kindred beings, become again wild scientists, nondomesticated explorers of a Gaian world just as Goethe, Barbara McClintock, James Lovelock, and others have done. For as Einstein commented, “We cannot solve the problems facing us by using the same kind of thinking that created them.”

Buhner explains how to use analogical thinking and imaginal perception to directly experience the inherent meanings that flow through the world, that are expressed from each living form that surrounds us, and to directly initiate communication in return. He delves deeply into the ecological function of invasive plants, bacterial resistance to antibiotics, psychotropic plants and fungi, and, most importantly, the human species itself. He shows that human beings are not a plague on the planet, they have a specific ecological function as important to Gaia as that of plants and bacteria.

Buhner shows that the capacity for depth connection and meaning-filled communication with the living world is inherent in every human being. It is as natural as breathing, as the beating of our own hearts, as our own desire for intimacy and love. We can change how we think and in so doing begin to address the difficulties of our times.

Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception into the Dreaming of Earth Details

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From Reader Review Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception into the Dreaming of Earth for online ebook

E says

Oh dear God, Buhner loves to hear himself talk, and quotes endlessly, ad nauseam, and as he quotes Thoreau, "A man has not seen a thing if he has not felt it," with the crux of the book being "How does it feel." To me.....Insipid, affirming, tedious, tranquil. I agree with what he is saying, and therefore don't need 576 pages to realize if something feels right follow it. And quotes!!! although wonderful and relevant.....he could cut the book down by a third by reducing quotes and comparisons. I really have mixed feelings about PI. It can be eye opening, and his statement that he got rid of many belongings by thinking this way (Marie Kondo would love him), and I do feel that plants and things do talk to us, I just think he could have used an editor to help him with his self indulgence, at which point I would have given him a 5 for content.

Fb says

Reading it a second time. Love this book and so well written too.

Dalton P. says

every couple of pages I found myself gripping the book and bringing it closer to my eyes, pupils dilating and mind exploding. Read this book, you will never look at nature walk the same way again.

On another note way before I read this book, once while on psychedelic mushrooms I kept bringing up the idea to a friend that these chemicals are 'of the plants' and that they are trying to show us how we are suppose to live, how they live. I remember telling a friend that its like the movie 'the happening' when the plants develop and release a chemical to make humans kill themselves, but with psilocybin being more beneficial to humans than what the movie had conjured. to see this carefully articulated in this book gives way to the spark that glues your eyes to the pages and lets you go 50 to 60 pages in without putting it down. its one of those moments where your eyes are wide open and you are silently mouthing the words 'what the fuck'.

Ramona Gherghe says

There is Hitler inside each of us and if we do not heal the Hitler inside of ourselves, then the violence, it will never stop

Michaela says

I must not have read the end notes closely enough because this book went in a direction that I did not anticipate. Although I have severe reservations of anyone/any book that makes claims regarding curing schizophrenia or viewing it in a positive light, I still managed to enjoy the book because it was so far out (no pun intended) of the traditional box. And although I am unlikely to start tripping on acid anytime soon, I still am left with plenty to think about. Even if only 25% of his science is in the ballpark of accuracy, it does feed a rich conversation as to how we define life and our role in it, the wonder of bacteria, the long-term success of any conservation efforts, and many other topics worthy of debate. Reading this was quite trippy indeed.

Dean Zochert says

I will never look at Nature (Gaia) the same again...not any aspect of it from bacteria to the most complex animal, including humans. At times it was difficult to read because of all the new information coming in and I had to put it down for a bit while I digested what I'd read. The concepts he discusses are not new and he's not the only one currently writing about them, but he puts ideas across in such a way that they are easily understood. My only criticism of the book would be the author's extensive use of quoting others. I found it a bit irritating but understand he was garnering "evidence" for the points he was making. I will definitely be reading this book again in the future.

David Moss says

Some amazing, paradigm changing sections, some tedious gobbledegook. Is it a worthwhile read? - most definitely! Emphasis on paradigm changing. Absolutely magical at times. It's a book I'll return to.

Andrea says

This book appeared in my life in a beautiful, magical way that insisted I begin reading now, don't do anything else, just read this book. I took it slow, as it's dense with one mind blowing gem of wisdom after another. This book is a life-changer. It will shift your perception and encourage you to witness the deeply meaningful fabric of life around you.

Chris Enock says

Fantastic

Thomson says

One of the best books I have ever read -- important for any discussion of science and spirituality. It continues the dialogue between the contrasting perceptions of the mechanistic/reductionist world view vs the romantic/imaginal/soulful world view. It encourages the reader to listen to one's heart, and to ask the question "How does this feel", as opposed to merely thinking about things in one's head. It encourages a

deeper, soulful feeling of the world of nature around you, to allow your heart's intuition and feeling to come forth. It encourages you to follow the "golden threads" that lead to a deeper and fuller sense of being, a sense of being led into one's true self, one's true calling and passion.

