

Defending Perceptual Diversity in America: Entheogens as Legitimate Contributors to Learning, Health and Empathy

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Abstract

Cognitively monophasic cultures such as America are those that officially deny institutional incorporation of any subtle or substantial concepts or products derived from mental states beyond a prescribed range of typically waking states of consciousness. These altered states of consciousness (ASC) offer great advantages to those who experience them, yet many approaches to such fulfilment require investments of time and skill training. Importantly, many such approaches do not offer ASC of greatest ecstatic intensity and revelatory insight. Psychoactive substances known as *entheogens*, however, do just that. They may even be the original inspiration or catalysts of religion and therefore science itself. They offer cognitively monophasic cultures various therapeutic effects and temporary excursions into polyphasic experience, without total lifestyle revisions and expenditures of precious time, thereby allowing them increased adaptive capacities to holistically restructure their worldviews and also heightened senses of self-awareness and empathy while remaining an integral part of their immediate culture. However, they will only do this if positively sanctioned, and, they have been and will continue to be used whether or not they are illegal.

Historical and modern members of Western culture have learned volumes about consciousness potentials via religiously sanctioned entheogenic rituals, psychedelic clinical therapy, and private experimentation. American citizens have access to legal information necessary for petitioning the Supreme Court to recognize their liberty to use entheogens for religious practice or medicine, however, a criminalizing cognitive prejudice yet exists in America, enmeshed by religion-biased DEA controls on entheogenic substances. Forward-thinking regulated facilitation of them, for culturally relative, health promoting, and responsible intellectual usage, might best be administered by psychiatric anthropologists and clinical psychiatrists. These specialists have been extensively and intensively trained in varying cultural and physiological mechanisms, respectively, and they may be further trained for society-appropriate entheogenic care giving. In such a near future, America would abide the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Re-viewing “Altered States”

Monophasic consciousness models ignore or exclude (Lumpkin 2001:2), and/or misconceive many altered states of consciousness (ASC). Ninety percent of the 4000 societies we know of have one or more institutionalized forms for the induction of Altered States of Consciousness, ASC (Locke and Kelly 1985:45). With respects to varying norms between cultures, ASC might be minimally defined as those states of awareness that detach us from corporeal interaction with our external environment in one manner or another (Morris and Maisto 2002:148). This ethnically sensitive theory reveals psychological anthropology to be a

boon to consciousness studies. This is not to say that ASC, as recognized by Western minds, are not relative to predictable frequency-decreased and intensity-increased brainwaves, interhemispheric synchronization, and “coherence of thought and emotion” (Winkelman 1996:38) – findings usually associated to neuroscience and information theory; indeed, they are characterized by thatⁱ, but also much more. The importance of both cognitive and psychological anthropology, in relation to the neurosciences, is “the study of the ways in which different cultures can manipulate the mind [...] to interrelate the results of those studies with the study of the kinds of cultural and social organization” (Rich 2000:60, emphasis added) that actually *coordinate* these phenomena.

Cosmology and cultural constructs (e.g., norms, customs, and taboos) generally reflect one another, epistemologically, during and even outside of ASC.ⁱⁱ

“[C]ross-cultural studies of trance and possession reveal a wide range of named states, processes, and entities which members of different cultures use to explain the induction, form, and significance of ASC. There is usually some definable set of metaphors and symbols which locate ASC within the social and total cosmic orders.” [Locke and Kelly 1985:15]

Ritualized ASC guidelines reflect the ways by which cultural knowledge is discovered, interpreted, coded, decoded, and altered. These “ways” are through mental *schema*. Schemas are cultural models formed through experience which provide organized settings “for giving meaning to experience, and serve as resources in reconstructing past experiences as well as linking the past with present concerns and future possibilities;” whereby, “through remembering, culturally available knowledge becomes situated knowledge, connected to a person, [to] context,” (Garro 2000:309, emphasis added) and to the history of an event or entity. This applies, with varying potencies and effectual trans-substantiations, to trance inductionⁱⁱⁱ as well as any other form of personal and social ASC.

Schemas can be transformed by and transmitted between cultures. A foundational example of the manner in which schemas operate was given by the developer of schema theory, Sir Frederic Bartlett, as he “noted that when an American Indian story was told to British subjects, they changed many of the details (when retelling it) to fit in with their mental framework, omitting unfamiliar details and adding familiar ones” (Johnson and Johnson 1999:283). Subsuming new information into outstanding knowledge frameworks can assist the mind of any person to quickly absorb it; and, they may later learn more information that may augment and clarify any schema within which they had quickly embedded such familiar placeholders.^{iv} Today, most all cognitive anthropologists argue that people conceptualize through referencing these schema or schemata (McGee and Warms 2008:362). It has been proclaimed by Jean Mandler, Distinguished Research Professor of Cognitive Science at University of California San Diego, that “we comprehend events in terms of the schemas they activate” and that likely

“most, if not all, of the activation processes occur automatically and without awareness on the part of the perceiver-comprehender” (D’Andrade 1995:122).

Branching out from the work of D’Andrade, Claudia Strauss suggested that schemata not only provide references to knowledge and sensorial experience but that they motivate our very actions and may occur at different levels of rank regarding phenomenal associations and intricacies of detail.^v Schemas, at one level, “...may not be sensitive to schemas at other levels. Schemas at low levels of abstraction, for example, might be those for perceiving geometric figures and colors, while some at higher levels are for understanding complex activities” (Strauss 1992:391). This is currently agreed with by experts in the neurosciences, in that ASC allow visualized (or otherwise sensualized) access to millennia-old ancestral biocultural memories (Blanc 2010:92-94) as well as limbic communication and intuition motors, via synchronization of the prefrontal cortex (Winkelman and Baker 2010:69) with both brain hemispheres. There are varying levels of complexity in thought and sensation throughout such self-objectifying journeys, that provide increasingly larger views of the world and of experience itself, which can facilitate intercultural transformation and transmission, of schematic information and direct (self-guided and transpersonal) experience, to occur with far more power, scope and quickness.

When a person induces ASC, they have an opportunity to sensorially objectify and manipulate the otherwise tacit information, emotion, and intuition networking in their minds (Pahnke and Richards 1966:175,186-189). This allows them an opportunity to intentionally and efficiently outfit their worldview with more complex, simplified, novel, or appropriate information as it comes along. Intentionally mediated ASC at their most potent can facilitate

“[temporary] loss of memory, erasure of previously conditioned responses, changes in beliefs, and increased suggestibility [...which] predispose the individual to change [...and] evoke a conscious-unconscious integration by activating unconscious material, permitting the resolution of repressed conflicts through catharsis and reintegration.”
[Winkelman 1996:39, emphases added].

Altered states can thereby strengthen or rearrange a person’s acculturation, allowing for the personal agency of choice between variations of perceptual frameworks, providing more objective “enlightenment” through exigent and subjective evaluations of self and existence.

Such activities tend to generate supportive testimony for the dynamics of cognitive diversity. And still, they don’t always receive support for repeated use, hence most Western perceptions of perceptual norms today. Set, setting, intention and values are what ultimately manifest the altered realities in altered states; it has been said that these factors are in fact more important than the sacrament being taken or the sacrifice (physical, spiritual, and temporal) being made. Many prominent ethnoscientific scholars are

“[...] convinced that individual intentions and expectations, together with cultural expectations and experiences are critical for determining the specific nature of many altered states of consciousness and for inducing sacred ecstatic experiences. If people grow up seeing shamanic trance healing being performed by large numbers of adults in their community on a regular basis and listening for hours on end to rhythms and chants [...] and if people are also expected to engage in this activity, they are far more likely to successfully enter into a sacred ecstatic state than if they grow up in an Industrial middle-class environment.” [Hayden 2003:73]

Sacred and profane experiences, like existential and baseline personalities, can perhaps be differentiated best by recognizing these factors. Those who engage only, or mostly, in mundane and profaned activities and mindframes are likely to have “no interest in, or perhaps no awareness of, sacred ecstatic experiences” (Hayden 2003:75). And as such, since access to the sacred has been “perhaps the most potentially troublesome, but the most adaptive” ASC technique for humanity through evolution, by “[...] association of one’s self and one’s activities with higher ideals or conceptual frameworks” (Hayden 2003:75), only the most adept spiritualist or honed scientist (Wallace 1966:209-210) may come to know the intentional and patterned ways out of “baseline consciousness” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:66) and into such greater notions of pleasure and perceptual amplitude. This does not have to be the rule, and, these experiences can be much more sensorially enhanced, thereby making them also far more chemically and actually memorable.

