

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AYAHUASCA EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY  
SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SANTO DAIME CHURCH

A dissertation presented to  
the Faculty of Saybrook University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in  
Psychology

by

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## Abstract

### A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AYAHUASCA EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SANTO DAIME CHURCH

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Saybrook University

This descriptive phenomenological research study focused on the ayahuasca experiences examined the changes in consciousness experienced during ayahuasca ceremonies through the use of ethnopharmacology and rite interrelations. The research design was based on a phenomenological approach as proposed philosophically by Husserl (2001) and adapted by Giorgi (2009) for psychologists to investigate and understand individual experiences as actually given to those within the encounter that is being studied. Data consisted of reports given by participants who were willing to share their ayahuasca experiences. The phenomenological inquiry presented the understanding of reported changes in consciousness during the ceremonial use of ayahuasca, the experiential aspects of ritual space, and the perceived psychological value assessed by participants. All six participants reported experiencing profound change in the form of a dramatic permanent shift in conscious self-perceptions, which allowed for an integrated sense of wholeness, a sense of relating to oneself differently by means of releasing psychological patterns of unresolved past events. Participants reported experiencing an essential sense of self beyond their bounded identity that referenced divinity.

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beautiful son Rowan:

Thank you for nourishing my dreams and always being so good.

And to my dearest friend Christine:

your constant love and support have meant the world to me. I am truly grateful.

## Acknowledgments

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a lucid dream to explore “other ways of learning” that launched me into a journey to complete this work. Lastly, thank you to nature.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ayahuasca is a psychoactive brew consumed by indigenous people throughout the entire upper Amazon region. It is also known as hoasca, iowaska, daime, and yage. The term *ayahuasca* is a Quechua phrase meaning “vine of the spirits.” For most people who imbibe it, ayahuasca induces intense visual imagery and other perceptual modalities. Also reported are non-perceptual cognitive effects such as personal insights, ideations, affective reactions, and spiritual and mystical insights. Benny Shanon (2010), a cognitive psychologist, observed:

Ayahuasca introduces participants to “other realities.” Participants may feel that they are gaining access to profound sources of knowledge and that the mysteries and ultimate truths of the universe are being revealed to them. All this is often coupled with what drinkers describe as an encounter with the Divine. (p. 13)

### Statement of the Problem

A great deal of recent research has produced data relating to the possible therapeutic and healing benefits associated with the consumption of ayahuasca (e.g., Labate & Cavnar, 2013). Shanon (2010) asserted that ayahuasca facilitates cognitive and perceptual changes that evoke therapeutic effects on the part of the participant. Neuroscience has begun to develop an understanding of the underlying brain mechanisms of the experience. The fields of psychology and anthropology have studied ayahuasca’s cultural ethnobotanical properties as well as personality variables and after-effects, especially those demonstrating transformation within a traditional ethnographic framework. However, unanswered questions remain about how the changes in perception and cognition that accompany the use of ayahuasca may affect individuals. This research explored therapeutic integration, the potential long-term effects, and the intrinsic value of the experience. These are several aspects of what could be called “the ayahuasca phenomenon.” Participants have reported changes in their perceptions as well as shifts in cognitive understandings (Shanon, 2010).

Ayahuasca has been considered a *psychointegrator* due to its involvement with the serotonin and dopamine neurotransmitter system within the brain, acting essentially as “an elevation of the ancient brain process” (Winkelman, 2010). This alleged integration occurs at various levels of brain functioning, including the cerebral left hemisphere’s objectifying and the right hemisphere’s interpretation and pattern construction as well as perception and cognition. This integration includes the paleomammalian brain’s evaluative functions and social empathic responses containing both conscious and unconscious dynamics. Human behavior requires the coordination of information with motivations and personal significance that link together emotion and cognition. This means that the brain is engaging both cognitive and emotional processes leading towards an integrative holistic growth experience (Grof, 1975, 1980, 1992).

### **Research Question**

This descriptive phenomenological study investigated the experiences of six selected ayahuasca drinkers from the United States and Brazil within a Santo Daime community in California. It asked, “What is the phenomenological experience reported by participants in ayahuasca ceremonies?” By studying these phenomenological reports, researchers may be able to determine the underlying structures of these experiences.

### **Learning Objectives**

My goal in this study was to understand the psychological meaning that participants give to their ayahuasca experiences. Although this is a limited view of the lived experience, I proposed that the lack of precedent for studying the ayahuasca phenomenon phenomenologically would trigger additional investigations, providing information that would inform future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the research literature sought to understand important aspects of the ayahuasca phenomenon. I felt that this process would provide a specific focus on the relevant research needed to support my inquiry. However, this is by no means an exhaustive review of ayahuasca research, nor does it claim to be a comprehensive summary of all the relative research available on ayahuasca experiences.

Ayahuasca has often been a key constituent of indigenous cultures. It appears that the indigenous peoples of this region of the Amazon Rainforest have used the brew for millennia (Naranjo, 1986). Among many tribes, ayahuasca was used in the making of all major decisions, such as where to hunt or to how to heal. Even today, ayahuasca is the basic instrument utilized by many shamans in the entire region (Shanon, 2010). Ayahuasca is treated with honor and respect as a way to receive great knowledge. The indigenous conceptualization of ayahuasca is that it is a teaching plant (Luna, 1984). For many, ayahuasca is a being with special, unique qualities. In some tribes, ayahuasca is even seen as a deity (Shanon, 2010).

The ayahuasca tea is made from two plants. There may be variations in the plants being used, but generally one plant is *Banisteriopsis caapi*, a liana of the *Malpighiaceae* family. The other plant is *Psychotria viridis*, a bush of the *Rubiaceae* family. The term *ayahuasca* is used to refer not only to the potion but also to the first of the constituent plants.

The active ingredients of ayahuasca are found separately in the two plants. “In ayahuasca use, it is often said that the vine gives ‘power’ whereas the leaves give light; usually, the former is characterized as male and the latter as female” (Shanon, 2010, p. 15). When preparing the brew, the *Banisteriopsis* is cut into twigs and pounded; the pounded fibers are boiled in water

together with the leaves of *Psychotria*. This brew is then ingested during a ceremony performed under specific conditions.

Apart from indigenous concepts, ayahuasca is considered by many to be a powerful entheogenic substance, one that has the potential to facilitate the expression of “manifesting the Divine within” (Tupper, 2003). The etymological roots of the term *entheogen* convey a sense of spirituality, hence reinforcing ayahuasca’s designation as a psychoactive substance used to facilitate spiritual experiences (Smith, 2000; Tupper, 2003). However, according to Winkelman, the term *psychointegrator* better reflects “the substances’ systemic neurophenomenological affects, as it integrates brain processes and experiences” (Smith, 2000, p. 210). Ayahuasca impels the whole organism into an integrative state through its impact on the brain’s serotonergic system (Mercante, 2006).

Chemically, the main active ingredients in the ayahuasca potion are the alkaloids N,N-Dimethyltryptamine or DMT, and the harmala alkaloids, namely, harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmine; all beta-carbolines that are MAO (mono-amine oxidase) inhibitors. Usually, DMT, the substance inducing the hallucinations, is found in the *Psychotria* leaves, and the MAO inhibitors are found in the *Banisteriopsis* vine. DMT is a potent hallucinogen affecting the activation of the neurotransmitter serotonin. “When taken orally, however, DMT is deactivated by MAO. This deactivation is, in turn, deactivated by the MAO inhibitors which protect the DMT from deamination by MAO and thus render it orally active” (Shanon, 2010, p. 15). This means that the two plants work together to make available the DMT within the brew when ingested, when otherwise it would remain inactive.

Ayahuasca appears to influence major neurotransmitters as a potent agonist at 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5HT-2C receptors in the layer IV pyramidal cells of the cerebral cortex (Schenberg, 2012).

The exact way that this occurs is not completely understood. However, the effect causes extraordinary cognitive and perceptual experiences. It is believed that the effect is mediated through increasing glutamate release and associated excitation in that area (Sessa, 2012). Much more research is required to investigate these chemical changes within the brain and how the changes affect the experienced perceptions. This method of using ethnopsychopharmacological substances, with ethnic and cultural variations, is the traditional means of treating psychological issues for many native practitioners around the world (Winkelman, 2010).

### **The Church of Santo Daime**

The Church of Santo Daime (*Holy Daime*, the latter word being a colloquial form of the Portuguese phrase “give me”) is a blended religion that combines indigenous traditions and Roman Catholicism, along with some Afro-Brazilian elements. In the church’s rites, *Daime* (the name given to ayahuasca in this context) is consumed as a sacrament. The term refers not only to the brew, but also to the animated force believed to reside within the brew. Importantly, the *Daime* is regarded as a divine being or as the Divine itself, and is believed to be the source of life, vitality, and health, as well as the source of all knowledge and supreme wisdom. *Daime* is essential in the rites of the church that carries its name, not only as a sacrament but also as the source of the doctrine that is believed to emanate from it (Shanon, 2010).

The founder of the Santo Daime church, *Mestre Irineu* (Master Irineu), “received” the “doctrine” of Santo Daime in a vision, after seven days of isolation in the rainforest, eating only unsalted yucca and drinking water and ayahuasca. One spirit, first identified as the *Rainha da Floresta* (literally, Queen of the Forest), and later as the *Virgem da Conceição* (Virgin of the Immaculate Conception), told him during a vision how he would develop the rites of Santo Daime. The ceremonies in Santo Daime involve the singing of a sequence of songs called *hinos*

(hymns), which are said to be channeled by some of the outstanding church members. *Mestre Irineu* channeled the first *Hinário*, a collection of hymns, and several others have since been “received” through a process of channeling by other mediums (Shanon, 2010).

The ceremonial circumstances in Santo Daime churches vary, but the primary observances are the *Concentração* (concentration, or seated sessions) and the *Bailados* (synchronized and repetitive dances). In general, *Concentração* take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> day of each month. A sequence of *hinos* (hymns) is chosen to be sung by the *Padrinho* (godfather) or *Madrinha* (godmother) – the leaders of Santo Daime churches – but a period of silent meditation is also included. The session lasts from 4 to 6 hours. The *Bailados* (dances) take place on festive days, e.g., the commemoration of such Catholic saints as St. Joseph, St. John, or The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, as well as on holidays such as Christmas and New Year’s Eve, among others. This is a dancing rite that lasts 12 hours or through the night.

The common space where the rites take place is indoors in an *Igreja* (church), which can be a rectangular or hexagonal building. At the very center of the church space is the *mesa* (table) where an altar is has been placed with a *cruzeiro* (a two-armed cross also called a *caravaca*) positioned at the center. The table, like the church, can be shaped as a rectangular or a six-pointed star. Those who are considered the spiritually strongest within the community sit at this center table. The *Madrinha* or *Padrinho* sits at the head of the table as the spiritual leader of the community. The right side and behind the center table are spaces reserved for women, while at the left side and in front are spaces reserved for men (Mercante, 2006).

The ingestion of *Daime* (ayahuasca) and participation in the ceremony appeared to promote reliably the occurrence of spontaneous mental imagery and changes in other perceptions, such as hearing and bodily feelings. Ayahuasca (*Daime*) appears to affect visual

perceptions for some drinkers, but not for all. This imagery was considered by the participants in one study as a process of inner perception, the moment when different entities (physical body, thoughts, feelings, culture, emotions, mind, soul, spiritual space, etc.) become connected within their awareness (Mercante, 2006).

### **Experiences of Ayahuasca**

Ayahuasca research has documented the basic framework of the experience through individual reports and from varied fields of knowledge such as anthropological, ethnobotanical, physiological, and psychological. This knowledge base forms the foundation for this research.

The first sensation that drinking ayahuasca brew evokes is gustatory. It is notorious that ayahuasca tastes awful, as it is an earthy or even bitter-tasting brew. In the doctrine of the Santo Daime Church a basic distinction is made between the two aspects of the ayahuasca inebriation; the two are also associated with the two plants of which the brew is made. “The first aspect, associated with the vine, is that of ‘force’ (or ‘power’) or drunkenness; the second, associated with the leaves, is that of ‘light’ and eventually visions” (Shanon, 2010, p.56). The two distinct aspects are characterized in the indigenous traditions as the male and female elements of ayahuasca (Lagrou, 1998).

The visual effects appear to be the most prominent aspects of ayahuasca inebriation. The physiological effects of the brew are often described as an *internal invasion*. “The sensation is of something heavy and viscous crawling through one’s inner parts, pressing and eventually taking possession of one’s entire body. Often, drinkers sense that things are burning inside their system” (Shanon, 2010, p. 56). Many times, the next sensory experience is vomiting, although this is not reported as universal. South Americans often refer to the vomiting induced by ayahuasca as an act of *purga* (purge). The experience of vomiting is often reported as one of major moments of

transformation within the ayahuasca session (Shanon, 2010). During the ayahuasca inebriation one's body feels different from its ordinary state, and visions can be strong, sometimes evoking experiences that may be frightening.

The initial difficult phase is typically followed by a period where the brew is more manageable. During this period the ayahuasca experience becomes enjoyable. Some drinkers report that this experience presents them with moments of exhilaration and great wonderment (Shanon, 2010). This period usually lasts for about an hour and a half to two hours. During the last phase of ayahuasca inebriation, reports of sensory perceptions include bliss, peace of mind, well-being, spiritual upliftment, and great happiness. Many people report experiencing an intense love for humanity and a deep love of nature and all existence (Shanon, 2010). Reichel-Dolmatoff (1991) documented that indigenous drinkers often felt they were "recreated" after ayahuasca inebriation. During the last phase, drinkers often turn their focus outwardly towards others from the previous introspective contemplation. When this happens, it is not unusual for people to feel that they are endowed with an exceptionally keen perception of other persons' minds and souls (Masters & Houston, 1966). Here is an anthropologist's account of an indigenous drinker's experience:

As noted by many ethnographers, the effects of taking ayahuasca follow a fairly stereotypical course. Some time after ingesting the drug, drinkers experience severe auditory and visual disorientation: they hear loud rushing sounds and see patterns of colored light. This is accompanied by a feeling of intense nausea often leading to vomiting and violent diarrhea. This phase is often extremely frightening, and many people have reported their fear of going mad during it. It is, however, followed by more complex hallucinations, which become clearer and clearer: drinkers see distant and exotic landscapes and people. These hallucinations continue for one or two hours, gradually fading to leave those who have taken the drug with a sense of elation and beauty. (Gow, 1988, p. 26)

While there is a great deal of research on the different aspects of the ayahuasca experience, a lot is still not understood. This may be the case because ayahuasca inebriation is

said to be different every time for each individual. Shanon (2002) summarizes this aspect of the ayahuasca phenomenon:

My own firm belief is that there is no alternative to studying phenomenology from within. The experiences that ayahuasca induces are extraordinary in the full sense of that term and many are ineffable. There is no way to really appreciate what they are without experiencing them firsthand. ... Moreover, for a serious study of the ayahuasca experience a cursory, explorative exposure to the brew is not sufficient. The spectrum of phenomena pertaining to the ayahuasca experience is extremely broad and there is simply no way these can be captured in a small number of probes. ... What happens to one under the ayahuasca intoxication is determined not only by the brew itself but also by one's attitude and stance, and these, in turn, change over the course of time. In sum, then, any serious study of ayahuasca requires not only firsthand experience, but also substantive, long-term familiarity – indeed, training. (p. 32)

### **Consciousness**

The definition of *consciousness* is one of the issues helping to underscore the challenge in studying it, because there is considerable debate over what consciousness is and how it operates. For many observers, consciousness contains the ultimate secret of human existence and contemporary science. Scientists even disagree about the possibility of correlating any physiological signals with subjective experience (Jovanov, 2011). Chalmers (2002) calls this the “hard problem”:

CONSCIOUSNESS, the subjective experience of an inner self, poses one of the greatest challenges to neuroscience. Even a detailed knowledge of the brain's workings and the neural correlates of consciousness may fail to explain how or why human beings have self aware minds (Chalmers, 2002, p.90).

Consciousness is a vast subject, one that neuroscience is working to investigate with every technology available. However, consciousness is difficult to conceptualize in terms of boundary or level of awareness, and how is it facilitated. Not much is known compared with what is still to be understood, as we continue to explore the manifestations of consciousness. “The nature of reality, or what we are conscious *of* and perhaps what *makes* us conscious – marks the frontier of human exploration, a frontier that we may never fully conquer” (Combs,

2009, p. xiii). Understanding consciousness would benefit humanity in unimaginable ways, potentially impacting how people view themselves while resolving the ongoing questions. “It would answer those gnawing existential questions about who we are, how the world works, and what is *real*. It would therefore tell us how to live and make sense of our lives” (Combs, 2009, p. xiii). These questions have been pondered by the ancients and continue to be explored in the modern age, as investigators try to explain that what seems unfathomable is more than a challenge; even if science can answer these questions, however, ultimately the personal intersubjective experience of heightened awareness may turn out to be valuable only when encountered as the result of individual attainment.

The most challenging question in consciousness studies is this: “How can a physical system give rise to conscious experience?” (Chalmers 1996, p. 25). Chalmers proposed that the relation between the physical processes and the conscious or phenomenological experiences depended on the dual link between the physical and the psychological, and the psychological and the phenomenological. Whereas it is accepted that there is a link between physical processes and psychological properties (Jovanov, 2011), it remains unknown “why and how these psychological properties are accompanied by phenomenal properties.” Furthermore, “understanding the link between the psychological and the phenomenal is crucial to understand conscious experience” (Chalmers 1996, p. 25). It could be argued that phenomenological research has demonstrated the connection between the psychological and the phenomenological; perhaps it is a question of demonstrating that connection in a way that is globally accessible instead of individualized as unique experiences that are difficult to replicate. Why and how that phenomenology activates and demonstrates an interaction with psychology has yet to be determined.

## Concepts of Consciousness

Different concepts of consciousness within current research can be distinguished in the following categories: creature consciousness; consciousness of an organism; background consciousness; transitive consciousness; object-directed consciousness; access consciousness; phenomenal consciousness; introspective or meta-consciousness; and pre-reflective or primitive self-consciousness. Thompson, Lutz, and Cosmelli (2005) defined these concepts of consciousness in the following ways:

- (1) Creature consciousness is consciousness of an organism as a whole insofar as it is awake and sentient (Rosenthal 1997).
- (2) Background consciousness refers to the overall states of consciousness, such as being awake, being asleep, and dreaming (Hobson 1999).
- (3) State consciousness refers to specific conscious mental states individuated by content (Rosenthal, 1997; Chalmers, 2000).
- (4) Transitive consciousness is object-directed consciousness (consciousness of something), whereas intransitive consciousness is non-object-directed consciousness (Rosenthal, 1997).
- (5) Access consciousness is described as those mental states whose contents are accessible to thought and verbal report (Block 2001).
- (6) Phenomenal consciousness refers to mental states that have a subjective-experiential character (Block, 2001; Nagel, 1979).
- (7) Introspective consciousness is meta-awareness.

(8) Pre-reflective self-consciousness is primitive self-consciousness, or self-referential awareness of subjective experience that does not require active reflection or introspection (Kriegel 2003; Gupta 1998; Wider 1997; Williams 1998; Zahavi 1999).

These concepts are still developing, and it is unclear how they interact, inform, or supersede one another.

The concepts most intensively debated are phenomenal consciousness and access consciousness, specifically in terms of how they affect one another. The distinction between them is best summarized through the example given by Block (1997, pp. 386-387) of being engaged in a conversation at a party, while a power drill rattles outside the window. Engrossed in conversation, one does not initially notice the noise, but perhaps eventually one does notice it. Block's proposition is that, as one is aware of the noise all along, one is *phenomenally* conscious of it, but not *access* conscious of it. When one notices the noise, one becomes access conscious of it (and perhaps also realizes that one has been hearing it all along), so that now one has both phenomenal consciousness and access consciousness of the noise. There is a counter-argument to this description, claiming that one does not actually hear the drill until one notices it. One's auditory system may respond selectively to the noise, but it makes no use of the information provided until one notices the drill. Hence, it is generally assumed that there is no phenomenal consciousness without access consciousness (O'Regan & Noë, 2001, p. 964). However, it seems far-reaching to claim that there is no phenomenal consciousness in the absence of access consciousness; in sum, not being aware of something does not mean that something ceases to exist until it is recognized. Therefore, my position is that phenomenal consciousness can occur with or without access consciousness. The cognitive theorists, however, are still working to define *awareness*, *process*, *state changes*, and other concepts related to consciousness.

## Neuroscience Models for Viewing Consciousness

There are two key approaches used in neuroscience for investigating consciousness. The first is the hierarchical connectionist perspective. Connectionists seek to describe the conscious processing of each stimulus and subjective experience as specific responses in the brain in terms of an activation of individual neurons through hierarchical processing and associations with other brain regions (Chalmers, 1994/2002). For example, recognizing somebody's face includes hierarchical processing of signals coming from the eyes, the emergence of face features through hierarchical processing, and the collection of meaning through associative responses in other parts of the cortical network (Jovanov, 2011). The second approach to consciousness assumes a field that combines a synergistic effect of cerebral electromagnetic fields with the neural connections. It is imagined that the field serves as a global integrating medium of neural activity (Cosic, Cvetkovic, Fang, Jovanov, & Lazoura, 2006; Penrose, 1994; Rakovic 1991). This perspective considers that the states of consciousness referred to as "higher consciousness" allow access to the individual and the collective unconscious as a mechanism of insights and creativity (Jovanov, 2011). These states can be experienced as expanded, narrowed, or constructed alterations of consciousness. It is assumed that so-called "collective consciousness" acts as a biological mechanism described by Carl Gustav Jung (1991) as:

a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (p. 43)

Some investigators who hold the connectionist perspective suggest that the collective unconscious and the archetypes form a genetically inherited organization of the nervous system located in the infinite knowledge database of genetic information (Jovanov, 2011). However, this approach does not make clear the complex psychological phenomena such as synchronicity

(Jung, 1991). The field-based approach may provide possible explanations for phenomena like synchronicity through interaction with the overall “field of consciousness” (Penrose, 1994; Rakovic, 1991, 1995). The “field of consciousness” is the total awareness of an individual at a given time. In the hierarchy of interrelated rhythms, it is believed that every thought or action creates “ripples” throughout the hierarchy of our body and brain rhythms (Jovanov, 2011).

There is speculation whether this perspective could explain the mechanisms of consciousness, especially “the hard problem.” It is believed that monitoring physiological correlates as ripples in the stream of consciousness might facilitate personalized insights into the correlates of diverse states of consciousness. This could be useful for indications of emotional stress and anxiety that show heart rate variability and may allow researchers to gain insight into people’s “streams of thought.” By looking at feedback about an individual’s physiological correlates of conscious processes, “we might re-create the physiological basis of a particular state of consciousness at will and explore it in the quest for insights that would allow the expansion of their consciousness” (Jovanov, 2011, p. 205). This process seems very similar to the yogic practice of deep recapitulation exercises during meditative states; reviewing, witnessing, and letting go.

**Neuroscience research of consciousness.** There are several different neuroimaging techniques available; such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS), the measurement of the brain’s glucose metabolism via positron emission tomography (PET), and the analysis of different parameters in the electroencephalogram (EEG) that allow investigation of brain activity over a broad range of different cognitive demands. These techniques provide a specific ability to measure brain activity; moreover, researchers are finding new ways to manipulate the data collected to gain further insights.

Neuroscience research using fMRI offers the primary advantage of high spatial accuracy, but it does not allow for the study of cognition with high temporal resolution such as EEG techniques (Fink & Benedek, 2013, p. 208). EEG techniques have become useful in determining the necessary calculation for examining the inner processes of cognitive activity as a means to understand consciousness. These techniques reveal lower spatial resolution showing fine-grained temporal analysis of brain activation that is observed in response to a specific cognitive event (Fink & Benedek, 2013). Indeed, this method of monitoring the brain's activity has been used in many different areas of cognitive research, especially in terms of understanding consciousness. Analyzing functional operation or functional coupling between different cortical areas with EEG techniques has become an important tool in cognitive research (Bhattacharya & Petsche, 2005; Grabner, Fink, & Neubauer, 2007; Jaušovec, 2000; Jaušovec & Jaušovec, 2000; Mölle, Marshall, Wolf, Fehm, & Born, 1999; Petsche, 1996; Razumnikova, 2000; Sandkühler & Bhattacharya, 2008). This type of research is helping to develop connectionist models of consciousness based on complex calculations taken from EEG data that measure electrical rhythms of the brain by the voltage fluctuations in frequency (hertz, or Hz) through multiple electrodes placed on the scalp.

The EEG signal represents a range of oscillation frequencies divided into frequency bands: alpha band, 8-13 Hz; beta band, 13-30 Hz; theta band, 4-8 Hz; delta band, .05-4 Hz; and gamma band, 35+ Hz. Spectral analyses of the EEG can be used to compute the band-specific frequency power for given periods of time. This then allows for task- or even- related power changes to be quantified by contrasting the power in a particular frequency band during a cognitive task with a preceding reference interval (Fink & Benedek, 2013). Research using the EEG shows task- or event-related power changes in the alpha band when individuals are engaged

in different types of idea generation tasks, such as meditation, and alternative states of consciousness, such as mediumship.

According to Boden (2006), the mystery of consciousness lies in its computational variety. “A neuroscientific explanation of a psychological phenomenon does not just identify which parts of the brain are active when the phenomenon occurs; it shows what the brain cells are doing, not just in terms of chemical changes but the computations, or information processing, that the cells are performing” (p. 5). Boden suggests that these computations can reveal more information about consciousness and the processes within the brain. This approach to consciousness research is looking for the “conditions of consciousness,” a pattern like the genetic code that may be found through the computational framework of neuroscience research (Kennedy, 2011). These computational models are working to identify how consciousness functions within cognitive processes.

The computational models can be used to determine microstates within the cognitive brain functions. Microstates appear to register only when using the EEG technology to monitor them, not fMRI. Studies have revealed that the basic units of cognitive processes fall in the millisecond (ms) range (approximately 100 ms). Microstate analysis of EEG data allows a resolution in this time range showing that the brain’s electrical states are quasi-stable for fractions of seconds (Kennedy, 2011). It may be valuable to study the quasi-stable states more closely to see what can be determined; perhaps there are certain micro patterns involved that help facilitate resetting the brain state.

The states then rapidly reorganize into another state (Vaitl, Birbaumer, Gruzelier, Jamieson, Kotchoubey, et al., 2005). This occurs so that brain activity can be placed into sequences of quasi-homogeneous temporal segments, or microstates. Lehmann, Grass, and Meier

(1998) showed that different classes of thoughts under daydreaming conditions correspond to different classes of microstates, with durations of about 120 ms (milliseconds) (Kennedy, 2011). Lehmann, Grass, and Meier (1998) suggested that the continuous stream of consciousness is actually discontinuous, consisting of sequences of concatenated, psycho-physiological building blocks, or “atoms of thought” that follow each other in fractions of a second and whose functional significance is identifiable in terms of classes of subjective experiences. Those microstates that are found under daydreaming conditions might also be similar to those of visualizations in meditation or altered states.

Neuroscience is working to understand the physiological correlates of altered states of consciousness, although experiments involving them are relatively rare. Most published papers assess the overall physiological status of certain conscious states – for example, during meditation. Monitoring techniques include EEG, fMRI, and heart rate. The main dilemma with human experiments is making exact correlations and mappings between physiological correlates and psychological states. Participants can seldom associate a precise state with a particular moment when a specific correlate has been recorded. This is especially distracting in data collection, as every action performed to mark an event creates a disturbance in the flow of consciousness and another in the current state by initiating a physical action (Jovanov, 2011). Some researchers have provided another technique in order to try to remedy this issue. The approach used by Lehmann, Grass, and Meier (1995) was to interrupt the session immediately after a certain physiological correlate was recorded and annotate the event with the participant’s description of the content of consciousness and emotional state. However, this approach breaks up the initial event and the flow of consciousness (Jovanov, 2011). Perhaps another solution would be to give the participants a scripted experience – a guided meditation of sound and visual

content, while taking the EEG and heart rate to see if coherence exists that would include some neural correlate during the course of the script. An example would be a recording of consciousness, while watching predetermined content.

Another approach is to stabilize physiological rhythms to create periods of uninterrupted conscious experience via an indirect stabilization of the limbic system (Jovanov, 2011). “Increased coupling of bodily rhythms and conscious decoupling of the limbic system from the current content of consciousness may facilitate conscious exploration of the unconscious mind” (Jovanov, 2011, p. 217). Research has indicated that the stabilization of basic physiological rhythms may serve as a foundation for altered states that could facilitate insights (Jovanov, 1995, 2005; Rakovic, Tomasevic, Jovanov, Radivojevic, Sukovic, et al., 1999). It is believed that this type of stabilization could allow insights into unusual conscious experiences.

**Expanded states of consciousness.** A great deal of research has focused on the potential insight that may come from studying the brain images of meditators. The neuroscience research compiled from these practitioners has proven useful. Meditation is practiced by stilling one’s attention and self-regulating it. The first surviving piece of instruction can be found in Patanjali’s sutras (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1953/1981). The *yogah cittavrtti nirodhah* instructs that, to attain union with the divine mind (*chitta*), the movements in consciousness known as thought-waves (*vritti*) must be controlled (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1953/1981). Many people practice yoga or some form of meditation to “clear the mind” of activity and, over time, to learn to focus the mind to gain incredible awareness. Practice over long durations has been shown to have an effect not only on the psychology of the practitioner, but also on physical aspects of the body, including apparent changes in brain structure. It is known that the brain can rewire itself in the presence of the appropriate sensory input, even after maturation of the nervous system

(Jovanov, 2011). Recent research results have revealed long term changes in brain electrical activity in meditators (Tei, Faber, Lehmann, Tsujiuchi, Kumano, et al., 2009), especially during integrative body-mind training (Tang, Ma, Fan, Feng, Wang, et al., 2009). It seems possible that the activity in which an individual engages will in some way affect the function and perhaps the structure of the brain.