Rajesh Hegde says

I stumbled into this book online when i was researching on the purpose of psychedelics in nature. This book gave me very interesting perspective in that aspect. The author's main emphasis is on the underlying complex intelligence in nature, which we can only feel it experientially and not understand it through reductionist thinking. The chapters on the common neural pathways in all living organisms and how we are interconnected is quite insightful .

The length of the book could be shorter with lesser quotes, although quotes were very relevant and interesting. Definitely recommend the book who would like to get a deeper perception on the nature's workings. Also this book is relevant for people working on climate change.

Emme says

Mind blowing book that will convince you that the earth and all that's in it is fully alive and in homeostasis with one another. Also a pretty convincing and somewhat amusing argument that LSD use is good for you because even nature uses hallucinogens! Strange but true, according to the author. But seriously, aside from that, this is a great, mind expanding book (sans drugs even!) that will greatly enhance your understanding of the ecosystem and our place in it.

Andrea Paterson says

Eye opening look at what it means to be "intelligent." Buhner argues with passion that intelligence is a feature of all life on the planet, not just human life. The book is filled with fascinating examples of the brilliance of other life forms.

Darkemeralds says

So brilliantly insightful and mind-changing that despite some problems, I have to give *Plant Intelligence* the top rating. It's in my short list of books that have jolted my thinking off its comfortable rails into whole new paradigms.

First of all, *Plant Intelligence* is only sort of about plants. It's also sort of about psychedelic drugs. It's not quite a polemic against human technological progress (though it heads in that direction), and also not quite a theory of living systems. It's poetic, recursive, loosely-structured and passionate, and as a reader I found it challenging and highly rewarding.

Buhner lays out in great and scientific detail some little-known characteristics of plant ecosystems and the

microbiome of the earth. This forms the basis for the rest of the book, which is a long reverie on the connectedness of all self-organizing systems, among which humanity is absolutely not "supreme" or even in any way special. Plant systems have "brains," and interact with their changing environment by exactly the same means as "intelligent" animal species; the earth itself is a living being responding intelligently to its environment (Buhner cites James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis throughout the book); and the hubris that has driven humanity to its destructive practices will be no match for Gaia when Gaia shrugs its shoulders and brushes us off.

Plant Intelligence was a slow read for me, because the scientific language demanded careful attention, and because I had to keep stopping to quote long, mind-blowing sections to friends and family. First there were vivid images of plant root systems all communicating via the same neurotransmitters our brains use. Then came the unsettling concept that humans aren't the free agents we think we are; we're really just working for the planet. (Bees, Buhner says by way of analogy, think they're collecting honey, and have no idea that they're pollinators).

Next came awe as Buhner discussed how human creativity is only a response to the larger system eliciting something it needs from us. While this view says that free will is largely a fantasy, it also says that our creative works--our very lives--do have meaning and power whether or not other humans consciously know it. It abolishes in a single chapter the idea that only fame and fortune can validate our lives.

Finally--and in what I felt was the weakest part of the book--Buhner lets loose his "barbarian" diatribe in favor of hallucinogenic drugs and against civilization. After spending some 400 pages building a beautifully spiraling idea structure, he seemed to lose sight of his own core idea, that humanity is just one (disposable) part of nature like all other parts. Instead, he regresses to the conventional notion that humanity and its technologies (particularly cities) are separate and uniquely bad, and that a libertarian, individualistic, back-to-the-land way of human life is somehow inherently "better" than urban life.

Throughout the book, I was hoping he'd arrive at the logical conclusion, that cities are organic, natural structures arising in response to Gaia's promptings just as beehives and anthills and biofilms arose; and that the shamanic approach that he favors would apply equally to urban and "natural" environments. I had to sleep on his conclusions before realizing that my view (let's call it urban shamanism) is as likely to be valid as his, even though I haven't written a beautiful, challenging, poetic tome on the subject. Yet.

On a final and more mundane note, Buhner's style poses some difficult editorial problems, and it's easy to imagine an editor just leaving most of it alone, but there are dozens of missing words, repeated phrases, and misspellings throughout the (Kindle edition) text that really should have been caught by a competent line-editor. This important book deserves better editing than it got.

Carrie Viscome-Skinner says

I love plants, am a gardener and an herbalist and I also am into discovering the spiritual side of all things. This book brings those things together beautifully. It gets very intense at times and the author has many personal experiences to share as well as his insight on plant and human behavior. There are many exercises given to help deepen our relationships with earth and its plant people. In the end you will realize that plants and the whole of the Earth itself is alive and dwells in both the physical and spiritual realms as we do.