Children grow to adults as they complicate life from base needs and desires towards the recognition and reasoning of, and compromise with, the social and natural worlds around them. Those with more maturation will have a heightened and compressed gain on those who do not. Elders in many societies earn their revered status this way, rather than via superficial ages of licensure or rites of passage – it is in their vast history, and also in their elegant and overseeing capacities for cosmological/natural and mechanistic thought that they are highly esteemed. Consideration and patience are hallmarks of this, relative to deep thought or “meditation” on everyday acts and responses. “Meditation helps a person “unlearn” the conditioning that causes automatic identification with the content of consciousness,” and is “[...] often viewed as a technique for revealing the illusory nature of our usual sense of self and consciousness” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:73). Meditative states are characterized by hyperparasympathetic nervous system activity and can be caused by direct means or by indirect means, one of which is via chemical and extra physiological exertion caused by hallucinatory or hypersympathetic consciousness states (Winkelman and Baker 2010:69). The mind can be set to undertake ventures onto new viewpoints and to intentionally – or otherwise by acculturative effects upon circumstantially suggestible aspects of psyche (Baker 2005:185, Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994), in adolescence or adulthood – rewrite mental conditioning patterns for physical and cognitive reasoning, feeling, and insight.

This is a perennial and ever-possible event. A classical metonymical example of the complex neurological mechanisms, involving random as well as setting-modulated subcategories of learning and performance (Baker 2005), has been termed by Wallace (1970) as mazeway resynthesis (Wallace 1970:15-20, 169-170, 237-238). A good abstract and interpretation of this systemized cognitive process has been described by Winkelman and Baker (2010:81), whereby the mazeway is “the individual’s internalized map of the “routes” he or she must take to obtain gratification and avoid problems,” and can be compared to how a rat entrains itself to comprehend and take efficient advantage of a reward/punishment path recognition model. With rat maze experiments, “researchers used the same maze layout, but moved the rewards and punishments around,” and “[...] the rats continued to follow their accustomed path long after it was obvious that it was no longer rewarded” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:81). Humankind relates.

Wallace witnessed a woman sweeping up her concrete porch of a then-nonexistent house that had been destroyed in a disaster, and, as it took days for her to come to terms with (let alone grasp the reality of) her new situation in life. Such behavior is truly apparent trauma, but we also “automatically run our mazeway every time we encounter prompts to perform some culturally accepted behavior” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:81) in non-critical circumstances. Personality is an overarching categorical system within which many interrelated mazeways exist (Wallace 1970:15), such as, nonexclusively, positive organic values, positive symbolic values, altruistic values, negative values, objects (“images” thereof), self, self-image, the human environment, and the nonhuman environment (Wallace 1970:17), as well as the supernatural environment, and techniques “(images of ways of manipulating objects in order to experience desired end-states or values)” (Wallace 1970:18). More broadly, culture attempts to format such focused schemata for the sake of cohesion amongst personality types.

So, it is the case that running the old ingrained mazeway can be detrimental when it comes time to face adaptation to changes, no matter how efficient or elegant it may once have been. However, a resolution exists with ASC whereby such an experience “can convert an individual to a radically new way of religious life or even a new religion,” or even a new ecological and psycho-spiritual lifeway, and mazeway resynthesis through this avenue is like a scientific paradigm shift where “[...] the process can result in an entirely new way of approaching the problems that the individual was facing” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:80). The resynthesis model itself must have a well-managed set, setting, and control scheme to achieve an objective goal that the subject was originally not savvy to. The subjects of ASC, though, can learn to be the objective managers, and actually direct their own mazeway resynthesis. Mazeway pattern sets become ingrained in the minds of mammals so that with each new set, within the limit of mammalian spatial and sensorial memory capacities, they are outfitted with a greater repertoire of tools and filters for understanding, and a heightened ability to solve problems.

The term *propriospect*, which was originally coined by Ward Goodenough (1971:36, 1981:98) to explain how learned and embodied experiences (which are ingrained into

mazeways) interact and combine to create a whole personality, ushers a hierarchical understanding of cultures and the *culture pool* – the collective of all propriospects in a group – from the society in which they play ever-fluctuating parts (Wolcott 1991:261). Propriospect, then, can be related to linguistic competence, in a way; the old argument for a cultural “acquisition” mechanism can be instead explained in terms of competence to interact with certain groups at certain times and places, rather than by a total gathering and reproduction of all things intra-cultural. That competence is objectified by a “demonstrated ability developed through firsthand experience” (Wolcott 1991:262). Every individual wants to peddle their knowledge as the common knowledge of their culture (Wolcott 1991:256), and we all recognize this shortcoming from our own defense. However, the self-reflective can recognize that “more astounding than the sum of what anyone does know [...] is the recognition of how little of the great “all of it” each individual knows or ever needs to know” (Wolcott 1991:265, emphasis added). As such, culture is a unique and complex perception and guideline within each person, and “Culture (the capital “C” kind) cannot be individual, or personal, or private, neither can it be anything other than personalized” (Wolcott 1991:264). It is not illusory, but it is not static either: it is a process, and the demonstration of adherence to or deviation from it is entirely circumstantial and epochal.

Mazeways on the macro scheme are perhaps analogous to culture pool subsets, as subcultures, elite groups, and cult institutions, at the societal level. When a peacefully intentional and societal resynthesis (rather than a hegemony) known as a revitalization movement occurs, through inspiration and guidance of a leader, e.g., Handsome Lake amongst the Iroquois, it is done to “reduce the stress level prevalent in a system by increasing its internal organization” whereby “[t]he rigorous ritualism, puritanical morality, austerity, and fanatical determination of such movements rapidly dissipate after the reorganization has been accomplished and the movement is no longer utopian but ideological, no longer radical but conservative” (Wallace 1966:215). It can be done out of revelation, out of compromise or out of imminent need for adaptive measures, and, it might not need to discourse the boat so much that four of the major cult institutions of any culture involved, such as (1) the various denominational congregations, (2) the religio-political cult, (3) superstition, and (4) the children’s cult (Wallace 1966:77), are completely reset or disturbed enough to halt their sustainability. In fact, a complete reset may be impossible, as Melford Spiro notes (Wolcott 1991:254): “if it is nonsense to speak of national character or modal personality, it is equal nonsense to speak of society’s culture; for culture, too, resides in the individual, and there are as many cultures as there are personalities.” So, such movements are intellectual rather than radical revolutions. A fair and balanced syncretism results from revitalization-styled mazeway orientation of any positively sanctioned social engineering project because it must be co-operated by old and new approaches alike in order to succeed and flourish.

We All Know it All

Each culture has an ethnoscience - a system by which knowledge is obtained. Whether or not they are using the structures of Western scientific method, “all traditional cultures also use empirical science, and all recognize objective realities [...and] if one were to de-emphasize methods and concentrate on results, the contribution would be rightly viewed as staggering,” such as how “a traditional doctor might not be able to explain the specific chemical properties of the substances used but clearly understands the results” (Sutton and Anderson 2010:103).^{vi} In fact, positively sanctioned rituals and lifeways that exist within the myriad of Western cultures also express similar forms of faith, proclaimed to be wisdom. Many cultures utilize rituals and customs that may be apparently useless to their intended purposes, that can yet be proven to have far-reaching social and ecological functionality (Geertz 511-531; Gluckman 190-203; Lumpkin 2001:60; Rappaport 297-310; Sutton and Anderson 2010:161-164, 172-175). Traditional social groups around the world have tended to incorporate holistic systems of environmental and personal comprehension into their societies that also serve as life-guidelines for them.^{vii} Such metaphorical and metonymical religions can lend great power to cultural adaptation because they are best codified and decoded by an integrated set of interpretations, derived by experientially learning (Kolb 1984:28-30) through multiple states of awareness, to reach broad and densely detailed levels of signified understanding.

It might be posited that there is a unique archetypal analogue (to the Christian ‘Fall of Man’) myth-history at the basis of ethics framed by every parent in the Western world. In as much, it can be said that, before The Fall, primeval man

“did what he wanted to do and did not think of it as good or bad. He could feel pleasure and pain, but he could not think pleasure and pain. Now, after the Fall, he must think of the consequences of his acts before he performs them. He must evaluate them on a scale of good or bad. He must think about them and consider whether he wants to do them or not. Pleasure and pain are feelings, but good and bad are thoughts.” [Coult 1977:258]

People have their ways of separating mankind from other animals. Although each ethnic group may have a different position on whether or not some semblance of original sin exists, or have different and reasonable ways to explain the hardships of the human condition, there are keys to define how everyone relates on the topic. The good and bad – concepts rather than actualities – are those very thoughts that base the complex and distinct morals, ethics, norms, mores, totems and taboos, and now the laws that we see from culture to culture and nationality to nationality today. Me and you, us and them – these ideas are bound to such structures. There are indeed a few intercultural consensus ideas as to what is horrific or supremely detestable in behavior and action, and even these have been justified under specific conditions; but, it is good to keep in mind that every person in the Western world has a particular ethnic and religious or scientific background and that every one of those backgrounds is steeped in a complex, and in some ways

(to Others), an abnormal moral system. Functionalist and symbolic ethnoecology as well as ethnopsychology can usually illuminate the justifications, practices, and perceptions of any culture (Winkelman and Baker 2010:190-199).

Consciousness cannot be all-inclusively defined on a gradient of registerable brainwave function patterns.^{viii} Keeping human physiological and cultural variation in mind, it is equally impossible for an overarching melting-pot nationality to define or justly stricture boundaries (unless they are admittedly arbitrary) of waking consciousness, let alone normality.