Meditation and spiritual practices encourage a unique mindset, an alternative consciousness that might be influencing brain structure through the creation of diverse neural pathways and, perhaps, by helping to execute potentiality in brain function. Rosenzweig (2007) stated that a meditative practitioner activity could lead to new neural connections; that is, “neurons that fire together, wire together” (p. 13). Perhaps spiritual experiences help to prime the brain for receptivity to future phenomena; creating a latent ability. Research has found that brain function may be affected by conscious activities. One example can be seen in a recent research study (Luders, Kurth, Mayer, Toga, Narr, & Gaser, 2012) that showed cortical regions reporting to vary in meditation practices. Since cortical folding occurs early in the brain’s development, its activity may be connected to behavioral traits.

Meditation is traditionally taught to elevate consciousness, or awareness of the self, whereby practitioners become more *dharmic* (righteous) and *ananda* (blissful). Interestingly, its practice may be connected to the brain structures associated with behavioral traits and emotions. Although the exact functional implications of larger cortical gyrification (the pattern and degree of cortical folding) remain to be established, these findings suggest that the insula is a key structure involved in aspects of meditation (Luders et al., 2012). The insula, which is thought to be one of the many brain areas involved in dreaming consciousness, participates in diverse functions usually linked to emotion (Domhoff, 2003). This study hinted at the possibility that

dreaming consciousness may affect the way the brain functions, as does meditating consciousness.

Traditional seated meditation is another practice wherein the body is inert while the mind remains active. The possible implications are interesting, as the neurological dream model of Hobson, Stickgold, and Pace-Schott (2000) (see also, Hobson & Pace-Schott, 2002) posited a brain concentric system where dream consciousness originates in brainstem activation. Both psychodynamic and neurocognitive models might find support in this research, in terms of the theory that dreams originate from unconscious activity (Freud, 1900/1998) or abstract knowledge and figurative thought (Foulkes, 1985) that is translated into brain activity. It may be the case that both pathways are used in informing brain functioning, which, in turn, responds by triggering cascading changes in consciousness.

Other research studies have revealed that a long-term practice of meditation (focused awareness) can affect brain structure (Kennedy, 2011). Perhaps practicing any discipline associated with purposeful awareness repeatedly would affect the brain structure, as brain development may be driven by conscious intention. I have often wondered if each brain is unique to the activities in which it participates, much like an athlete's body differs from that of a person with a sedentary physique. Would those individuals who experience altered states have distinctive patterns within their brain structures? And could those structural differences shed light on the function and capacity of psychic ability or lucid dreaming? Nunez and Shrinivasan (2006) have suggested that "maybe consciousness is a resonance phenomenon and only properly tuned brains can orchestrate the beautiful music of sentience" (p. 525). Also, according to Withaker-Azmitia, Shemer, Caruso, Molino, and Azmitia (1990):

The final consequence of receptor-mediated development is that psychotropic drugs may actually be neurotropic – which is to say that these drugs may not only alter

neurochemistry but may also alter brain structure. This idea is more understandable when one considers that the mature brain is not static, but in fact shows quite dynamic characteristics, such as synaptic turnover. That is, new synapses are constantly being made while old ones are eliminated. If the same factors which regulate development are responsible for this as well, and it seems probable that they are, then altering receptor function would also alter synaptic profiles in the mature brain. This would also explain the long onset for therapeutic response seen with psychoactive drugs. In summary we have described a new and exciting role for serotonin – the regulation of brain development. (p. 329)

As the human brain is studied more extensively and with the help of the increasing number of brain imagery instruments, there may be enough data to start comparative studies to test this idea. It would be interesting to see if the human brain is – like our fingerprints – unique to the individual. But, unlike our fingerprints, which are predetermined at birth, our brains can change, depending on the nature of our focused activities.

**Mirror neurons.** Mirror neurons may hold the key to helping neuroscience find more answers about consciousness and how the brain processes information. The human brain is thought to contain approximately 100 billion neurons, each of which makes contact with thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of other neurons. These connections (or synapses) are thought to be the actual pathways of knowledge accumulation. They are understood to be the primary means by which neurons communicate with each other (Gazzaniga, 2008). The importance of synaptic events was emphasized by Pribram (1991), who noted that the complex electrochemical activities in the neocortex are at the root of brain processes. These electrochemical connections, which are in constant dialogue, act like the superhighway of brain communication and may well foster coherence. However, it has not been determined whether macro-level processes of inflection affect the overall activity of the brain, yielding to experiences of “collective consciousness” (Combs & Krippner, 2008, p. 269).

Discoveries in neuroscience have revealed the existence of *mirror neurons*. These are specialized neurons in the brain that appear to respond to behaviors of others by triggering a similar arousal pattern in an observer, such that the experiences are mirrored. Mirror neurons were first discovered in the frontal cortex of monkeys, responding both during the execution of motor acts and during the perception of others performing similar motor acts (Hickok, 2009). This mirrored perception is thought to generate learning. Mirror neurons found in the pre-motor and posterior parietal cortices were found to respond to other people's intentions and actions (Hickok, 2009). Mirror neurons found in the anterior insula and anterior cingulate respond to the emotions of others (Rizzolatti, Fogassi, & Gallese, 1996). It has been suggested that mirror neurons are the foundation for action and understanding, including the perception of speech and understanding of language (Rizzolatti & Arbib, 1998). Mirror neurons are thought to be important to imitation and emulation and may have played a key role in the adaptation of language. Imitation of a complex act requires the brain to adopt the other person's perspective. Thus mirror neurons seem to adopt another person's point of view as though performing a simulation of the other person's action in a virtual reality (Ramachandran, 2009).

There is a great deal of speculation within neurocognitive psychology and neuroscience about the function of mirror neurons. The current hypotheses are related to self-awareness, empathy, language, imitation, motor mimicry, and theory of mind, which refers to the ability to infer another person's mental state from one's own experiences or their behavior. According to Rizzolatti and Fabbri-Destro (2008), mirror neurons do not have a unique functional role. Their properties represent a mechanism that maps the pictorial description of actions carried out in the higher order visual areas onto their motor counterpart (Rizzolatti & Fabbri-Destro, 2008). This matching mechanism may underlie a variety of functions, including both dream imagery and

meditative visions. Mirror neurons may offer a potential explanation for many of the brain's diverse functions; more research is needed to strengthen and clarify these foundational insights.

Iacoboni (2008) raised the possibility that mirror neurons may assist in the intersubjective experience or shared consciousness (p. 197). Mirror neurons, in a way, create a shared consciousness in that they allow someone else's experience to be understood; this perception then helps to shape our cultural connections. The mirror-like networks in the human prefrontal and inferior parietal cortices have been determined by using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) (Grezes & Decety, 2001), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) (Fadiga, Fogassi, Pavesi, & Rizzolatti, 1995), and magnetoencephalography (MEG) (Hari, Forss, Avikainen, Kirveskari, Salenius, & Rizzolatti, 1998). These studies discovered that the same neural networks are engaged when participants perform and when they observe actions, even though neurons with "mirror neuron" properties in the emotional domain have not yet been recorded in the monkey brain research. Meanwhile, fMRI studies on humans in the domains of emotion and empathy suggest that neural networks with mirror-like properties are not restricted to the motor domain or confined to the prefrontal cortex, but extend to other brain areas such as somatosensory and insular cortices (Singer & Leiberg, 2009). "This is evidence for the existence of shared neural networks for facial expressions, sensations, and emotions, which enable one to feel-by merely perceiving or imagining another person's sensations or emotions – what the other is feeling" ( p. 975). This research has validated the concept of a shared neural network for emotions that may translate into understanding empathic communication and connection.

Although the research is developing foundational understanding, it seems possible that mirror neurons will be found in other parts of the brain functioning similarly to what has already been discovered in the frontal cortex – namely, matching and mirroring. Mirror neurons appear

to accomplish a simple task, but they may be far more integrated and multidirectional in function and purpose – perhaps involved in contemplation or inner reflection, dreaming, or altered states.

Mirror neurons will continue to keep us connected to some degree as they have for thousands of years, while the scientists and neurophysiologists determine to what extent it is happening.

Human beings are sensitive creatures, fundamentally and subtly connected by our shared emotions. As Combs and Krippner (2008) have pointed out, these feelings and interactions could have been highly adaptive in the course of human evolution and may continue to shape the future of humanity even in an era that ignores their presence. As we become conscious of these subtle connections that link us, perhaps understanding and better communication will prevail.

Ramachandran (2009) has speculated that mirror neurons may provide the neurological basis of human self-awareness; as we are quite literally connected by our neurons, a whole chain of neurons around the globe talking to each other, there is no real distinction between your consciousness and somebody else's consciousness. This idea of a collective consciousness, or at least the potential of a shared consciousness, seems reasonable, and perhaps one day will be validated through further mirror-neuron systems research.

### **Consciousness, Spirituality, and Mediumship within Syncretic Religions**

Consciousness when viewed from the perspective of spirituality is compounded by the notion of a soul, viewed as a psychological aspect within the human mind-body. It is important to note a distinction within these spiritual experiences:

There is an overlap between “spiritual” experiences and those referred to as “transpersonal,” “mystical,” or “religious,” but these are not regarded as synonyms. In “transpersonal” experiences, one’s sense of identity appears to extend beyond its ordinary limits; in “mystical” experiences, this extension appears to unite with something considered “divine,” “sacred,” or “holy”; in other words, all “mystical” experiences are “transpersonal,” but not all “transpersonal” experiences are “mystical.” In “religious” experiences there is a reported contact with something that an organized body of believers considers to be “divine,” “sacred,” or “holy.” (Krippner & Sulla, p. 340).

Science has often found itself in opposition to the ethereal field of spiritual research that has primarily been investigated by religious, philosophical, and, at times, psychological fields of inquiry. It is without question that certain individuals believe in the efficacy of the human soul as an essential sense of self beyond the bounded identity. This is often viewed as a consciousness that transcends the physical aspects of human existence beyond the temporal and spatial, as demonstrated through beliefs in the afterlife. The soul is a central concept in reincarnation as a belief in the procession of souls on a continuous journey through the cycle of life, death, and rebirth into another physical life. The Tibetan religious traditions abound with references to this non-ordinary field of consciousness, with elaborate and intricate models that form a type of phenomenological inquiry. Over centuries, this inquiry has created a “science of the soul” (Rinpoche, 1994). Western beliefs regarding the afterlife tend to be varied depending on the viewpoint taken within different forms of the Christian, Judaic, and Islamic faiths (Winkelman, 2010).

Stories abound from non-religious individuals whose belief systems have been transformed after undergoing near-death experiences (NDEs) – those images, perceptions, events, feelings, or a combination thereof reported after a life-threatening episode. The typical features of NDEs include a sense of separation from the body and the ability to look down on the situation with a peaceful and pleasant state of mind that is often followed by an interaction with a spiritual being. Although there has been research (Grayson, 2000) on NDEs in the fields of spiritual investigations, biomedical sciences, and anomalous psychology, controversy prevails. There is no doubt that people have these experiences, although there is no conclusive evidence that has confirmed that life continues beyond death. However, this does not mean that NDEs hold any less value to those who have had the experience, nor does the lack of verification prove

the non-existence of the afterlife. The path of the soul remains an open investigation that seems to be more valuable to the individual than, perhaps, to science, and yet the search for answers continues.

### **Neuropsychological research into mediumistic states of consciousness.**

Neuropsychology is the blending of the field of psychology with neuroscientific research methods. Neuroscience offers a revolutionary means of investigating and approaching consciousness by offering a more detailed perspective into the systems and functions of the brain. Mediumistic states of consciousness provide a unique opportunity to investigate a specific form of conscious awareness, by providing a specific set of subjective outcomes that can be studied. *Mediumship* refers to the state of a person who functions as an instrument of alleged communication between the living and the dead, or between spirits (human and/or non-human) and humans. Neuropsychology has begun to investigate these unique patterns of consciousness found within the phenomenon of mediumship with the use of neuroimaging techniques (Oohashi, Kawai, Honda, Nakamura, Morimoto, et al., 2002).

EEG research studies have been particularly important within the phenomenological study of mediumship and shamanism, helping to show related areas of brain activation during these altered states of consciousness (ASC). Using a wide range of culturally patterned induction techniques has shown the way to global parasympathetic dominance, in which the frontal cortex exhibits high-voltage, slow-wave, synchronous EEG patterns within the theta rhythms that originate in the limbic system and proceed to frontal regions via limbic-frontal innervations (Winkelman, 1986). It does appear that religious experiences tend to involve higher activity of the frontal and prefrontal cortices (Azari, Nickel, Wunderlich, Niedeggen, Hefter, & Tellmann, 2001; Beauregard & Paquette, 2006; Jevning, Ananda, Beidebach, & Fernando, 1996). Increased

activity in the frontal cortex may reflect focused concentration during the altered states of consciousness (ASC) experiences elicited by meditation practices, while the correlation between the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the superior parietal lobe may reflect a non-ordinary sense of space or time, leading to the implication that mediumistic and trance experiences, as well as intense religious and spiritual experiences, are distinct and mediated by several brain regions and systems. Penfield (1978), who electrically stimulated the live brain to map cortical functions, hypothesized that neural networks alone would be incapable of producing consciousness, stating that the mind had a distinct existence from the brain although closely related to it. Although it cannot be ascertained that brain function alone is responsible for the achievement of these altered states of consciousness, it is a beginning point to determining which part of the brain is involved. To-date, however, there have been limited studies of ASCs relative to the research that is required.

Researchers have proposed that higher activity of the dopaminergic system (DRD4) and parallel lower activity of the serotonin 5-HT system may be involved in individuals who have shown higher scores on measures of spirituality (Comings, Gonzales, Saucier, Johnson, & MacMurray, 2000; Kjaer, Bertelsen, Piccini, Brooks, & Alving, 2002; Previc, 2006). Some researchers have postulated that these results might be due to the higher concentration of dopamine in the D4 receptor in the frontal cortex, although it has been shown that the dopaminergic system is, in part, under the regulation of 5-HT protections (Hageman, Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Caixeta, Wickramasekera, & Krippner, 2010). For example, stimulating 5-HT1A or 5-HT2A receptors may elicit dopaminergic release (Diaz-Mataix, Scorza, Bortolozzi, Toth, Celada, & Artigas, 2005). These studies have helped to develop the neurochemical constructs involved within the brain processes during ASCs. Yet, many researchers believe it is

unreasonable to postulate a role for neurotransmitters in trance and religious experiences, as the needed research has not been adequate definitively to assess and define such involvement (Hageman et al., 2010). More research is required not only to further this investigation to confirm previous findings, but also to determine the neural pathways involved during ASCs.

Many researchers have contended that the medium is engaged in a form of dissociative trance while in a state of mediumship. A medium or possessed person generally undergoes dramatic shifts that may include manifesting changes in behavior, voice, expression, movements, or physiognomy, or the appearance of an alternate personality or identity (Goodman, 1988). Dissociative trance is characterized by involuntary alterations in consciousness, identity, awareness, memory, or motor function (Winkelman, 2000). Winkelman (1986) indicated that involvement of the limbic system is a central part of the neural architecture of dissociative trance. It is believed that a trance-like state of consciousness can be achieved through rite practices that affect brain function (Don & Moura, 2000); moreover, evidence has shown that parasympathetic dominance can be induced through excessive sympathetic activation found within common features of rite practice, such as through the use of drumming, chanting, and rhythmic dancing, all of which are homeostatic reciprocal action of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) collapses (Winkelman, 2010). Many of these corporal techniques designed to affect changes in brain processes are utilized to induce the altered states of consciousness needed for the type of mediumship that exists within traditional forms of shamanism or that has been adopted by the new syncretic religions.

EEG studies have indicated functional implications for the dynamics associated with cortical networks by measuring the rhythmic oscillations of brain waves associated with alterative states of consciousness. The shamanic drumming that is used to enter an altered state

of consciousness consists of a steady monotonous pattern of 3-4.5 beats with frequencies that correlate with the delta frequency band of brain electrical activity. In electrophysiology this state is an indicator of the first phase of deep sleep and coma (Jovanov, 2011). Maxfield (1990) discovered increased theta activity while individuals were listening to rhythmic monotonous and patterned drumbeats, as compared to when they listened to unstructured beat sequences. The alpha, theta, and beta wave activities have all been linked with different processes of alertness, focused attention, and awareness (Fanji, Xin, Shen, & Zhijie, 2003). EEGs have demonstrated changes in attention, sensory processing, and cognitive processes highlighting the different cortical network interactions (Lopes da Silva, 1991). Researchers have confirmed a connection with self-reported dissociative experiences and theta brain wave activity (Giesbrecht, Jongen, Smulders, & Merckelbach, 2006). Findings also suggest a positive relation between dissociation and delta activity, while “cortical power within the alpha range was inversely related to dissociative symptoms” (Hageman et al., 2010, p. 91). An EEG study that involved trance channelers found statistically noteworthy increases in amount and percentage of beta, alpha, and theta brain-wave activity (Hughes & Melville, 1990). These research findings seem to suggest that the brain wave activity during mediumistic experiences is distinctive to that particular state of consciousness and deserves further investigation.

Another explanation of mediumship is that it is a neodissociative ego state that highlights the normal polypsychic nature of human identity (Frederick, 2005). Neodissociative theory explains the paradoxical phenomenon that occurs within hypnosis of divided consciousness, “so that it probably should not be too surprising that individuals might be able to encounter another ego state within themselves during a hypnotic-like procedure” (Hageman et al., 2010, p. 99). This explanation seems to suggest that mediums are not in communication with a separate spirit

entity rather, it indicates that mediums may be in dialogue with another aspect of themselves within their own psyche/mind. This theory suggests that the origin of the channeled identity stems from the ego states or a cognitive subsystem that has not been properly integrated within the mediums' normal experience of identity (Hageman, Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Caixeta, Wickramasekera, & Krippner, 2010). This explanation does not take into account personas that transmigrate from medium to medium, where more than one medium has been channeling a specific persona who is identifiable as a unique spirit entity, such as in the case of "Dr. Fritz," a German physician, who has allegedly been channeled by Zé Arigó, Edson Queiroz, and, currently, Rubens Farias, Jr. More research will be required to understand the unique phenomenon that occurs when an individual is in a trance-like state or involved in mediumistic activities. It appears that research that combines neurophysiological, psychological, and phenomenological assessments of mediumistic experiences would be essential in the development of "a more precise understanding of the neurobiological substrate of its manifestation and disruption of the integrated functions of consciousness" (Hageman et al., 2010, p. 92). This approach would allow for a broad range of physical, mental, and experiential inquiries that might resolve conflicting theories postulated from different fields of study. However, as important as the technique of inquiry is, the necessity of carrying out research with particularly gifted individuals who can demonstrate consistency and reliability in terms of their abilities as mediums is paramount, for, if they cannot perform to task, then the investigation is useless.

**Spiritualism and mediumship.** *Spiritualism* is a metaphysical term that holds the position that the fundamental reality of the universe is nonmaterial. It is held within this belief that the spirits of the dead survive in another plane of existence, and that it is possible for the

living to receive communications from them through other individuals who are capable of practicing mediumship. Spiritualism within the realm of magical and occult arts may be considered the philosophical and religious counterpart to parapsychology. *Spiritism* refers to the belief that all humans, animals, plants, and natural objects possess souls and are part of a larger universal cosmic spirit. The two terms have been used interchangeably, although most syncretic religions seem to use the term *spiritism* to describe the form of mediumistic practices that govern their beliefs.

Mediumship is the fundamental ritualistic practice within the three major spiritistic religions found primarily in Brazil, namely: Candomblé, Kardecismo, and Umbanda (Hess, 1994). Candomblé and Umbanda are African-derived practices; their mythologies are ruled by the “Sky God,” and his intermediaries are called the *orixás*, who symbolize the primordial forces of nature. The *orixás* are believed to have the ability to take hold of the mind and body of a human being through acts of spirit “incorporation,” which is practiced by group members. Practitioners of these African-based rites believe that they can gain access to supernatural power in three ways: (1) by making offerings to the *orixás*; (2) through divination; and (3) by being taken over by an *orixás*, ancestral spirit, or other benevolent spirit that may assist the community through healing or with timely warnings (Hageman et al., 2010). The trance state used to obtain this form of altered consciousness is brought about through drumming, singing, and dancing, as well as by using a mind-altering substance such as strong tobacco (Villoldo & Krippner, 1981). Candomblé remains closely associated with the original religions of Africa by retaining the original names and worship practices of African *orixás* (deities) (Bastide, 1960). Umbanda practices in Brazil place more emphasis on an assimilated Christian heritage than on the traditional African *orixás*. *Kardecismo*, or Kardecism, is a popular form of modern Spiritism that

was first introduced to Brazil in the early nineteenth century through the teachings of Allan Kardec (1861-1867), a celebrated French spiritualist (Hageman et al., 2010). These spiritistic traditions helped to form the philosophical foundations for the new syncretic religions that are prevalent in Brazil today and are spreading globally.

**Syncretic religions.** *Syncretism* is the integration of elements from two or more systems, theories, or concepts into a new system, usually applied to one in which cultures, beliefs, or doctrines that may appear incompatible are nevertheless combined. This terminology is a perfect description of the new ayahuasca religions recently established within Brazil's growing spiritistic culture. *Ayahuasca religions* (Labate & Araújo, 2002; 2004), a description first coined by anthropologists, is a working term used primarily by academic researchers to speak of these groups as a whole; it is not necessarily used by the groups themselves, which often view themselves as unique and independent manifestations (Labate, Santana de Rose, & Guimarães dos Santos, 2009). *Santo Daime* is the oldest and most geographically dispersed of Brazil's ayahuasca religions currently growing internationally, the other two being *Barquinha* and the *União do Vegetal* (Vegetable Union), which is also gaining an international following. Within these religions, the generic term *ayahuasca* denotes the combination of the vine *Banisteriopsis caapi* and the leaves of the shrub *Psychotria viridis* (Dawson, 2007), which then creates a substance traditionally consumed as a sacrament fundamental to the religions. Ayahuasca is generally believed to have been discovered by indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon, who then passed the concoction on to non-indigenous cultures through its use among mixed-race communities and rubber-tappers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. At the same time, there is substantial evidence that this assumption may be misleading, as the true origins of these religions are still definitively unknown.

**The Santo Daime church.** Raimundo Irineu Serra (1892-1971), known as “Master (or Mestre) Irineu,” is recognized by many as the reincarnation of the spirit of Jesus. Master Irineu is the founding prophet of the Santo Daime religion, having retreated in solitude into the forest where he received a series of visions inspired by the *Queen of the Forest* to bring the Holy Daime (ayahuasca) to the ailing. These visionary experiences gave birth to his epiphany, which would create the central doctrine of the church. Santo Daime emerged as a religious entity in the late 1930s (Dawson, 2011). “The name Daime, which has also come to identify the religion, is derived from the invocations made by the users of the brew during its consumption and ensuing religious ceremonies” (Labate, Macrae, & Goulart, 2010, p. 2). *Daime*, which is derived from the verb “to give” (*dar*), refers to the notion of grace received in the form of health, healing, knowledge, revelation, peace, and love from a divinity or spiritual being. Mestre Irineu developed his religion and installed his church in 1945 in a place known as *Alto Santo* (Holy Rise) in a rural area of Rio Branco in the Brazilian state of Acre. “Mestre Irineu registered his religious group in the government registry just three months before his death in July 1971, after which it came to be officially called Universal Light Christian Enlightenment Center [*Centro de Iluminação Cristã Luz Universal*] or CICLU” (Labate, Macrae, & Goulart, 2010, p. 2). Subsequent to Irineu Serra’s death, a breakaway organization known as CEFLURIS, The Eclectic Centre of the Universal Flowing Light Raimundo Irineu Serra [*Centro Eclético da Fluente Luz Universal Raimundo Irineu Serra*] was founded by Sebastião Mota de Melo in 1974 and is the branch known internationally (Dawson, 2011). Although this is the official name of the organization, worldwide it is simply referred to as the practice of Santo Daime.

Mestre Irineu worked as a *curandeiro* (healer), learning the basic patterns of ayahuasca shamanism and adapting it by recomposing the shamanic system, through a series of defined

movements capable of exercising control over the reality experienced in an “altered state of consciousness” by directing the domain of conscious individuals over their emotional and unconsciousness awareness (Cemin, 2010). The alterations made to the shamanic system within the church practices work to initiate and instruct novices in order to expand their consciousness in order for them to participate safely in the rituals:

The[re is a] multiplicity of techniques in which the body serves as support: concentration, coordination of movements in the dance steps, the singing of hymns and the rhythm of the maraca rattle, and even the physical effects of the liquid which go from accepting its smell and taste, to the sensations that it can cause: drowsiness, palpitation or quick beating of the heart, vomiting, diarrhea, ‘astral journeys’ (the sensation of death and rebirth, anxiety, pleasure; beautiful, illuminating and/or terrifying visions), besides acceptance of the codes of conduct within the system, notably ‘obedience’, ‘humility’, and ‘love’ for all members of the church. (Cemin, 2010, p. 40)

This practice seems to allow the corporeal techniques in the Maussian sense of adaptation through the “arts of using the body” to alter consciousness and properly indoctrinate the neophyte into the system (Cemin, 2010). According to Mauss (1974), this is a function in society within its social practices; stating that “behind all our mystic states, corporeal techniques ... are biological means for entering into contact with God” (p. 233). Space, time, and movement are coordinated through the use of the body by making the details essential, as they point to the principles of movement and action, thereby creating an anchoring point within the altered state of consciousness. In this way, body movements become classifications that establish identities and social positions in relation to the sexes, as well as the social division of labor (Mauss, 1974). The *daimista corporeal* technique as applied to the transmutation of the “vegetal body” (plant) into the “divine body” (entheogen), is further applied to the bodies of adepts seeking to make them capable of transporting themselves to the “realm of the higher astral plane” (Cemin, 2010), by gaining access through the shamanistic system of controlled movements within the altered state of consciousness. A catalyst is thereby created in the body through the chemical constructs

found within the brew, with additional effects accomplished through synchronized movement to rhythmic sounds, allowing the achievement of a pristine state of altered consciousness.

**Daime.** Ayahuasca is referred to as *Daime* by those who are practicing members, known as *daimistas*, of the Santo Daime religion. *Daime* is regarded as an “entheogen,” an agent whose properties facilitate or act as a catalyst in the interaction of humankind with supernatural agents or forces (Polari, 1999). The indigenous conceptualization of ayahuasca is that it is a teaching plant (Luna, 1984). Indeed, ayahuasca is viewed not just as a brew or a plant, but also as a being with special, unique qualities, often seen as a deity (Shanon, 2010). “Ayahuasca allows a distinct perception of the other world without losing consciousness of this one ... supporting the hypothesis that another reality can be found just behind the apparent world: ayahuasca allows a point by-point comparison” (Calavia Saéz, 2014, p. xxii). “The notion of cosmovision here finds its perfect expression: the alteration of consciousness caused by drinking the beverage affects the visual field above all, often giving rise to *miraçōes* (visions)” (Soares, 2010, p. 68). Daime is known not only for its illuminating visionary powers as a form of plant medicine, but also for the plant’s spiritual energy or power to cure as a holy being.

Ayahuasca links the “seeing,” “learning,” and “knowing” that transpire through visions, purportedly to see the world ultimately as it truly is (Peluso, 2014, p. 234). By virtue of the psychotropic effects of drinking Daime within the rite participation in Santo Daime, participants are required to learn to work (*trabalhar*) within an altered state of consciousness (Dawson, 2011). The “work” is achieved through the body and thoughts that are the symbolic productions of the imaginary (Cemin, 2010). The powerful visions (*miraçōes*) given by the Daime are treated with great respect, as they often profoundly change those who have them by encouraging life-

altering transformations; while not all who imbibe the concoction have visionary experiences, all seek to have them.

The *mirações* are considered “the noblest instrument of spiritual work, with powerful didactic effects: for the doctrine, precisely on account of its flexibility and openness, is (re)constructed and attained (through divine grace) – and there is no paradox here – by the subject of each spiritual adventure or introspective journey. There is no paradox because the construction resulting from individual and subjective efforts, translated into images, concepts, narratives, teachings, moral conclusions and emotions – always firmly rooted in the experiences, sometimes harsh and painful, physically felt, that are associated with sensible movements of the imagination – coincides, according to shared convictions, with cosmic truth, made accessible as a divine gift, the revelations being precisely the awareness of this coincidence, the matrix of acknowledgment of the holy unity, which reconciles, with the supreme connection it brings about, matter and spirit, self and other, individual and collectivity, the human and the natural, the natural and the cosmic whole, the cosmic whole and the deity, and – through this association the human and the divine. To the holy and holistic unity there corresponds the ceremonial practice, in which the singing of hymns in unison and the collective uniform dance (which establishes oppositions only between male and female, and between proto-priests or propitiating leaders and the congregation of the faithful), in a space ritually circumscribed, is counterposed to the fragmentary, solitary, individualizing and rigorously intersubjective multiplicity of the meditations and *mirações*. (Soares, 2010, p. 68)

*Mirações* are held to be the actual form of healing delivered on the astral plane that transcends conscious obstacles within the recipient, allowing transcendence of physical ailments, bringing health and healing cures similar to lived miracles. Although these miraculous healing experiences happen within the ceremony, they extend beyond the rite space where they arrive, often permanently altering the health effects of the individual.

