

# Feature Interview with GRAHAM HANCOCK

BY REGINA MEREDITH/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND  
HOST OF THE BROADBAND LEARNING CHANNEL

EDITED BY LANE BADGER

## THE SUPERNATURAL: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind

Graham Hancock is an explorer and author of the international bestsellers *The Sign and The Seal*, *Fingerprints of the Gods* and *Heaven's Mirror*. His books have sold more than five million copies worldwide and have been translated into 27 languages. His public lectures and TV appearances, including the three-hour series *Quest for the Lost Civilization*, have put his ideas before audiences of tens of millions. Graham Hancock is an unconventional thinker who raises legitimate questions about humanity's history and prehistory and offers an increasingly popular challenge to the entrenched views of orthodox scholars.

This interview is a joint venture between *Four Corners Magazine* and The Broadband Learning Channel. We caught up with Graham and his beautiful wife Santha at the C-Pak 2005 Conference here in Sedona in November. He spoke about the compelling ideas and research included in his new book entitled: *The Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind*. To see the complete video interview of this article check out [www.bb1c.tv](http://www.bb1c.tv) (under the SCIENCE & CONSCIOUSNESS)



**Regina Meredith:** *Let's start in the jungles of the Amazon where you began exploring the subject of 'essence-expanded consciousness' through the vine of souls, or ayahuasca.*

**Graham Hancock:** The reason that I began to study this substance was because I wanted to investigate a mystery in human history. It is very clear from the evidence that the art of the painted caves of Paleolithic Europe (33,000 BC) and the art of the Sand Bushman in Africa (25,000 BC) appear to be the art of altered states of consciousness!

These artists put themselves into altered states, either by using plant hallucinogens, or with other techniques like prolonged rhythmic dancing, at which point, they then painted the visions of what they experienced.

Now as a writer, I have always believed that when I explore a subject, I must explore it personally. I must put myself into that story. And for that reason, I felt that if I was going to write about the role of altered states of consciousness in human history, I had to experience those states for myself.



Graham Hancock

It so happens that there is a very ancient shamanic culture in the Amazon, which goes back about 10,000 years. They make a beverage called “ayahuasca”. It is in fact a mixture of two plants, one of them is a vine and the other is a leaf that contains the potent hallucinogen DMT. When mixed together, they produce extraordinary effects. I went to the Amazon to drink it with a shaman. I spent five weeks of in-depth research. Ayahuasca experiences are potent and very physical demanding so it is not something that you want to do every day. I spread it into eleven sessions. It makes you very ill when you drink it, causing severe vomiting and diarrhea. It tastes like a ground up frog!

**RM:** *What was your original inspiration to explore this kind of consciousness?*

**GH:** The original inspiration, in my case, was the intention to explore the mystery of human origins. Most of the story is really boring. Our ancestors, even as their form changed to a modern form, behaved for millions of years in a very dull way. There was no creativity and no symbolism to evidence a spiritual life. They were really just tool-using apes!

Even though they looked like us, which happened about 200,000 years ago, with full anatomical modernity, and the human brain the same size and structure as it is today, behavior still did not change. Still no creativity. Then 40,000 years ago, it seems like a light was ‘turned on’ all around the world. The behavior that we recognize as ‘human’ was introduced all at once. What is key to this change?

What signaled this change was the birth of the first great art of the world. There had never been art before. Suddenly, in upper Paleolithic Europe about 35,000 years ago, you get the most extraordinary art being painted, and you get this all around the world. It is really as though a light had been switched on in the human mind. The brain was there, but had not been used until then. Something happened that led to it being used and I believe that the evidence is compelling that our ancestors discovered altered states of consciousness. They may have come across hallucinogenic plants by chance; they may have thought they were food items, and then when consumed, it brought about a radical transformation in the way that they looked at the world. It changed everything about being human. This I felt was the crucial and vital ‘before-and-after moment’ in the human story. It is connected to altered states of consciousness, and that is why I had to investigate this subject in this way.