“The cognitive inferences we make about our perceptions are models of the world that suggest certain strategies for acting. Although these models make it possible for an animal to act effectively in the world, they are never a completely accurate description of the world for no animal is capable of perceiving everything that is occurring in its environment” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:37).

Ethnicity may be considered that which is singularly universal in the historical record of all living cultural groups today. However,

“[l]ooking at ethnicity as a shifting boundary, and ethnic traits as symbolic and interactive rather than substantive and static, helps also account for the variety of forms ethnic behavior assumes. [...] Barbara Lal has made a useful distinction that helps clarify the fluidity of the ethnic boundary in light of ethnicity’s invocation of symbols. [...] Ethnicity by consent involves the submerging of certain differences to create a new ethnicity for mobilization purposes. [...] Compulsory ethnicity is the utilization of a certain ethnic trait for mobilization, a trait that group members cannot escape [whether or not they have chosen to associate with their ethnic roots and labels].” [Schreiter 1991:14; emphasis added]

Thusly, even if the conformity or deviance of an individual or a group of people can be assessed by such symbolic measures, the hopefully objective wagers upon them are just that: symbolic measures. There are myriad systems of social measurement in historical and living cultures (Winkelman and Baker 2010:250-260), and there are also myriad ways of metaphorically, metonymically and quantitatively regarding those measures. So, waking consciousness and normality may be more logically regarded, and ultimately better understood and advanced, by consented ethnic systems rather than compulsory ones, if true social and institutional progress is to be made. Any regard otherwise is apparently aimed at subservient mobilization rather than understanding and interdependence, and is therefore unscientific and inhumane.

There are people with inborne capacities for amazing operational performance while maintaining “abnormal” psychological states. The imagination that one phase of consciousness is supreme in metafunctionality over others is a false concept relative to teleological, unilineal evolution models of existential philosophy.^{ix} Any remnant fear and suppression of ASC may stem directly from a deficit of truly objective understanding in them due to never having

experienced them (at least appropriately so), and also thereby the occultation of navigational competence between them and “normalcy.” Just as that fear can stunt exploration, the fear of ASC can decelerate cultural growth and disintegrate cultural adherence in general.^x

With traditional ethnic groups – even American origin cultures – there are rituals and habits through which people can appreciate every state of awareness they know of, even if there are taboos on the inappropriately timed entires of, or prepared use of certain substances for, altered states of awareness. They are beneficial, because many states can be at odd angles to others, and may thereby be a cause of confusion or frustration without such practice; and, because some of these states can confer more focused and/or balanced sensory transception, as well as anti-biasing influences and peaceful confidence (Coult 1977:213), and other advantages in certain situations (Coult 1977:269) wherein uninitiated or baseline individuals still have not explored and expanded past the adolescent “capacity for analog communication with the world” (Coult 1977:271). Just the simple lack of basic cross-phase transference rituals between (let alone during) differing states of consciousness, due to a mandated single-state worldview, can lead to fragmented phases of consciousness (Laughlin 1992:19), collectively and individually. That can obviously stunt prospective futures for a growing populace. In general, nationalized and state ethical systems and laws are still relative to unique spirituality and religious guideline foundations, without top-down separation, but “spirituality is at pains to take more integral account of those factors which individuate as well as keep steadily before its eyes the truth that cosmic spiritual wisdoms are actually generalizations from the lives of particular spiritual people” rather than all such people (McKenna 1991:209). Any existing preconceived miscomprehension, of how ASC cannot assist the constructive mind, thereby, is a problematic reason for the anti-intellectual alienation of and disservice to such states (Lumpkin 2001:39).

Without specific rites (of passage, healing, religious service, myth-history enactment, kinship bonding, e.g.) and without masterful guides or teachers of ASC, it is possible that some psychological and social degradations can result from certain powerful – and possibly ego restructuring – ASC experiences (Lewis 2008, Piedmont and Moberg 2003:145). However, these experiences will be undertaken with or without structure, even if taboo, because of existential human curiosity and passion towards challenging and reforming social hierarchies. We see this reality from day to day in the Western world. Holding to a careless and uneducated view that such experiences are dangerous in and of themselves is immensely limiting to genetic and cultural survival because it halts a crucial exploratory and creative discourse that otherwise ushers human adaptability and environmental sustainability.^{xi} Hence, polyphasic consciousness is optimal for mutualistic relations between humankind and within its myriad habitats.

A person embracing an ASC in America may appear to be on a gradient of despondence to irrational hyper-reactivity, or in a non-utilitarian state of being, temporarily incapable of any officially useful life duty or of linear thought. Prescribed cultural associations of kinesthetic physical appearances (stature, linguistic competence, body language, facial expressions, mobility, et cetera), attached to the overwhelming bipolar notion of normalcy and illness (or

goodness and deviance), can create this generality. But, if an experiencer learns something new for personal or societal growth from his experience, or if an observer is newly informed by their observations of an experiencer, both of their schematic extrapolations – their situationally advanced perceptions – are creative, fresh, and revisable. Both points of view are adaptive and worthy, like any differing cultural worldviews, and, both contribute to knowledge and novel expression, while neither exemplifies certain Truth.^{xiii}

It is a narrow cause trying to differentiate between religious and spiritual themes in altered-state practices. None is more legitimate than the other in terms of universal, or culturally relative, human rights. Even members of the Anglican Working Group have spoken out that “the various forms of spirituality may be fluid and individual, taking no classical religious form, or they may be crystallized in the beliefs and practices of a specific religious community...” (Cohen, et al. 2001:31-32, italics added). This is clearly important to account for within a supraculture so polythematic in worldviews and rituals, such as America; no one adherent to a belief system within such a culture is likely to have the same interpretation of its purpose or benefits as even their closest peers in the same system (Bourdillon 1997:155). If new and symbolically codified spiritual formats are ever to emerge, they must at least be respected through the process. There are many respected and open-minded scientists who consider themselves spiritual. “The important anthropological question about these [altered] states is how they are interpreted within any particular culture” (Barfield 1997:471, emphasis added). It is therefore the quality of ASC experienced by practitioners, in relationship to culturally schematized realizations and meaning-making – rather than Eurocentric purportings about their negative psychological health indicators – that should be regarded as authentic authority on the matter. This requires scientific mindedness and a clinical approach, along with advising from the anthropological community, which can help the lay public in rediscovering that any person anywhere can undergo a cognitive trans-cultural, let alone sub-cultural, metamorphosis or synthesis, and give back in the process. There are many ways for a person to achieve this, not the least of which is via dietary manipulation of body chemistry.

Phytochemically Induced Altered States

Certain hallucinogenic and euphoriant plant chemicals, and their derivatives, are known in many culturally sensitive academic circles today through a terminology that the general populace is swiftly coming to recognize as being better suited to represent authentic spiritual and medicinal contexts. “In Greek the word *entheos* means literally “god (theos) within” and refers to rites of prophecy, artistic creation, erotic passion, and to “religious rites in which mystical states were experienced through the ingestion of substances that were transubstantial with the deity,” (Ruck et al 1979:145-146), hence the term *entheogen* works best to denote the action of manifesting the deity within. This meaning has now been continuously used by scholars who have felt that the term *psychedelic* has been used to “overly connote psychological

and clinical paradigms and to be too socio-culturally loaded from its 1960s roots to appropriately designate the revered plants and substances used in traditional rituals” (Tupper 2002:500). This is crucial, i.e., because there is no justification in deriding a medicine man, or reverent and careful practitioner, who uses substances that have been dubitably propagandized as dangerous, destructive, or simply useless.

Following a standing professional concept (Ott 1993:72-75), the depression of the central nervous system (CNS) with alcohol, and thereby the confusion of symbolic cognition and memory, and, the agitating effects upon the CNS by metabolic stimulants, make such substances unfit for inclusion amongst my thesis subjects. Playing into that separation are the well-known factors of debilitation, and of addiction, related to these substance types. To the contrary of these effects, “the interminable dialectic, which is not infrequently used as a defense against dissolution during the psychedelic experience,” provides a balancing mechanism whereby “[t]he mind wings from one extreme to the other, finding it impossible to come to rest at either extreme, but refusing to relinquish both of them,” (Coult 1977:213) providing temporarily overwhelming yet full-sensory advantages in mental balance and increased gain in attention span and cognitive abstractions. In fact,

“Of all the groups of proscribed psychotropic drugs, it is the entheogens which have been treated most unfairly, for these are in no way “drugs of abuse.” Animals shrink from them rather than become habituated to them, people use them infrequently and mostly treat them with awe and respect for their divine potency.” [Ott 1993:75]

Truly, if any person is abusing entheogens, by the textbook definition of substance abuse, it is because they are seeking answers - and/or environmental changes - that they are not fully conscious of, and which may be offered by entheogenic insight within the right social frameworks.

