

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

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Abstract

Cognitively monophasic cultures are those which deny cognitive and material social integration for any subtle or substantial concepts derived from beyond a hierarchically prescribed grouping or range of normalized and usually waking states of consciousness. Psychoactive substances known as *entheogens* offer cognitively monophasic cultures various therapeutic effects and temporary excursions into polyphasic experience, allowing them increased adaptive capacities to holistically restructure their worldviews. Historical and modern members of Western culture have learned volumes about consciousness and empathy via entheogenic rites of passage, sanctioned religious sacrament usage, and psychedelic clinical therapy. American citizens have access to legal information necessary for petitioning the Supreme Court to recognize their liberty to practice entheogenic rituals; however, a criminalizing cognitive prejudice yet exists in America, signified by religion-biased DEA controls on *entheogenic* substances. Forward-thinking regulation, of these substances and their associative culturally relative rituals for responsible and intellectual usage, might best be commanded by professional sociocultural and psychological anthropologists, ethnobotanists, and ethnomusicologists. These specialists have been, in total, extensively and intensively trained in human cultural mechanisms and physiology and may be further co-trained to exert certain care giving capacities in order to work the role(s) of entheogenic Western therapists and teachers.

Re-viewing “Altered States”

Ninety percent of the 4000 societies we know of have one or more institutionalized forms for the induction of Altered States of Consciousness, ASCs (Locke and Kelly 1985:45). With respects to varying norms between cultures, altered states of consciousness 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 gives psychological anthropology the spotlight in consciousness studies. This is not to say that ASCs, 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); indeed, they are characterized by just that and more.ⁱ 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, during and even outside of ASCs.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 ASCs. There is usually some definable set of *metaphors* and symbols which locate ASCs within the social and total cosmic orders.” [Locke and Kelly 1985:15, emphasis added]

To the perceptive onlooker, ritualized ASC guidelines will reflect the ways by which cultural knowledge is discovered, interpreted, coded, decoded, and altered. Schemas (schemata) are

culture-specific cognitive knowledge maps or frameworks. These can be crafted through intentional ASC experiences – a rule that applies, with varying potencies and effectual trans-substantiations, to trance induction as well as any other form of schema-mediating personal and social ASCs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Schemata can be transformed by and transmitted between cultures. An example of one manner by which schemata 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} 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 the physiological neurosciences (Blanc 2010:92-94) that also outline the way in which ASCs allow visualized (or otherwise sensualized) access to those multiple millennia-old ancestral biocultural memories and cognitive instinct motors within the prefrontal cortex.

When a person induces ASCs, 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 ASCs 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 enculturation, 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.

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, emphasis added).^{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.

Consciousness cannot be defined by patterns in generalized brainwave function or attention levels aside from operational awareness (a Eurocentric view).^{viii} Keeping individuality in mind, it is equally impossible for an overarching melting-pot culture to define “waking consciousness,” let alone “normality.” Imagining that one phase of consciousness is supreme over others is also a false concept relative to teleological, unilineal evolution models of culturally ignorant and archaic philosophies.^{ix} Any remnant fear and suppression of ASCs may stem directly from a deficit of truly objective understanding in them due to never having experienced them (at least appropriately so), and thereby also by occultation of navigational competence between them. Just as that fear can stunt exploration, the fear of ASCs can decelerate cultural growth and disintegrate cultural adherence in general.^x A lack of even basic *cross-phase transference* rituals between states, due to a mandated single-state worldview, can lead to fragmented phases of consciousness (Laughlin 1992:19), collectively and individually. Any existing preconceived miscomprehension, of how ASCs can or cannot associate to the laborious mind, is a problematic reason for the anti-intellectual alienation of and disservice to such states (Lumpkin 2001:39).

Us and Them

Monophasic consciousness models demerit the sacred. Without specific rites (of passage, healing, religious service, myth-history enactment, kinship bonding, e.g.) and without masterful guides or teachers of ASCs, 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. Holding to a careless and uneducated view that such experiences are dangerous in and of themselves, as such, 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 comatose or out of control, or in a non-pertinent state of being, temporarily incapable of any “useful” duty in life or of “pure” thought. Prescribed cultural associations of kinesthetic physical appearances (stature, linguistic competence, body language, facial expressions, motility, et cetera), attached to notions of normalcy and illness, can create this generality. Schematic analogies such as those which would cause this reactionary perception, “are not found items,” but rather, “they are imaginative and contingent constructions *made by living subjects*” (Shore 1991:22, italics added). So, if an experiencer learns from his experience, or if an observer learns from their observations of an experiencer, both of their schematic extrapolations – their perceptions – are creative, fresh, and revisable. Both points of view are adaptive and worthy, like any differing cultural worldviews, and, both have a wealth of knowledge and expression, while neither exemplifies “Truth.”^{xii}