The *daimista* system has two vectors: drink *Daime*, and pay attention to the hymns. These two vectors demand a set of techniques that establish the religion as a “way of life” (Cemin, 2010). According to Mauss (1974), it is the formation of techniques that helps to establish the indoctrination as a way of being in the world by circumscribing techniques by which to live:

The daimista system provides techniques for every aspect of life, beginning with the “techniques of birth and obstetrics” through the use of *Daime* during pregnancy and birth; the “techniques of childhood” – a little spoonful of *Daime* to give protection and grace;

“techniques of adolescence” primarily applied to girls, as the ritual includes a space set aside for “virgins”; “techniques of dreaming, sleep and wakefulness” in granting visions with the same ontological status as dreams, the act of dreaming taking them into the sphere of sacred, and true experiences; “techniques of movement” to concentrate, to dance, to sing, to meditate and “techniques of body care” to purify, to wash, to abstain from sexual relations; also “techniques of consumption” mandating the eating of light foods, and abstention from alcoholic beverages. During the making of the Daime (*the feitio*) one must consume only sweet manioc without salt accompanied by lemon balm tea, and, above all, “to drink Daime.” These corporeal techniques also are applied to the imagination as one must control the thoughts and not to think useless thoughts outside the prescriptions of the doctrine by paying attention to the hymnals. This fully takes hold by allowing oneself to be subjected to frequent and systematic sessions of singing and listening to the hymns, in an “altered state of consciousness,” where the “hymn is something that is fixed in the memory and never leaves.” (Cemin, 2010, pp. 42-43)

*Daime*, which is considered a guide, easily becomes a way of life for many, as every aspect of life is transformed through the alteration of consciousness, not only through the rites of drinking the *Daime*, but in the mannerisms required by the doctrine that accompanies it. Some believe that, once Daime is ingested, it resides permanently, altering that person’s consciousness whereby he or she is never the same. This would be an interesting construct to investigate in a long-term study, to see if, in fact, the brain chemistry of single-dose drinkers shows permanent alterations that affect brain processes.

**Elements of the sacred.** The symbolic representation found within, or given to, objects or places holds a significant power in the representation of the sacred when viewed by the spiritually minded individual. It is within these esoteric symbols that the mundane become extraordinary, often leading to the experience of what could be called the *supernatural*. “A symbol, therefore, necessarily unifies. It seeks to overcome a separation and reunite the parts back into the whole” (Silva Sá, 2010, p. 169). Within the Santo Daime religion, there are esoteric symbols from varied sources creating a blended symbolic language revealed in ritual practices. Some symbols are borrowed from Catholicism, others are based in customary shamanistic

practices, while still others seem to have been adopted from esoteric traditions from Europe – all of them meant to unite the cosmic whole.

Although many members do not have explanations for the meanings of these symbols, they seem, nonetheless, to be inherently and profoundly transformed by that which they cannot name. The sacred symbols within the Santo Daime are, most importantly, expressions of that which is profoundly experienced within the unseen reality made visible through the ritualized practice of drinking Daime. The main sacred space for *daimistas* is the Amazon rainforest, the woods, the source of the raw material needed for the tea they ritually imbibe. The secondary sacred place is the center, which is divided into three liturgical spaces: the hall, the *Casa do Feitio* (the house for making Daime), and the secondary forest in the back of the center's grounds. The sacred wooded area is reserved for the special recognition of the “Queen of the Forest,” where special works (*trabalhos*) are celebrated, typically on August 15. The Queen of the Forest is considered the living representation of spirit energy and the guiding force within all of Nature. The architecture of the hall, which was defined by Mestre Irineu, highlights two features: it is oriented to the rising sun, and it has no complete walls. This design allows for wide internal and external visibility of the surrounding forest, with the east and south sides being occupied during ceremonies by the female members, while the west and north sides are occupied by the male members (Cemin, 2010).

The *mesa* (table) serves as the altar in the center of the hall. The *mesa* is considered to be the source for receiving and transmitting energy currents from the astral plane. It constitutes a mechanism capable of capturing and distributing the power of the astral plane between the brotherhood and the cosmos. The ritual objects located on the table consist of the *Santo Cruzeiro* (“Holy Cross”), placed in the center (also known as the “Caravaca Cross”), which represents

*power*, plus an image of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and a jar of flowers, symbolizing the mission of the church. The flowers are representative of the garden of followers of the religion. Also featured are a copy of the Holy Bible and a glass of water symbolizing aid to spirits in need, as well as three lit candles that represent the Holy Trinity. The chair is an important symbol of power, as it represents the leader of the congregation. It is from the chair that the leader guides the *trabalho* (work), while facilitating the full manifestation of “light” and “force.” The maraca rattle, a musical instrument, is also considered a spiritual weapon. It marks the beat and summons up force for the *trabalho* by calling in the spiritual power, similar to the hymns enacted through the guided individual; it also intensifies the force through the vibration it makes (Cemin, 2010).

The *hinários*, or hymnals, hold special significance within the works (*trabalhos*), forming the written manuscript of teachings to which the membership must adhere. The *hinário* (hymnal) is received by a member directly from the astral plane, for it is considered that, in the spiritual world, there is a *linha* (lineage) of *trabalhos* whose teachings are transmitted through hymns; moreover, this lineage of *trabalhos* was first delivered by the “Queen of the Forest” to Mestre Irineu. In order to receive the hymns, adepts do not have to imbibe *Daime*, but they may feel as though they had “taken *Daime*,” as they sense that they are connected to the astral plane. This experience may occur while they are at home, in the street, and, very often, while sleeping. It is reported they wake up with the hymn after having had a dream of receiving it, which may manifest in the dream through hearing or seeing it being delivered by a spiritual being or visualized as texts “floating in the air” or printed on a sheet of paper. When an individual receives more than one hymn, it constitutes a *hinário*. The pattern of the hymns and the process of “receiving” them was established by Mestre Irineu based on his own experience of receiving

his own book of hymns, titled the “*Cruzeiro*.” The rhythms of the music that accompany the hymns are placed in one of three categories: the waltz, the mazurka, and the march. These themes are modeled on the rhythms used in Mestre Irineu’s *hinário*. When a hymn is received, the adept must show it to the leader, who evaluates whether it is consistent with the lineage (*linha*); then the hymn is presented to the brotherhood and later tested by being sung in the works (*trabalhos*). This process is referred to as “instructing” or “educating” the hymn in order to get the melody and the words of the hymn perfectly aligned with the *linha* (Cemin, 2010).

**Historic perspective on spirit possession.** The trajectory of spirit possession in Santo Daime has three main phases (Dawson, 2011). The first phase covers the period of Mestre Irineu’s leadership, from the time of the religion’s inception until his death in 1971. Mestre Irineu had a reputation as a healer (*curandeiro*), whose power resided both in his knowledge of folk medicine and in his ability to work with spirits. It is believed Mestre Irineu’s life was influenced by a certain type of “Afro-Amazonian religiosity” that he learned in his childhood – a mixture of Afro-Brazilian, Catholic, and indigenous beliefs (Furuya, 1990). These different ingredients were combined to produce a worldview infused by the everyday ritualized components of a widely diverse range of spiritual agencies and interactions (Galvão, 1955; Maués & Villacorta, 2004).

Mestre Irineu’s background reflects a combination of oral history, narrative analysis, and anthropological investigation that shows the centrality of spirit-oriented activity within the early religious repertoire of Santo Daime (Goulart, 2004; Labate & Pacheco, 2004). Evidence suggests that interaction with nature spirits was the primary form of spirit-oriented activity undertaken by the early *daimista* community, although engagement with the spirits of the dead might also have occurred. Early *daimista* activities involved *curandeirismo*, a practice that consults spirit guides

regarding the cause of an illness or allows engagement with spirits to ward off spirit infestation, thereby treating illnesses caused by maleficent spirits or guarding against possible spirit assault (Dawson, 2011).

During the late 1940s, the religious repertoire of Santo Daime began to change as a result of Mestre Irineu's increased interest in European esotericism such as Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and Rosicrucianism, as mediated through the publications of The Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought – *Círculo Esotérico do Comunhão do Pensamento* (Moura da Silva, 2006). *Esotericism* is a study of the mind that seeks to understand the secrets of conscious thought by investigating experiences that grant access to particular forms of hidden knowledge. These interior realities are nurtured through a wide range of techniques such as meditation, introspection, and regression that allow access to truths located deeper within the conscious self (Faivre, 1986).

By the time of his death, Mestre Irineu had distanced himself from the Esoteric Circle. However, the esoteric influence stayed within the Santo Daime ceremonial practices, where the primary focus was the cultivation of the “higher self” by harnessing impersonal cosmic energies, rather than encouraging personal wellbeing through the ritualized interaction with spirits (Dawson, 2011).

During the mid -1960s, Sebastião Mota de Melo joined the Santo Daime religious movement, becoming known as *Padrinho* (Godfather) Sebastião. He practiced as a medium in the Brazilian Kardecist tradition, where communication with disembodied spirits of the dead constituted the sole supernatural reference point (Cavalcanti, 1983). Sebastião acted as a medium for some of the most exemplary spirits of Brazilian Kardecism, such as Bezerra de Menezes and Antônio Jorge, using symbolic components of *caboclo* (peasant) spiritism that involved the

recognition of the supernatural agency of certain animals (Dawson, 2011). However, this association with spirit-oriented activity impeded his campaign for leadership after Mestre Irineu's death, which led him to found, in a remote area of the jungle, a new branch of Santo Daime he named *Céu do Mapiá*, establishing the organization known as CEFLURIS (Labate, MacRae, & Goulart, 2010).

By the mid-1970s, Padrinho Sebastião had reestablished Kardecism as a formal component of the Santo Daime ceremonial repertoire. Mediumistic activity did not replace the esoteric framework that had become vital to Mestre Irineu, but, rather, integrated the two paradigms within a single doctrine. Consequently, the esoteric concerns of developing the “higher self” remained central, while interactions with the spirits of the dead increased the legitimacy of *daimista* activities, including *caboclo* (peasant) spiritism based on the supernatural agencies of certain animals. The interaction with “animal spirits, however, was and continues to be regarded both with a degree of suspicion and as likely to result in some form of illness or bad luck” (Arruda, Lapietra, & Santana, 2006;). The adoption of New Age spiritual practices and beliefs that involve spirit-oriented activities increased the appropriation of ritual components from Umbanda and had a substantial impact upon the subsequent direction of the *daimista* repertoire. Umbanda practices complement Brazilian Kardecism's practices, as both traditions focus on the spirits of the dead. By the time of Sebastião's death in 1990, “Umbanda-inspired possession rites were being practiced by nascent *daimista* communities throughout Brazil, although not officially” recognized (Dawson, 2011, p. 147).

Since the turn of the century in 2000, under the dual leadership of Alfredo Gregório de Melo (Sebastião's son) and Alex Polari (a former political prisoner and founder of the Santo Daime church, *Céu da Montanha*, in the state of Rio de Janeiro) the incorporation of spirits

appropriated from Umbanda practices has become customary in the mother church of *Céu do Mapiá*. The most important of these ceremonies are named Saint Michael (*São Miguel*) and The White Table (*Mesa Branca*), which occur respectively on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of each month. Perhaps, due to the progressive influences of the urban professionals across the ever-expanding CEFLURIS movement, the beliefs and practices appropriated from Umbanda have increasingly found their way from the ceremony margins toward the reportorial core of Santo Daime (Guimaraes, 1992; Junior, 2007). This represents a fundamental modification of the Santo Daime religion, since its inception and original doctrinal practices set forth by Mestre Irineu. Since the ceremonies of Saint Michael (*São Miguel*) and The White Table (*Mesa Branca*) were intended as arenas for incorporation, the formalization of these rites validates Umbanda-inspired practices as compared to the established motifs of Brazilian Kardecism (Dawson, 2011). The Santo Daime religion has seemingly always had a fluid evolution, as its very nature derives from the etheric realms of the astral plane; thus these new developments may be brought forth from that connection.

**Present-day perspective.** Santo Daime has, over the years, become a global New Era religion, practiced predominantly by the white urban middle class, that embraces an eclectic and experimental mix of traditional European esotericism, Kardecist Spiritism, New Age spirituality, and possession rites drawn from the traditional Afro-Brazilian religions of Umbanda and Candomblé (Labate & MacRae, 2010). Dawson (2011) referred to the spirit idiom of Santo Daime as a form of “hyper-heteroglossia,” based on a term first coined by Bakhtin as “heteroglossia” (Besnier, 1996), a “variegated phenomenon comprising multiple voices which articulate often contrasting, if not incompatible experiences” (p. 149). Santo Daime is tremendously syncretic in its doctrine, making it both inclusive and, perhaps, challenging to

navigate. Some of the appeal of the Santo Daime movement may actually be the fact that it is shifting the paradigm from a monotheist representation of higher consciousness to a polytheist perspective that invites many representations of the sacred that have traditionally been unrelated or even in opposition to exist together.

There are, perhaps, as many different ways to understand personal experiences of spirit interaction as there are individuals who have had these experiences. This is largely thought to be attributed to the power of the plant medicine interacting with the individual's own requirements for healing at the time of the ceremony, along with whatever spirits may be present during each particular ritual. These experiences vary not only from individual to individual, but also from ceremony *trabalho* (work) to ceremony *trabalho* (work), as each time one partakes in an ayahuasca ceremony it is considered a unique expression of interaction with the plant medicine, no matter how similar it may be to former experiences. Shanon (2010) attested that every ayahuasca ceremony is a distinct experience, without exception.

A number of *daimistas* describe their interaction with spirits as a form of possession, an event involving suppression of one's conscious self accompanied by an inability to remember anything from the point of possession until the moment of "dispatch," when the spirit leaves one's physical body. Other *daimistas* seem to experience a typically Kardecist form of mediumship, describing themselves as remaining conscious throughout the experience. Some individuals state that their subjective presence is essential to directing the spirits, while others describe the self as an interested, but passive witness to what the spirit is doing to their body. There are *daimistas* who express the experience of the interaction as an ecstatic progression that dislocates the self from its physical moorings, whereby astral flight occurs, allowing for trips across the globe or to different historical periods to interact with other personalities. Some

*daimistas* describe a form of indigenous shamanistic soul-flight that involves disincarnate journeys to spiritual realms populated by supernatural agents of both human and non-human spirit beings. It is common to hear expressions of expanded consciousness or broadened spiritual vision stemming from the interaction with the world of spirits. Similarly, several *daimistas* explain the spirits with which they interact as astral counterparts, “variegated aspects of the material self” (Dawson, 2011, p. 149). It is not uncommon for several of these different forms to be experienced by an individual within a single work (*trabalho*), although not all individuals have these experiences of interaction with the spirits.

**Motifs within spirit possession.** *Daimistas* employ several different motifs within spirit possession, although not every member regards incorporation of disembodied spirits as a necessary expression of *daimista* religiosity (Dawson, 2011). The pantheons of spirits within Santo Daime are as unique as the doctrine of the syncretic religion, both malleable and diverse. The Creator deity holds absolute authority within the Santo Daime cosmology as the generative astral component to the metaphysical playground played out by all forms of spirit possession. The god of Santo Daime is called the “Father” (*Pai*), but there are also the “Mother” (*Mãe*), the Master (*Mestre*), the Queen (*Rainha*), the Catholic trinity of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and the archangels Michael (*São Miguel*), Gabriel (*São Gabriel*), Raphael (*São Rafael*), and John (*São João*), to name a few featured prominently within the *daimista* hymns (Dawson, 2011). Although God and the higher-level forces from the upper echelons of the spiritual realm tend not to be incorporated by individuals, they are seen as providers of protection and grace through their eternal presence within the ritual space of the ceremony. However, when they do appear in material form, it is through special karmic grace attained by the individual and held within the concept of reincarnation as a more permanent manifestation (Dawson, 2011).

The ceremonial form of incorporation appropriated from Brazilian Kardecism and Umbanda practices carries influences regarding the types of spirits invited into the Santo Daime repertoire. “Antônio Jorge,” “Doctor Fritz,” and “José Bezerra de Menezes” were famous personas of Brazilian Spiritism who are regularly called upon during incorporation rites (Santos, 2004). Another aspect of the spiritual hierarchy involves spirits in need of charity, known as “suffering” or “inferior” spirits, who are incorporated as a form of karma building and generosity to help lost spirits. These spirits may attach themselves to a medium, referred to as *encostar* – literally, “to lean on” the spiritually unwary, ill-prepared, or careless, thereby causing illness, bad luck, and other unwelcome effects. Although not practiced by every community member, some spirit possession is termed *atuação* – literally, “action” or “performance” that distinguishes involuntary possession from voluntary incorporation (*incorporação*) of a medium (Dawson, 2011).

Santo Daime regards everyone as having the ability for mediumship, with the understanding that some may have a natural proclivity to become practicing mediums. As a result, every individual is open to some form of interaction with the spirit-world within the ceremonial practices of Santo Daime. This interaction may be so subtle that the experience of the spiritual domain may go largely unnoticed at a conscious level. This creates a challenging situation, as the lack of awareness of the spirit-world may have an actual impact upon the consciousness of individuals, perhaps influencing them in some capacity.

In the worst-case scenarios, the unwary are left open to spiritual assault. It is for this reason that all members are given some form of instruction, whether they wish to become practicing mediums or not (Dawson, 2011). It is not unheard of for individuals to have had

experiences for which they required some form of assistance, because they were overwhelmed by their interaction with the spirit realm during the ceremonial practices of Santo Daime.

**Mediumistic training.** The primary lesson, perhaps the most important aspect of incorporating, requires that the individual learn to control the physical side-effects of being possessed by a disincarnate spirit, which often causes shaking, expostulating, and gesticulating. In addition to inducing and managing the possession event, mediums must learn to identify and express appropriately the particular type of spirit by which they are being possessed, as different kinds of spirit execute different ritual tasks. The medium's ability to communicate which type of spirit has been incorporated is one of the most critical parts of the ceremonial aspects of mediumship. Moreover, mediums must also know the context of the possession in relation to the ceremony, whenever it is appropriate. Although most kinds of spirit possession are actively encouraged in the ceremonies of Saint Michael (*São Miguel*) and The White Table (*Mesa Branca*), only limited types of possession are permitted within Concentration (*Concentração*) and Dance (*Bailados*). Other ceremonies do not tolerate any form of possession at all, such as Mass (*Missa*) and the *Feitio* (making of the Daime) (Dawson, 2011).

Santo Daime is beginning to allow different types of spirit incorporation within the rituals, as a result of the increasing influence of Umbanda practices of incorporating the *orixás* (deities). *Daimista* rites are typically very controlled events with defined spaces, actions, and behaviors. This extends to the form of incorporation that must occur at the correct point within the ceremony and for the proper duration. Incorporating the wrong type of spirit, or incorporating at the incorrect time within the ceremony, may lead to the spiritual current within the group being disrupted, which could lead to a reprimand from the leadership. Mediums must be acutely aware of the social hierarchies and cosmological status of the spirits they choose to incorporate.

Social standing within the group membership may also determine which individuals get to incorporate and at what moment that is acceptable. The rite space is decidedly discriminating in terms of where participants dwell within the ceremony, as determined by sex, age, marital status, and seniority, and even, at times, by height (Dawson, 2011). It is the mediums' responsibility not only to incorporate the right kind of spirit at the appropriate time, but also not to transgress the assigned spatial boundaries within the ceremony by distracting others' *trabalhos* (works).

Santo Daime ceremonies acknowledge spirit activity both as a symbolic and a practical expression of the psychotropic experience provided by the ritualistic drinking of Daime. The ceremonies provide a practical and symbolic space for the classic types of shamanism (*xamanismo*), mediumship (*mediunidade*), possession (*incorporação/atuação*), and trance (*trance*), although they are usually understood simply as spirit activity. The practices range from those who participate in the ceremony as witnesses and do not interact with spirits, to those who interact with the spirits by speaking or visiting without being inhabited, and to those who actively practice spirit possession (Dawson, 2011). Interestingly, these experiences are not seen as necessarily different or mutually exclusive of each other within the Santo Daime perspective of symbolic space of spirit activity, instead inviting the collective to participate as individuals themselves determine.

**Individual possession.** “Individual possession” identifies the person being possessed as the central focus of spirit-oriented activity. There are two divisions within individualized possession, a private form of mediumship and a more outwardly expressed form termed “expressive possession.” The private expression of mediumship is the traditional form of spiritism practiced by *daimistas*, which shows greater alignment with the older communities that consider more discreet interactions with “suffering” spirits as a primary notion to build good

karma (merit) in this life and the next. Incorporation affirms the established daimista notions of “trial” (*prova*) and “firmness” (*firmeza*) within the rite drinking of *Daime*, as it requires concentration and determination to remain within the confines of the ceremony under the influence of the psychotropic substance (Dawson, 2011).

Private incorporation must also be conducted in a way that does not distract other members from remaining firm within their own particular trials; hence the focus is inwardly based. As an act of charity, incorporated spirits are prayed for and at times instructed in the ways of *Daime*, as a means to help them accept and evolve from their path of suffering, and perhaps to gain better incarnations when the time comes for them to re-enter the physical domain.

**Expressive possession.** Expressive possession is another form of individualized incorporation recently added into the Santo Daime ceremonial space. It is becoming increasingly popular as a part of the ceremonies. Unlike private mediumship that serves a defined purpose, expressive possession lacks a clear ritualistic function other than the simple expression of the presences of the spirits. This form of incorporation typically includes *orixás* (deities) from the Umbanda traditions, or spiritual guides of *caboclos* (indigenous spirits) and *pretos velhos* (spirits of the old black slaves), although the presences of spirits such as children (*herês*), cowboys, gypsies, and aristocrats are also represented (Dawson, 2011). Expressive possession, designated as such due to its theatrical presentation, is thought to have no obvious ritualistic function besides feeling the experiencing of an incorporated spirit’s presence.

Varied reasons are given by *daimistas* for expressive incorporation, such as that the spirit’s presences is serving to protect against the unwarranted appearance of inferior spirits; or it is the spirit’s desire to enjoy the trappings of physical sensations like singing, dancing, and drinking *Daime*; or that benefits are being transferred to the host by the spirit’s presence; or,

finally, that the presence of the spirit is an outward manifestation of the higher self (Dawson, 2011).

The spirits of expressive mediumship must maneuver the customary procedures of the ceremony and honor the confines of the ritualistic space of the *trabalhos* (works) by not distracting others too greatly from their own particular work. When that occurs, other mediums step in to calm the offending spirit.

**Interactive possession.** Interactive possession is based within special mediumistic ceremonies held to serve other group members. Usually practiced only by the qualified mediums in the group, interactive possession is more restricted in the parameters of incorporation and has three principal ritualistic purposes. Indeed, it is primarily practiced as a form of charity towards lesser spirits, most often the suffering souls of the dead. “Here, the medium works upon lesser spirits whom she has incorporated or upon spirits in possession of others who may or may not be trained mediums” (Dawson, 2011, p. 156). At times, skilled mediums may need to relieve an untrained *daimista* by assuming responsibility for a difficult spirit, transferring the spirit into their body, and then working with other mediums or higher spirits to instruct (*doutrinar*) and enlighten (*iluminar*) the incorporated spirit by assisting its passage back into the spirit-world. During this type of intense interaction between mediums and spirits, the giving of *Daime* to the troubled spirit through the host is a common practice.

Acts of charity towards fellow daimistas are another form of interactive mediumship through the use of the Kardecism practice of the “pass” (*passe*). This involves the medium passing her hands around the head, limbs, and torso of another person to heal, soothe, and mitigate negative energetic spirits.

The last ritualistic form of interactive mediumship takes place through the delivery of wisdom and teachings from the highest echelons of the spiritual domain; it is typically restricted to the most senior mediums. This practice of edification tends to employ the incorporation of spirits of Kardecist Spiritism, along with other spirits of the deceased *daimista* community, including Padrinho Sebastião. As with all forms of spirit incorporation, mediumship is seen as an act of charity that earns cosmic merit or good karma (ethical retribution) for its practitioners. Those who practice this form of mediumship within the Santo Daime community tend to be almost exclusively women, due to the greater receptivity women have to the spirits (Dawson, 2011).

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology used was based in the phenomenological approach called “back to the things themselves,” as proposed by Husserl (2001), in order to analyze and understand individual experiences (p. 168). The philosophical phenomenological methodology was later adapted for psychological research by Giorgi (2009) as a *descriptive approach*, defined as a careful examination of experiences to attain detailed descriptions used for a structural analysis in order to reveal the psychological essence of the experience. This means that the lived meanings of these attitudes are sought after, rather than simply collecting observed data, thereby providing a phenomenological and humanistic approach to methodology rather than an experimental and behavioral one.

Husserl pointed out that the “whole scientific enterprise is grounded ultimately in the perceptual and meaning-making operations of human consciousness” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 9). It is the meaning that is found within the individual’s experience that is of most relevance, and that allows for the opportunity to uncover the essence of the experience. Giorgi (2009) described the Husserlian approach to phenomenological methods as requiring researchers to employ the phenomenological psychological reduction, by setting aside presumed past knowledge of a phenomenon, while simultaneously withholding from making ontological claims regarding the phenomenon being witnessed, and using imaginative variation to discover the essential nature of the phenomenon being investigated. Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological methodology is contrasted with an interpretative methodology, which means, for Giorgi, “an articulation of the given object – relevant to the experience, but not limited to the strictly given” (Giorgi, 2006, p. 91). This research, in sum, utilized the descriptive phenomenological methodology rather than an interpretive one. The approach required the researcher to remain mindfully aware of the

phenomenon and its context. As Merleau-Ponty asserted, “The phenomenological attitude is assumed because it tries to understand the natural attitude better than the natural attitude can understand itself” (1962, p. 26). This was attained by following Husserl’s (1982) Principle of all Principles, which emphasized that what was presented to the researcher “*is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented*” (p. 44). The process called for not adding anything, nor taking it away, but for simply reducing it to the essence of meaning. This phenomenological aspect is a very important consideration within this research design, because it honors the contextual aspects in terms of the ritualistic atmosphere that underpins the ayahuasca experience in the Santo Daime tradition.

### **Method**

The descriptive phenomenological approach involves a five-step method of data analysis. This analysis, which was carried out after the interview had been transcribed, became the empirical evidence used as the source for its psychological implications.

#### **Step One**

I read and re-read the entire narrative description to get a sense of the whole experience (Giorgi, 2009). I assumed a phenomenological attitude, which meant being present to the data as they was given. This was done without presuppositions, in order to reflect on the participant’s experience as a way of describing how it was phenomenally experienced (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1931/2008, cited in Broomé, 2011). The phenomenological attitude is different from the everyday way of understanding the world, as researchers must *bracket* their everyday knowledge in order to look with fresh eyes at the data, putting aside all judgments and preconceived notions about the phenomenon being studied. “The concept of ‘bracketing’ comes from Husserl’s (2008/1931) *epoché* (attitude) in which the researcher allows him or herself to be present to the

data without positing its validity or existence” (Broomé, 2011, p. 11). Giorgi wrote, “it is not a matter of forgetting the past: bracketing means that we should not let our past knowledge be engaged while we are determining the mode and content of the present experience” (2009, p. 92). Thus the “bracketing” of past knowledge, along with non-presented presuppositions about the given object, is critical to ensure that nothing contaminates the presented description of the lived experience. Husserl posed bracketing as a way to place critical attention on the present experience, stressing that bracketing means not letting our past knowledge become *engaged* while determining the mode or content of the present experience of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009, p. 92). This means remaining open to how the phenomenon was being presented within the experience regardless of one’s former experiences, knowledge, ideas, or even expectations.

The descriptive phenomenology method consists of two reductions: the psychological phenomenological reduction, and the eidetic reduction (Wertz, 2005). The *psychological phenomenological reduction* perceives the object from the perspective of being reduced to the phenomena presented as the lived experience. The *eidetic reduction*, on the other hand, is the process by which a particular object is intuitively reduced to its essence through the discernment of the invariant characteristics and unchanging structures of the phenomenon. Giorgi (2009) wrote that “the primary meaning of reduction is that the object presented to consciousness must be understood as something that is present to consciousness exactly as it is experienced, and one does not claim that it exists exactly the way it is experienced” (p. 90). This is important, because it is the psychological meaning of the experience that we are seeking to understand. The descriptive phenomenological method focuses at the level of lived reality at which psychologically lived experiences reside. This method is clearly appropriate for seeking

clarification of the meanings of the phenomena experienced by participants in the Santo Daime tradition.

The space within the ceremony is both physical and ethereal in the Santo Daime Church, as members report experiencing an alternative plain. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962), space is seen as a “relationative” field (p. 284). Space “is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible” – the “universal power enabling [things] to be connected” (p. 284). This suggests the idea of space holding things together, connecting things into union rather than creating distance. Merleau-Ponty (1962) affirmed that, when someone knows the space between two things, this person is uniting those things, no matter how distant they appear to be. The resulting awareness promotes a more realistic approach to the phenomenon being studied.