Dr. Stanislov Grob was member to a Russian psychedelic research group that focused on the archaically supposed “toxic psychoses” model of entheogenic activity. He discovered in clinical experimentation something quite exciting and different. With both sane and schizophrenic people, psychedelics were not causal to psychotic episodes at all. Repeating “the sessions with the same subjects, same substances, same dosages, and in the same set and setting, each of their subsequent sessions was very different from the previous ones,” and “[...] were catalysts of psychological and psychosomatic processes,” that “were not producing artificial experiences by interacting with the brain” but rather, “by increasing the energetic level in the psyche, they were bringing into consciousness the contents from the depth of the unconscious” (Walsch and Grob 2005:125). He has compared LSD, e.g., as being duly crucial to psychoanalytic and cognitive sciences as microscopes and telescopes for other fields of study (Walsch and Grob 2005:125), and has found noteworthy that most “emotional and psychosomatic disorders of psychogenic origin do not start from scratch after we are born, during our infancy and childhood,” but are due “to the trauma of birth and difficulties of

prenatal life” and he has proclaimed this because of how many “[...] karmic, archetypal, and phylogenetic” (Walsch and Grob 2005:133) - or transpersonal domain - symbols and references have been related to over 4000 studies he co-conducted in both Prague and the United States.

This conforms to the ancestral memory and intuition motor accession effects of prefrontal cortex activation, aforementioned. If many personal and social mental dysfunctions are relative to such cognitions, those related to the “noosphere” or Jung’s collective unconscious, they can be accessed and positively resynthesized through the utilization of entheogens to remove troubled individuals from the unsatisfying world of constant competition in which they are “always imagining something better for oneself in the future and ceaselessly pursuing various goals” (Walsch and Grob 2005:132), ever multitasking, while never feeling like there’s time to be honestly devoted, rewarded, or even to live (hence being neurophysiologically morbid) in the present or have enjoyment with sacrifice and blissful gratitude. Jonathan Ott (1993:16) described the act of interactional and cognitive playfulness in a non-ritualized entheogenic state as *ludibund*, not to be confused with “recreational,” which readily associates to enjoyed but perhaps wasted time. Through mastering control of any overwhelming entheogenic effects, during either religious, interpersonal, or creativity-focused rituals, one can begin to utilize entheogens in a predictably fun yet productive fashion, much as one would with games, sports, or an academic study of interest.

Entheogens have been used throughout millennia in various contexts, including that of the modern techno-industrial society. These include the spiritual and medicinal (Calabrese 2008; Glass-Coffin 2010:60-64, 75-76; Merlin 2003; Rättsch 1998: 462-465, 620-625; Schultes et al. 1998:82-85) as well as cosmology-making and political contexts (Lewis-Williams 1997:337; Rättsch 1991:132), including elite Mystery cults of Rome, Greece, and India (Wasson et al. 2008) as well as Judaic groups (Baker 2005:180-181), European and Asian Mystery cults (Baker 2005:185) and chiefly also in pilgrimages (Maclean 2009) as well as Hindu pursuits of positively sanctioned ecstatic, empathic existence gained in a fashion that is opposite to the sensory withdrawal functions of Yoga.^{xiii} Wallace (1970:55) reminds us that

“The religious significance of all such practices lies in the folk interpretation placed upon a basic psycho-physiological reaction to the drug, such that the hallucinatory or other ecstatic experience is phrased for the individual and the group as possession by the divinity or as communication with the divinity.”

Entheogens have also been used constructively within modern medical institutions (Dyck 2006:326), and by revolutionary population groups (Zayas-Basán et al. 2010:19). The Nobel Prize winner for DNA analysis, Kary Mullis, has stated that the entheogen derivative LSD gave him inspiration (Winston 2010). A technical LSD session researcher went on to become a vice president of Hewlett-Packard (Walsch and Grob 2005:33). Steve Jobs of Apple, inspired by an entheogenic experience abroad, was another modern visionary to contribute leaps and bounds to society (Griggs 2011).

Increasingly, entheogens are gaining a long over-due legitimization for use in Western psychopharmacology.^{xiv} Many entheogens are now acknowledged as highly beneficial to health (Blanc 2010:95-96; Kwok-Wen et al. 2010; Rättsch 1998:65,333,857), to perceptual functions of personal meaning (Collier 2009; Dyck 2006; Halpern et al. 2008; Hanes 2001), to spiritual significance (Griffiths, et al. 2006, 2008), and to the intuitive process (Blanc 2010: 92-94; Lumpkin 2001:57) as well as empathic discourse in life (Schultes et al. 1998:126; Virtanen 2009:349-350). They are shown to be gratifying and therapeutic (Ben Amar 2006; Guzmán 2003; Halpern et al. 2008), and supportive of heightened capacities for ambidextrousness, cognitive balance, confidence, reaction time, clarity, and re-acclimation (Winkelman 1991:17-18). In some cultures, the insight gained from entheogens “has an equal, and sometimes privileged, status with empirical knowledge” (Sutton and Anderson 2010:104). Some people yet remember or care to learn that entheogens, utilized in appropriate contexts, have been our helpers for thousands of years.

Usage: Our Collective History and Current Legitimizations

We now venture further into the history of world religions and relative therapies. To date, humanity is learning that many of the world’s major spiritual disciplines have been historically augmented (Berlant 2005; de Borhgeyi 1961:501-503; Dobkin de Rios et al. 1974:150-152; Frits 2001; Wasson et al. 2008:64, 74; Webster, Perrine and Ruck 2000), and are continuously shaped (Dannaway et al. 2006; Guzmán 2008; Halpern et al. 2008) by the powerful experiences that entheogenic substances instill.^{xv} A prominent two of many unassuming religious societies are included therewith: (1) Buddhism with its ritual and habitual usage of the euphoriant Nag Champa (*Ailanthus malabarica*), containing a potent monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) - an amplifier of endogenous (neurotransmitter) and exogenous entheogenic chemicals (Cornell University 2009), and historical entheogenic mushroom sacraments (Hajicek-Dobberstein 1995), and, those of (2) Christianity with its use of the resin from MAOI-containing Frankincense (*Boswellia spp.*) (Moussaieff et al. 2008), and Cannabis as well as, possibly, the MAOI “Syrian Rue” used in conjunction with the spatiotemporally entheogenic plant of common use, Acacia (Shanon 2008:58-70), as well as Amanita mushroom sacraments (Irvin and Herer 2008; Rättsch 1998:632). Renewed “illuminated manuscripts” – in this case an illustrated Medieval period rendition of the Book of Psalms deemed the “Anglo Catalan Psalter” (Moleiro2005a), likely finished in 1340CE at a workshop in Barcelona, and it’s earlier version, deemed the “Eadwine (or Canterbury) Psalter,” (Moleiro 2005b) of 1180CE from Christ Church, Canterbury – are likely to raise even further academic argument as to the knowledge and use of entheogenic Psilocybin mushrooms by either Benedictine monks (at least in Hautvillers) or the Biblical figures they studied, as recently as 820CE. Also called *psychointegrators*, entheogens integrate “brain functioning from neurophysiological to cognitive levels in ways that permit the manifestation of specific human potentials [...and]

served as one of the original sources of ASC-based healing and religion in humans” (Winkelman 1996:11, emphases added). In that the highly praised scientific method developed from the logical thinking movement of The Enlightenment, founded upon critique of religion-based ethnoscience (once seeming to provide the best answers) but given its own breath because of societal developments stemming from that older perspective, much credit is due to such practices, historical and present. There is substantial disconnect, then, between drug policy makers (of whom the staunchest advocates tend to be Christian), and the spiritual and psychopharmacological circles of our modern age.

The mass populous must reach back through millennia of burned books, confused claims against heresy and witchcraft, and now controversial prohibition, in order to make right and perform salvage for correlated medicines, ecofacts, and ideofacts which gave us our modern being. Unfortunately, through restrictive laws on diet-based consciousness alteration (technically laws against the stimulation of our own personal neurological property), population control models are instituted that are more cost-effective than the upkeep of military force alone (Barfield 1997:133), such as that seen in the psychedelic movement of the 1960s. This is still a volatile premise, being that evolutionary adaptations stem from pressures both natural and artificial; a careful people would not want to end up wasting their future immune and reproductive functions or intellectual and physical capacities on a fight against sanctioned but fruitless toxins (alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, e.g.) that they are imposing upon themselves. A careless people might thusly impose (Walker 2011), however, and not upon themselves necessarily (in as much as many policy makers are multinational citizens with increased priveleges to experience life under different legal pressures), but rather upon those subservient to them. Synthetic and addictive or potentially fatal non-entheogen drugs of abuse should more considerably be Schedule items. The illegalization and demonization of entheogens, in and of themselves, is pure nonsense.