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 comrade 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, indeed, many respected scientists who consider themselves spiritual. “The important anthropological question about these states is how they are interpreted within any particular culture” (Barfield 1997:471). It is therefore the *ASCs* of practitioners, in relationship to culturally schematized realizations and meaning-making – rather than supremacist ascertations of their Eurocentrically presumed psychological indicators – that should be focused upon. If culture is what counts in anthropology, then the community needs to assist the lay public in rediscovering the enlightening revelation that any person anywhere can undergo a trans-cultural, let alone sub-cultural metamorphosis or synthesis and give so very much back in the process. There are many ways for a person to achieve this, not the least of which is via dietary alchemy.

Phytochemically Induced Altered States

Hallucinogenic euphoriant plants and their derivatives are known in many culturally sensitive academic circles today as *entheogens*. The term *entheogen* means “internal generator

of God,” and has been 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). Due to the depression of the central nervous system (CNS) with alcohol – and thereby the confusion of symbolic cognition and memory – and, due to the agitating effects upon the CNS by metabolic stimulants, these substances do not fit the criterion. Well known factors of physiological debilitation and addiction related to these substance types play into that separation. Entheogens have been used throughout millennia in various spiritual and medicinal (Calabrese 2008; Glass-Coffin 2010:60-64, 75-76; Merlin 2003; Rátsch 1998: 462-465, 620-625; Schultes et al. 1998:82-85) as well as *cosmology-making* and political contexts (Lewis-Williams 1997:337; Rátsch 1991:132), including key pilgrimages (Maclean 2009; Wasson et al. 2008).^{xiii} Entheogens have also been used constructively within modern medical institutions (Dyck 2006:326), and by revolutionary population groups (Zayas-Basán et al. 2010:19). Even the Nobel Prize winner for DNA analysis, Kary Mullis, has stated that the entheogen derivative LSD gave him inspiration (Winston 2010).

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; Rátsch 1998:65,333,857,) to perceptual functions of personal meaning (Dyck 2006; Halpern et al. 2008; Hanes 2001), to spiritual significance (Griffiths, et al. 2006, 2008), and to abilities of intuitive processes (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-enculturation (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). Entheogen use in Western cultures was once legitimized as such.

We now turn to 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: Buddhism with its ritual and habitual nag champa – *ailanthus malabarica* - usage (Cornell University 2009) as well as historical psychedelic mushroom sacraments (Hajicek-Dobberstein 1995;) and those of Christianity with its use of frankincense – *Boswellia spp.* resin – (Moussaieff et al. 2008) as well as Syrian Rue, *Acacia spp.*, and *Cannabis spp.* (Shanon 2008:58-70) and similar psychedelic mushroom sacraments (Rätsch 1998:632). 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). Many responsible and constructive Americans have used such substances to the benefit of Western society (Piedmont and Moberg 2003:146; Richards 2005:384).^{xvi} There is some serious confusion, then, between miseducated legal circles, and the spiritual as well as medical and scientific communities in our modern age.

American entheogen users can receive public and legal acceptance if they ritually ingest the powerful substance *hoasca* (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; Rättsch 1998:330; Stewart 1993:222). Any old or new ideological and medicinal insights from entheogenic experiences, outside of Christian doctrine and dogma, is continually slandered, devalued, defiled, and politically demonized (Calabrese 2008:347;) by a religiously biased judicial system “rooted in the spirit of the Catholic Inquisition” (Rättsch 1998:16) of inhumane ideological supremacy.^{xviii} 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, emphasis added). 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.