A fundamental question was presented by Laughlin, McManus, and d’Aquili (1990): “How much can we know about consciousness from direct experience – that is, how much can we discover by looking at our own mind through ‘introspection’?” (p. 21). According to Laughlin and his colleagues, this is because introspection is not equal to the experiential: “Introspection frequently fails as an accurate data source precisely because the scientist is unskilled as a contemplative” (p. 24). Experiential observation can produce valid information only if the researcher has had some training in the spiritual tradition being researched (Mercante, 2006). The researcher who experiences the traditions under study would have a better comprehension of them than adopting the position of an objective or participative observer. Researchers who observe the studied culture experientially – principally by being initiated into local mystical traditions – try to situate themselves in that culture, giving themselves the chance to try, at least for some time, to see reality through the eyes of those being researched (D. E.

Young, personal communication, 05/15/2000, cited in Mercante, 2006). This shift in perception may present itself readily. As William James (1902/1929) wrote:

Our normal consciousness ... is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are all there in all their completeness. (p. 328)

This concept of experimental participation supports the phenomenological descriptive approach attested by Giorgi when seeking the psychological essences of the experienced meaning. During the process of making the data clear, the feelings and intuitions that arose in the researcher's consciousness must be described carefully.

### **Step Two**

I re-read the whole description, demarcating spontaneous shifts in meaning in the text, by discriminating among the different units that express a self-contained meaning in terms of the whole. I formed "meaning units" – a purely descriptive term – within the narrative, so that the data might be tended to in manageable portions (Giorgi, 2009). Moreover, "the divisions are to be these that naturally cohere in the text rather than those imposed by expectations of a researcher's theoretical positions" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 54). This admonition allowed for unexpected meanings to be discovered. The meaning units then were re-expressed in the third person, while remaining true to the meanings given by the participant. By taking each third-person meaning unit individually, the researcher dwelt with it and considered what was being psychologically expressed through it.

### **Step Three**

I reflected on the meaning units, using *imaginative variation* to transform them into psychologically sensitive representations of the given descriptive expressions of the participants for each unit. This meant reflecting on the meaning to discern what it revealed about the

phenomenon under investigation, and gaining insight from it by looking for the invariant and unchanging characteristics of the phenomenon. Wertz (2005) described *imaginative variation* this way.

One starts with a concrete example of the phenomenon of which one wishes to grasp the essence and imaginatively varies it in every possible way in order to distinguish essential features from those that are accidental or incidental. This is the method par excellence for the acquisition of qualitative knowledge, for it informs us of what something essentially is. Eidetic seeing or insight provides evidence of those features that must be present in any and all possible instances of a subject matter. (Wertz, 2005, p. 168)

This meant stretching the variation to see if it was still coherent with the whole and authentically descriptive of the given meaning. The search for the essence of the phenomenon puts the focus on a specific instance of the object of study, which might be something real or imagined. Free imaginative variation seeks to know more precisely how to articulate what makes the object a specific example or instance of the type of phenomenon it is (Giorgi, 2009). According to Giorgi, once the essence of the phenomenon or state has been determined, the next obligation is to describe it as accurately as possible. “The sense of phenomenon in phenomenology is that one must be present to the ‘given’ precisely as it presents itself, neither adding to nor subtracting from what is given” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 9). This is not interpretation but realignment, through description of the essence of what is being said. This is a very important aspect of the descriptive phenomenological approach, articulated by Giorgi thus:

Description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of experience. This sense of description is contrasted with interpretation, which is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of experience with the help of some nongiven factor, such as an assumption, hypothesis, theory, or the like. Description is also contrasted with construction, which is not satisfied to stay strictly with the given, but uses imagination or other nongiven factors to either present or account for the objects of experience. Finally, description is contrasted with explanation, which attempts to account for what is presented, usually by employing factors that are not necessarily given or in terms of other known but nonpresent events (for example, causes). But its goal is not simply to exhibit what is given. (Giorgi, 2009, p. 89)

## **Step Four**

I clarified the analysis to form constituents of the experience. I did this by synthesizing the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement, again using free imagination to pull the essence of the phenomenon into clear expression. The result was a description of the essential structure of the lived experience. Giorgi (2009) pointed out that the unity of the consciousness of each person must be respected if a single structure is to emerge from the data, thereby making the constituents holistically and relationally formed. Constituents are context-dependent and interrelated with each other, forming the essential parts of the whole structure (Giorgi, 2009). Moreover, “Gurwitsch (1964) makes the valuable distinction between elements and constituents clearly and directly: an element is a part that is independent of the whole in which it resides, whereas a constituent is a part that is mindful of its role in the whole” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 102). This means that each constituent clarifies the understanding of the other constituents, helping to form a holistic representation of a psychological experience. The constituents are put together in a descriptive paragraph, which then forms the psychological structure (results) of the analysis. This represents the objective knowledge of the participant’s experience, not what actually took place. The result is an objective description of the transcendental structure of the phenomenon as it was experienced (Neegaard & Uhøi, 2007). In sum, the descriptive phenomenological method offers a viable means for understanding the lived experience of the phenomenon of drinking ayahuasca in ceremony within the Santo Daime Church.

## **Participants**

Six selected ayahuasca drinkers, originally from the United States or Brazil, within a Santo Daime community in California were purposefully selected based on their experience with drinking ayahuasca and their willingness to participate in the research study. This entailed

selecting research participants according to the needs of the study (Robson, 2011). This selection criterion included experienced ayahuasca drinkers, who had participated in Santo Daime ritual inebriation for more than a year (approximately 10 or more times), and reportedly had a transformative experience while drinking ayahuasca in ceremony. This form of sampling is suitable when participants are selected for special characteristics in information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely (Patton, 2002). Recruitment was through telephone contact. Participants received no compensation for their participation. The total amount of time requested from participants was about 60 minutes for an in-person interview.

### **Research Setting**

The research took place in the privacy of the individuals' own homes or in some other place of the participants' choosing. The activity was recorded during in-person interviews.

### **Instruments**

Resources included computer, cell phone, and pen and paper, all of which I had available to be used.

### **Procedures**

I presented the consent form and answered any questions participants had, prior to their confirmed consent. I described the purpose of this study as a phenomenological inquiry into their experience of being profoundly changed during a specific occasion of drinking ayahuasca in ceremony. I then explained that this meant that their experience, as they experienced it, was what was of most importance. I reminded the participants that they were not obligated to continue the study and could stop at any time. Then I asked them to describe their experiences of ayahuasca through a recorded in-person interview: "Please describe in as much detail as possible a specific experience drinking ayahuasca in ceremony which has profoundly changed you: What was it

like?” Participants were coded P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 to ensure confidentiality. All collected data were coded and transcribed. The documents were stored on a secure computer during data analyses in an office at my residence accessible only to me. At the conclusion of the study, all files will be deleted. Results have been presented in such a way as to minimize the possible identification of any one individual.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment for the study was through personal interactions of the researcher with the Santo Daime Church community. Participants were contacted through their email or by phone to confirm their willingness to participate and to arrange in-person interviews, which were conducted face-to-face in a venue of the participant’s choosing. A single-question interview script was used for in-depth interviews of the selected participants, with the researcher asking minimally-directive, open-ended follow up questions as needed.

### **Data Collection**

Interviews required less than 60 minutes of the participants’ time. No financial or other compensation was given to subjects for participating in the interview process, nor was there any expense on the part of the participants.

### **Data Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a psychological phenomenological method. The data analysis consisted of the following steps:

- (1) The researcher assumed the phenomenological attitude, including bracketing any previous assumptions on the topic;
- (2) Each narrative, once transcribed, was read in its entirety in order to develop a sense of it as a whole;

- (3) Each narrative was re-read, marking off units of meaning;
- (4) Each meaning unit was transformed into a psychologically sensitive statement reflecting the lived experience of the interviewee; and
- (5) The transformed data from all interviews were examined for key constituents, which then were synthesized into a general psychological structure.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The nature of the subject being researched by this pilot study required extreme caution in protecting subject anonymity. Individuals opting to participate in this study were given pseudonyms as identifiers at the beginning of the interview. The data collected were downloaded to password-protected files on the primary researcher's computer from the recordings from the researcher's digital device. Afterwards, all data were deleted from recording devices.

Participants who, during initial screening, demonstrated signs of emotional or mental instability or trauma due to the experience in question were not selected to participate in interviews/ Instead, they were urged to seek professional assistance in processing these issues.

### **Informed Consent**

The purpose and procedure for the research study were explained to selected participants prior to the interviews being conducted. An informed consent form was presented for participants to sign, and all had the opportunity to ask questions about the study prior to and after being interviewed.

No minors participated in this study. Participants had a fluent understanding of and ability to communicate in English. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations did not apply.

### **Potential Risks to Human Participants and Safeguards**

Potential risks to human participants included social or psychological harm in the form of having private behaviors exposed. Interviews also carried the potential risk of bringing up strong emotional memories in participants. Safeguards for participant privacy were addressed through previously described procedures. Participants at obvious risk for strong, emotionally disturbing reactions were excluded from the study. No deception, manipulation, control, or coercion was used in this study, and participants had the opportunity to ask questions or withdraw from the study at any time without stating a reason. Appropriate professional or medical assistance would have been recommended, but no such need arose.

### **Potential Benefits**

The primary benefit of this study was to guide future researchers in continuing this line of inquiry. Published literature resulting from future studies may assist service providers and the general public in understanding the lived experiences of those participating in ayahuasca activities in a more positive light. Participants, as well as others who drink ayahuasca in ceremony, stand to benefit in several areas where they may currently be stigmatized, by providing mental health, medical, and legal professionals as well as spiritual leaders a better understanding of the potential health benefits arising from ayahuasca consumption.

### **Risk to Benefit Ratio**

The risks of this study were low, and every possible precaution was taken to shield participants from any negative impact. However, the need for adequate research in this area of study calls for serious inquiry. All professionals working with individuals involved in drinking ayahuasca stand to gain valuable understanding and insight into these practices and the potential

positive outcomes of such activities, thus reducing the stigmatization of these individuals. The risk-to-benefit ratio was clearly in favor of conducting this research study.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Structure

- The first constituent was a shift in self-perception.
- The second constituent was the sense of permanence that enlightened participants to how they had permanently changed psychologically through an experiential shift.
- The third constituent represented an experience of wholeness and peace gained from a sense of being released from past unresolved events.
- The fourth constituent was an embodied somatic visionary component.
- The fifth constituent was the reported experience of a soul expression as an expanded essential sense of self beyond the bounded identity.
- The sixth constituent was the reported psychological experience of witnessing consciousness as an active relaxed mental state with the capacity to focus and support the process.
- The seventh constituent was the reported experience of a divine connection expressed as a form of enlightened awareness or as a sense of knowing the essential self through a new-found intimacy by being connected to a divine other.

### Constituents

The structures of all the participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) revealed seven distinct constituents of the phenomenon of profound change as psychologically experienced in the drinking of Daimé during ceremony, namely:

- (1) a shift in self-perception such as to change the way one sees oneself;
- (2) a sense of permanence in this new state;

- (3) a feeling of integrated wholeness and peace, through an embodied somatic visionary component experienced as an expanded essential sense of self beyond the bounded identity;
- (4) an embodied somatic visionary component;
- (5) the experience of a soul expression as an expanded essential sense of self beyond one's ordinary bounded identity;
- (6) a witnessing consciousness with a sensation of divinity attributed to the plant medicine; and
- (7) the reported experience of a divine connection expressed as a form of enlightened awareness as a sense of knowing the essential self.

### **Discussion**

All the drinkers reported pronounced change as a conscious shift in self-perception – in other words, a different perspective related to understanding as a form of realigning with an integrated sense of wholeness. They felt a change in their experience of themselves as a sense of relating differently through permanently shifted self-perceptions. The experience, which was psychologically transformational, had a profound effect on their mental perceptions. Emotional reactions to themselves and the world around them held a new sense of permanence. All the participants felt they experienced a form of becoming more whole and psychologically integrated, as the result of attaining a sense of inner peace and a sense of being released from conscious entrapments. As embodied emotionally, painful psychological retained wounds from past unresolved events were transformed into a sense of inner peace, emotional freedom, and integrated wholeness. This transformation was understood as having been facilitated as a form of knowledge attributed to the plant medicine. Each participant reported an embodied somatic

visionary experience through a lucid presence, which helped give a sense of validation that supported integration. A sense of greater wholeness, along with changes in self-perception, helped them to follow the dramatic psychological shifts of consciousness through the somatically visual element, which reportedly transported them to a state beyond normal space and time that led to feelings of divinity. This experience affected deep changes in self-perceptions and the releasing of patterns of mental and emotional disharmony. All participants explored an expanded essential self, described as separate from the corporeal, as a distinct expression of identity unbounded by time and occupying a spatial awareness. It took the form of an embodied soul as an essential sense of self beyond the bounded identity. All the participants experienced a witnessing consciousness as an active mental state, with the capacity to focus and support the process of integrated wholeness. All of them also reported similar aspects within their expressed phenomenon of acknowledging a form of divinity. The divine connection was expressed as a form of enlightened awareness, as a sense of knowing the essential self, as being in the presence of a divine other as a recipient of undiscovered knowledge, with a sense of compassionate understanding attributed to the plant medicine. An enhanced protective grace through a new-found intimacy came through the plant medicine that helped them through their process.

A shift in self-perception was the first constituent. It consisted of a pronounced change that allowed for a different perspective, one related to understanding as a form of realigning with an integrated sense of wholeness such as to change one's experience of oneself. It led to a sense of relating to oneself differently, through permanently shifted self-perceptions. All the participants reported a feeling of knowing that what they had previously been thinking was altering, that the inner direction of conscious thought patterns that they had been following was making a course correction for healing integration as a way to wholeness. The changes in self-

perception were reported as deeply understood truths that reworked previously held belief patterns, accompanied by a feeling of purposeful intention for the change as a means to satisfy an evolutionary progression of mental and emotional growth, going beyond limited thoughts and associations. This feeling of conformational change was important psychologically, because it lifted the burden of doubt from within the psyche of the drinkers. This may have assisted the experience of transformational change by removing any inner conflict, to allow the embedding of newly formed belief patterns, perhaps assisting in making them more permanently viable. This change in self-perception not only represented a psychological change in conscious thought patterns (having different kinds of thoughts), but also an intrinsic understanding of the reason for the change (why it was important or necessary to think differently), as well as the added psychological belief in the benefit given by the plant to grant a newly formed conscious awareness that completely altered their future thought patterns (a belief in permanent change in the way thinking occurs). As an example, P3 reported developing a completely new perspective, overcoming a deeply rooted sense of aversion to attentive admiration; she understood the reason for this change, because she became able to rectify an inner conflict stemming from a strong cultural-ideological programming in childhood. After drinking the plant medicine, she observed that this state permanently shifted to a new belief of honoring self-determination through acceptance of personal expression

The second constituent was the sense of permanence that the drinkers reported having after drinking Daime during the ceremony, which enlightened them as to how they had changed psychologically through an experiential shift in their feelings and self-reflections. They saw this shift in self-perception in terms of feeling firmly rooted in a new state of conscious awareness that now informed all of their perceptions. This reported sense of permanent change in their

mental and emotional psychology seemed to allow the drinkers to feel supported in their changed behavior and provided them with a new belief system to act differently. All the participants reported feeling that they had made permanent psychological changes to their mental and emotional states due to ingesting the plant medicine, which later had positive effects on their behavior and life choices. They mentioned the feeling of a quality of permanence as a resolution that moved from a sense of wounded fragmentation psychologically into a greater integration as a sense of enhanced self-awareness. P2, for example, reported having a sense of mastery in her ability to speak fluently, understanding Portuguese without formal study as a novice, while P4 reported ceasing painful past psychological patterns connected to childhood issues, now resolved in a strong sense of self-awareness, achieving relationship harmony through compassionate understanding of self and others with a sense of empowering self-expression. The participants generally reported permanent psychological change after drinking Daime that had a great impact on the way they experienced their lives.

The third constituent represented an experience of wholeness and peace gained from a sense of being released from conscious entrapments through interaction with the plant medicine. These entrapments had been embodied in emotionally painful, psychologically retained offenses, disturbances, and hurts of past unresolved events. Participants reportedly experienced a journey to wholeness, away from previous awareness of ailments experienced as mental unrest and emotional disharmony, into permanently transformed states of consciousness felt as emotional and mental expressions of wholeness and peace through dynamic shifts of identity and associated woundedness. This psychological sense of wholeness and inner peace was reported, at times, as a feeling of being healed, seeming to suggest that there was a particular opportunity for the participants to become whole – to develop a sense of self-worth and self-acceptance, as

unresolved residual psychological imprints that hindered self-expression and interpersonal relationships were worked out through a process of integration, as a new self-perception helped support a feeling of healing and completeness. P4, for one, reported feeling healed from repetitive negative mental patterns of childhood that stemmed from feelings of being unnurtured and unloved, now transformed into self-acceptance and a sense of self-respect. P1 reported feeling a sense of becoming more whole and peaceful, after experiencing an alteration in her perceptions that revealed issues with intimacy and closeness with others, a problem with which she had struggled from youth. P3 reported a sense of wholeness and peace. after finding a resolution to her childhood stories, with a new sense of authenticity in honoring her emotions. The significance of becoming whole, with a feeling of achieving a state of inner peace, spoke to the new alignment of the psychological states, away from a place of disharmony or unrest found prior to the ingestion of the plant medicine. P2 spoke about experiencing a new psychological state of fearlessness, inner confidence, purposefulness, and deep joy that recalled the integration of psychologically fragmented pieces of self into wholeness and vitality. These encounters of wholeness and inner peace found in the experience of the plant medicine appeared to lend a feeling of support, protection, and great belonging, a sense of safety to incorporate insights through acknowledged integration that facilitated a permanent shift in self-perception. This was expressed as acknowledging something great within themselves, as when P5 found a sense of resurrection within him through a perceived death experience, a sense of the eternal filled with tangible faith, inner peace, and a release from fear of death. The process of integrated wholeness was also articulated as a need to heal psychological trauma, especially for P6, an abuse survivor. This revealed a need for her to come into wholeness from perhaps fragmented psychological states of disharmony and anguish from retained offenses, distresses, disruptions, and hurts of past

unresolved events into a natural psychological state of balanced self-awareness, freed emotional expression, and inner harmony. This constituent might also provide a sense of identity, a greater value of self that may increase psychological inner peace.

An embodied somatic visionary component was the fourth constituent for the structure of profound psychological change experienced in the drinking of Daime during ceremony. Each participant reported a sense of the indelible reality of the experience, as though the lucid presence of the embodied somatic vision helped give a sense of validation. This supported a level of self-acceptance that seemed to lead to integration in a sense of greater wholeness and changes in self-perception. The drinkers all reported experiencing intense, extraordinarily insightful, visionary and somatic elements, felt as a total embodied experience that psychologically propelled them into a new state of awareness through time and space, even a sense of divinity. This experience seemed to be what led to a sense of empowerment for the participants, as they accepted the psychological shifts they had experienced under the influence of the plant medicine. The embodied somatic visionary qualities supported the psychologically meaningful messages that were uniquely given for each participant, compelling the profound mental and emotional shifts in perception that changed the conscious awareness for the drinkers. These were experiential truths made evident through the somatic engagements that shape awareness beyond simple mental notions into a lived sense of comprehension. The embodied somatic visionary expressions were reportedly seen as enlightened messages that gave them a sense of strength and connection to the communication of healing or transformation, a way to understand and identify what was happening in the internal field of the psyche. The reported embodied visionary experience seemed to remind drinkers of its significance within the experience of transformation. P5, for instance, reported a somatic visionary journeying after experiencing death through what

was described as a porthole in time and space that appeared to arrive in a heavenly paradise of immense beauty, whereby he proceeded to meet divine others who invoked in him feelings of joy, kinship, faith, and a sense of becoming fearless and immortal. This embodied somatic visionary experience propelled P5 into a state beyond conscious thought and into a new world of experiential understanding, which reportedly returned him to the living after he had left his corporeal consciousness in a way that permanently changed his view of the world and himself. The embodied somatic visionary element carried enough strength to help move the drinkers beyond the moment they were experiencing to an understanding of multiple layers of psychological integration or wholeness. This was seen in the example of P6, who experienced an alteration of consciousness through a series of intense somatic visions that led to the understanding of her repetitive behavioral patterns elicited by a long history of sexual abuse that she reported to have resolved through the plant medicine's visionary teachings. All the participants reported an intense embodied somatic visionary experience, which formed as a kind of symbolically meaningful discourse directed with a sense of immediate comprehension, felt through all the senses physically, with emotional and mental components attributed to having been facilitated through the plant medicine. The psychological support from this type of somatic visionary symbolism may, perhaps, be compared to having an additional instructional aid that imparts knowledge and potentially complex conceptual ideology in a way that leads one to comprehend images and somatic components easily, to assist in helping to remember having lived the experience.

The fifth constituent was the reported experience of a soul expression as an expanded essential sense of self, beyond the bounded identity of the individual, due to the ingestion of the plant medicine. All six participants reported experiencing an ability to connect with a

psychological aspect within them that had somatic, visual, auditory, emotional, and mental components that seemed to be separate from the distinct corporeal sense of connection and extension of self beyond bounded identity. This led them to have an essence of the timeless, which accompanied a specific somatic orientation with a sense of separateness within spatial dimensions, as if traveling to what was described as an alternative astral place attributed to the plant medicine. P2 and P3 reported experiencing a sense of soul expression through mediumship as an instrument of communication between the living bounded soul and what appeared as the astral field of disembodied souls, as intermediaries or as conduits of conscious engagement with another in a noncorporeal orientation within the field of somatic visionary experience. P5 reported experiencing a somatically visual sensation understood to be an expression of soul as a spiritual component that seemed to inform the state of death that felt independent of the corporeal and journeyed through highly visual, somatic, and auditory sensations to an alternative world with many divine Others. All the participants referred to an experience of *soul* as a representation of an expanded essential self, distinctly separate from the corporeal self occupying a specific space and connected over varied expressions of time.

The sixth constituent was the reported psychological experience of a witnessing consciousness as an active relaxed mental state with the capacity to focus and support the process of integrated wholeness during the somatic visionary mental alterations due to the ingestion of the plant medicine. All participants reported experiencing an ability to maintain the sense of a being a witness within the psychological process, both as an experiential, somatically connected recipient of teachings and as a continuous witness. The latter appeared as an active coherent mental resource that seemed to help facilitate a reference point of the experience, as well as generate a sense of an integration of the communication attributed to the plant medicine.

P3 expressed having a strong witnessing consciousness during her experience as a sense of surrendering to the process of mediumship and as an extension of awareness during the visionary expression. P2 also reported feeling a deep connection and purpose of being consciously guided, as if from a soul level, while witnessing a flawlessness in physical execution and somatic alignment in the physical act of singing during the ceremony. P1 described the sense of witnessing consciousness as recipient perception of an intelligent other that presented a direct response, understood as a force from outside the bounded consciousness of personal perspective. P5 reported an embodied sense of witness consciousness, which somatically felt to him like a form of resurrection, appearing through his somatic visionary experience as a lived demonstration that may have contributed to integration of a greater sense of wholeness and a change in self-perception. All participants reported experiencing different perspectives of soul expression during the visionary experiences, which maintained an actively engaged mind, fully present with relaxed attention, as though to witness the action taking place as the recipient of knowledge or insights thought to be given through the plant medicine that is often reported as an intelligent other.

The seventh constituent was the reported experience of a divine connection expressed as a form of enlightened awareness as a sense of knowing the essential self. This was experienced as an enhanced protective grace through a new-found intimacy as being connected to a divine other, similar to a feeling of being a recipient of undiscovered knowledge. That also held a sense of compassionate understanding, attributed to the plant medicine that helped them through their process as an intelligent other. All participants reported experiencing an ability to connect with a psychological aspect within themselves that had higher knowledge or greater wisdom, seemingly divinely generated and attributed to the plant medicine. P3 and P4 expressed this feeling when

reporting that the plant medicine taught them how to navigate challenging relationships, make better personal choices, be contributing members in their community and be in ceremony, along with a permanent sense of connectedness to the divine. They saw this as an expression of supported inner recognition of self-honoring wisdom, as a sense of integrated wholeness and compassionate self-perception. The conscious awareness of divinity was reported within the experience as a visionary somatic sensation that transcended ordinary wisdom into enlightened understanding. P5 described this experience of divinity through his reported journeying to a place where he had an interaction with a female deity in a place of immense beauty and delight that intensely affected his perceptual awareness. This experience of death changed his perspective, allowing him a sense of resurrection, renewal, and tremendous faith, all attributed to an embodied somatic visionary expression of a divine connection during the ceremony. All participants reported experiencing a sense of divine awareness through an embodied somatic vision, with emotional and mental interactions within the process as an enlightened form of conscious awareness of an intelligent other that came to assist them while they were drinking Daimé during the ceremony. P6 reported a sense of being comforted through a perceived reassurance by a divine Other that continued as a permanent sense of divine connection. It enabled her to feel a sense of support through a process of resolving psychological wounds of self-esteem and behavioral patterns stemming from sexual abuse that seemed to have begun in infancy.

Additionally, all six participants reported their experience of divinity as a form of enhanced protective support that reportedly assisted them through their process of integrated wholeness, even as a sense of compassionate self-acceptance as a resolved pattern may help to support changes in self-perception. All of them reported being comforted and guided throughout

their experiences, allowing them to go deeper into their psychological patterns; a sense of protective grace gave them a feeling of assurance in embodied awareness of faith and trust, as if being with a divine caretaker. This divine element within their reported experiences seems to have helped lift their psychological states to a level of increased conscious awareness of unity and integrated wholeness, which they seemed to enhance their ability to change self-perceptions. This constituent of divine connection appeared to leave the drinkers with feelings of beauty, protection, unity, compassion, and peace, something that lingered in a profound and permanent way through an embodied somatic visionary experience attributed to the plant medicine. The divine aspect within the experience reportedly had a pronounced effect on the participants, perhaps making the plant medicine ceremony more memorable and, therefore, even more impactful.

One of the profound changes experienced through the drinking of Daime during ceremony seems to follow Shanon (2010), who reported that, for many, ayahuasca is not just a potion or a plant, but also a Being with special, unique qualities; it may even be seen as a deity. This would explain the feeling expressed by participants that there was a divine element within their experiences that helped to inform them of knowledge that was previously unavailable to them. This came about through a reported feeling of enlightened awareness stemming from the plant medicine. All the participants indicated that this enlightened awareness within their consciousness was directly attributable to their interaction with the plant medicine, reportedly believing that the divine element came directly from the plant. It was this special feeling that acted to inspire the drinkers, perhaps regardless of content, although content did appear to support the magnitude of the experience to impact them. Participants reported that this aspect of

divinity from the plant medicine helped them through their process, through a heightened feeling of protective grace, enlightened knowledge, and joyful peace.

All participants reported the sense of a divine aspect within their experience as a form of heightened awareness and knowledge that facilitated a change in self-perceptions and emotional states of understanding and integrated wholeness. The findings appear to validate information found in the literature that attests to the plant medicine's capability to shift the drinkers' awareness psychologically in such a way as to help them release past pain patterns in favor of positive mental health. The shifts in consciousness were reported to be so transformational that many referred to the experience as matching the benefits of several years of psychotherapy within one ayahuasca ceremony (Shanon, 2010). The current findings help to strengthen this association, as all the participants indicated that they had worked through some form of psychological barrier that was previously present and that reportedly altered after they ingested the plant medicine.

These findings also coincide with documented experiences of indigenous drinkers who have reported feeling they were "recreated" after ayahuasca inebriation (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1991). This report resembles the element of permanence reportedly experienced by participants, who described themselves as being permanently psychologically changed from the experience. Drinking Daime, according to the statements from the participants, seems to be capable of stimulation that helped to resolve impending psychological difficulties and reportedly enabled them to cope with on-going mental and emotional challenges. Profound change through the drinking of Daime during ceremony, as reported by participants, appears to have a divine enlightening quality, or some form of a message that confirms integrated wholeness, compassionate awareness, and inner transformation, due to profound shift in self-perception.

This outcome confirms the findings in the literature that attest to the traditional use of the plant medicine as being aligned and known as a teaching plant (Luna, 1984).

A good amount of research has been carried out on the different aspects of the ayahuasca experience. However, there is still a great need to conduct more research in order to understand how this unique plant medicine interacts with perceptual awareness and its effects on consciousness. The plant medicine is said to be different every time for everyone, making the research inquiries challenging, as each individual and each session is different. This is one reason why descriptive phenomenological research fits well, as it is an investigation into a specific experience that individuals have had that seeks to find a shared structure to identify and understand the phenomenon.

There are many areas of ayahuasca research that still need to be addressed. These include questions about how the plant may affect an individual over time, or if the plant medicine effects change with dosage and frequency, or if there is a continuum within the psychological expressions of drinkers. There are many unanswered questions as to the potential impact of this particular plant medicine and to whom it is best suited. Each participant had unique experiences, and yet an overall phenomenon was found within all of these different experiences. Shanon (2002) encapsulated this aspect of the ayahuasca experience as being an explorative practice that each individual must undertake in order to find the substantive answers that can be revealed only through first-hand experience. He posited that there was no alternative to studying this phenomenology from within (Shanon, 2002, p. 32), thus making a substantial argument for further descriptive phenomenological studies to investigate the ayahuasca experience through its impact on different individuals. Consciousness, a subjective experience of an inner self, may be

best served by investigating the phenomenological aspects through the individual. This topic deserves more research to validate this small sampling.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The profound shifts attributed to imbibing ayahuasca have become increasingly sought as those who have partaken have claimed to have had transformational experiences. This has led many others to seek out this medicine as a means to find a sense of integrated wholeness. Such an undertaking is often accompanied by a strong desire likened to a spiritual quest to connect with that part of the self that is beyond the human-bounded identity, thereby moving into a sense of expanded consciousness that seems interconnected with others.