Such mandates and acts have been related to a “Pharmacratic inquisition” (Ott 1996:18). William Blake said that “everything that lives is holy” (Ott 1993:59) in concern for states of awareness (and not just profoundly poetic sentiments) which may be considered true ecstasy. “For the Catholics, and for the Protestants after them, to experience ecstasy, to have religious experiences, was the most heinous heresy, justifying torture and being burned alive” (Ott 1993:60). This task force may have materialized out of defensiveness against opinions that dualism, rather, is superstition, for those people that “have direct, personal access to entheogenic, religious experiences, [...] never conceive of humankind as a separate creation, apart from the rest of the universe” (Ott 1993: 59), or of the soul/mind as separate from the body. Christianity worships symbols but ignores or obfuscates some of the referent objects and experiences that they once carefully represented, the forgotten identity of the forbidden fruit being a blatant example thereof (Irvin, Rutajit, and Zervos 2009). Schele and Freidel (1990) note that

“It is as though people were worshipping the decorations and hardware on a door – the portal to the Otherworld” unfortunately “having lost the key to open it; having forgotten even that it is a door, and its threshold is meant to be crossed; knowing not what awaits on the Other Side.” [Ott 1993:69]

On the contrary, and in progressive (once “heretical,” now illegal) fashion, many responsible and constructive Americans have used entheogenic substances to the benefit of Western society (Piedmont and Moberg 2003:146; Richards 2005:384), unintentionally reconnecting such mythic symbols to factual and accessible tools for expanding thought and skill, enlightening themselves and academics alike.^{xvi} In ludibund or ritual manners, they have become members of forums wherein they can divulge such secrets, share inspiration, and use it to find peace, and to better themselves or the world around them. Most are generally bullied to hide this fact (with the promise of jail time otherwise) while pretending that their identities have not been augmented, and even enriched, as such.

Entheogens and self-conscious human evolution go hand in hand. They act on the serotonin systems of the brain, and it is the strong activity of these very systems that relates them physiologically to better mental acuity (Winkelman and Baker 2010:83-85) and likely thereby to a better state of potential and regenerative health. This very tangible offering may be a reward for what our DNA desires, no less. Raghanti et al. (2008) notes that “A wide range of evidence indicates that the human serotonin (5-HT) system was modified in the course of human evolution and contributed to our cognitive specializations” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:127) and that “there are differences [between humans and chimps, e.g.] that reflect evolutionary divergences in 5-HT1D receptor systems of humans and chimpanzees” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:127). Pregoner et al. (1994) also found “direct evidence that humans evolved to more efficiently process what are generally considered hallucinogenic or psychedelic drugs,” by examining “the displacement of serotonin by various drugs in humans, chimpanzees, other primates, and other mammals” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:127) and concluding that it is significantly greater (human:chimpanzee) by 2.5 to 4 times on the binding of LSD and other ergots.

There is more. Research has provided insight that endogenous entheogen production is a major factor in adolescent cognitive developments in that endocannabinoids (THC-like chemicals created by the human brain) cause an increased potentiation in the adolescent hippocampus, thereby enhancing memory and behavioral learning (Blanc 2010:93). Our evolutionary adaptation for dietarily and ritually augmenting internal DMT levels (Tupper 2002:503-504) is likely to be that which today grants us any spiritual capacities for existential intelligence, beyond childhood. It appears that selective pressures have exerted upon us myriad advantages gained from and a propensity for the heightened activity and crosstalk of the prefrontal, limbic, and serotonergic systems – including attention span control, future planning, self-evaluation and socializing (Comings 1996:84), depression and anxiety prevention (Tomarken and Hollon 1991:95), violence suppression, fear rationality (and perhaps, thereby,

calculated compromise) and impulse control (Blank 2006:15) – via the original ancestral consumption of entheogens. And then there are dreams.

Of the nocturnal subconscious, those dreams that strongly pertain to learning, cultural transmission and schemata reorganization are those that occur in deep sleep, and can be discreet or nominally lucid, total sensory experiences produced by endogenous entheogenic chemistry (Rätsch 1998:815) and activated by psychointegration of the prefrontal cortex (Winkelman and Baker 2010:79). Acetylcholine, GABA responses, and serotonergic centers are currently considered to be the primary chemical gating mechanisms for dreams (Pace-Schott 2003:22-25), but “[w]ith tryptamines and beta-Carbolines proposed as search targets, it may eventually become possible to find “the kind of stuff dreams are made of” (Callaway 1988:123, emphasis added). We need only highlight the MAOI action of an endogenous neurochemical, “pinoline,” as well as the tryptophan-serotonin-melatonin and the likely tryptophan-to-DMT endogenous synthesis processes of the human brain (Callaway 1988:121) to see this. Brereton (2000) notes that dreams provide a process for “virtual scenario construction” that allows “for risk-free examination of social and cognitive functions” and “scenario building processes that engage opportunities for model construction related to issues of social adaptation” (Winkelman and Baker 2010:79). Acculturation is a fact, but “inception” -quipping on the recent blockbuster hit film (Inception 2010) - may also be entirely probable, for whatever purposes it may serve. The CIA may be the very organization to request information about this premise (Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:120-121), as well as truth serum and chemical warfare research (Ott 1993:53-56), in regards to their “MKULTRA” program. Technical LSD sessions have even given an architect the ability to design an entire shopping mall as “a platonic form” that he envisioned and walked around in (Walsch and Grob 2005:33). To intentionally engage in a ritualized or prescribed activation of dream consciousness while in a waking state is to become keen to those logical programmings of habit and culture, and yet subject to overwhelmingly creative abstract thoughts and to the self, as transmutable and unique but unified, in a manner that can usher accelerated personal growth.

Researcher Paul Devereux, working at Avebury, has recently begun to comprehend possible Neolithic shamanic insight and folklore symbolism relative to various European henge sites through a new “way of seeing” the landscape (Wallis and Blain 2003:312). Though this idea is not a new one, he has affected the praxis of many of his contemporaries. It may be that this certain way of seeing was also practiced by the creators of ancient architecture, rock art, and artifacts (de Borhgeyi 1961; Dobkin de Rios et al. 1974; Glass-Coffin 2010:66; Lewis-Williams 1997; Rätsch 1998:21, 622, 631), and, that some timeless, cognitive contexts of prehistoric cultures can be unveiled by such transpersonal means of participation. Reflecting upon the codifying schematic concepts behind (and general purposes for) most folklore and myth-histories of any cultural group (Barber and Barber 2006), it may be that there is similar footwork to be done in research-minded ASC methods of inductive survey, regarding the

unveiling of much deeper cultural heritage and resource knowledge on the behalf of living people everywhere.

American entheogen users can receive public and legal acceptance if they ritually ingest the powerful substance ayahuasca (a DMT-containing herbal/vegetable beverage) as a Christian member of the Santo Daime (SD) or Uniao do Vegetal (UDV) churches of the Americas and European nations. This is a conundrum, because these organizations show that their members are quite sane and healthy, and yet DMT is illegal for any other individuals or groups to consume.^{xvii} This is a strictly religious limitation of perceptions, set by the institutionalized dominance of this so-called Christian Nation (Blank 2009:160). The same classic mode of data erasure and schemata limitation took place with the Native American Church and peyote use at the start of the twentieth century (Baker 2010:20; Rátsch 1998:330; Stewart 1993:222). Ordained priests now head such ceremonies. Any original or non-syncretized ideological and medicinal insights from entheogenic experiences, outside of Christian doctrine and dogma, are continually slandered, defiled, and politically demonized (Calabrese 2008:347) by a religiously biased judicial system either non-dialectical in its reeling from, or subverted and “rooted in, the spirit of the Catholic Inquisition” (Rátsch 1998:16, emphasis added) of inhumane, fallacy backed, coercive ideological supremacy.^{xviii}

There are simple but ignored excuses for such actions. Entheogens simply “could be seen as a threat to the religious interpretations of the legitimate social power, and are therefore typically repressed in state level societies” because, in part, “[t]heir typical use in interpersonal settings with idiosyncratic interpretations could pose a threat to hierarchical control of religious consciousness and therefore to central political authority” (Winkelman 1996:23). With or without institutional acceptance and involvement, many responsible Americans will continue to utilize entheogens (Winkelman 1996:47) in order to live out a semblance of humanistic freedom – either raucously and ignorantly without any initiation, expectation, and guidance, or, safely and constructively with provisional education and intention. Counter-culture has proven able to offer the latter, but with only sub-nominal structure and peer reviewed sensibility and accountability. With enough patience and simultaneous tactical foresight and reflexive praxis, intercultural controls can be co-opted into play that assure positive outcomes.

Rituals of Adaptation and Re-solution

Altered states can be stressful to the reckless or uninitiated, and entheogens are not panaceas even if they are beneficial. Without sensitive and culturally relative care during and after their psycho-physiological entheogenic journey, some experimentalists may find themselves in a liminal crisis, unable to create/link coherent or lasting polyphasic schemata,

resynthesizing disorganized mazes, wherein they may anxiously confuse their psyche and temporarily become intensely introverted or dissociative to daily life.^{xix} Anthropologist Sara Lewis proclaims that these very situations are where “psychotherapy (a culturally sanctioned institution) has the potential to help individuals make meaning of their experiences and integrate them into culturally relevant methods of learning” (Lewis 2008:111). This would require both legitimization and licensed legalization of such substances, and culturally relative approaches to institutional psychotherapy. There are some entanglements therein. Baker (2005:186) notes that many ethnic, national, interest group, and also seminarian and scientific (Steindl-Rast 2001) populations consider them as sacraments, and, conversely proscribed for utility in countercultural backdrops, as the cohesion-promoting entrainment medium of sacrament. To create a space for positive reinforcement of context-appropriate entheogenic utility is to really win the War on Drugs and satisfy our powerful genetic predispositions at once.