Discussion

Smoke, Spirits, and Speedbumps

Many staunch advocates of Western ‘normality’ would argue that to achieve ASC via any substance consumption is a fundamentally dirty act, providing unqualified (false) experiences.^{xix} It is perhaps a hard truth for them that many ASCs are formally and positively sanctioned in America. Alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, as well as prescription drugs such as psychotropics, opiates, and anti-depressants are all capable of inducing strong ASCs. Tobacco is actually a hallucinogenic plant with similar psychoactive chemistry to the Ayahuasca vine; and moreover, its effects are dose-and-tolerance dependent only, with the added curiosity that “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 DeRios 1976). The physiologically alterative effects of nicotine addiction also outweigh and desensitize perceptions of this experience to anyone but the seldom-occasioning smoker. Kava Kava, a plant native to the Pacific tropic islands and now commercially available in pill-form on 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. Another mind-altering substance called Má Huáng, taken as a pure herb or as a tea, receives much the same freedom as Kava in the United States despite the controversy over its ephedrine content. In contrast to these powerful substances just mentioned, the uses of myriad non-addictive, long-duration hallucinogens (those without direct CNS-stimulative or depressant attributes) are still given negative sanctions and stigmas.^{xx}

Visionary insights are those that produce deeply felt representative imagery, while *synaesthetic* experiences are those that allow a cross-wiring of the senses so that one may, e.g.,

“taste color” or “feel sounds” in a more right-brained manner. Illegalization of visionary and synaesthetic ASCs 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 pro/portion of consciousness is altered (Winkelman 1996:15-18). Instead of being integral to traditionally beneficial and adaptive customs and rituals, used to mediate and extract power from such states, they are legally banned in America. This is not for lack of many Western people who have had such experiences – because *many* actually have (Wasson et al. 2008:6) – but for the lack of honest secular and professional acceptance towards, or outright ostracization of ASCs (Baker 2010:16-20; Richards 2005:387). There are some confounding factors to this oppressive pseudo-norm.

The Western industry-centric model of sanctioned drug use does indeed grant citizens perception modulation rights, but only through addictive, metabolism boosting and central nervous system (CNS) depressing drugs, by which a population control model can be instituted that is more cost-effective than the upkeep of military force alone (Barfield 1997:133). Also, preventative medications are not prescribed by mainstream healthcare; there are only synthesized, reductionist allopathic medications available and insured-for. The promise of a citizen’s negatively altered psychosocial habitus and physiological state with substances such as these (containing caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, opiates, or synthetic chemicals) is assured. Of etiological misunderstanding and therefore confused malpractice that can exist in such a social climate, Western medical reductionism may bring in far more problems than the polyphasic model could possibly incur (Lumpkin 2001:57). But some Americans are changing this story from the ground on up.

Empathetic Tolerance toward Cognitive Dissimilarities

The last decade has seen a rise in religious tolerance from the West. Many Christians are now displaying an increased attraction for religious ASCs in trance-oriented musical experiences (Hutson 2000:38) and trance-friendly worship services (Luhrmann 2004:523-527). The fight is seemingly against a continuing colonialist dominance, now even inverted upon its own promulgators: Americans, those once-traditional, European-descendent people. The interventions of that dominance, even across seas, have been statements of ownership over bodies (Avery 2004:10-17) and minds (St. John 2006:15-16), self-proclaimed as superior in worldview, and busy at removing, from the non-elite, myriad modes of healthcare, spirituality, and subsistence strategies from collective mental schemata – cultural memory and worldview – and ultimately, thereby, from recognition and physical existence. Alternative musical venues tailored towards trance evocation, and otherwise ASCs, seem to have thus far developed into an incredibly powerful and testified, communitas-expanding psycho-spiritual arena of free thinking. Whether or not anyone in this arena intends to synthesize modern ethnosciences for various population groups through it, and, whether or not it has the capacity to manifest worldview encompassing schemata-transformative experiences for its adherents, it may be, for such, the requisite and foundational “neo-tribal” gathering which cognitively monophasic cultures lack.

Spiritual rituals themselves can provide an outlet for peace and personal empowerment, and yet entheogens alone have played a powerful role in religion and ethnoscience since millennia unknown. While the American legal institution has been making misinformed 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). Some marginalized spiritual communities already practice with

these entheogenic sacraments, and may be able to inform and assist the administration for various ASC-ready Christian groups that could also benefit from them. Effectively, the marginalized communities would 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 spiritualists on an international level, even when ASCs are not directly the issue at hand (Lumpkin 2001:60). This is a matter that requires academic mediation.