According to McKenna (1992), traditional healers have been using this medicine in ceremony to draw out aspects of an individual's personal history where psychic tension comes to rest. These methods have exhibited startling parallels to the techniques of modern psychotherapy, as well as seeming to represent access to new possibilities and energies through a spiritual understanding still largely unrecognized by Western theories of healing (p. 229) The potential for ayahuasca to become a medicine in the Western sense may require accepting a shift toward therapeutic modalities with a more holistic approach to the individual that incorporates aspects of the spiritual. The expression of a person's soul, as an essential sense of self, may be pertinent in achieving a state of integrated wholeness in terms of wellbeing. It appears relevant to inquire more into the plant medicine experience as an entheogen substance. Participants in this study reported a lived conviction of their transformative experiences, suggesting that we consider a set of phenomenological findings that seem to point toward a psychic integration of consciousness, including an expanded essential sense of self, or soul component. These findings seem to support ayahuasca as a "psychointegrator" of integrated development. The reported stimulation of the mind, emotions, and a sense of soul as a spiritual component was significantly consistent within the ayahuasca phenomenon. The plant medicine appeared to help bring individuals into states of

integrated wholeness, along with forming a type of awareness of a sense of the essential self that also seemed to extend into a holistic interconnectedness of a communal vision of the world.

Whether or not these spiritual aspects, which are found within the ayahuasca experience and are well-documented, may have more relevance to the integrated wholeness of an individual than has been previously understood is yet to be determined.

Ayahuasca is considered by many as a form of the Tree of Knowledge, a resource that presents access to wisdom (McKenna, 1992). Participants reported that the plant medicine felt like a teacher, through their experiences of emotional insights, gained wisdom, and a sense of learning and realization attributed to drinking it. Ayahuasca is often seen as a course of training, as if in preparation to enter a school (Gorman, 1992) that appears to require a certain level of training in order for students to participate effectively (Shanon, 2010). Looking at the plant medicine within this study as an entheogenic agent seemed to call for the mindful participation of individuals who, in a sense, put forth an effort as conscious witnesses and willing contributors in order to dialogue with an intelligent other while under the influence of the plant medicine. The findings within this study implied a shift in self-perceptions that allowed participants to realign their understanding, based on teachings revealed through imbibing of the plant medicine. These outcomes were accompanied by an expression of intentionality by participants beforehand, which seems to suggest that they experienced both a sense of being affected by the plant medicine and a recognition of their role as intentional contributors. It is not uncommon for individuals to set intentions before a ceremony. Quite often in the Santo Daime Church those intentions are also set collectively, as a form of focused guidance for the group experience. Several of the participants attested to the experience as one that required some form of involvement as a conscious witness, perhaps as a good student or steward of knowledge. This

often seemed connected to a sense of goodwill, reconciliation, and compassion. Participants in this study reportedly considered the possibility of an intelligence within the plant medicine that was interacting with them. Perhaps the plant medicine facilitates access to a disconnected or undiscovered part of oneself, or a connection to something outside the bounded identity. To know definitively would require an extensive investigation of ayahuasca, as well as a greater understanding of consciousness than has yet been determined.

Although varied ayahuasca experiences have been extensively documented through cognitive psychological research (Shanon, 2010), this descriptive phenomenological approach seemed to capture several different ayahuasca experiences within a single reported phenomenon. This was, of course, a small sampling, and more research will be required. Researchers will need to consider the intersubjectivity of participants to determine variations in the phenomenon, if any.

Reported findings related to the participants included elements that seem to correlate with neuropsychology research, as in altered states of consciousness (ASC) experiences elicited by meditation practices that reflect a non-ordinary sense of space or time. There were reports consistent with dramatic shifts as measured by changes in voice, expression, and movements (Goodman, 1988). These might suggest a form of dissociative trance characterized by involuntary alterations in consciousness (Winkelman, 2000). The neodissociative theory that explains the paradoxical phenomenon occurring within hypnosis of divided consciousness (Hageman et al., 2010) may be applicable; indeed, it seems to suggest that mediums are not in communication with a separate spirit entity, but rather in dialogue with another aspect of themselves within their own psyche/mind. Participants reported a distinct sense of witnessing consciousness within the mediumistic experience with an intelligent Other, which suggests a

form of duality with consciousness that may reflect the neodissociative trance characteristics. Further descriptive phenomenological research with a larger sample may help to shed light on this possible connection.

It is interesting to note that traditional indigenous *ayahuasqueros* (directors of ayahuasca sessions) have indicated the importance of a participant's personality, as if each person receives exactly what he or she merits according to his or her focus. This can be understood as a level of openness or being clear physically, mentally, and spiritually to receive what is offered through imbibing the ayahuasca, as determined by the individual's mindset (Shanon, 2010). Such an understanding of the ayahuasca experience reveals an inter-relational aspect that appears to invigorate and intensify the individual's area of focus, even as a religiously oriented person might be inclined to experience visions of a divine nature or an adventurous person might experience a journey to a surreal or fantastical place. Another might have experiences that relate to daily life, one's profession, or one's relationships. If that is where the primary focus is found. It seems reasonable to assume that ayahuasca may be especially useful in researching consciousness, in addition to medicine and healing. Perhaps it could help in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by alleviating the psychological trauma of unresolved past events. More research will be required to understand better the inter-relational considerations of ayahuasca and personality based on an individual's conscious predisposition. Other factors, such as the effectiveness and intensity of the medicine, may be relevant in terms of its use in a therapeutic setting.

Experiences reported during the plant medicine ceremony seemed to encourage the process of integrated wholeness through a sense of emotional encouragement and safety in self-expression. A feeling of acceptance often appeared as a kind of creative response of openness,

curiosity, and exploration in acts of creativity such as art, music, poetry and dance. These may reflect a release of build-up emotional and mental energy gathered through personal shifts of perception, as a part of the process of psychic integration and mental adherence to the information presented through somatic, visual, auditory, emotional, and mental expressions of insight during the ayahuasca inebriation. An ayahuasca vision, or *miração* (healing vision), experienced by the participants reportedly provided a strong impetus for resolving experiences in terms of a sense of integrated wholeness, with symbolic imagery holding meaning to the individual and subsequently becoming incorporated into creative expression upon reflection in such forms as paintings, poetry, sculpture, music, and lyrics. The creativity coming from these intense transformative experiences may offer another aspect for study, leading to greater understanding of the creative connections and symbolic resolutions of psychological trauma found in artistic expressions, even while delving deeper into the study of ayahuasca as a psychointegrator.

Although it is not unusual to have creative expression arise from some type of inner reflection, the plant medicine seems to push the boundary in the field of conscious activation, in that a feeling is reportedly experienced whereby mysterious forces seemed activated and participatory in the creative act while under the influence of ayahuasca. This experience of the impact of ayahuasca inebriation on the individual has been described by Benny Shanon as follows: “It was not that I was an automaton nor was I enslaved by any external agent, rather the playing was the expression of a wondrous co-operation between me, my very self, and forces I felt were superior to me “(2010, pp. 220-221). This perceived presence of an apparent intelligent other or mysterious outside force is a unique quality of the ayahuasca experience, in that it feels relatable, connected, and intelligent, as if able to bridge consciousness in order to reach a higher

potentiality within its own field of experience – or, in a sense, to transcend to a higher potentiality that may only appear to be separate. To understand this mechanism within the experience of ayahuasca use will require greater inquiry into ayahuasca studies and the parameters of individual consciousness, in order to reveal the potentiality and hidden aptitude in the alterations thereof.

The changes of consciousness acquired through the ritualized practices found in the syncretic religion of Santo Daime appeared to demonstrate a collective awakening of the deep human desire to discover that which lies beyond our normal, everyday lives. The search for spirit connection within the ritualized journeys of drinking Daime appears to be specifically designed to help answer the quest for God or a higher consciousness. Although each experience is unique to the individual, the clear sensitivity to the religious experience of each member expresses authenticity for all, even within the highly regimented ceremonial practices. Science may not be able to verify what is happening within the consciousness of mediumship, but the journeys traveled by the mediums attest to profound changes taking place within the consciousness of individuals who practice this form of altered perception:

A symbolic or ceremonial experience is real and affects one as much as an actual event. The psyche is unaware of the difference between an outer act and an interior one. Our shadow qualities are lived out equally well – from the viewpoint of Self – either way. Culture can only function if we live out the unwanted elements symbolically. All healthy societies have a rich ceremonial life. Less healthy ones rely on unconscious expressions: war, violence, psychosomatic illness, neurotic suffering, and accidents are very low-grade ways of living out the shadow. Ceremony and ritual are a far more intelligent means of accomplishing the same thing. Ceremonies the world over, and from every age, consist mostly of destruction: sacrifice, fasting, and sexual abstinence. Why? These are the ritual languages that safeguard the culture by playing out the shadow in a symbolic way. It is easy to fall into the error of thinking that we protect the culture by obliterating the destructive elements. But we will see that there is no way to energize a culture except by incorporation of them ... true religious ceremony has to contain as much darkness as light. (Johnson, 1993, pp. 52-53)

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The symbolic representation of consciousness as the other world of spirits allows for a dialogue that cannot happen in any other conscious way except, perhaps, through dreaming. The idea of spirit incorporation may frighten many people, as it opens the door to that which lurks within the shadows of the mind. However, spiritistic ceremonies seem to permit a “paying out to the shadow” in a ritualized form of redemption, thereby clearing the consciousness of the recipient who is allowed to make a way through to health that is not entirely understood. Clearly, that the Santo Daime religion is a strange eclectic container, ever-evolving, potentially bringing certain challenges to those who try to navigate it without a guide. Thus it appears that a guide is needed, whether it is a disembodied spirit or a physical human in the form of a medium.

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## APPENDIX A

### Informed Consent Form

(For subjects participating in interviews)

#### INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Purpose:** It is the goal of this research to study the essential psychological structure of the experience of being profoundly changed through the use of ayahuasca in the context of a communal spiritual rite and to understand a limited view of this lived experience. The resulting data from this pilot study will inform the direction of future research studies. This project is being conducted by Jacqueline Senator Orcutt, a graduate student at Saybrook University, in partial fulfillment of the dissertation requirements.

**Principal Researcher:**

Jacqueline Senator Orcutt  
P.O. Box 557  
Tiburon, CA 94920  
jsenatororcutt@gmail.com

**Procedures:**

- [1] This study involves a brief interview conducted by the researcher in person.
- [2] Completion of these procedures will require approximately 30 minutes of participation.
- [3] The interview will be digitally voice-recorded.

**Possible Risks and Safeguards:**

This study is designed to minimize as much as possible any potential physical, psychological, and social risks to you. Although very unlikely, there are always risks in research, which you are entitled to know in advance of giving your consent, as well as what safeguards will be taken by those who conduct the project to minimize the risks. Those risks include personal identification, association with certain practices, and psychological triggering of intense memories or emotions.

I understand that:

- [1] Although my identity shall be known to the Principal Researcher, all identifying information shall be removed at the time of transcription of the digital voice recordings.
- [2] My responses to the questions will be pooled with others, and all identifiers, such as name, address, and related information that might be used to identify me, will be given a number or pseudonym.
- [3] This informed consent form will be kept separate from the data I provide, in a locked file for five years, known only to the Principal Researcher, after which it will be destroyed.
- [4] The data collected in their raw and transcribed forms are to be kept anonymous, stored in a locked container accessible only to the Principal Researcher for five years, after which they shall be destroyed.
- [5] Transcribed, anonymous data in the form of an interview transcript will be kept indefinitely for future research.

- [6] All the information I give will be kept confidential to the extent required by law. The information obtained from me will be examined in terms of group findings and will be reported anonymously.
- [7] There is to be no individual feedback regarding interpretations of my responses. Only general findings will be presented in a Summary Report, to a copy of which I am entitled, and my individual responses are to remain anonymous.
- [8] None of the personal information I provide associated with my identity will be released to any other party without my explicit written permission.
- [9] If quotes of my responses are used in the research report, for the final pilot study report or dissertation, or in any and all future publications of these quotations, my identity shall remain anonymous and at most make use of a fictitious name.
- [10] I have the right to refuse to answer any question asked of me.
- [11] I have the right to refuse at any time to engage in any procedure requested of me.
- [12] I have the right to withdraw from participation at any time for any reason without stating my reason.
- [13] I have the right to participate without prejudice on the part of the Principal Researcher and other persons assisting the Principal Researcher.
- [14] It is possible that the procedures may bring up thoughts of an emotional nature that may upset me. In the unlikely event that I should experience emotional distress from my participation, the Principal Researcher present shall be available to me. She will make every effort to minimize such an occurrence. However, should an upset occur and become sufficiently serious to warrant professional attention, a recommendation to that effect will be made by the Principal Researcher.
- [15] By my consent, I understand I am required to notify the Principal Researcher at the time of any serious emotional upset that may cause me to seek therapy.
- [16] I will receive a copy of this signed consent form for my records.

Regarding any concern or serious upset, you may contact the Principal Researcher at 415.259.9561. You may also contact the Research Supervisor of the project, Dr. Stanley Krippner, at [skrippner@saybrook.edu](mailto:skrippner@saybrook.edu). Should you have any concerns regarding the conduct and procedures of this research project that are not addressed to your satisfaction by the Principal Researcher and her Research Supervisor, you may report and discuss them with Dr. M. Wilson Williams ([SIRB@Saybrook.edu](mailto:SIRB@Saybrook.edu)), the Director of the Saybrook Institutional Review Board.

**Possible Benefits:**

I understand that my participation in this study may have a possible benefits, namely, that of enabling the Principal Researcher and others working in the topic area to contribute to knowledge and theory of the phenomenon under study.

**Summary Report:**

Upon conclusion of this study, a summary report of the general findings will become available. If you would like a copy of the report, please check the box below and provide the address to which you would like it sent (your email or postal address):

I would like to receive a copy of the Summary Report

Postal or Email Address:

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### **Consent of Principal Researcher**

I have explained the above procedures and conditions of this study, provided an opportunity for the research participant to ask questions, and attempted to provide satisfactory answers to all questions that have been asked in the course of this explanation.

---

Principal Researcher Signature

Date

---

Principal Researcher Name

### **Consent of the Participant**

If you have any questions of the Principal Researcher at this point, please take this opportunity to have them answered before granting your consent. If you are ready to provide your consent, read the statement below, then sign and print your name and date on the line below.

I have read the above information, have had an opportunity to ask questions about any and all aspects of this study, and give my voluntary consent to participate.

---

Participant Signature

Date

---

Participant Name

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interview Script**

Please describe in as much detail as possible a specific experience drinking ayahuasca in ceremony which has profoundly changed you. What was it like?

(The researcher asks minimally-directive, open-ended follow-up questions as needed.)

## APPENDIX C

### Confidentiality Agreement for Transcription Services

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regard to any and all audiotapes, videotapes, and other documentation received from Jacqueline Senator Orcutt related to her Phenomenological Study of Ayahuasca Experience. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio or videotaped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audio or videotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Jacqueline Senator Orcutt.
3. To store all study-related audio or videotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audio or videotapes and study-related documents to Jacqueline Senator Orcutt in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals, if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audio or videotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

---

Transcriber's Signature

Date

---

Transcriber's Name

**APPENDIX D**

Template for Data Transformation  
 RES 9500 P1 description of experience  
 Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
<p>I'll describe the first experience, because that was a very profoundly changing experience, where I drank it with a group of people, including X [chuckles], at a place in the Haight with Y. It was sponsored by a university. And I got invited just because I knew X. So, I didn't feel the effects of it. We drank it. It was a Daime. And I was waiting, and I was thinking of going and asking to see if she could give me more, because I didn't feel it.</p>	<p>P1 describes the first time drinking Daime with a group sponsored by a university. P1 is invited due to the fact that she knows a member of the group. P1 does not feel the effects of the medicine she ingests and desires more. P1 thinks about requesting a larger dose of medicine.</p>	<p>P1 reported drinking a preparation taken as a form of what was described as plant medicine as something that would potentially perpetuate a form of psychological or in a way spiritual healing for the first time in a ceremony and felt a sense of questioning the strength and power of the drink to affect some kind of a recognizable physiological change or shift in awareness that follow a feeling of impatience.</p>
<p>Then I just sat with my eyes closed for a minute, and I saw this post get slammed down right before my eyes, even though my eyes were closed.</p>	<p>P1 takes a moment to close her eyes. P1 experiences a surprising dynamic vision with her eyes closed of a post being forcibly placed in front of her.</p>	<p>P1 reported resting in a relaxed state when what felt like an energetically somatic form of awareness descended, grabbing her attention unexpectedly, while simultaneously presenting an intensely colorful and light enhanced visual depiction of an image, as clear as though her eyes were open, of a post being forcibly planted directly in the center place of consciousness as if placed right in front of P1.</p>

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
<p>And then I saw two snakes go up on either side of it, like intertwining. And then their heads moved back like cobra heads, and then this golden ball on top.</p>	<p>P1 experienced a vision of a caduceus :two snakes going up on either side of it, like intertwining. And then their heads moved back like cobra heads, and then this golden ball was on top.</p>	<p>P1 envisioned within the <i>Miração</i>, or healing vision, what was described as a visual depiction that evolved into a more elaborate display revealing two snakes that moved up the post, as if intertwining rhythmically, then stopping at the very top of the post to extend themselves, displaying their full presences, with their hoods out, followed by having a light-filled spherical orb that appeared above the post and twin snakes and glowed brightly, completely engrossing the consciousness.</p>
<p>Oh, I need to preface this by saying that it was Curá, and when we drank the tea, they told us to think about what we wanted to have healed. And so, when I drank it, I wasn't really sick of anything, but I was feeling alienated from people. So I thought about [how] I would like to heal feeling alienated from people.</p>	<p>At this special ceremony for healing, P1 was instructed in the Curá to think about what she wanted to heal. P1 was physically healthy and decided to heal her inability to feel connection to others.</p>	<p>P1 reported being asked to focus on an area to receive healing and decided to heal what was described as the inability to feel connection or closeness and affection that leads to intimacy and deeper relationships with others.</p>
<p>And so back to the vision; it was this pole with the snakes on either side. And then this ball in the middle said, "Get closer to God and you'll be closer to other people." And it was just this message that I really didn't expect, and I didn't have it already in my</p>	<p>P1 describes her vision of a pole with snakes on either side. P1 describes a ball in the middle that said, "Get closer to God and you'll be closer to other people." P1 experienced a feeling of being stunned by the insight of the message, as she</p>	<p>P1 reported an expanded and elevated state of awareness that seem to allowed a <i>Miração</i> healing vision that was somatically visually and mentally received in the form of imagistic symbolism</p>

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
<p>mind. It was not something that I felt like I thought up and then showed myself. I felt like it had externally been shown me from some alternate intelligence.</p>	<p>experienced a feeling that the message came to her from outside of her own consciousness. P1 speculated about being in communication with some form of higher intelligence.</p>	<p>with a somatic sense of other that included an auditory message that acted like a direct answer to the healing request, as if the question was answered by a powerful presence that appeared out of the quiet of the mind into an elaborate display of unexpected wisdom, like saying, Find what is sacred and it will bring a feeling of connectedness to everyone. P1 reported being stunned by the insight of the message, as the experience gave her a feeling that the message came from somewhere beyond P1's own comprehension, a thought P1 believed she could never have come up with by herself and seemed so insightfully directed to the point of the healing issue that P1 understood it as a force from outside of the bounded consciousness of personal perspective and with a feeling of being in communication with something that was viewed as other and wiser than P1's own mind, something that was of higher intelligence that could help if asked.</p>

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
<p>It just convinced me that there was some other doorway to some other place, where I could get more information or some intelligence smarter than me that had a way of showing me or talking to me that I didn't really experience before.</p>	<p>P1 experienced a shift in her perception of her awareness that opened her up to more information and gave her the feeling that she had a new conscious connection with a higher intelligence. P1 experienced the message given to her as having an enlightening piece of wisdom that felt within her as a recognition of truthful knowledge being bestowed unto her in order to heal through the instructions in how to move into healing by specifically identifying the issue beyond her feelings of separation and alienation. P1 felt the dialogue was communicating with something other than her mind and was unlike anything she'd ever experienced.</p>	<p>P1 reported a profound change in perceptual awareness that gave her the feeling that this was a new conscious connection with what was described as a supremely higher source of inner knowing that had an elevated awareness and wisdom. P1 reported a candid knowledge from what felt like an outside source that represented a foreign concept with a completely unknown answer to the heart of the issues. P1 was struck by having the message given in a way that could be understood instantly as if a divine Other could see into the depths and relieve suffering by giving the most succinct and beautifully faceted gift of knowledge that also bestowed a pathway to attain the goal, a message perfectly crafted to the inquiry.</p>
<p>I've taken drugs that caused hallucinations, but they weren't like you have a question and then you get an answer to that question in such a direct way.</p>	<p>P1 had experienced drug induced visions before that were without a felt sense of connection to a higher source. P1 described her experience as being connected to a higher intelligence through making inquiries that were followed by direct answers.</p>	<p>During the <i>miração</i> healing vision, P1 noticed the experience of the plant medicine was different from what was experienced with other psychedelic drugs, because, unlike a typical random visual spectacle, P1 experienced a</p>

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
		<p>directly scripted response, as if it were a purposeful, detailed reply in dialogue with an enlightened intelligent Other that instructed P1 by answering the query with what was reported as a dialogue with a wiser intelligence, a distinctively separate Other from P's normal consciousness that directly responded with an unimaginable answer to the request for healing the feelings of alienation. P1 reported a direct connection to an intelligent transcendent Other through visual, somatic, and emotional sensations in the mind that had reportedly never happened before, convincing her that the plant medicine was like a form of intelligence that had entered into communication with her through the act of imbibing it.</p>
<p>It changed me, because I started going to work and it changed my whole life that way. That event was important because of that. (Background note: P1 is referencing her lifestyle and career choice as an ayahuasca researcher, author, artist, and active practitioner of an ayahuasca religion).</p>	<p>P1 allowed the experience to act as a catalyst in her life creating a new social circle, career interest, worldview, and strong dedication to continue to participate in ceremonies.</p>	<p>P1 reported a strong desire to follow the path that would continue to connect to what was understood as a Source of healing through a sense of inspiration and wisdom. She felt that it seemed to be found within the plant medicine ceremony.</p>

P1 Meaning units	P1 Transformed meaning units	P1 Further transformations
		The experience was reported as to have profoundly changed P1, who then became dedicated to working with the plant medicine, which acted as a catalyst, creating the foundation for new social circles, career interests, life practice, worldview, and strong dedication to continued study of the plant medicine.