The benefits of such institutional integration, mindful of set and setting, could be very substantial. Laura Huxley has proclaimed that entheogens used in a clinical psychotherapy setting can, in one day, allow a person to “let go of so much, and have insight into so much” – “[s]ometimes more than a year of traditional psychotherapy,” and that “[i]f one receives the grace, one can just take it, and that’s the end of it,” but “[i]t is the cooperation with grace that brings it alive” (Walsch and Grob 2005:182). This can tie into not only increased psychotherapeutic effects, but also those of learning, health and empathy. A person cannot become a master entheogenist without much acclimatization from their long range set (their acculturation and personal development) and acclimation to their immediate set (current situation and expectations) as ornately elaborated in the insightful guidebook *The Psychedelic Experience: a Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Leary et al. 1964). This usually requires a sitter, a teacher, or a healer until a person becomes acculturated to specific techniques and safeties (Baker 2005:185-187), and capable of going solo on such biophysical and psychospiritual journeys.

In traditional (including ancestral Western) societies, there are various doctors, chiefs, shamans, or medicine men and women, and their apprentices or those they have initiated, who must experience and then co-manage or administer rites of passage, vision quests and divination.

“In those drug-using societies where adequate data [exist], one finds that it is generally recognized that the shaman is a special individual whose nervous system and level of maturity permit him to deal most competently with the realms of unconscious activity generated by hallucinogenic plant use” (Dobkin de Rios 1974:152, emphasis added).

This is a matter of exposure, acclimatization, habitus and cultural training altogether. “[O]ne might say that physiological manipulation of the human body, by any means available, to produce euphoria, dissociation, or hallucination is one of the nearly universal characteristics of religion” (Wallace 1966:56, emphasis added) – keeping in mind the varying rules of myriad

worldwide faiths and lifeways; however, methodologies as well as expectations and goals tend to differ from system to system, culture to culture.

As mentioned earlier, this can be used constructively or destructively. Ignorance to any ongoing destructive usage of such potential social engineering mechanisms is passive promotion of it. The best way to fix that problem is to provide support for or contribute to an outlet for constructivism. We face now the “de-stabilization of family structure,” and the “inexorable deterioration of what was formerly a cohesive social system” in America, involving “economically impoverished environments [and] the likelihood of parental separation” (Wolcott 1991:121), as well as crises in educational funding and innovation, and in sustainable advances of technology and politics. These issues can be examined through revolutionary insights, from the bottom up. ASC-trained anthropologists could serve as culturally objective co-administrators of entheogenic care givers – an inductively Western but metacultural (Goodenough 1971:37) and non-hierophantic sort of medicine man, highly qualified to advise those who would serve individuals and personal or professional focus groups as closely as possible in accord with their heritage, nationality, lifestyle, and even work culture. Their knowledge would augment standard therapeutic tools such as talk therapy, biofeedback, hypnotherapy, symbolic manipulation, and ritual or habitus in general because although people can be treated by masters of the biomedical model of health and consciousness, they are also greatly shaped by culture in a way that can trump predictions and make the irrational rational, whereby psychiatric anthropology (or “cultural psychiatry”) is a far better approach to research and counseling (Kirmayer 2008; Kirmayer and Sartorius 2007; Kleinman 1988; Luhrmann 2000). And, since “[a]nthropologists learn culture just the way children do,” though “unlike a child, the anthropologist can remain cognizant of the process” (Wolcott 1991:254), they can do so not only more thoroughly but also more quickly. As such, they are in a strong position to mediate and foster the best of cooperative human intellectual and emotional potential.

Myriad Western therapists will likely soon find it necessary to opt for this because many worldviews are indeed polyphasic and do incorporate ASC, and because many prominent psychologists are now finding culture to be more relevant to complex thoughts than innate mental prototypes previously hypothesized and unsuccessfully proven (Shore 1991:14) while anthropologists are realizing that the “data clearly argue for the possibility that the suggestibility properties of both plant and synthetic drugs [including those tacit non-drug “supplements”] cross-culturally either explicitly or implicitly are the prominent factors in the cultural drama that societies face in socializing their youth” (Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:128, emphasis added). This would coincide with, and perhaps fortify, a preexisting theoretical model of culturally universal shamanism (Blanc 2010:94). Under the right set of cultural initiation and safety measures, almost all people can immeasurably gain from entheogenic experiences that our bodies and minds, to varying degrees, are inherently wired for (Pahnke and Richards 1966:204-205). Interfaith chaplains and music therapists as well as folklorists could surely help to create

fantastic sets and settings, let alone sincerely offer heartfelt rituals, counsel, and ludibund experiences.

Shamanism has been commodified in the global market. This can dramatically affect the experiences of patients, and in return, the indigenous worlds that purportedly treat them.^{xx} Some Westerners may even believe that the very substances utilized are neurologically or intellectually destructive, simply because of media-dramatized negative experiences of their own or of others in their culture. Many such substances, though, have been chemically, clinically, and field tested to a degree that they are exemplified as quite the opposite (Halpern et al. 2008:20-21; Lucas 2005; Tupper 2002:503). Even commoners, let alone leaders in pre-colonial Native American cultures,

“were acutely aware that overindulgence in drug use could undermine the social order. Rules were needed. These rules contributed not only to defining social status and creating and nurturing social ties, but also to regulating access to the drug itself,” and, “[t]his is especially true in stratified societies.” [Barfield 1997:132]

So, these problems can all be effectually mediated and perhaps remedied by the nature of an international understanding and mutual respect for the rituals and substances relative to spiritual, ecological, and economically supportive ASC (Schultes 1960:262). Cultural heritage preservation and resource management tactics can future-safe these practices and plant species, including the overall ecological interdependence of any population group in any country. The confounding pressures, upon shamanic legitimacy and substance exports, extend from corporate Western encroachment and alienation of perceptual diversity. So, too, these pressures can be relieved by careful Western organizations.

Discussion

Smoke, Spirits, and Speedbumps

Many staunch advocates of the presently normalized Western mental state would argue that to achieve a psychointegrated ASC via any substance consumption is a fundamentally “cheating” act – one that provides only unqualified experiences to weak people.^{xxi} It is perhaps a hard truth for them that, already, many ASC, formally and positively sanctioned in America, are seen as undesirable by people from other cultures. Alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, as well as psychotropic prescription drugs such as benzodiazepines and opiates are all capable of inducing strong and dangerous ASC. Tobacco is actually a plant with similar psychoactive MAOI chemistry to the Ayahuasca vine. Moreover, its effects are dose-and-tolerance dependent only, whereby “as Westerners are most familiar with alcohol as a means of altering

consciousness, it is possible that tobacco-induced altered states of consciousness are just not recognized” (Janiger and Dobkin de Rios 1976), likely because the physiologically alterative effects of nicotine and the strong addiction it creates both outweigh and desensitize perceptions of this experience to anyone but the seldom-occasioning smoker. Other powerful, mind-altering MAOIs, and the somewhat relative drug class of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), abound in the pharmaceutical grade as “antidepressants,” and amongst other chemical components of herbs on market shelves sold as mood drugs as well as performance enhancers. The innocuous and happy homeowner down the street may be a utilizer of these latter medicines, and may well benefit from them in ways that give them an advantage over others.

Datura, a potent deliriant that crosses historic cultural boundaries in its artistic and literal representation and in its usage, is widespread in growth and still used in America as a sacrament despite its ill reputation (Baker 2005:184, Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:126). Amanita muscaria mushrooms, equally as potent in effect and also antidoted by the prior, share this status. Peyote-utilizing Native Americans live and work amongst and with us while retaining their spiritual, cognitive, interactional and physical power. Kava Kava, a plant native to the Pacific tropic islands and now commercially available in pill-form on Western market shelves, is also capable of neuro-physiological alteration (Rätsch 1998:448; Thomson PDR 2007:489); and, it is given neither negative stigmas nor negative sanctions against its usage in the United States. In contrast to these substances just mentioned, the uses of myriad non-addictive and circumstantially beneficial long-duration psychointegrative hallucinogens, with capacities to produce synesthesia and ancestral memory access (those without direct CNS-stimulating or depressant attributes), are still inappropriately and irrationally given negative sanctions and stigmas.

“Visionary” insights are those that produce deeply felt representative imagery or heightened natural intuition about the future, while synesthetic experiences are those that allow a cross-wiring of the senses so that one may, e.g., “taste color” or “feel sounds.” Illegalization of visionary and synesthetic ASC can be summed up as altogether caused by a complex lack of knowledge regarding (1) the navigation of such states, (2) the human usefulness of them as coding mechanisms and interpretation tools, and (3) exactly what proportion of consciousness is altered (Winkelman 1996:15-18). Instead of being allowed as integral parts of traditionally beneficial and adaptive customs and rituals, or innovation and therapy in modern settings, they are legally banned in America – despite their more respect-inspiring, and less overt, toxic, and abuse-relative properties and consumption patterns than substances of current positive sanction (Piedmont and Moberg 2003:145; Richards 2005:387). This is not for lack of many Western people who have had such experiences – because, unsurprisingly, many actually have (Wasson et al. 2008:6) – but for the lack of honest secular and professional acceptance towards, admittance of experience with, or outright ignorant ostracizing of, ASC generally (Baker 2010:16-20; Richards 2005:387).