Those who learn to meaningfully comprehend and translate both subjective metasymbolic sensations and objective knowledge together, through enduring and intentional rituals of natural interpretation and social interplay, can be described as *liminoid* converts. Victor Turner would describe them as being in a “voluntary experience of prolonged liminality” (Barfield 1997:360), perpetually unified with their livelihood, their own enculturation, and their prescribed state of awareness, purpose, and action. In order to transcend their usual perceptual and cognitive boundaries, however, they would need to experience this transformation through an altered state of consciousness. Rather than fallacious manifestations of undisciplined or “non-rational” (a presumptive, Western propaganda schema-trigger term, synonymous with “useless”) behavior, some very productive discourse can materialize from ritualized entheogenic insight in such a state of flow. When culturally legitimized, citizens in liminoid modes offer “the possibility of changing our goals and, therefore, the restructuring of what our culture states to be reality” (Turner 1986:31). The importance of entheogens, in this regard, is in their “ability to assist adaptation to a wide variety of circumstances and conditions” (Winkelman 1996:13). As such, intentionally moderated ASCs and *phase-transference* rituals should be tempting ideas in the pioneering country of America, if not for the mass populous being suppressed from even their own traditional folklores and related medical systems that have contained, and would

continue to perpetuate, knowledge of entheogenic substances and the ASCs they evoke (Schultes 1960:257).

Rituals of Adaptation and Re-solution

Altered states can be stressful to the reckless or uninitiated. 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, wherein they may anxiously confuse their psyche and temporarily become intensely introverted or dissociative to daily life.^{xxi} 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 legalization of such substances, and, likely, culturally relative approaches to institutional psychotherapy. “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). A physically capable and ASC-trained psychological anthropologist would be positioned as a better informed and *cultural relativity* aware clinical psychedelic therapist – a sort of Western medicine man – capable of utilizing the standard tools of hypnotherapy, suggestion, symbolic manipulation, and ritual administration that would serve the individual as closely as possible in accord with their heritage and lifestyle.

This therapist and ritual administrator would do best to work closely with sociocultural anthropologists to make sure that the methodologies utilized conform to the ethnic background

and subcultural lifeways of patients, and of both acolytes and masters of relative rituals, thereby most effectively accessing, making available for modification and fortifying those subconscious frameworks of the individual. Incorporating the purview of ethnobotanists would be necessarily paramount to exposing the co-evolutionary markers outlining particularly beneficial entheogens for any individual, since people may best be affected by those certain bioregional-associative substances that have either those proven or likely affiliations with their biocultural heritage. All of these specialists would be able to integrate their work with the possible cooperation and/or co-facilitation of situation-specific native or indigenous elders and healers. This could maintain a fair-trade and culturally faithful operation of ethnoscientific preservation, revitalization and adaptations. The globalizing world needs this. Work would necessarily be performed in both clinic and field, dependent upon social needs and factors of set and setting.

Most Western therapists will likely soon find it necessary to opt for this because many worldviews are indeed polyphasic and do incorporate ASCs, 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). This would coincide with, and perhaps fortify, a preexisting theoretical model of culturally universal shamanism (Blanc 2010:94). Research has even provided insight that endogenous entheogen production is a major factor in adolescent cognitive developments (Blanc 2010: 93) and that our evolutionary adaptation for dietarily and ritually augmenting internal DMT levels is likely to be that which today grants us any spiritual capacities for *existential intelligence*, beyond childhood (Tupper 2002:503-504). Dreams that strongly pertain to learning, cultural transmission and schemata reorganization are those which occur in deep sleep, and are mostly non-recollectable, non-lucid (unintentional), total sensory experiences produced by endogenous entheogenic

chemistry (Rätsch 1998:815). Respect is due for the entheogens, as we now know that they may have been the catalyst for major advances in language, art forms, social institutions, and technology – organic and synthetic. 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). Even commoners, let alone leaders in pre-colonial Native American cultures, for example,

“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, emphasis added]

This case is no exception when compared with other past and current ASC-organized societies.

Shamanism has been commodified on a global market. This can dramatically affect the experiences of patients, and in return, the indigenous worlds that purportedly treat them.^{xxii} Some 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). In a double-loop, 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 ASCs (Schultes 1960:262). Cultural heritage preservation and resource management tactics can future-safe these practices and 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.