## APPENDIX E

### Template for Data Transformation RES 9500 P2 description of experience Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>Well, the experience that I'm thinking of was basically I was still in my whites, and I had kind of come into the Daime, and I'd been coming more, and feeling really called to it. And, so there was this element of my own intention being there, just really adhering to the structure - me wanting to show up, right? So that was something I was bringing to the experience, that I wanted to show up. I wanted to be of service. I wanted to do my best in that container and become a part of it, and bring all of the gifts, and the light that is in my being, this channel could bring. And I feel like that's what I brought to this work, and that's what I showed up with. That set the stage for the experience that I had.</p>	<p>P2 felt a strong desire to show up with integrity in honoring her mission of service by intending to support the ceremonial structure by adhering to the highest standards in her participation within the ceremony and her role in it as a conduit of light and service. P2 intended to be of service within the ceremony by acting as a channel for the energetic force within the practice by invoke the awareness of being the container for this force as well as anchoring the vibration of energy that filled the space. P2 described this force as a representation of energetic gifts and light that is her pure essence, felt and experienced within the emotional and mental fields of awareness. P2 experienced a sense of inner power in her intentions for the ceremony as a foundation and permission to be open.</p>	<p>P2 reported still being in the early stages of initiation and having a passion to align with the doctrine with what felt like a strong desire to show up with integrity in a way honoring the mission of service by intending to support the ceremonial structure by following all the rules and standards in participation within the ceremony and the role in it as a conduit of graceful service as described as an open channel of presences and awareness. P2 reportedly intended to be of service within the ceremony by acting as a pathway for the dynamically powerful surge of physical, mental and psychical vitality and strength building within the practice by invoke the awareness of being the container for this force as well as anchoring the vibration of energy that filled the physical and rite space of the ceremony. P2 reported this force as a</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		<p>representation of energetic gifts that felt like empowerment, confidence and grace that was defined as a sense of pure essence of soul presence, felt and experienced within the emotional and mental fields of awareness. P2 reported a sense of centered awareness within a feeling of inner power in the intentions for the ceremony as a foundation and permission to be open.</p>
<p>And, so I had this feeling that there wasn't going to be any woman to push - to sit at the table and to pull the hymns - and that was a concentration of work. And I knew the hymns okay, but I didn't know them that well. And I had been going enough that they were in me enough, I'd heard them enough times that on a subconscious level, I felt like I knew them well enough. And I just had this feeling that it was going to happen. And, so I get there, and I sit back. I see there's no one there and I'm sitting back, and I didn't sit at the table. And finally, right before the work starts, W calls me up and he goes, "Q, you need to sit here because no one showed up to sit in the pushadora's spot." And they</p>	<p>P2 realized that she would be called into a leadership position by being asked to fill the role of the female lead singer when no one else was there to do it. P2 felt confident in her ability even though she had never done it before. Additionally, P2 felt others knew her voice was strong.</p>	<p>P2 reported having a distinct feeling of precognition to be asked to lead and felt both sense of excitement at the opportunity and feelings of awe at being summoned by the building energy of the ceremony to come and lead as the central force of the rite as a channel and singing the <i>hinarios</i>, sacred text hymns believed to be authored in the astral world. P2 reported feeling a calling to a specific service within the ritual, one of honor held by the entire group and as understood as responsibility and recognized both the potential limitation in</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>knew I had a voice [chuckles].</p>		<p>relationship to the hinarios as well as its power as a living force already awakened and well-practiced that linked the hinarios to guide the singing of them well. P2 reportedly arrived and found that the thoughts and feelings had before coming had accurately described what was about to take place that helped P2 to further surrender to the invitation to take the lead as Pushadora. P2 reported confidence and saw it reflected back by the expectations and recognition by other members who seem to know it too.</p>
<p>So, I just remember in that moment it was like-- because I knew it was coming, I could feel it, and I was kind of scared. There was just a little bit of fear of-- but I think it was this fear actually of just like, "Oh, my God, the beauty of opening to such beauty that I knew was coming." My heart was beating. I just relaxed with it, and just sat there and closed my eyes.</p>	<p>P2 felt a surge of excitement and slight anxiety just before being asked to sit at the table. P2 experienced an increased awareness of her potential to express beauty. P2 decided to center herself and focus inwardly with her eyes closed to calm herself.</p>	<p>P2 reported a feeling of anticipatory excitement and slight anxiety of being aware of what felt like the pending shift in opening consciousness as if, a form of spiritual action accompanied with performing the lead role as orator and feeling of faith as if, to believe and be centered in personal confidence and a sense of sacred trust in way was understood as the process of psychically stepping into a</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		powerful alignment with what felt like a divine mantle of strength, wisdom and grace that then gave way to feelings surrender in joyous hopes and aspirations. P2 reported an increased awareness to express beauty and focused on a sense of grounding and anchoring the intense energy into a rooted place within as preparation to serve as an instrument as an open recipient of increased energy.
<p>In that moment, when I first sat down in that chair, I completely surrendered. I completely surrendered myself, my being, to God, and I let go of everything to the most I think I've ever let go in that moment. It was this complete opening like, "Thy will be done. Just do what needs to be done through me. I am yours." And this prayer to let go of my mind, to let go of the thinking part, the doing part, and to just be, and to allow myself to be sung, to be lived, to just be a conduit.</p>	<p>P2 experienced a profound shift the moment she sat in the pushedora's seat of being completely open to the moment and releasing everything in favor of her intention to be conduit of the Divine within herself. P2 stated her intention with prayer to let go of her rational mind in favor of spontaneous action in singing naturally.</p>	<p>P2 reported having felt a sense of divine will arriving in the designated position of authority 'the chair' at central table in the middle of the rite space at the main altar to lead the ceremony finding in it a sense of celestial communion with the spiritual aspects of souls both as a somatic sensation of increased energy in the physical body and that felt in the space around the corporeal as a release from the bounded mental attitude with the willingness to serve at will in a feeling of surrender. P2 reported a shift releasing the</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		<p>conscious limits in awareness that allowed a sense of the divine alignment in fulfilling the role of <i>Pushadora</i> (the person energetically responsible to push the vibratory force behind the singing by actively lifting the vibration of the room by what felt like tending focused mental attention on the mystical nonphysical domain held within the rite of consciousness of set parameters through the felt sense of the current changes in nuances within the group maintaining a continual connection to somatic, psychological and physical fields revealed in the rite space and its members) being in mediumship, as an instrument of communication between the living bounded soul and what appears as the astral field of disembodied souls, as the intermediary for the ceremony. P2 reported a shift that felt like complete immersion into a vibrant force that flowed out unimpeded. P2 reported entering into mediumship where the voice became that</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		<p>tool to project the energy of the full force of the hinaris that gave the sense of being the instrument to lift the vibration higher as a radiant vehicle of the sounds.</p>
<p>So, I think that was my portion in it, which is also the piece of me that is God inside of me making that prayer. So, the work started. Part of that was letting go of the fear, right? I'm not going to let these things that normally get in the way-- because I think we're all channeled; we all have this ability to channel. But the things, I see them get in the way of my channeling, of such purity and divinity, and the fear, the judgment of I'm not doing it right, or holding back because somebody's going to be upset with this. All of that, just clear that, don't let any of that come in.</p>	<p>P2 recognized her own connection to divinity within the action of her prayer to be of service through her singing. P2 experienced a release from the mental fears that normally distract her from feeling confident and by choosing not to focus on others.</p>	<p>P2 reported feeling confident and connected to an inner feeling of Divinity that informed an intimate acceptance of the self that allowed expansion into a sense of freedom in the confidence to carrying out of P2 own expression, fully competent and completely in alignment with P2 own sense of divinity and feeling independent from outside influences and associated judgements of the bounded person and relations to that role gaining feelings of deeply rooted in love and acceptance. P2 reported this as a voluntary giving over to this force while still holding a sense of reverence and respect as it felt like tending this connection as a form of service through actively surrendering to the process to the perceived will of the Divine Other.</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>And, so I just opened, and it was my voice, it was like, "This is my voice?" This is my voice singing. And the words, the Portuguese, everything, it was just coming through me. I was being sung. It was the experience of being sung - letting go, not in the mind, not in me doing it, not me making it happen and thinking about it, but just being sung, and I continued opening.</p>	<p>P2 experienced a pure state of being a living instrument creating music by allowing herself not to judge herself or making any additional effort to have the experience.</p>	<p>P2 reported an alternative awareness that felt like being a living instrument creating music with the voice as if, a conduit of energy that felt movement somatically through the body with a mental state of alertness witnessing as a centralized focal point of the nonphysical that came pouring out exquisitely formed and perfectly executed as if performed in the corporal by this mystical energetic force as if, having a sense of connection to a powerful current of what felt like kinetic energy that was somatically felt like pressure that continued to expand.</p>
<p>And, normally, the first drink, the force comes kind of softly and not super strong, but I remember like five or six hymns in, the power and the strength of the force, it was so strong. It was so strong. And it wasn't the medicine; it was the state that I allowed.</p>	<p>P2 experienced an increased awareness within the sensations she normally felt and attributed the increased awareness in her mental and sensory state to her conscious state of flow.</p>	<p>P2 reported consciously permitting the expansion of the powerful force that was building within as a somatic expression to grow unimpeded feeling it grow more powerful as by letting go into the experience. P2 reported the intense receptivity to the nonphysical energetic field sensed from within the corporal as a focal point of entry that</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		somatically felt as kinetic movement like a pressure building and expansion that encourage the platform for the plant through a sense of actively surrendering to the somatic expression with a heightened visual perception and a feeling of increased mental awareness.
<p>And, so as soon as it came in to that strength, that my voice, these high notes, it was like, I just let go. Because sometimes in my voice, my mind gets in the way on higher notes, it's like I want to--I'm worried I'm not going to hit it or I'm trying too hard. It was just coming. It was like there was nothing even-- it was just coming through. It was no effort, no pushing, just complete relaxation, and it was so powerful too. It wasn't like I was trying to push the voice above everything. It was just there, like this crystal light illuminating everything.</p>	<p>P2 experienced within this state of flow the ability to achieve a new level of performance skill with ease and delight. P2 reflected on her state of consciousness as being full of clarity that informed and expanded her experience.</p>	<p>P2 reported an alternative state of consciousness through mediumship that included a somatic expression of mastery that transported the mind from feeling as if, making an effort to an experience of having the ability to what felt like to achieve a new level of performance skill with ease as being full of clarity that informed the performance and expanded the knowledge of the act. P2 reported feeling fully released from the state of being the doer as the active director of performance as if, free from actively doing to a sense of having it done through oneself as if, moved by a fluid somatic force that did not require any apparent participation</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		mentally to facilitate beyond what was described as a state of open receptive mental concentration, as if surrendering to an apparent powerful current of what felt like kinetic energy that was somatically felt like a continuum of momentum and vigor expressed as easeful mastery and found a sense of great freedom and joy in the expression filled with profound clarity and appreciation for everything in this alignment as easily sustained energy that felt effortless and nourishing in the sense of feeling great love and compassionate wisdom.
<p>I was like, "Well, this is so much fun [chuckles]." I was having such a good time because it was like dancing with that power, and not in this way of like, "Oh, I want more." It was just like, "This is what I was born to do." The first [?] song, we sang [?], and by the end of that, I was just like, "Oh, my God [chuckles]. Oh, my God."</p>	<p>P2 experienced a state of harmony with a sense of deep joy and purpose being a free expression of her creative self. The experienced left P2 feeling awe-struck.</p>	<p>P2 reported an alternative state of consciousness filled with harmony and a sense of deep joy and purpose, in a sense of being a free expression of the creative self an expression that seemed filled with animated talent as a dynamic ability to bring forth beauty as if, awe-struck by the natural aptitude and to find such a powerful connection to what felt like an</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		<p>endowment of competence as performing with expertise. P2 reported feeling a destined alignment having been delivered to the perfect place connected with purpose and natural gifts, as if, a sense of perfectly designed divine expression of a totality made from all the elements of people, places and appearances including an expansive sense of unifying connectedness within the cosmos felt through a somatic mental awareness.</p>
<p>I remember the lights go down for the concentration. As soon as it went down, the sounds, the cars on the freeway, it was like each car that went by, like three or four times, just leveled. I went into this really high astral plane. I've never been that high before, and I was just in this space of my mind. It was an expression of my mind, and all my guides came. And they came, and I just had the most profound experience with my guides, and I saw myself with them, and we were dancing and becoming one, and it was just this plain-- and then I saw this thing appear; it was like the gates of Hell in the plain. And it was coming</p>	<p>P2 recalled a break in the singing to focused silent meditation within the ceremony. The suddenly silence in the room brought P2's awareness to the outside noise jarred her. P2 then reported she experienced an altered state of consciousness where she visited her spirit guardians. P2 felt a deep connection with the beings she encountered in this alternative conscious state of awareness. P2 then experienced an object within her field of awareness that symbolized negative forces that were pulling on her awareness until she made a statement of denial that landed her in a conscious state of dullness. P2</p>	<p>P2 reported an elevated meditative state of awareness that permitted speaking with what was understood as energetic others that somatically felt like separate entities and mentally identified as familiar guides that informed about potential changes to behavior and mental states of awareness. <i>Miração</i> P2 reported having an experience of mentally witnessing the corporal body receive labored attention that also had an accompanied somatic sensation within the physical body as what</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>closer, and I was looking at it, and it wanted to take me in, and I said, "No." And I went into boredom. I met my boredom too in that space, and all the guides, they were just like, "Do, do, do." It got really slow, and it was like, "Oh, this is this thing. This is what--" And, so I went into this really powerful healing too in this whole different way that I had. It was in this mental expression, so it was - that part was really, really powerful. And they came, and they healed me, and I could feel them pulling things out of my throat chakra, and all over me - pulling things out of my face, just opening everything in my body for my voice.</p>	<p>experienced intensely insightful dialogue with different aspects of conscious awareness that revealed ways to alter her behavior to heal. During this exchange P2 for had a visionary and somatic experience of the healing forces removing toxins from her throat and face allowing her to fully access her potential.</p>	<p>was described as a healing that was perceived to be performed on the physical body by etheric others while in what was described as a state of altered consciousness and felt a physical sensation at witnessing as if, the healing forces were removing toxins from the throat, face and body that were understood as to allow fully access to potential by removing blockages that had a sense of limitations both adopted from past experience as well as that remnant residue absorbed from negative projections of self and others within those past experiences as if, to allow potential freed energy expression to flow unobstructed. P2 reported entering into communication with these inner forces that felt like a stream of conscious emotional states delivered through an actively moving visual display of mental imagery and somatic emotional presence of the material visited that took expressions of different visceral places of collected feelings</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		and mental determinations, as if a survey of the inner field that felt as though physically visited as separate distinctive areas during the healing passage and found a somatic and mental comprehension of them passing through them.
Then, when the concentration ended, I had gotten leveled up even further, because I had given myself this space. Sometimes when we're singing it's like we're so-- it's hard to have enough space to take a really powerful healing. I'd given myself the space to really receive in that concentration period,	P2 expressed the time spent in concentration allowed her to deeply tap into a mindfulness state of permission to heal that gave her a greater sense of being lifted up emotionally. P2 acknowledged not always allowing the mental space to heal due to being too focused on performance when singing.	P2 reported an intense healing during the time in meditation and understood that the time was given to process thoughts and reflect on the knowledge received in meditation that had felt as if, allowed the healing that often eluded because of the mental activity required while singing. P2 reported a sense of released old judgments and concerns that affirmed a new wholeness as though healed in an expression of upliftment, like an empowered opening in a what felt like a new spacious acceptance.
and I met my soul mate too. His name is Z in the astral, and he came. It was just this incredible timeless experience.	P2 recalled experiencing her soul mate within her height state of meditation that reflected a sensation of the eternal.	P2 reported a state of consciousness communication with an expression of what P2 describes as an eternal Other, a spiritual companion and understood this exchange as a level of

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		support and beauty from an elevated spiritual potential expressed within the mind that felt a warm loving sensation that uplifted the emotional state with feelings of significant connection as if, presented a foundational sense of healing acceptance of self and empowered wholeness that gave a deep sense of the eternal.
<p>And then the concentration hymns came. My voice was just even more open, even more perfect. It was just perfect. And I didn't have to try, I just let it come. I just let the Daime teach me. And I paid attention, I watched, I listened, so that I could retain, but not in a grasping way. It was like the feeling of what was happening versus trying to mentalize it, trying to, like, "Oh, this is this thing, and the sound, and the shape." That's sometimes how I want to analyze things, with my mind, and get very nitty-gritty detail. But it was more just like, "Feel this. Feel the hymns. Know the hymns, where they come from, and being with them in the place that they're from and pulling that down. And as you pull that down, open yourself to the unique beauty that you are."</p>	<p>P2 experienced a witnessing consciousness within her awareness that allow her to have freedom from thinking or initiating action. This awareness of the Daime led P2 through a pathway within the spirit of hinários leaving P2 with a feeling of deep connection and purpose as she sang effortlessly.</p>	<p>P2 reported feeling a freedom from thinking or initiating action instead, felt as though a conscious conduit of the hinários. P2 reported a sense of mastery while singing the hinarios as though envisioning they're were being performed through P2 to learn, as if, in essence a direct lesson from this elevated psychic field expressed as an otherworldly dimension from where the hinarios are believed to originate and that this force felt like an energy beam that felt like it came down from the heavenly spheres and out into the <i>salão</i> (the container for the ceremony as the rite space that includes the</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		<p>physical chairs, tables, altar space, the members and the entire equal counterpart in the astral realm of the disembodied spirits) of the rite as if, through the body in spiritual participation through of surrendering as thought to being led by the Daimon through a pathway of the spirit of the hieron that are believed to be a living vibrational link with the spiritual realm from where they are held, honored, studied and received from the astral and considered to be direct transmissions from the astral as living teachings that P2 felt connected as a feeling of anchoring the spiritual energy that was propelling the unfolding spiritual canon as if, as a living doctrine into the rite and felt as an embodied the energy that was then expressed through the singing. P2 reported feeling a deep connection and purpose of being consciously guided as if, from a soul level while witnessing a flawlessness in physical execution and somatic alignment in</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		the physical act of singing as both radiant and special.
<p>That rest of the work was just really being in that space, but me seeing the unique being that I am and what I was born to bring into that space or wherever I go, my potential to bring beauty and light in a way, and to smile, and to be the light, and to laugh, and to break up the rigidity, to break up the seriousness. This light, this lightness, this pure like crystal beauty that just dissolves all that. And the voice is one expression of that, and I think that's what I discovered. My voice can be one expression of that, but it's also in everything. Everything can be an expression of that same thing that I'm learning through the voice.</p>	<p>P2 discovered that her experience of singing in such an exquisite and divinely guided way gave her the true sense of being a vital and bright presence in the world in everything P2 does not only when singing and what a valuable gift that is to others. P2 experienced herself as a divine spark of conscious light that has the potential to lift others through her conscious presence in the world. P2 experienced a profound change with the rite that was expressed as a bright light of inner awareness that open her mind and heart to accept transformations of mental obstructions and heavy feelings into a sense strength and emotional vitality.</p>	<p>P2 reported singing as being divinely guided and gave the true sense of being a vital presence in the world, not only when singing as a divine spark of conscious light that has the potential to lift others through its conscious presence in the world. P2 reported a profound change within the rite that was expressed as a bright light of inner awareness that open the mind and heart to accept transformations of mental obstructions and heavy feelings into a sense of confidence and emotional vitality grounded in the feelings of unity and uplifted encouragement for everyone while envisioning a catalyst of energy and celebrating this special unique presence in an offering to others with the vision that this expression was as if, a special gift like a heavenly vocation as a gifted unique presence in the world.</p>
<p>Ever since that day, I kept-- I feel my Portuguese changed forever, and my</p>	<p>P2 felt the experience changed her permanently by improving her skills set and</p>	<p>P2 reported a permanent change in the ability to speak and</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>understanding, my ability to feel what I was singing, and to also let go, and to let myself be a conduit, to let myself be a channel. And I've never had, since that day, any experience quite like that with the Daime.</p>	<p>expanded her understanding of the language. P2 experienced a state of an alternative consciousness that she described in her awareness as being a medium or instrument for the medicine.</p>	<p>understand Portuguese that was attributed to the initiation that was thought to have been received during the mediumship through the spiritual dimension of the ritual. P2 reported being completely different having undergone the journey as it felt like an imprinting of the hinarios and also what felt like a trained way to access the same current of energy at that level continually to grow and expand as a living part of the ritual. P2 reported a permanent shift in the ability to connect with the hinários in a deeply intimate way that gave a feeling of having an enlightened understanding, a state of an alternative consciousness that was described in awareness as being an intermediary channel for the spirit of the plant medicine.</p>
<p>And I think part of it was that I had to step up, and I think that was a big part of it for me was realizing that part of what allows us to open in these profound ways is having the opportunity to have to, to have the pressure. There's no choice. If you</p>	<p>P2 attributes a large portion of her experience to her willingness to participate, engagement in the process and following the request to manifest her highest potential and perform her best.</p>	<p>P2 reported feeling pulled by a sense of responsibility and a desire to service as no other could do what P2 had been called to do that evening as if, through a preordained agreement with such a</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>don't do it, nobody's going to. And so, so the opportunity, this invitation like, "This is your chance to do it." To offer yourselves. And to just give it all you got, to be the best of yourself right now.</p>		<p>gift of mediumship comes the opportunity for great service that feels actuated by the sense of a willingness to serve and as P2 was capable of doing this task even though unproven and a novice, filled with trust, faith and the connection felt before the ceremony help to assure the decision to step forward and fulfill the service without holding back, encouraged to explore the unexpected potential. P2 reported as sense of having an opportunity to perform a task that required an alignment with the other members and confirmation by a vital sense of divine order that informed everyone through the presence of a collective mental agreement in a felt sense of energetic balance and preparedness. P2 reported a sense of courage and expectancy that transformed into lived acceptance of responsibility with feelings of assured confidence.</p>
<p>And I feel for me, that's how I thrive. And that's part of what that experience taught</p>	<p>P2 discovered that her emotional self is best served when she feels that she is</p>	<p>P2 identified a sense of self that was felt to have led to a sense of</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
<p>me is the way I thrive is by really feeling that I have a role to fill, a service that isn't a burden, but is a choice. That's the journey that's unfolding now, and to learn to create that for myself, to not wait for somebody to put it out there, but that I actually can create for that myself.</p>	<p>being in service as an offering from her to the community. P2 found her inner power to create her own opportunities of service without waiting to be invited by others.</p>	<p>emotional freedom that inspired a sense of empowerment that help to ground a sense of purpose as capable to actively give something that is valued and useful.</p>
<p>I may not sit at the table and be the Pushadora, but it's not about where I end up. I know I can be that if I want to, and that there's something really special that I bring with my being no matter where I am - and especially in these works - and to keep remembering that and to hold onto that experience as a guiding star so that in the times when I forget, it's there.</p>	<p>P2 realized that the role she plays within the collective does not determine or limit the gift of who she is and her ability to offer her highest self is possible at all times, especially within ceremony.</p>	<p>P2 reported a profound change in the awareness of self-identity that shifted self-values, feelings of competence, ability and actualize potential with a sense of liberty to envision a continual link with what was understood as divinity that felt like a form of reliable guidance. P2 experienced self-discovery that gave the opportunity to be in the leadership role within the collective that helped connect a feeling of inner worth. P2 experienced the gift of the ability to reach within to a sense of honoring and respecting all the unique abilities as a way to offer the very best of oneself through the experience of witnessing radiant self-expression. P2 reported a profound change in awareness</p>

P2 Meaning units	P2 Transformed meaning units	P2 Further transformations
		that P2 plans to use as an anchoring point in the future to keep this connected feeling to the highest potential focused in the forefront of consciousness.

**APPENDIX F**

Template for Data Transformation  
 RES 9500 P3 description of experience  
 Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>Wow, that's ... it is pretty profound, the question. The first thing that came to mind was, it's going to sound religious, but I was having a lot of issues with mediumship and contact with the spirit world since I was a child, but I didn't know how to refer to or put a name the it.</p>	<p>P3 remembered an alternative state of consciousness since she was a child that made her aware of what she described as an additional world filled with etheric energy beings. P3 did not know how to identify these experiences.</p>	<p>P3 reported having remembered an alternative state of consciousness as a state of noncorporeal determination as if, having a self-awareness that felt as a spiritual being capable of travelling to what seemed like the astral world that seemed to bridged contact with multiple others described as energetic beings during childhood and with a willingness to go deeper as it felt natural even though P3 didn't have any names or definitions of what P3 was doing she felt comfortable with it happening since P3 was a child that made aware of what was described as an additional world filled with etheric energy beings that then later came to understand that the experiences were a kind of mediumship. P3 reported feeling a sense of a burden with this connection as it was outside secular life.</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>So, the Daima was a great school to teach me how to navigate the spirit world and I would go in these altered states and completely be somewhat transported to past life memories, ancestral realms, and with all that I would access things of my lineage.</p>	<p>P3 learned through the use of the medicine how to use her natural ability to explore alternative states of consciousness that took her to deeper levels of her familial roots within her psyche.</p>	<p>P3 reported experiencing an alternate state of consciousness where it felt like being in a place of learning in a kind of presence of an intelligence master that appeared to have an ability to foresee into all facets of the individuals' consciousness in a sense of multidimensional time as a sense of the past that included what was understood as preincarnations of the individuals' former lives and life connections that included all relatives living and deceased, a sense of present time as a reference point of orientation of the individual and future as a form of directional actions to take and then appears to effectively organize a lesson plan as if, being given guidance in the form of insights into the deeper aspects of the individual seeming to adjust perspectives, releasing emotional attachments and a sense of limitation, in a sense processing psychological constraints of identity</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>and associations of past experiences as what is described as healing school of knowledge through what was assumed to be the entheogenic plant medicine as the expression within the experience seemed to follow a prescribe logic that appeared visually, somatically, mentally with an emotionality that accompanied a specific somatic orientation that had a sense of separateness within spatial dimensions as if travelling to what was described as an alternative astral place. P3 described that the plant medicine felt as though it had become the teacher that deepened the fluid connection to what felt was the spiritual realm connected to an etheric plane where P3 felt was able to pull from a vast data base of ancestral knowledge. P3 reported an initiation into a school of learning in the Santo Daime tradition and through the rite use of the plant medicine was described as what gave support and a type of knowledge based on</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>what felt like how to use the natural ability of mediumship to explore alternative states of consciousness that went as if, to deeper levels of familial and inherited cultural roots within the psyche that felt like a deeply spiritual connection that felt as if, presented feelings of navigating past lives and ancestral lineage through a somatic emotional and mental expression of understanding what felt like a collection of stories, notions, prejudices, injustices, associations with identity, inherited talent with a sense of pride and in a sense releasing all that appeared to weigh down the potential for growth and personal expression as if, unburdening as to gain a sense of freedom, empowerment and supportive knowledge to in a sense act from a place of personal confidence and self-empowered awareness through honoring and acknowledging the perceived teachings reportedly given</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>My mother's side primarily, and the suffering of the women on my mother's side. I remember the first time Daime I cried so much, nonstop. I've never cried like that in my life. My culture, Latino culture, we're taught to be strong. To somewhat, like, hold back those type of feelings, and it was at Daime, it completely opened my heart, and it was like the floodgates just opened, and I cried and was remembering other lifetimes, you know?</p>	<p>P3 experienced a very strong recall of maternal connections and deeply rooted wounds of inherited cultural pain from the women she connected too. P3 experienced herself as an open conduit of emotion and found the freedom to fully release all those emotions through her tears. P3 reported she had never been allowed to cry and felt a shift in adhering to cultural norms. P3 experienced the outpouring of her tears as a release of karmic build up as pictured through her mind.</p>	<p>through the imbibed plant medicine.</p> <p>P3 reported feeling capable to openly express the emotions as in physical tears filled with a sense of held back reactions that weren't allowed to be shed or shown seemed to opened feelings of repression, a sense of being not allowed that then lifting up freely to be accepted as if, present in a heart centered way with permission, a sense of compassionate acceptance to experience feelings, with a sense deeply rooted recall of maternal connections, a sense of the emotional depth of feelings carried consciously by females with the heightened awareness of wounds and that seems to be understood as inherited cultural pain from the women connected too P3 that felt as an open conduit of emotion with a sense of the freedom of expression to fully release all those emotions through tears. P3 reported a shift in awareness that allowed the freedom to express openly without shame</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		to cry because it was authentic as the outpouring of tears was determined through the visual storyline and emotional mental dialogue that accompanied these linear historic somatic expressions was the formation of an understanding that a lifetime of karmic build up released as if watching what was releasing as it was pictured through the mind through a visually somatic emotional and mental expression of what appeared as a collection of stories, notions, prejudices, injustices, associations that seemed to be regarded as psychologically limiting as if, to clear away constraints to self-expression of emotional freedom.
It was on the big island. I was laying down in the healing room, and I was kind of trying to navigate mediumship and the spirit world and spirit stuff come to me, and I remember being by myself and trying to trance and trying to visualize, kind of more Oriental, Eastern ... Krishna. Lord Krishna in my mind, to get me through the passage	P3 experienced a challenging force within her consciousness during the ceremony while she lay in the healing room. P3 worked to balance her mental state within the challenging realm of energetic beings she found within her consciousness by focusing on eastern philosophical remedies of invoking different deities to create a feeling of safety and inner peace within her mind.	P3 reported working with emotional and mental energies in association with what was described as different noncorporeal others that overwhelmed with an intense presence that needed a response to claim space among the entities P3 asked for protection from the

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>of the spirits that I was dealing with.</p>		<p>spiritual orientation of Krishna to ask for as if, the esoteric meditation and chanting practices P3 was apparently using as a means to reach a higher level of consciousness might somehow help to call out for a form of spiritual refuse through the divine presence within those specific practices as represented as the Lord Krishna as a kind of relief and peace. P3 reported feeling a challenging force within consciousness during the ceremony and wanted to create a feeling of control over the immediate emotional state with a sense of safety and inner peace as though to gain a sense of freedom from what appeared to be outside influences that felt like mental agitations and emotional unrest within the mind.</p>
<p>One sister sat down by my side. She's been Fardada a lot longer than I have, and I used to call her like my mother in the church, because she would care for me and support me. She sat next to me, she held my hand, and she prayed to Jesus.</p>	<p>A close personal friend who P3 trusted and felt a maternal bond with came and sat with P3 and held her hand and told her to pray to Jesus for help.</p>	<p>A close maternal friend appeared during the reported distress and seemed to know that Jesus would serve better to clear away the bad spirits P3 reported encountering as if, connecting to what was perceived as the energy</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>of Jesus Christ by calling the name Jesus would somehow be a stronger kind of spiritual anchor as to bring a feeling of peaceful protection and P3 reported listening closely and then chose to let the feeling of trust guide the passage through the challenged moment followed the kindred spirit of a friend's advice like being soothed by a loving mother.</p>
<p>When she did that, at first my tongue would not allow me to say, "Jesus." It would just stop firing. It was like against anything I wanted to do, to say those words. But at the same time, seeing that I was struggling, and I was just kind of wanting to advance and further in my development with mediumship, I opened myself, and so I started repeating, "Jesus. Lord Jesus."</p>	<p>P3 had a strong somatic experience of total resistance in response to saying the name "Jesus". P3 saw the resistance as a hindrance to her growth in the conscious expansion of her awareness and ability to perform mediumship and chose to verbalize the words "Jesus, Lord Jesus".</p>	<p>At first P3 only felt resistance to Jesus as there felt to be too much in the way to relate, a sense of defiance towards an adverse feeling of programming from childhood and society that seemed to be avoided and ignored then shifted to a place of releasing what felt like an aversion as an attachment to the past, mental and emotional feelings of censure and rebellion griped progress until actively asserting to call Jesus with a conscious awareness to surrender. P3 reported a strong somatic response of total opposition to participate in calling "Jesus" a sense of</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>defiance and refusal to accept that progressed into a understanding a sensed as a hindrance to maturing awareness and ability to perform mediumship, as a sense of being in the full acceptance of what felt like a spiritual truth as felt to be focused on love, followed by a chosen conscious shift that brought acceptance and released a feeling of conflict by verbalized the words “Jesus, Lord Jesus”.</p>
<p>I remember how liberating it felt to come to terms with the name, and everything the name represents. What is saw was image, you know <i>Miração</i>? An image of Lord Jesus Christ walking along the dessert. So calmly and so gracefully along the desert and the horizon, and what looks to be maybe the sunset. And the colors, you know, the orange sherbet and gold. If that in itself, just looking at him walking and it just he's Jesus, you know? It really comforted me. That comfort released all that tension I had, all the spirits, those things I was feeling around me just kind of disappeared.</p>	<p>P3 experienced a feel of freedom and empowerment within the understanding of the symbolic view of the Lord Jesus Christ. P3 experienced a <i>Miração</i>, Divine healing vision of Jesus. P3 experienced her consciousness as an alternative moment in time witnessing the living presence of Jesus walking in a vividly colored desert at sunset. During the vision P3 experienced a transformation of consciousness that removed all the negative energies and emotions from her awareness.</p>	<p>P3 reported witnessing a <i>Miração</i> (healing vision) that transported awareness to a visually, mentally and somatically to feel as if in a heavenly Paradise with a strong sense of a divine Other identified as the presence of Jesus - accompanied by Him with a feeling of being freed, as a sense of being lifted from past attachment, judgments and associations that were felt as though had somehow limited the full potential of personal expression that seemed to be released that encompassed somatic and vivid emotional imagery imprinted what felt like the</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>essence of Jesus and as if, in that instant felt a sense of miraculous peacefulness. The <i>Miração</i> that helped to shift the awareness had profoundly changed the perception of the Christ and through a sense of being with the Christ felt a sense of empowerment within the understanding of all the symbolic viewpoints of the Lord Jesus Christ and what it represents as a Living Presence that felt filled with intimate knowledge and what felt like direct experience. P3 reported feeling as if having been with the living master Jesus during the <i>Miração</i>, as presented as if transported with a feeling of traveling back in time to walk in the presence of Christ and it filled the space with a feeling of divine grace as all the afflictions and harassing energies faded away into feelings of calm beauty, a sense that removed all the negative energies and emotions from conscious awareness.</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>It was that powerful to connect to that archetype, to connect to that name, and to, within myself, to finally come to terms with it, it was healing.</p>	<p>P3 experienced a powerful healing in the form of an inner connection within her psyche that allowed her conscious awareness to change and become identified with the sacred.</p>	<p>P3 reported a powerful healing of released mental obstructions that help to shifted belief systems that felt filled with emotional freedom through the <i>Miração</i> described as a perception of the Divine Other that seemed connected that allowed the awareness to be intimately acquainted with Christ and to be identified as a sacred encounter.</p>
<p>It was in that moment that I realized that there was a distinct separation between Jesus, the man, the master, and the church.</p>	<p>P3 experienced an epiphany of insight revealing the multi-layered symbolic impact and representative meaning within culture and society juxtapose a lived experience of the archetype of Jesus.</p>	<p>P3 reported a sense of wholeness as healed of feeling estrangement within societal expression of Jesus with a new sense of direct connection, a sense of deep communion with the Christ during the vision that gave a personal understanding of that presence in different places in life. P3 reported feeling like an epiphany of insight that revealed multi-layered symbols that represented meaning within culture and society that were put aside in what felt like a shared lived experience of Jesus. P3 reported a permanent shift in consciousness that reclaimed the personal meaning of Christ as it</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		was felt as a genuine and authentically intimate exchange through the <i>Miração</i> (healing vision).
<p>That in itself changed my life forever, because before that, you know, being raised Catholic and everything, I had developed such a strong ... It was more than a resistance, it was like, you know, you just don't want to look at it. You just don't even want to think about it. It was like repulsed by the name Jesus. It was just a trigger. It would bring up so much emotion. It would bring up so much feeling. It's charged. That name was so charged.</p>	<p>P3 experienced a profound and permanent change in her belief and viewpoint. P3 experienced a complete reversal of strongly held viewpoints that revealed hidden triggers and old wounds of the past centered in the “Jesus” of her youth.</p>	<p>P3 reported a strong resistance from feelings experienced during childhood and the education that left a complex pile of unwanted beliefs that suddenly felt changed, released feelings of rebellion and angst associated with the past simply seemed to drop away. P3 reported a profound and permanent change in how she felt towards and conceived her relationship with Jesus as a personal direct connection of a living being, that determined a new perception that felt as if it completely reversed the previous strongly held associations, beliefs and feelings of resistance in childhood.</p>
<p>It was, what I came to realize in that time, it wasn't just because my Catholic upbringing in this lifetime as Luna, but it was multiple lifetimes, you know? That I got to see the Daime. I'd been a witch in Europe or my ancestral lineage of the native central American. So that memory in itself was so</p>	<p>P3 experienced a past life regression within her conscious awareness that revealed a series of lifetimes with similar themes of systematic repression that included her current ancestral line. P3 experienced a tremendous surge of awareness that freed her consciousness to evolve beyond repression and limiting belief structures that</p>	<p>P3 envisioned a series of visual and somatic sensations as a form of regressive cleansing within conscious, a sense of resolution and understanding with what appeared to be the soul of the individual as though beyond the bounded identity of</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
<p>powerful that to actually accept it, I would say that that was probably one of the great gifts that I received in the Daimé, and that was life changing.</p>	<p>changed the way she perceived the world. P3 believes this permanent shift in her awareness was due to the ingestion of the medicine.</p>	<p>individual that revealed what felt like a review of lifetimes each with a similar themes of systematic repression that included current feelings within the cultural identity and close associations with relatives that were accompanied by a tremendous surge of awareness that freed consciousness to evolve beyond feelings of repression with the sense of releasing limiting belief structures that changed the way the world is seen and interacted. P3 reported a permanent shift in awareness because of what felt like an interaction with another that focused on learning that took place after imbibing the plant medicine and reported feeling completely changed as she felt a better understanding about how she was the way she was from the perspective of what was understood as a collective soul story revealed through what was described as the teachings received by the plant medicine. P3 reported profound gratitude for the what she considered as</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		<p>teachings given by the plant medicine as it felt as though a living being was in deep communication with as the sense was that the plant was the teacher and the meeting came through the commingling act of ingestion.</p>
<p>Because this name, this name is this Master, this name ... you know, he's still a presence that lives, and it really, and anywhere you turn and look there's reference, a church or a cross or a cemetery. It made me really happy to be able to tune in to this universal love that he represents. In a sense it made me a born-again Christian. I would say that was definitely more significant, because that was the first thing to come to mind when you ask questions.</p>	<p>P3 experienced a shift in her conscious awareness that showed her the impression of the Christ energy throughout the world as a living presence being echoed in symbols throughout society. P3 experienced the transformation of her old persona into a newly formed identity that appeared more bonded to the Divine.</p>	<p>P3 reported a heightened awareness of Jesus Christ as a result of what felt like being in the Holy presence after saying the name Jesus and being engrossed in a powerfully somatic and highly visual, mentally focused on the Holy name it felt that an impression of the Christ energy was in attendance throughout the entire world as a living presence being echoed in symbols throughout society. P3 reported feeling a sense of transformation of the old persona that felt repressive with past associations into to a newly formed awareness that enjoyed feeling more bonded to the Divine, had a sense of empowered self-acceptance and envisioned what felt like a continued connection as the most</p>

P3 Meaning units	P3 Transformed meaning units	P3 Further transformations
		momentous and meaningful gift of profound change received through the rite drinking of Ayahuasca.