There are some confounding factors to this oppressive norm. If, for example, a Euroamerican person were to achieve the equivalent to “runner’s high” not by jogging, but rather through chanting and hyperventilation, they would be thought of – in the very least – as eccentric. Their practice, however, would likely have no stigma or legal implication in society. In fact, and including that avenue, there are many manners by which to achieve altered states (Hayden 2003:46-87, Winkelman and Baker 2010:69-86) which are analogous to those we experience through activities we more readily associate them to. In fact, “[s]ensory deprivation has been exploited by mystics, both Eastern and Western, to achieve the higher extremes of beatitude” and by “American Indians to secure guardian spirits in visionary experiences” (Wallace 1970:55). Some might have the decades of training to make their Qi Gong or Yoga sessions go from meditative to hallucinogenic and back again – and likely not without the lifestyle habituated mind-and-body affective dietary aids of Traditional Chinese Medicine or Ayurveda. Interestingly enough, these practices can cause the same behavior and neurochemical modulation that is deemed illegal in the United States of America.

The Western industrial sanctioning of drug use does indeed grant citizens perception modulation rights, but only through either metabolism-boosting and central nervous system (CNS)-depressing drugs, many of which are dangerously addictive. And actually, psychoactive drug use is “nearly universal among American adults” (Ott 1993:32) where “already more than 90% of our adult population is using drugs” (Ott 1993:76). Natural and preventative medications are not prescribed by mainstream healthcare, though; there are only synthetic, non-holistic allopathic medications available and covered by insurance. Detrimentially altered psychosocial habitus and physiological state is nearly assured through regimented usage of legal drugs (Ott 1993:30). Of etiological misunderstanding and therefore confused and even iatrogenic health education and treatment that can exist in such a social climate, Western medical reductionism may create far more problems than the polyphasic model could possibly incur (Lumpkin 2001:57). On the bright side, some Americans are changing this story from the ground up by finding the best of both worlds.

Empathetic Tolerance of, and Cooperation with, the Cognitively Dissimilar

ASC are ubiquitous worldwide. They increase our abilities to learn and to empathize. Levels of suggestibility are increased when a person, especially an adolescent (Calabrese 2008:340; Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:121), consumes entheogens or induces their own from within or through other dietary measures (and in regular dreaming), but careful attention and direction or self-control in this state predisposes them to psychologically schematic reprogramming. Spiritual rituals themselves can provide an outlet for peace and personal

empowerment, and yet entheogens have for untold years, and yet can, contribute greatly to those rituals and to ethnoscience (including that of the Western world). Entheogens have a distinctive “ability to assist adaptation to a wide variety of circumstances and conditions” (Winkelman 1996:13), and, as such, intentionally moderated ASC and phase-transference rituals are promising ideas in the historically forward-thinking country of America. The nation’s many peoples may be keen to recover and reintegrate parts of their own traditional folklores and related medical systems that have contained, and would continue to perpetuate, knowledge of entheogenic substances and the ASC they evoke (Schultes 1960:257); however, the cooperative involvement of not only psychiatric anthropologists and therapists, but also of folklorists and music therapists, could help to shape modernized, highly appropriate and attractive settings for the entheogenic experience in its various forms. Rather than fallaciously-deemed cathartic or irrational behavior (somewhat synonymous in the West with “useless”), some very productive self-realizations, psychological transformations, and mutually inspiring discourse can materialize from clinical, ritualized, or ludibund entheogenic experience.

While the American legal institution has been making presumption-founded war upon super/natural sacramental substances, many seminarian and scientific theologians may agree that such substances are potent natural manifestations of how “faith encounters God’s power” (Steindl-Rast 2001). Zoja (1989) highlights the differentiation that “While traditional [including American ethnic] societies may use drugs to strengthen healthy bonding of their members, our societal setting appears to be increasingly chaotic, where virtually anything goes, leading to more dangerous and unpredictable potential outcomes” (Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:122, emphasis added). Such behavior, however, is a symptom rather than a cause of destruction (Dobkin de Rios and Grob 1994:121), from suggestive materialistic pop culture and habituation to mundane lifestyles, as well as abuse of sacred environments and mockery of pure or honorific interactions, altogether leading to self-absorption and radical acts while intensely under the influence. There are sub/cultures that can teach others the many ways to be safe, effective, and peaceful, as well as adherent to their cultural guidelines, in entheogenic practice. Some marginalized spiritual communities and Americans from entheogenist ethnic groups already practice with these sacraments, and may be able to inform and assist in administration for various ASC-ready religious and sectarian groups that could also benefit from them. Effectively, such obscure or marginalized communities require a legal equality with all Christian denominations – even spiritually inclined scientists and atheists (Blank 2009:167, 190; Sullum 2007) – that has been long sought after by people on an international level, even when ASC are not directly the issue at hand (Lumpkin 2001:60).

There exists an inhumane prejudice that prevents families, academics, and business professionals from legitimately immersing themselves into, gaining respect and recognition for, and expressing to society some incredibly empowering and inspiring aspects of their traditional ethnic or emerging cultural lifeways. Rather than cultural collaboration - the proverbial “melting pot” – this is oppressive, supracultural, religio-political supremacy. Thereby,

polyphasic consciousness may not be appreciated by some, but it must not be sanctioned for alienation and punishment by all. It is up to individuals to discover for themselves the empowering ludibund or clinical benefits of entheogenesis, inherently influencing schema reorganization and maze way resynthesis; and, it is up to entire cultures to embrace perceptual diversity the way it should be understood by the laws of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In as much, it is pertinent that (1) psychiatric anthropologists work with mental health care researchers and clinical institutions to create and co-facilitate new interpersonal and focus group entheogenic therapy programs, and that (2) the American government regulates entheogenic substances and their use at least for the sake of such advances in healthcare and thereby, too, the local and international social relations of the American public. Inherently, positive developments in educational models and technological innovation, let alone career types and job availabilities, would surely follow.

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i Not all, but the vast majority of cultural groups perceive the linear Beta-brainwave associated mental state (typically alert, calculating, and concentrated) as the non-altered state of consciousness - the norm in Western cognitive science, medicine, and industry.

ii Ethnoepistemology is a field which, concerned with personalization or absorption of cultural meaning as relative to conscious experiences, “is not only concerned with knowledge that can be formulated, articulated and codified, but also, and more elusively, with tacit knowledge – that which is pretheoretical” (Locke and Kelly 1985:12). It is noteworthy that any ethnic group or culture which utilizes seemingly pre-theoretical behavior is actualizing a mode of activity which, for them, no longer (or *temporarily* no longer) needs processual explanation as much as simply effective performance or ritual. It is then a post-theoretical behavior, rather, which may facilitate an easier or faster transmission of culture. There exist ornate ritual methods that may allow a people to access again, when it is needed or pertinent, a creative empiricism which manifests theoretical knowledge.

iii The ways in which any group of people codifies and standardizes their expectations for any ASC demonstrates how, for example, “they indicate the experiences and attitudes that are essential for “component” (controlled) trance induction” (Locke and Kelly 1985:16) essentially, how to properly and acceptably ‘do trance.’

iv These cognitive placeholders also serve a crucial purpose by themselves, for they provide people with analogies by which to compare and contrast elements of their own perspective, and their culture’s consensus, realities.

v Schemas are thought networks that manifest relations from linguistic domains to non-linguistic symbolic and sensorial (subjective and sensation-associated) content categories. Weak linguistic determinism provides that language, cultural constructs, and personal experiences (non-reproducible circumstantial events, primal physiological feelings, et cetera) do not absolutely determine the thought processes of a person. It expressly outlines how culture and language are more like software to our neurophysiological hardware because people are open to changes in perspective and thought networking in ways that may simply require instantaneous and dramatic awareness shifts, epiphanies, ecstasy, or even punishment, rather than narrowly being restricted to years upon years of linguistic training or cultural immersion in the secondary altriciality of youth or in adulthood.

vi This is not to say that placebo effect and psychological persuasion/coercion are not effectually proven to occur or influence the sciences in human societies. It is not to say that misconceptions of ‘post hoc, ergo propter hoc’ – meaning “it happened after, therefore it was caused by” – do not occur with cosmology, medicine, or any other social idea or institution, either. Many cultures do indeed gamble with, or divine the outcomes of their various activities, and will promote such irrationality as customary norm. But, much of this is due to available technology. As cultures innovate their own advances or adopt those of other cultures, methodologies and conclusions change.

vii They may “possess a great amount of knowledge about their environment, but the sheer quantity of information presents a major problem in systematizing, storing, and retrieving information,” and so “the solution lies partly in religion,” which, used as deep metaphor rather than taken merely at face value, can provide “powerful emotional and social involvement [...] given the absolute value of a sacred text [...] and] encoded in oral tradition (legends or myths)” (Sutton and Anderson 2010:127, emphases added).

viii Awareness abounds in every possible state of nervous system activity. “Each moment of consciousness is a fresh re-entrainment that is constrained to the general limits of the organism’s circadian cycle,” whereby such “re-entrainment may be experienced as anything from a continuity in the stream of consciousness to a radical transformation of experience” (Laughlin 1992:18). Western psychology would have us concertedly agree, however, that a sleeping individual is un-conscious. There are indeed better ways to describe such states. It is simply that the sleeping person is not most actively embraced with the external world. They are non-interactional, but rather conscious in an extremely introverted, and biologically necessary altered state. “Because the definitive characteristic of awareness is re-collection, re-remembering, re-cognition of patterns in experience, awareness tacitly presumes the role played by knowledge in the construction of experience” (Laughlin 1992:19). ASC share a similar pressure to conform by definition to blanket statements.

ix This is also the case for some current cultures, unfortunately. A monophasic culture, such as that of America, “gives credence only to experiences had in the “normal” waking phases – that is, in the phases of consciousness oriented primarily toward adapting to the external operational environment,” and promotes with a heavy hand that “phases of consciousness organized around the inner life of the individual are frequently ignored, repressed, negatively sanctioned, considered pathological, or otherwise derided” (Laughlin 1992:19).

x It has been noted that some cultures which embrace polyphasic consciousness models (integrating ASC with ‘operational’ consciousness) tend to be especially coherent.