**RM:** *How do you explain the cross-cultural similarities in art with people who theoretically had no communication with one another?*

**GH:** This is one of the great mysteries, and one that I found myself confronting most closely in this research. Here is the bazaar thing; in experiences our scientists define as non-real or hallucinations, people all around the world universally report the same things. That is, the experience of passing through to another realm.

This is a realm that is convincingly real, seamlessly real, inhabited by intelligent beings who want to communicate with you. And these beings often take the form of half- animal, half- human hybrids. Overlaid with the perception of these beings, are geometrical patterns, grids, and zigzags, wavy lines that appear. And this is universal. It is found with all people, in all different cultures, and in all different times in history.

One possible explanation offered by shamans from around the world is that that other realm is real. That is why people see the same things because they are going to the same places. They are projecting their consciousness into the same places. This is the shamans’ view of the universe and what is real is significantly different from the beliefs of western science.

Western science believes that if you cannot weigh something, measure it and count it, then, it simple doesn’t exist and is an illusion. Shamans review things quite differently. They believe that whether we like it or not, we are tied up with the spiritual realm. If we wish to deal with problems in this physical world then we cannot ignore that spiritual realm. So rather than sticking their heads in the sand and pretending that it doesn’t exist, shamans attempt become masters of that realm. They develop techniques for altering their consciousness at will. The most common method is by the use of hallucinogenic plants. They enter the other realm and master it through communication; negotiate with the spirits there; and bring back useful information to this world, particularly to do with healing.

**RM:** *Are these inspirations the source of religion?*

If you go back to the source of any of the great religions, you are going to find shamanic experiences. I don’t want to offend Christians, but St. Paul’s Damascus road experience, was very much a classic shamanic experience, with the light and state of consciousness, which later translated to religion.

Christ is a powerfully shamanic figure. Most shamans around the world today believe that they may have a mother or father in the spiritual realm. Of course, Christ is the same kind of figure. He is partly divine, partly human, part spirit, and part man. At the source and origin of every religion is a profound experience that an individual or group has had in an altered state of consciousness. Then what happens is that the bureaucratic structures of humanity begin to impose themselves on that original experience, and within a few generations, the religion has moved away from the direct connection with the spiritual realm. It then substitutes a class of



priests between the spirit world and us. These priests are entirely motivated by this world's concerns, and religion becomes an instrument of material oppression, control, and corrupted by the political establishment, when at the heart of the religion is a direct experience of another world. The direct experiences are relegated to 'myth'.

In fact, you will find that many religions as they develop, turn against those who experience altered states of consciousness. Many religions are opposed to altered states of consciousness, even though their own religious validity derived from them. This is a normal process. This is what human beings do. Human beings are power animals, and at any point can be corrupted to the power interests of a particular group. That is what has happened with religions.

**RM: Are there cross-cultural commonalities with altered-state experiences?**

**GH:** Yes, commonalities, as well as some differences. This suggest to me that there are multiple realms out there, and perhaps, different substances put us onto the right wave-length for different realms. In every case, it is a convincing encounter with different levels of reality. This encounter takes two forms. The ayahuasca experience was for me rather like traveling for the first time to another country, a wonderful country, filled with incredible sights and sounds. There were beings of great wisdom and intelligence that wished to communicate with me. But first of all, I had to learn the rules of that realm.

**RM: What were these new rules?**

**GH:** First of all, you have to deal with the physical consequences of the ayahuasca state. Sometimes the physical consequences come back 3 or 4 times during a session, so it is a constant interruption. But at the same time, the visions always return too. All together, across the eleven sessions that I did in the Amazon, I was beginning to get genuine communications. Information was coming to me. It is not that these beings speak in human voices, the communication is telepathic. I had to overcome my fears, my preconceptions, and my own ideas of what was going on, in order to listen to and understand what was being said.