## APPENDIX G

Template for Data Transformation  
RES 9500 P4 description of experience  
Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
<p>That's a very hard one to narrow down to one. I feel that I've had so many profound experiences drinking Daimé. My very first time was absolutely incredible. Not because it was all just spliced out, but because I really went into the deeper places of myself where I was not well, really followed things, and was able to release them. It set me out on the path that I'm on now. That experience has only continued to blossom. The self-discovery, the self-realizations, the beauties, and the pains. It is really hard to narrow it down to one experience because I really have had so many profound experiences drinking Daimé. Is there something specific that I could speak to?</p>	<p>P4 experienced a challenge when having to choose one particular transformative event within ceremony as she reports having had many prolific experiences.</p>	<p>P4 reported feeling overwhelmed with the idea of having to choose only one life-changing experience during rites drinking <i>Daimé</i> (form of Ayahuasca made ritualistically from only leaf and vine) as felt strongly that many times there were given valued insight. P4 chose the first after contemplating that the experience had felt deliberate, as if, to present a way that felt like being given the perfect directions for wholeness, as it felt like it had taken P4 deep into what felt like the broken places within the psychological space of the mind and spiritual aspects of self as emotional and esoteric associations and beliefs, then felt as though being taught by what was described as given by the plant medicine that appeared as a form of a teacher and seem to provide a type of knowledge that was understood as</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		essential instructions for progress in what appeared a quest to feel wholeness, a sense of peace, self-acceptance, and health.
<p>That would have to be then, the first. That was the first time it ever happened. The first time I ever drank Daime, I ended up having a really beautiful experience. I also ended up throwing up and crying for about six straight hours, which is a very deep experience. It was very much like a rebirth. I went through my inner pain, my insecurity, jealousy, greed, everything that a person doesn't want to see in themselves. I was never afraid. I just knew I was in something very deep. I had so much trust for the experience, and it was absolutely opening. I've never been the same.</p>	<p>P4 chose the first time she drank Daime in ceremony as the most profound experience to share. P4 experienced a full range of emotions that clearly revealed all psychological patterns and personality traits that requested reconciliation. Although P4 was challenged during her experienced she never felt a sense of fear as she inherently trusted the process the medicine was taking. P4 understood that this experience was truly transformational even during the process of being ill and grieving. P4 welcomed the medicine with total faith in its ability to transform her wounds. P4 found she experienced a truly transformational shift within herself in the ceremony that permanently changed how she viewed herself.</p>	<p>P4 reportedly felt the first time drinking Daime in ceremony as the most profoundly insightful as though being in a type of marathon described as being made up of many hours of therapy, as a sense of reviewing a wide range of psychological predispositions that also seemed to have a visually somatic connection in the form of what was reported as physically purging that seemed to be accompanied by what felt like all the emotional baggage with limited mental associations that appeared as a type of built up of negative feelings and judgments that were felt to be cleared away through what was described as a regenerative process, as surrendering as to facilitate a type of released resolution. P4 report that at times there was a sense of being intensely uncomfortable, as a</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>somatic sensation of the physicality of purging and a sense of mentally off-putting as having a sense of the shadow part of the individuals' psychology as what appeared as potential character flaws, judgments, bad habits and prejudices that P4 appeared as a type of limitation to growth in a sense of achieving what was thought to be an integrated wholeness, a sense of peace, self-acceptance, physical and mental health. P4 reported what felt like a presence of complete trust as if, being guided through what was understood as a very deep curative process that was described as being led by the plant medicine that somatically gave the sense of a tremendous assurance of faith in the plant medicines' ability to work positively as a type of healer teacher that was apparently believed to be the plant medicine itself. P4 reported surrendering to what felt like witnessing a life review with a full range of somatic, mental and</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>visual information that seemed to reveal what was described as a full range of psychological patterns and personality traits that were shown in a way as to teach how to best reconcile for wholeness and what appeared as the greatest benefit for individual personal growth. P4 reported that this experience felt truly transformational even during the process of being ill and grieving there seemed to be a sense of acceptance and permission to move forward as though understanding that this was in a way part of the process to what felt like healing of past psychological disturbances and attachments as described as a means to a kind of integrated wholeness as a sense of peace, self-acceptance, and health. P4 reported a sense of being altered psychologically, as if her perceptions, judgments and associations had somehow changed within in the ceremony that was described as being permanently changed in what appeared to be the way</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>in P4 viewed herself, as if being able to take action without any hinderance from the past perceptions and attachment in a sense resolved as a freer expression with empowered choices, as if supported by knowledge of what is best.</p>
<p>Like I said, it opened me on to my path that I'm on now. It's been 14 and a half years of being a regular member, singing the hymns, learning the maracas, learning the rituals, learning how to be a sister to the brothers and sisters in the Santo Daime, and continuing to deepen my journey of self-discovery.</p>	<p>P4 experienced such a tremendous shift that it ignited her dedication and practice of the doctrine and social membership in the Santo Daime church for almost 15 years. P4 experienced a continued fortification of the powerful inner support to transform and evolve with the use of the medicine.</p>	<p>P4 reported a tremendous shift in perspective so much that it felt as though it has ignited a form of dedication, a sense of diligence, commitment and earnestness to practice the doctrine of the plant medicine as if, to embrace a proficient knowledge of all aspects of the ceremony and rite practice as well as what was described as becoming an active social member in the Santo Daime church for decades. P4 attested to a deep belief that felt as though the medicine had continued to act as a powerful inner support and catalyst of personal growth as directed from what was believed to be the plant medicine as if, the plant medicine was able to act as a master teacher as a sense to bringing</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		instructive knowledge as if, directed for personal growth, a sense of peace, self-acceptance, and wholeness, as an integrated state of health in mind, body and spirit.
<p>It was kind of all-inclusive. I felt like it was visual, but not hallucinogenic. It felt like the veils had been removed. I saw, deeply, in a visual way but nothing that was fake and dancing, like walls melting in front of my eyes. It was more in my inner mind's eye. It was also very tactile. It was like being revealed something that happened in childhood, and then throwing up and having it actually, physically, leave my body. At the same time as having a clear vision of what that was.</p>	<p>P4 had a somatic, visual and auditory experience that informed her through inner visual awareness and a felt sense of empathy that reflected the information that was psychologically transforming her perceptions. P4 had a synchronistic experience where painful memories from childhood would arise in the mind followed by a purging that left P4 with the distinct feeling of fully releasing in a physically and psychological manner the toxins from the event. P4 experienced a heighten awareness within her consciousness that allowed her to witness this passage of healing with full understanding.</p>	<p>P4 reported a sense of complete immersion into what felt like a depth of knowledge that seemed to communicate on many levels using the different senses in the form of auditory, somatic and visual symbols, as a means of communication to what felt like to uncover meaning of deeper issues as though being clearly understood the meaning. P4 envisioned this communication not outwardly or psychedelically but as a visual mental awareness as if, seeing with an inner vision that felt intimate and mysterious. P4 reported receiving somatic, visual and auditory information through what was described as inner visual awareness that felt like an embodied sense of empathy that seemed to reflect the</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>psychologically material that was understood as helping to change perceptions as a means to resolve attachments that seemed in a sense a form of healing childhood psychological wounds. P4 reported feeling a level of what was described as synchronized events as if painful memories from childhood would arise in the mind that appeared to be followed by a physical purging that seem to give the distinct feeling of fully releasing in a kind of physically and psychological manner the toxic thoughts, ideas and associations from the remembered childhood wound that seemed somehow as aligned expressions as if, to yielded a feeling of letting go of the entangled emotional burden with a sense of freedom from the psychological remembrance that reportedly accompanied the physical sensation of releasing a kind of physical version of what appeared as mental and emotional</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>disturbances. P4 envisioned a heightened consciousness that seemed to allow a sense of holding P4 as a type of witness to what appeared as a passage of healing with what was described as having a full understanding as to what was apparently being released as a kind of childhood wound that then appeared to given a sense of resolution, a sense of peace and wholeness, a self-acceptance.</p>
<p>It was multi-level. On a mental level, I understood it. On a physical level, I was experiencing it. On a spiritual level, I was able to see into the depths of it. For me, it was all-inclusive. It definitely had a visual component. It was taking me on a journey, but it was inside of my mind. It was inside of my vision. It wasn't in front of me, like a movie.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a state of consciousness that organized input from her mental, physical, and emotional intelligence with a deep soul awareness of the entire process that included understood meaningfulness. P4 experienced clairvoyant vision during the healing process.</p>	<p>P4 reported a sense of immersion within the <i>Miração</i> (healing vision), a state of fluid consciousness that felt like it organized the mental, physical, and emotional intelligence as a visually somatic mental and emotional expression with an envisioned deep soul awareness, as a kind of soul awareness of what was described as an entire process that seemed to include an understood meaningfulness and a sense of contextual reference. P4 envisioned the communicated spiritual and mental teachings during the <i>Miração</i>,</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		(healing vision) as what was understood as a healing process that seemed to help to inform what appeared as a healing journey, a kind of clearing away misconceptions in a way of restoring balance and harmony psychologically through what was described as an inward way of seeing, a sense of clarity, edified knowledge and a kind of immediate understanding of what was presented.
<p>It felt and changed as it grew, as I went along. In the beginning, it was more of the beauties and the splendors. I closed my eyes and I felt like I was in a cosmic garden. I love flowers, so it spoke to me on a personal level. I would experience things in a very garden-esque kind of way. Experiences like, I would be in a journey and then I would see a cockroach in my garden and realize that a hand was twisted in a funny way. When I relaxed my body, the cockroach would move out of the way and I would continue through the garden.</p> <p>It was kind of like the garden of my soul.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a fluid ever changing inner landscape that informed P4 intimately with uniquely symbolic language that helped P4 make adjustments for greater harmony and balance. P4 experienced a level of communion with the medicine that led P4 to deeper understanding soul.</p>	<p>P4 reported a sense of progression during what felt like a healing journey of self-acceptance a kind of review of positive moral changes, envisioned as deep communication with the plant medicine through somatic visual cognition as a kind of looking at all aspects of self with the feeling extended out to what appeared as an expanded whole as if, to include the whole cosmos as an evolving fluid inner landscape that seemed intimately informed with uniquely symbolic language in a sense a dialogue that felt as if, as an active</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>participant in what appeared as a moving living world that seemed to have an intelligent other guiding what felt like a journey and was understood to be the plant medicine. P4 envisioned a level of communion with the plant medicine that felt as if to give a deeper understanding to the awareness and ability to connect with what appeared as an alteration of consciousness as a means to discover knowledge through an intelligent other that was understood to be the plant medicine. P4 envisioned a loving connection of what was described as being like the level of the soul, a sense of identity beyond the bounded individual through what appeared as an intricate beautiful pathway assumed to be led by the plant medicine as an intelligent other that seemed to allow an appreciation of everything even that which could be improved, a sense of self-acceptance.</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
<p>Then it changed from a garden kind of place, to a darker place and was showing me all the pain and suffering that I held in my body. It was also helping me to release it. (You feel like it stayed with you?) I do. Especially, because it was the first one. I was young. I was 24. I'm 38 now. It had a really profound connection with me. I was so sincere at the time of really wanting to change myself and to have a spiritual connection. I had been working on myself at that point, before I found Ayahuasca about six years, really intently. I was looking for a way to open the door. It brought me to that. I wanted to walk through the door that it opened for me.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a transition to a deeper level of soul awareness discovering the suffering that was held within her body. P4 experienced the medicine allowed her to release it with a sense of permanence. P4 remembered being very dedicated to her spiritual studies spending many years before finding Santo Daime. P4 experienced a feeling of confidence that she had found the correct path to allow her to achieve her spiritual goals.</p>	<p>P4 envisioned travelling down what appeared as a visual pathway described like a deeper level of soul awareness, a sense of totality discovering suffering, a sense of wounding from childhood as what appeared to be held within the body as uncomfortable attachments and psychological hinderances to personal growth and peaceful self-acceptance. P4 reported that the plant medicine felt like a vehicle to fortified and supported a kind of release of suffering with a sense of permanence, a sense of resolution. P4 reported feeling very dedicated to spiritual studies spending years developing spiritual maturity that felt as if, a kind of preparation before finding Santo Daime as if, P4 had become as though ready for what felt like a way to become in a sense into a state of sustained enlightened awareness, as if, to have a sense of completeness, a foundational sense of self-acceptance and a</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		sense of peace with others. P4 reported feeling confidence in finding what felt like the precise path to allow a sense of depth in spiritual goals as it appeared as though the plant medicine gave access to a place that felt inaccessible before.
<p>I continued to do the work afterword as well. I was really diligent, especially in the beginning, at doing all of the homework that was offered to me. I feel like that was a part of what gave it the same power, was the discipline that I brought to it as well. I can see how other times, when I haven't been as disciplined or if one is not as disciplined, that it could fade. I feel like because I'm so intent on change and so eager to follow the instructions I was given that it really helped it to be concrete. I feel the following through with doing the homework that's given to you and having the self-discipline to obey the requests that are given to you, is a really important part to making the teachings last.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a tremendous amount of discipline driven mainly by her desire to transform and be a perfect student for the instructions she received from the medicine. P4 experienced a feeling of success because she was able to follow the instructions due to her diligence and dedication. P4 experienced the fruit of her studies because she made an effort to really honor the lesson she was presented.</p>	<p>P4 described making cherished efforts with a strong sense of commitment and a sense of conscientiousness by attempting to follow through with what was understood as the spiritual work and perceived directions that were felt to have been given through the plant medicine as a form of intelligent Other, as kind of a master teacher as though P4 was enrolled in a type of school. P4 reported a feeling a sense of discipline driven by what was described as a desire to be a diligent student in following what was understood to be the instruction that felt as though it was received from the plant medicine as an intelligent other. P4 felt success was happening by being able to follow the</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>teachings given by the intelligent other that was described as the plant medicine because of what was described as an intense devotion to absorb all that was presented through what felt like an act of active participation as if, to pay attention like being in a class and then understand what was given and then to apparently practice through a form of continuation in daily life with a sense of dedication to study what was understood to be the lessons received from the plant medicine as an intelligent Other during the ritual. P4 envisioned the fruit of the studies happened by an effort that felt as if to act in honoring what was apparently received and then in a sense cultivate the lesson as putting directions into actions as to adopt changes to behavior that seemed to be taught by intelligent other that was described as the plant medicine.</p>
<p>In the experience I was given instructions on how to work on letting go of feeling that I deserved to be punished. To heal my relationship with my</p>	<p>P4 received instructions from the plant medicine about her self-worth and desire of better treatment towards herself. P4 experienced</p>	<p>P4 reflected on the teachings thought to have been given by the plant medicine seemed to have a sense of</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
<p>mother. To begin a yoga practice. At the time, I was a huge sugar addict. I was given the instruction, for instance, to do a really big cleanse, which I did. I did a six-month sugar-free diet. That really changed my inner being. That was definitely one of the homeworks I was given that I followed through with. I really saw how my relationship with my mother was not super positive and how I used eating sweets as a way to shield the sweetness of life. Then it really affected my body in a way that didn't feel sweet, happy, and good in life.</p>	<p>being able to let go of old behavioral patterns and heal interpersonal relationship wounds, especially with her mother. P4 experienced a depth of perception that revealed the woven connections between past behaviors, interpersonal relationship dynamics, self-care and how it played out in her life with food. P4 experienced witnessing her pattern of using sweet tasting foods to fill her desire for happy and meaningful life experiences.</p>	<p>connection to a sense of self-worth with a kind of desire to take better care as if, to be a better person by making better choices out of feeling honored in a kind of way of becoming more healthy physically, emotionally and mentally. P4 reported feeling capable in converting old behavioral patterns and sensed a form of change possible within interpersonal relationships that seemed to help past wounds to heal. P4 envisioned the plant medicine had acted in a sense as a therapist and revealed connections between past behaviors, interpersonal relationship dynamics, food and self-care that then kind of became a process to re-evaluate behaviors constructively by what felt was being led by the instruction given by the intelligent Other that was the plant medicine. P4 reported feeling as though the plant medicine had help in the acknowledgement of what appeared to be a destructive pattern of using sweet tasting</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		things to fill the desire for happy life experiences and had a feeling as to be ready to make change as there was a feeling of empowerment to act on the lesson given by the plant medicine, a sense of edified support.
To actually make a better relationship with the cosmic mother and have more trust in the divine.	P4 felt drawn to have a deeper connection with the cosmic mother and trust the divine. P4 experienced being drawn to a healthier relationship with herself by trusting the Divine Mother.	P4 reported feeling drawn to act on a desire to have a deeper connection with what felt like the cosmic mother as if, by trusting in that perceived divine connection that was experienced as a somatic, visual and emotional expression that seem to follow the suggestions that were understood as revealed by the plant medicine, as an intelligent Other in the form of a teacher. P4 reported feeling propelled to follow what was instructed a sense of honoring respectfulness through what appeared as adopting healthy behaviors in a sense to feel connected to the supportive Divine Feminine power encountered through the plant medicine.
Also, make a relationship with my birth mother and to start forgiving her and understanding that she's a	P4 experienced a feeling of compassion for her own mother as an individual and a wounded person without	P4 reported feelings of compassion for P4's mother as a wounded person and felt able to

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
<p>person. Not just my mom, but a person who has her own pains and her own sufferings who did what she could and didn't have the tools that she needed.</p>	<p>support that did the best she could as her mother. P4 experienced forgiveness for her mother as part of her healing process.</p>	<p>heal the past through what felt like new feelings of compassion and envisioned this understanding was somehow capable to helped to bring a sense of forgiveness for the mother as part of the healing process, a sense of mending through acceptance.</p>
<p>It was important to me to no longer eat a package of cookies a night, because it was going to take me down a path. It was already taking me down a path that I didn't want. Instead of finding love to sweets and yummy things, to let go of that and develop my emotional maturity and sweeten my relationship with life and myself.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a choice to mature emotionally in favor of healthy living and connected relationships with people rather than substituting that human connection and fulfillment of intimacy with the joy of eating sugary foods to fill a void.</p>	<p>P4 reported feeling a sense of alignment with the lessons received and felt as though it would be making the choices easy to accomplish with the support of what was understood as insights gained, as a sense of healthy living and connected relationships with people as though to felt better than substituting human connections and what felt like fulfillment of intimacy with what felt like the superficial feeling of joy in mindless eating of sugary foods to apparently fill what appeared as a feeling of emptiness in connections with others.</p>
<p>It was a long time ago, so I'm trying to come back to this place. Just seeing how it was with me and my mom, how bad I felt inside, seeing</p>	<p>P4 experienced recalling childhood pain. P4 experienced the realization that her mother was unavailable to soothe her</p>	<p>P4 reported recalling what was described as childhood pain that seemed filled with revelations that felt like</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
<p>myself as a child and how my mom was really lost and didn't understand what to do. So, if I cried, she would give me a cookie to make me feel better. I started going to eat cookies to make myself feel better. Instead of having the love for my mother, I substituted it with these sweet things.</p>	<p>with love and affection instead pacifying her with a substitute of sweet treats.</p>	<p>P4's mother had been unavailable to soothe with love and affection because of the mother's own apparent suffering and in a way gave the feeling to replace a desire for the mother's affection with some form of replacement sweetness in food.</p>
<p>I kind of saw it like watching something, but it wasn't in front of me. It wasn't visual, like hallucinogenic. It was inside my mind, but I feel like when I closed my eyes, I could see it. I felt inside of my stomach and my colon, it was so compacted and so uncomfortable. All the extra sugar, wheat, and everything I've been packing in there for so long and then I would throw up. I would throw up a lot, or I'd then have to use the bathroom a lot. Then, going through the physical aspect of releasing that pattern, and then a lot of tears. Then finding deep relaxation and a lightning and understanding.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a visual insight that was more clairvoyant than hallucinogenic. P4 experienced a clairsentient awareness of her physical body's discomfort due to the unhealthy choices that came from a psychological wounding from her mother's lack of affection. P4 experienced a series of stages within the process of healing through purging and releasing her bowels. P4 experiences a high level of emotionality through the process that then released her into a state of recovery and compassionate awareness of what was being healed.</p>	<p>P4 described a heightened state of awareness that felt more clairvoyant than hallucinogenic, as a somatically visual mental expression where the imagery viewed with the mind felt similar to a kind of visual memory. P4 reported having sensed an awareness of the physical body's discomfort as though to understand it was related to apparent unhealthy choices that seemed to have come from a psychological wounding that was understood as if, retraced and rediscovered as a mother's lack of affection that seemed to create what was thought and understood as if, to be a pattern for bad eating habits. P4 reported what felt like a series of stages within the process of understanding the</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>depths of cause/effect while purging and releasing her bowels as what felt like a physical validation to what appeared as an inward emotional journey. P4 reported feeling a sense of release as emotionality through the process that then felt like it pushed her into a peaceful state where there was a sense of recovered compassionate awareness as to what seemed as being healed throughout the process.</p>
<p>Then more love for my mother and an understanding that she wasn't a happy person. She didn't understand. She was doing the best she could to live with her own broken place. I've been working on my relationship with my mother my whole life. It really had to just come to a place of acceptance of exactly who she is. She will never be the mother I wanted her to be. She's exactly who she is, and I love her for that. I can't ask a pear from a banana tree. I had to really accept, she's not going to be the kind of mom I would've loved for myself in this life, but she is who she is, and I love her.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a return of greater compassion and affection for her mother following her healing process brought on by the medicine. P4 experienced a discerning awareness that propelled her understanding towards forgiveness, compassion and appreciation for who her mother is and not who she'd been wishing her to be. P4 experienced a place of peace in her relationship with her mother.</p>	<p>P4 envisioned compassion and affection for P4's mother following what was described as the healing process as both physically and mentally purging thought to have been facilitated as by the plant medicine. P4 reported feeling capable to discern what seemed to propel P4's mother and felt ready to work towards forgiveness, as compassion and appreciation for P4's mother instead of feelings of as though judging the mother for not being the kind of mother P4 felt wished the mother to be to P4. P4 reported changed</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		<p>feelings, a sense that instead of being at a loss for not having the type of mother wanted, P4 felt rooted in a place of peace and acceptance in relationship with the mother as a feeling of accepting who the mother is as a person, as to acknowledge the good aspects present within the relationship, a sense of honoring what's presented, as released attachment to what could be perceived as missing.</p>
<p>This is what God gave me, and so this is my lesson, which is coming to more of a place of peace and letting my relationship be what it is with her. It's not the deeply nurturing kind of love that I would love to have. We have a nice, light, funny, bantering sweetness that I accept. I'm glad that we have that. I'm really glad.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a new place of peace within her relationship with her mom by trusting that it is divinely given. P4 experienced gratitude for her mother.</p>	<p>P4 reported feeling a release of expectations in favor of honoring what appeared as a divine gift as to now feel like it allows a sense of appreciation for the mother as a sense of who the mother is as the mother is as to feel grateful for what it is. P4 reported feeling a change, a new place of peace within P4's relationship with P4's mom by tapping into feelings of faith as to trust what was believed to be divinely given as a divine teaching from the plant medicine. P4 reported a shift feeling a new appreciation for P4's mother as now there</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		feels as though there is a way to be grateful for their relationship as honoring what is present.
<p>Also, as I'm becoming a I'm almost 40. It's been a journey. If we talked about this when I was 24 or 25, I probably would have wept. I probably would have gone on about how much pain I was in still about it. It really has been a journey. At this point, I have so much more acceptance.</p>	<p>P4 experienced a level of equipoise having matured over time into acceptance but remembers when these memories would have caused great distress.</p>	<p>P4 envisions a level of equipoise feeling a sense of being matured over time into what feels like acceptance and described what felt like a form of remembering when these memories would have caused feelings of grave distress and upheaval as a kind of freshness to the wound that seemed to be carried for a long time that now having appeared to have been healed seemed less traumatic through the process of remembering.</p>
<p>Also, as I'm becoming a mother myself and just knowing that I can be the mother that I needed. I'm not going to try to fix my relationship with my mom through my own relationship with my child, but instead, just knowing that I can be the mother that I know that I wanted to have.</p>	<p>P4 experienced the awareness that as a new mother she will be capable of demonstrating the type of maternal relationship she would have liked to have had with her own mother and without the need to change her mother or heal from her mother through her own child.</p>	<p>P4 reported a feeling of reflection on the awareness that felt as though in becoming a mother will in a way demonstrate the type of maternal harmony and affection P4 would have liked to have felt with P4's own mother and felt a sense without the need to change P4's mother or a sense to heal from P4's mother through her own child, P4 described as though to have achieved a sense of freedom and</p>

P4 Meaning units	P4 Transformed meaning units	P4 Further transformations
		balance, a sense of permanent healing of what felt like a prior childhood wound.