“The process of integrating knowledge, memory and experience, especially within a polyphasic society, we call the cycle of meaning. According to this view, a society’s cosmology is expressed in its mythopoeic symbolism (such as myth, ritual performance, drama, art, and stories) in such a way that it evokes direct experiences in alternative phases of consciousness. The experiences and memories that arise as a consequence of participation in the mythopoeic procedures are in turn interpreted in terms of the cosmology in such a way that they verify and vivify the cosmology.” [Laughlin 1992:19]

xi There may be no way that America, and the European countries and polities, can enact sustainability measures without reaching out for and experiencing multiple perspective worldviews because

“[...] when a culture restrains perceptual diversity, that same culture reduces human adaptability, which, in turn, leads to human beings living unsustainably. Unsustainable lifestyles result in ecological destruction, including destruction of biodiversity (or biocomplexity). In a feedback loop, degraded environments offer fewer choices to human beings for adaptability, and a downward spiral commences.” [Lumpkin 2001:39]

xii ‘Normalization’ of states of consciousness, in as much, can be both beneficial and dangerous. “The increasing capacity for what we might call “institutionalization” [is] the creation of novel responses to situations and the objectification of these creations as external institutions, characterized by stable intersubjective significance” (Shore 1991:10, emphasis added). This speaks, structurally, of social institutions as automated manifestations of collective intent. It conjures up an image of the belief that a response to an entity or event, by virtue of the manner in which it is accultured to seem or feel like, is given legitimacy to denote an informed experiential sense (from association) of what that entity or event is essentially or actually like. Cultural adaptations to social and environment changes through time should thereby modulate such definitions on a frequent basis, and can do so most expediently through subjective polyphasic considerations.

xiii Practitioners of Indian and Asian tantra, called tantrika, regard “sexuality and drugs as important methods for expanding consciousness” (Rätsch 1998:32) equally to the modes of music, chant, and physical asana (what most Western people label as “Yoga”). At the start, their practices were regarded by the Yogic community as deviant and inauthentic forms of their standard ideology. Through disciplined organization and assertion, Tantra has been legitimate for over one-thousand years. This is an example of how rituals can “allow people to express feelings that would ordinarily pose a threat to the social order,” whereby they may “channel disruptive and rebellious emotions [and progressive ideologies] into a safely bounded area” (Barfield 1997:411, emphasis added).

xiv This endnote has been removed in this revision.

xv A plant material of new Western interest, *Salvia divinorum*, is currently an unscheduled entheogenic substance in America, and has been a primary medicine and psychoactive agent amongst Mazatec shamans of Oaxaca for centuries (Valdés et al. 1987:290); but, very few of them prefer to use it over psilocybin mushrooms (Rätsch 1998:463), likely due to its short-term and “unusual psychoactive effects that are difficult to compare to the known effects of euphoric or psychedelic substances” (Rätsch 1998:464). None the less, it has potential as a candidate substance for modern entheogenic ritualists because of its potency. *Salvia* is known in psychonautical culture to be so overwhelmingly powerful – and not conducive to a “fun” experience – that it isn’t typically used

beyond trial by much of the recreational mainstream; it is appreciated by those seeking extreme excursion into the depths of their subconscious minds. Western users of Salvia and similarly entrancing substances might be seen, by non-users, as willing victims of overwhelming modulation because of the seeming unpredictability of them (Dalgarno 2007) – a view made possible only because of the uncharted/ forgotten effects of such plants (Granziera 2001:188-190). Salvia is now the focus of prohibitionist gazes in some states, and a hot topic for scientists who realize its value as a key cultigen of ancient cultural utility and a novel way treat psychiatric disorders.

xvi One of the key factors in such attitudes towards a substance may be in that “cultural variables such as expectations, beliefs and values [do] color an individual’s subjective experience of the plant, in light of the socialization process and the incorporation of a complex set of expectations concerning the drug’s effects” (Janiger and Dobkin de Rios 1976:296). There are many of these complex predisposing factors (Locke and Kelly 1985:18-28).

xvii Placing DMT into “Schedule I [highest-priority illegal substance status] was not based on any specific negative research finding about DMT but, rather, was based on concerns for harmful consequences for Americans to ingest powerful mind-altering drugs of no known safety or utility” (Halpern et al. 2008:21, emphasis added). With such organizations highlighting that DMT has never proven harmful, this is revealed to be a propaganda-driven surface argument and policy. The Schedule I status remains prohibitive to nearly all American citizens, including terminally-ill patients seeking alleviation, and somehow there is perfectly legal licensure to imbibe the substance for those multitudes of SD and UDV Christian church members mentioned (Blank 2009:160).

xviii The Roman Catholic Church has continuously suppressed traditions of entheogenic mushroom usage amongst indigenous and native people of Mexico in their own right and now through government influence (Guzmán 2008:410), and yet, in 2005, it supported the legalization of all Christian DMT-related União do Vegetal activities in the US Supreme Court case that resulted in UDV members’ freedom to practice (Boggan 2008). When Taita Juan Bautista Agreda Chindoy, a Colombian Ministry of Health-certified indigenous healer of the Cametsa people, made his arrival on October 19, 2010 at the Houston International Airport en route to a shamanic presentation in Oregon, he was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement for possession of ayahuasca (Daily Mail Reporter 2010). Nancy Hollander, the “lead attorney that was successful before the Supreme Court in granting the UDV church legal authorization for the religious use of ayahuasca,” was key amongst his donation-funded attorneys as well as powerful “indigenous rights groups, human rights organizations and networks of the vast ayahuasca community” (Maher 2010). He won his freedom, but not his liberty to practice on US soil; careless plans to deport him back to his home (rather than respectfully release him to complete his medical mission) have been commenced by immigration authorities as of November 16, 2010, even though his practice was determined to be therapeutic in value, and is known to be certifiably religious, such as the Supreme Court deems necessary for the spiritual usage of entheogens (Bronfman 2007:9-10). It is clear then, that this dominative, alienating disposition of both the DEA and American law enforcement is directly against the Articles of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Norton 2010; UN 2007), particularly Articles 8, 12, 14, 24, 31, 36, 38, and 40, even if home-rule federal stances applied in opposition to his practice - which they do not.

xix It is likely that one of the dominant negative attitudes towards hallucinogenic substances has “been fostered by the conundrum that these substances have tended to be used and abused by young persons who often lack the ego-strength to experience either their psychotherapeutic or spiritual potentials” (Piedmont and Moberg 2003:145). They lack this strength because of a lack of support from both kin and society.

xx Unfortunately for the majority of the West, and for the affected traditional societies themselves, a merciless capitalism is reaching into the authenticity of indigenous worldviews and practices (Dobkin de Rios 1994:18; Guzmán 2008:409). This can taint ethnography and the true heritage and even rights of native peoples, if it hasn’t already. Without trustable academic source materials, an increase may be seen in the dominating popular belief that even the healers of traditional or indigenous people are simply seeking catharsis with visionary substances, and this may serve to perpetuate racial stereotyping and religious/ethnic supremacy, along with the

illegalization in industrialized countries of associated plants and mind-body experiences. On the other hand, such exposure can also be good business for truly traditional shamans and healers (Joralemon 1990) who work their livelihoods on a pay-for-prayer basis the same as modern Others. The important difference is that the traditional folk are not falsely representative of culture and substance. Recognition of who they are, and gracious support for them, can become widespread with the adaptive entheogenic revitalization movement I suggest for the Western world.

xxi And, they may not have the slightest clue about what sorts of trials and humbling ego-reformation a practitioner must abide while experiencing ASC via this induction method (Meyer 1999:9; Richards 2005:383-384) or about the wit required in being vulnerable enough to attain mystical insight as such. Nor may they understand that many peoples' spiritual practices and insights from around the world potentially stem from or include entheogen use.