Researcher Paul Devereux, working at Avebury, has recently begun to comprehend possible Neolithic shamanic insight and folklore symbolism relative to various European henge site/s 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; Rättsch 1998:21, 622, 631), and, that some timeless, cognitive contexts of archaeological culture 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, 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 people everywhere. For some ethnic groups, it is celebrated that much traditional knowledge is holistically, ornately transfused into the minds of ritual practitioners (Calabrese 2008:340) this way. The West is now witness to its need for similarly healthful and medicinal means of polysemic knowledge codification, rites of passage, and sensation-rich modes of decoding and demystifying tacit and overt cultural knowledge. At a time when America, specifically, puts so much endorsement in both peaceful and aggressive international exchange, the cross cultural understanding gained from this development would be unmatched in usefulness. As long as physical and social scientists have rights to explore such avenues, they will take the initiative to discover and create profound resolutions through them.

Transcending Prejudice

There exists an inhumane prejudice that prevents youth, students, professionals, and whole kinship networks from legitimately immersing themselves into, gaining respect and recognition for, and from expressing to society some incredibly empowering and inspiring aspects of their current (or possible) traditional, adopted, or emerging lifeways. Such ideological supremacy coercively persecutes and persuasively oppresses Americans of many ethnic backgrounds. Thereby, polyphasic consciousness may not be appreciated by some, but it *must* not be sanctioned for alienation by all: cognitive lifeways exist in the same context as ethnicity and gender. It is up to individuals to discover resourceful uses for novel states of being, and it is up to entire cultures to embrace perceptual diversity and subcultural outgrowth, inasmuch. It is apparently pertinent that the Americas regulate responsible entheogen use for the sake of advance in empathy, healthcare, education, ideological equality, and ecology.

Notes

ⁱ Of course, not all of these groups perceive the linear Beta-brainwave associated mental state (typically alert, calculating, and concentrated) as *the* non-altered state of consciousness, as is 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.’ 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.

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 perceptual, and their culture’s consensus, realities. 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 a Distinguished Research Professor of Cognitive Science, Jean Mandler, 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).

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 justifies the mechanisms at work in the examples of this paragraph in 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 in human societies. It is not to say that misconceptions of ‘post hoc, ergo propter hoc’ – *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.

^{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, emphasis added). 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*-membering, *re*-cognition of patterns in experience, awareness tacitly presumes the role played by knowledge in the construction of experience” (Laughlin 1992:19).

^{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 ASCs 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, emphasis added]

^{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 encultured 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 only through subjective and 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} Contrary to prohibitionist-promulgated fears, some marijuana-using populations have been detailed, in medical research, as capable of the same cognitive functions as non-users over time (Thompson PDR 563-564). *Salvia divinorum*, on a similar note, is likely to be useful in Western medicine to treat depression, social anxiety, and various dissociative behaviors (Collier 2009; Hanes 2001) – this scientifically and subjectively opposes media hyped standpoints.

^{xv} Salvia divinorum, currently an unscheduled entheogenic substance in America, has originally been a primary medicine and psychoactive amongst Mazatec shamans and shamanesses of Oaxaca for centuries, at least (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 is avoided by the recreational mainstream. Western users of Salvia and similarly commanding substances might be seen, by non-users, as willing victims of entheogenic 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 by which to retrace ancient cultural knowledge.

^{xvi} Apparently, it is education, moderation, and cultural significance that make all the difference in the world. One of the key modulating 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 DeRios 1976:296, emphasis added). There are many of these complex *predisposing factors* (Locke and Kelly 1985:18-28).

^{xvii} And yet, 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). Though justly highlighting that DMT has never proven harmful, even this crucial fact is a propaganda-driven surface argument. 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 safe and utilitarian 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 (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 which earned them their 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 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} And, they may not have the slightest clue about what sorts of trials and humbling ego-reformation a practitioner must abide while experiencing ASCs 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 – including their own – probably stem from or include entheogen use.

^{xx} This is the case despite their more ritual-inspiring, less-public, less-toxic, and less-abuse-related properties and consumption patterns (Piedmont and Moberg 2003:145; Richards 2005:387).

^{xxi} 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).

^{xxii} Unfortunately for the majority of the West, and for the affected traditional societies themselves, capitalism is reaching into the authenticity of indigenous worldviews and practices (Dobkin deRios 1994:18; Guzmán

2008:409). This can taint ethnography and the rights of native peoples, if it hasn't already. Without trustable academic source materials, there may be a constant belief that even the healers of traditional or indigenous people are simple cathartic abusers of visionary substances, who heretically rave under wild intoxicating influences; and, this may serve to perpetuate racial stereotyping and religious/ethnic supremacy, along with the illegalization of associated plants *and even 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.

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Defending Perceptual Diversity in America

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