Interestingly, part of my experience was an inward journey. I found myself confronted with many things that I had done in my life, going right back to my childhood. The purpose of that 'life review' was to give me a vision of myself in very unflattering terms. I couldn't hide from it.

I realized that you could not go back and change the past, but that I didn't have to be like that in the future. I did find it a profound teaching experience in that respect. Not only was it at that level of personal development, but also at a broader level. There was an enormous amount of extremely valid and valuable information

that was beamed at me from this other world. I need to do more work to get clear about what was being said. That is why I am going back to Brazil next year and spend a couple of weeks working with shamans and drinking ayahuasca, because I want to explore that other country more carefully, over and extended period of time.

I have spent many years investigating the ancient Egyptians and Maya. Now I have come to understand that their entire approach to religions, and spirituality, and the mystery to what it is to be alive, was mediated through altered states of consciousness. Both of these cultures used altered states to explore the realms beyond. I do believe that there are realms beyond. The shamans are right, we must not cut ourselves off from these worlds, we must know about them. It

is vitally important for us to know about them.

I think that it played a huge role in the success of the Egyptians civilization. The ancient Egyptians devoted their minds for 3,000 years to exploring life after death. The Egyptians had an answer to that. It was that there is a journey that we must make after death and that in that journey we must confront the consequences of the lives that we have lived. It is possible that these experiences

that we could undergo (in altered states), may be a vital prep for what happens to us beyond death. We might be able to (better) orient ourselves for that transition.

I do feel strongly that we need to take our consciousness back into our own hands. On the input side, western civilization has taken control through television; the consumerist ethic is being beamed at us 24/7. And on the second front, western civilization has demonized and criminalized all experiences involving altered states of consciousness, including the substances. There is clearly a war of a consciousness that is going on.

Our society has an investment in limiting our exploration of altered states of consciousness. Perhaps there is a deep fear that if we do explore these

altered states; we will not accept the power structure and the fairy tale delusion of material wealth. Consider the predicament of billions of highly intelligent people who are lulled into a state of sleep by this consciousness bomb of television, and those who are not allowed to explore the mysteries of their own consciousness, using the methods of the shamans.

If we do follow (the ancient footprints), we are considered to be criminals and are stigmatized by society and put in prison. This is a reversion to the world of the Spanish Inquisition, If as an individual I am not sovereign over my own consciousness, if I cannot decide what to do with my consciousness which is the heart of my being, then I am not free. And I need not talk about freedom, or living in a free society, or such issues as democracy, if my society will not allow me to explore my own consciousness.

If in an altered state of consciousness my behavior is disruptive in a public arena, then that behavior should rightly be controlled by society. But the personal and private exploration of our consciousness is our business and not the business of the state!



Aya Goddess

**I do believe that there are realms beyond. The shamans are right, we must not cut ourselves off from these worlds, we must know about them. It is vitally important for us to know about them**

**Graham Hancock's new book The Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind will be release next year in the U.S. It can be ordered on: [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) [www.amazon.co.ca](http://www.amazon.co.ca). Please check out the entire video interview at [www.bbcl.tv](http://www.bbcl.tv).**



**broadband learning channel**  
**www.bbcl.tv**

---

**Broadband Learning Channel is your FREE online video source of face-to-face, intimate interviews with the great minds of our times. Inspiration is only a download away with Michio Kaku, David Icke, Dannion Brinkley, Dolores Cannon, Bruce Lipton, Graham Hancock and many more.**



**Join us anytime, anywhere, as [bbcl.tv](http://bbcl.tv) joins iTunes to bring you our audio or video programs on your iPod as well as your computer.**

Bruce Lipton, Scientist

**DARE TO THINK AGAIN!** Hotlink to our newsletter at:  
**[www.bbcl.tv/media/nov05.pdf](http://www.bbcl.tv/media/nov05.pdf)**