## APPENDIX H

Template for Data Transformation  
RES 9500 P5 description of experience  
Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>Well, I'm thinking of this time in X many years ago. It was during feitio and the St. Michael work. I seemed to have died and went ... and I saw my dead body there and then I did the ... I went down the tunnel in the dark to the light. I came upon the threshold of this other world and it was what I suppose you might think of as heaven because it was a place that was so indescribably beautiful that it can't be put into words how beautiful this place was. I don't remember ever seeing it. In any event, I arrived there. It was kind of like a portal or a threshold or something like that and I was aware of a number of beings there that some of whom I was really recognized as what might be described as some of my guardian angels or, some of whom I've known all my life since I have a memory of meeting some of them actually in my birthing process. Then there's some other ones.</p>	<p>P5 experienced witnessing his physical body as being dead followed by a highly visual and auditory journey through a dark tunnel and into the light where he arrived in an extraordinarily beautiful place. At the entrance P5 experienced a deep kinship as he found it filled with loved ones, guardians and divine beings of light.</p>	<p>During the ceremony P5 reported that he felt that he had died meaning felt as if a physical death had occurred with a somatic and emotional sensation of what was understood to be an expression of soul as a spiritual component that seemed to inform the state of death as it felt like the soul was capable of perceptions that felt tangible and independent of the corporal and journeyed through highly visual, somatic and auditory sensations to what felt like an alternative world that felt like an actual valid place that gave the impression of coming into contact with many divine Others with an immediate feeling of recognition that seemed based in an unimagined alliance, and a sense of epic majesty accompanied by an intensely rich visual splendor of what appeared as a utopia. P5 reported feeling a sense as though being</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>outside the physical body and described seeing the body visually from a distance as if, as a separate object being viewed from above and was determined that the physical body was separate from what felt like the soul that appeared as the consciousness of what was happening and felt through a somatic, visual, auditory expression of consciousness that was understood as the soul, a sense of the individuals' personality, collected knowledge and associations had somehow felt as though traveled towards place that seemed as if, it was a type of destination like a celestial place where life appeared to continue as if, in a wonderfully delightful place sensed as the feeling of moving through a dark narrow long space that held a beacon of brilliance at the end of the journey that felt as if, arriving in an otherworldly place filled with bliss, beauty and a feeling of holiness where described that divine</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>Others greeted this soul who had a distinct feeling of familiarity with an elevated respect as if these others were deeply virtuous with a cognition that they were like guardians of a kind, as well as a sense of intimacy and trust that had a feeling of eternity, a sense of being beyond the boundaries of time as if, knowing these individual mystical beings in relation to the soul envisioned as what felt like many life cycles as though having an understanding and sense of recognition of what appeared as other lived experiences in the form of what was understood to be additional different forms of embodiment within a kind of physicality at what appeared as occurring at different points within a kind of alternative time and what was understood as a different expression of the individual as though being connected to what was understood to be the soul, as a kind of continuous consciousness, a sense of that will never die.</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>So, then I'm beholding this place, this realm beyond this portal, this threshold and it was so beautiful, like I said, indescribable in Earthly terms. It was super attractive, and I thought, "Oh wow, this is great. I want to go in there because it's just so beautiful. Who would not want to go?" Then I still realized that my body had died, and I'd left it back wherever in this salão obviously and wherever I was, someplace pretty far away it seemed.</p>	<p>P5 experienced standing at the entrance to this heavenly paradise with a desire to explore it with the awareness that he's left his physical body back on earth.</p>	<p>P5 reported an altered state of awareness that was understood to be a spiritual component, a sense of consciousness separate from the corporal that appeared to be a kind of awareness as an expression of soul that seemed to inform the state of death as it felt independent of the corporal and journeyed through highly visual, somatic and auditory sensations to what felt like an alternative domain that felt like an actual valid place that gave the impression of being transported to mystical abode that felt so inviting that the idea of leaving the physical connection to life did not dissuade the desire to stay. P5 reported having a dual sense of being aware that the physical body was what felt like somewhere at a far distance from where the soul was in what appeared as a different world with a sense of awe being at a gateway, a place that felt to be a greeting area where at a distance there was a vast unexplored place of unimaged beauty with a feeling bliss, harmony and pleasure.</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>In any event, so I decide, "Okay, I'm going to enter this place because it's the only thing I want to do because it's just so attractive and beautiful." I started to do that and then some of these beings were like, "Oh wait, hold on dude. Here, just stop for a minute because we need to let you know that if you cross over here you can't go back."</p>	<p>P5 experienced a strong desire to enter this paradise but is stopped and warned by the guardians that once he enters into this paradise he cannot go back to earth.</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling intensely drawn to enter into the splendor of this place of incredible beauty and felt that his entire being was ready to go explore a sense of feeling being drawn to a place of delight. P5 reported a feeling of being halted from continuing as distinct visually, auditory and somatic impulses envision that the path was barred by the guardians that felt as though counseled with a warning that had a sense of finality and envisioned that entering this domain had a sense of permanence that gave the understanding of not being able to return to life in the physical world, a sense of leaving behind all that was contained within what was understood as the bounded individual's life.</p>
<p>Then I was in a communication with them that went something like this. I'm like, "Well, I mean you know, I'm you know dead so, I mean that's one thing." Then I thought about it for a while. Okay, what would it mean if I didn't-</p>	<p>P5 experienced having an in-depth discussion with the guardians of paradise about the logistical situation he found himself in as being physically dead. P5 experienced considering the consequences of this choice.</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling in communication with these other beings gave a response to this perceived message that had a sense of utter conviction as if, P5 was physically dead as felt obvious almost factual that the perceived soul had detached from the</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>physical body through a distinct visual, auditory and somatic sensory impressions that gave the notion that the individual was already dead and this line of thinking than turn to a feeling of reflection and inquiry as to the ramifications of what if dead. P5 reported an altered state of consciousness that had a sense of lucid awareness of communications with separate spiritual entities that felt like guardians of wisdom and caretakers of life about the perceived situation as physically dead as if the soul was away from the body. P5 reported a sensation like an extension of time where feelings of consideration as to what it would mean to leave the living world behind with a sense of understanding what it would portend to be letting go of all those known, loved and connected to in life.</p>
<p>Right, yeah. Well, I already was dead. I knew that much because I'd seen my dead body as I kind of left the salão floating above it there. Well, here I'll tell you the really remarkable part as</p>	<p>P5 experienced an alternative consciousness where he is witnessing himself seeing his physical body as dead from the awareness of being outside his physical body and separate in the form of spirit.</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling convinced that he appeared to be dead during an alternative state of consciousness where he perceived the soul had detached from</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>things go. Then I decided I wanted to go cross over this threshold into this indescribably beautiful place and I'm about to do that and these beings, some of whom, as I mentioned, I might describe as some of my guardian angels, some beings I've had communication with before, had some familiarity with. They said, "Well hold on, before you cross over you should know that it's a one-way trip. If you enter you can't return." Then I thought about, "Well, what would that mean?" I thought of my daughter Q and I think it was really sad because I thought, "Gosh, she'll be so bummed out if Dad dies." I thought, "Well, I'm already dead and this place is really beautiful." and "Well, you know, someday she'll actually be here herself I figure and then she'll understand why I didn't come back."</p> <p>Then I decided to go, one-way trip.</p>	<p>P5 experienced having discussions with those he felt a tremendous intimacy and closeness too about the repercussions of crossing over. P5 experienced the guardians warning him that it was a definitive choice with no second chances. P5 experienced himself mentally going through the litany of outcomes based on the apparent facts, notably that he is dead, and his daughter will be sad. P5 experienced himself coming to terms with death and being ready to cross over to heaven. P5 experienced himself choosing to go into heaven.</p>	<p>the physical body through distinct visual, auditory and somatic sensory impressions where visually perceiving from what felt like a distance his dead physical body as lifeless form on the floor from the awareness of being outside his physical body with a feeling of buoyance and separateness in the form of what could be described as a spiritual aspect of self that felt like the composite of the individual through a sense of timelessness as a locus of personhood in the moment as an energetic expression. P5 reported feeling a desire to cross what felt like a threshold into what appeared as paradise as a place of infinite beauty, joy and fulfillment through highly visual and somatic sensation of what begins to feel aligned with this mental focus of crossing over to the place that appeared filled with rapture and enjoyment a sense of pure happiness and wellbeing than an interruption enters consciousness with an</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>alerting impulse that was expressed mentally as a conversation with many divine Others that had a clear felt sense presence as holy protectors with felt connections of kindred longtime companions that appeared somatically as benefic and virtuous, reportedly felt as though shared concern over potential irreversible consequences that had a sense of finality and envisioned that entering this domain had a sense of permanence that gave the understanding of not being able to return to life in the physical world. P5 reported mentally going through a logical process of the litany of outcomes of death, this was envisioned as recognition that the person would no longer be among the living that seemed to trigger the awareness as a special mental and emotional focus point on the immediate relationship with his daughter that then turned to the awareness of great sorrow and what would be her devastating loss. P5</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>reported entering a state of rationalization where the mental focus shifted to one of how it would feel alright to die, as there was a sense of the eternal and an almost obvious feeling that those loved and left behind would eventually be reunited envisioning in this same place that felt like an eternal paradise. P5 felt as though prepared to face death and felt ready to make the decision to cross the threshold to what appeared to be a place of eternal bliss. P5 reported feeling a sense of peace envisioning that his daughter would understand the choice to be in a celestial paradise once her time came with a feeling of confidences in being reunited. P5 reported coming to a state of choosing to accept death with a sense of life as a continuum.</p>
<p>I began to step across this threshold and then the Divine Mother, the really big mama, she kind of grabbed me and she's like, "Oh wait, Guy. You passed the test and now I'm going to send you back." I objected because I said, "I can't go back. I'm dead. I already saw my dead body. I</p>	<p>P5 experienced himself as in the process of decidedly going forward into heaven when the Divine Mother interceded. P5 experienced being in direct communication with the Divine Mother who revealed she had tested him, but his time had not yet come so he</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling a somatic sense of moving to cross the boundary when a feeling of being suddenly seized by what felt like an enormously supreme godlike feminine force that then felt as though</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>already know that I'm dead." She said, "Well, do you think that's a problem for me?" I'm like, "Hmm."</p>	<p>was returning back to his body. P5 experienced being confused about how far into the process he was and protested saying he was already too far along the process and questioned the logic of coming back from the dead. P5 experienced being confronted by his lack of faith in the Divine Mother's all-powerful authority and ability to send him back in to his body.</p>	<p>entered into mental and emotional sense of communication envisioned as a Divine Mother acknowledging the sense of detachment and thereby rewarding a return to life that seem to create a mental crisis of belief as the envision perception of personhood was that of someone who had already physically died and this mental construct then shifted the awareness to a perceived potential challenge to what appeared as the Divine to demonstrate what seemed like a power of over life and death. P5 reported feeling a sense of being confronted by a lack of faith in what was envisioned as the Divine Mother's all-powerful authority and ability to send P5 back into the physical body and in a sense reanimate life from the perception of death that then shifted awareness mentally with a envision response from the supreme celestial feminine presence as if to say nothing is beyond the reach of this infinite power that then shifted the awareness to a mental</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		and emotional state of contemplation with feelings of reflection.
<p>The next thing you know, I know is I'm opening my eyes and I'm lying on the floor of the salão what's going on and it's been about three hymns. As the master instructs you shouldn't be out of your place more than three hymns. I'm looking up at a couple of friends of mine, a couple of the brothers their fardados, who I've known for some years and they're looking at me like they've just seen a ghost. I mean they are pale, they're eyes are bugging out and they're testimony is that yes, my body was dead. They couldn't find a pulse or respiration for five minutes.</p>	<p>P5 experienced his awareness returning to his body as he opened his eyes to see that he was out of his body for 3 <i>hinários</i> and the two <i>fardados</i> tending to him are in a state of shocked surprise at his return to consciousness and life after having gotten no pulse or respiration for five minutes.</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling a sudden sense of corporal alignment in consciousness as the perception of having body awareness with somatic sensations of viewing the physical surroundings with clear, optical, auditory and sensory awareness of the salão the ceremonial room, and an awareness as to the concept of time that had passed by consciously knowing the specific song currently being sung and understanding as described in terms of the time it takes to singing 3 <i>hinários</i>, sacred hymns, known as the prescribed limit by the <i>Mestre</i>, the church founder to be the accepted duration of time to be out of one designated spot during the rite and the awareness of the presences of two <i>fardados</i>, male members who appeared to be standing over P5 with what was described as visual facial expressions of shocked surprise as to see consciously present</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>as the two members reported they could find no pulse or respiration for what was reported as a period of five minutes. P5 reported feeling a sense of strong verification of coming back to life as if, with sense of resurrection though a mentally somatic and visual expression that seems to accompany a feeling of reanimation of the physical corporal presence, a sense of embodiment. P5 reported a sense of confirmation of what he described as having a strong conviction of having died through what appeared by having two observers that told their experience of witnessing P5 unconscious and under further inspection found that the physical body was without respiration or heartbeat for an extended period of time that was said to be about 5 minutes that P5 felt like a sense of confirmation of the perceived experience of death that helped to create an additional feeling of validation beyond P5's own</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		<p>experiential inner journey that came from an outside physiological perspective. P5 reported feeling a sense of having received conclusive evidence of the Divine occurrence through a sense of matched experience in the feeling of being out of what he perceived to be the physical body for what seemed divinely ordained amount of time by the founder as the duration of three <i>hinarios</i> sacred hymns, that felt somehow supported as a part of the living doctrine and appeared reinforced through further what appeared as a physically demonstration as reportedly witnessed in the testimony of two seasoned members as actual physical consciously aware individuals who were paying attention to the ordeal as eye witnesses that said according to them P5 appeared lifeless for an extended period of time that felt concerned and then relief and bewilderment as the return of animation to the body.</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>Yeah, so I came back from that experience and I did feel different, I do feel different. In a nutshell I would just say that it amounts to an issue of faith. I have a lot of faith now than I did before that.</p>	<p>P5 felt changed with a new level of tremendous faith after encountering a near death experience.</p>	<p>P5 reported feeling profound and permanent change as a new foundation of tremendous belief with a sense of confidence in never-ending reliance, a sense of trust and support after encountering what felt like a genuine death experience with a sense of resurrection. P5 stated feeling as though no longer the same person as now an awareness of personal knowledge that there feels like there is more to life as an actual spiritual dimension and that for P5 it feels tangible.</p>
<p>Well, I have personal experience with resurrection. That's a pretty convincing trick to come back from the dead when you know you're dead. It's not just like, "Oh yeah, I died and went down the tunnel to the light." which I did. That's a pretty ubiquitous cross-cultural experience regardless of what language people speak or what culture they're from, that when you die then you do that, but occasionally people do come back and I'm one of those people. I'm not really sure exactly what that is like for other people, but as I said there's two people who were looking for a pulse</p>	<p>P5 underwent a profound change in his consciousness awareness that led to the acknowledgment of mortality through a physiological and spiritual journey that unfolded in his near-death experience. P5 experienced death confirmed for him a level of truth beyond a symbolic form of death and transition used metaphorically in visions, dreams and meditations. P5 experienced a physical form of death that coincided with a rich and fully supportive spiritual expression of life beyond death. P5 experienced being validated by the two witnesses that</p>	<p>For P5 it felt as if being involved in a miracle of having what felt like a visit to the Afterlife followed by what could be label as a near death experience that felt validated by two other people's report of lifelessness witnessed that matched strongly the inward experience visually, somatically and auditory as a journey to what felt like a heavenly realm as described from an awareness as an energetic form of self-outside of the physical body and to feel</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
<p>and respiration and they couldn't find it for five minutes.</p>	<p>watched over his physical lifeless body for five minutes while he apparently floated above ready to depart permanently only to then return.</p>	<p>consciously returned back to a sense of the spirit in the physical awareness of the body. P5 envisioned a profound change in his consciousness that led to the acknowledgment of mortality through a sense of the physiological and a sense of the eternal through a spiritual journey that unfolded as an apparent near-death occurrence that seem to confirmed a level of truth beyond a symbolic form of death although seemingly aware of a certain symmetry in the expression as something easily recognizable cross-culturally worldwide. P5 strongly associated with a felt sensation of resurrection through his <i>Miração</i>, miraculous healing vision and its perceived alignment with a sense of a strong physical confirmation from peers and added to the personal felt sensory experienced in body and what appeared out of the body as having died and been miraculously resuscitated as though having touched a place of immense beauty, a</p>

P5 Meaning units	P5 Transformed meaning units	P5 Further transformations
		sense of power and glory as if, a Heaven and then returned to the living to tell the tale, a sense of the extraordinary .
<p>(Regained consciousness)            Oh, I was just like pretty blown out. I could just pretty much barely sit there for the rest of the work and after the work I was just kind like time for bed. That was about it that was a full day.</p>	<p>P5 experienced feeling relaxed and ready to sleep after returning to his body. P5 experienced being wiped out after an encounter with the divine that revealed a connection between the physical and spiritual dimensions of conscious awareness.</p>	<p>P5 reported a state exhaustion and feeling sleepy after the perceived near-death experience as though emotionally, mentally and physically wiped out as if having actually travelled to a far-away place through an a perceived exertion of energy and mental focus where it felt as if an authentic encounter with the divine occurred and that revealed the close connection between the physical and spiritual dimensions of conscious awareness and that felt like it presented a lot to process and integrate.</p>

**APPENDIX I**  
 Template for Data Transformation  
 RES 9500 P6 description of experience  
 Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>Okay, there was a work. It was probably somewhere in my first ten or fifteen works with M at the X in the big room. It was a very, very strong work and it was a very amazing, it was an amazing work. Actually, a friend turned into a hummingbird and flew above the room. I didn't even realize that because there was so much going on that it wasn't until later when we were sharing on a different day after a different work. Somebody had said they saw the same person turn into that that I remembered seeing it.</p>	<p>P6 experienced a profoundly transformative and powerfully dynamic ceremony that was filled with a mysterious spectacle within the shared awareness of the group consciousness that witnessed a member capable of shape-shifting form into a hummingbird that took flight and flew around the room. P6 experienced an amazing incident during an alternative form of awareness in shared group conscious that was later confirmed unsolicited by another person for P6.</p>	<p>P6 reported having experienced a profoundly transformative and powerfully dynamic ceremony that included a visually somatic and auditory sensation of lucidity of what appeared as a mysterious spectacle within the shared awareness of the group consciousness within the rite that seemed as though, a member appeared to change physical form from that as a woman that then seemed to somehow morphed in such a way that seemed to suggest a physical transformation of corporal form of a human body into that of what appeared to be like a hummingbird that appeared to lift off into the air above the group and take flight around the ceremonial space, a sense of awe inspired mystery that seemed to be considered extraordinary and somehow believable as a sense of the possible.</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>P6 reported feeling transported to what felt like a place where it felt conceivable that others might easily appear as though to possess what appeared as a paranormal capability like a suggested form of mastery over what appeared as the spiritual and physical dimensions of embodiment a sense of manifestation with the sense of acceptability that felt almost obvious, a sense of the expected. P6 reported what felt like access to an alternative form of awareness, a sense of amplified and enhance dynamism as though being filled with vigor within the shared group conscious that appeared to be confirmed as though shared with specific others that participated in the rite as reported later in a way that seem like an unsolicited form of confirmation by another person who also apparently witnessed the visually somatic and auditory spectacle of a human transforming as though shape shifting into what appeared as a</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		hummingbird as if to fly around the room during the ceremony.
<p>Anyway, I guess my point is that there were a lot of amazing things happening. I went to go lay down because I needed to lie down. While I was lying down, I had this memory of an experience that I had when I was just probably like, I was less than two. Somewhere like maybe 18 months, something like that. I believe that's what I was, I was less than two. I was very small.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being at a powerful ceremony filled with astonishing energetic feats of consciousness when she felt the need to lie down. P6 experienced a flashback in her consciousness to herself at the age of almost 2 years old. P6 experienced remembering herself when she was very young.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling a sense of intensity like power as a dynamic energy within the ceremony that was felt somatically, auditorily and visually in a way that envisioned astonishingly mystical feats that seemed to suggest great energetic alterations of physicality within what appeared as an expanded consciousness that felt shared with others simultaneously within the execution of scene and perceived timeline that seemed to accept the variations of potential perceptions within the physical surroundings of the ceremonial space. P6 felt a sense of being overwhelmed by the physical intensity felt as a response to the plant medicine and felt a need to find a sense of relief as to lie down in a sense to relax the body as to find a sense of peace in the mind. P6 reported witnessing a <i>Miração</i> (healing vision) that seemed to transported awareness to what appeared as a</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		visually somatic, emotional and mental expression as if, to travel back in time to what felt as though P6 would have been the chronological age of almost 2 years old with a sense that felt connected to P6 at that young age, as if to actually feel as though P6 was almost 2 years old with a sense of childlike innocence as if, a baby a sense of naivety.
<p>I was in my crib with my sister. My sister, a year older than me, S, she was a year and a week older, so we were very close. She was like the pillar of strength between the two of us. I was very scared as a child a lot. I didn't feel safe. Anyway, being with her I felt safer. My mom, well my parents ... I'm not sure how much background you want but my parents, they were both drug addicts as teenagers, heroin addicts. My mom had my sister when she was sixteen and me when she was seventeen. Just to give you an idea of the environment we grew up in. It's hard to be a good attentive parent when you're on heroin.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being in a crib with her older sister who was only one year older than P6 but who made P6 feel protected. P6 and her sister were born to teenage heroin addicts who were incapable of proper care for her and her sister. P6 experienced neglect as a child.</p>	<p>P6 reported the <i>Miração</i>, (healing vision) seemed to enthralled the sensory perception as P6 envisioned what felt like reliving in a clearly somatic, auditory and visual way emotions and mental associations of what felt like it was based on an actual past recollection, almost like being put back in time to when a baby in a crib with the feeling of being with an older sister with a sense of safety who had been older by only a year but who always seem to instilled a feelings of safety and assurance for P6 when they were together, as though together they were protected. P6 reported</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>the sisters had experienced abusive and unstable care as children, a sense of neglect and fear as having been born to teenage heroin addicts, a sense of the erratic and volatile that seemed to be prominently featured in the visually somatic and auditory expression as an awareness seemed to portray the sensory experience as though having the same feelings of being back in time as if, in the actual place of neglect with feelings of sadness as though being uncertain with a sense of understanding what it felt like to have been the chronological age of 18 months old, a sense of childlike innocence.</p>
<p>Anyway, she had this boyfriend down the road after my dad, though I think probably during. His name was P. I remember he frightened me. One time we were at my grandpa's house, which is where ... That's my mother's father. I remember that house well. We were in the crib, me and S, and crying. I don't know why we were crying or ... Actually, what happened was that this guy P, the mean guy, he just</p>	<p>P6 experienced feeling unsafe around one of her mother's male friends who came into the room where her and her sister were in the crib crying. P6 experienced witnessing violent acts of aggression toward her beloved sister by the male friend of her mothers, one when she almost died three time after being kick in the stomach leaving permanent a scar.</p>	<p>P6 envisioned what seemed as a familiar scenario through what appeared as a somatic, auditory, mental and emotional awareness with feelings of being unsafe around one of P6 mother's male friends, a sense of fear and foreboding who seemed to enter into what was perceived as the room P6 was in within the <i>Miração</i>,</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>always seemed to have it in for S. She ended up when she was three, she died three times on the operating table because he kicked her in the stomach with a steel-toed boot. It ruptured her intestines and so she had a big scar on her stomach.</p>		<p>(healing vision) that appeared to coincide with expressions of distress for what was understood to be the perspective of the sisters that felt sorrowful and full distress as if, sobbing physical tears with a feeling of despair and fear. P6 envisioned what appeared to be an actual memory of the severely violent acts of aggression toward the beloved older sister by the male that was appearing within the vision, seemingly to focus in on an expression of particular brutality, a sense of wickedness that included a mental awareness, a sense of cruelty of what appeared to be an actual past event, a sense of tremendous pain and unfairness when the sister almost died, three time after being kick in the stomach by this particular male who seemed to have a particular focus in the vision that left a permanent physical reminder, a large scar on the sister's stomach that seem to underline the perception of this</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		individual as an expression of absolute violent aggression with a felt-sense of an indelible cruelty.
<p>Anyway, he just didn't like her, and he just always had it in for her. He had it in for her one time and we were in the crib in this room together. He was at the house and then my Aunt K who was just a teenager herself who often watched us when we were kids. She ran into the room with a broom and she yelled at him to get away from her and kind of defending herself with the broom. She grabbed S out of the crib and ran off into the back room with her and locked the door and left me there. I was just completely freaked out and crying and aaah. I was in this dark room; it was really dark and under this crib.</p>	<p>P6 experienced witnessing the male friend of her mother routinely become aggressive and attack her sister. P6 experienced a memory recall of an incident where this man fought her young aunt who defending P6's sister took her away into another locked room to flee his aggression. P6 experienced feeling left behind and scared as she relived the memory of crying in a dark room.</p>	<p>P6 envisioned a change within the mental perception of the Miração (healing vision) that seemed to feel as though P6 was in the physical dwelling of what felt as if in the maternal grandfather's house, a sense of the familiarly unsettling as if, to feel the erratic and unstable environment as though physically present that seem to accompany a story as the perception progressed in what seemed to clarify a set of conditions as to set the scene, a sense of explanation of a situation for what had happened to the others present at the time shown within the vision, a sense of confusion and fear, where it appears as though the aggressive man presented as if, to be fighting a young aunt who appeared to fortified herself with a type of protection as a broom with the feeling that it's a weapon to defend against a what was perceived as a</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>terrifying threat followed by what appeared as an attempt to garrison away from the threat that seemed as this man's aggression that then changed as the sister and the aunt seem to escape without taking P6 to the perception as if, being physically abandoned and left behind with a mental and emotional awareness of complete loneliness with somatic feelings of hysterical fear and sorrow in what was described as a very dark place.</p>
<p>Then my only thing I felt safe around was just taken away and I was there by myself after all this fighting is going on. Anyway, I was just beside myself screaming. This is the memory that I had the work, and of course I didn't remember any of this until the work when I laid down. I actually remember hanging on to the bars of the crib and just, I was just crying and felt so lost and scared that I was just beside myself. Then I was just so uncontrollably crying that I just fell backwards and was screaming and everything else.</p>	<p>P6 experienced a feeling terrified and loss of security after witness violence of a childhood event that P6 had blocked from her consciousness until that moment in the ceremony with the help of the medicine. In a lucid vision P6 had a somatic experienced of being completely overwhelmed with devastating grief and fear that she collapsed in the crib onto her back.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling in a sense terrified and helpless during what appeared as a violence episode that seemed to be from her childhood that P6 felt as if, a reclaim memory that felt as though it had been potentially blocked from the conscious mind apparently until that moment in the ceremony with what felt like the facilitation of the plant medicine that through the Miração P6 felt as though being physically back in the crib with a sense of somatic emotionality</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		and envisioned as if, to be reliving a part of what seemed to be P6's childhood life through what felt as a sense of being completely overwhelmed with devastating grief and fear as if, collapsing in deep distress.
<p>I was scared. Then as I'm lying there and then I hear my name. I hear Brandy, through all my sobbing. I quieted down a little bit because I thought I heard something. Then I hear my name again, V, there, there V. Then I pulled myself up back up and off my back onto the bars and I looked and there was this beautiful, beautiful woman. It was like from her torso up and she was like blue, she had like a blue veil and glowing and flowers around her. I know this is the Virgin Mary. Now I know and I knew like as I'm having this memory that it was her and she came to comfort me.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being in a state of fear and crying uncontrollably when she clearly hears her name being gently called. P6 experienced coming to a state of calmness as she response to her name being called and lift herself up into curiosity to see a <i>Miração</i> of the Mother Mary of Infinite Grace radiantly surrounded in flowers and light. P6 experienced a shift in awareness that the Divine Mother had always consoled P6.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling as if, in a state of uncontrollably fear when through what appeared as an auditory sensation of something that's as if, clearly called what sounded like P6's name as if being gently beckoned, a sense of soothing gentleness that reportedly drew the attention away from somatic mental and emotional distress that then felt like it changed as though entering a state of calmness as if, responding to being gently recognized and with somatic curiosity felt a sense to rise up to view what looked to be like an apparition as an augmented part of the <i>Miração</i>, (healing vision) described as the perceived physical presence of what could be identified as the Mother Mary of Infinite Grace that appeared as if, in</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>traditional and symbolic garb, a sense of recognition and relief that held feelings of acknowledge identity, a sense of comfort and admiration that appeared further depicted as radiantly surrounded with fragrant flowers, a sense of immense beauty, warmth, caring and love as a sense of smelling roses filled the space and what seemed to be an increase in the visible light as the space had the sense of being lit up with a brilliance that then had accompanied feelings of beauty, that then felt awe-struck by an alter state of consciousness that shifted awareness to that of being consoled by what's described as a celestial Other, as if, by a form of Divine Feminine energy within visual, somatic and auditory sensations of awareness that was envisioned specifically as what's described as the presence of the Virgin Mary and then felt to convey an impression as if, this presence had always been there with P6 to comfort through what was felt as a sense</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>She was like, “there, there, it's okay V”. She was so beautiful that I pulled myself up on the bars and I was just like cooing and crying at this beautiful lady.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being reassured by the Divine Mother who she felt naturally attracted too.</p>	<p>of an eternal presence of love and reassurance.</p> <p>P6 reported a sense of being comforted through a perceived auditory sensation like being spoken too with a sense of relief through both a somatic feeling of the comfort that arose from being reassured by a divine Other through what appeared as though actually in the presence of this Other accompanied by a kind of visual absorption in a loveliness that conveyed feelings of acceptance and security through what appeared as a celestial Mother that felt naturally appealing as though gaining relief by a sense of being soothed by this particular divine presence.</p>
<p>Had that going on. She was over to my left, so I was looking over off in the corner. Then that guy S comes walking in the room. As soon as he walked in the room she disappeared. Then he's like oh, sweet little V. Then he picked me up and I was so enamored by that woman in the corner that I was still looking over there like where she went.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being in an alter state of awareness of seeing a divine apparition when the man reappears in the room and disturbs the vision by picking her up out of the crib.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling a sense of physical orientation within the location of the others in the shared place that informed the narrative of what seemed to be the disappearance of the divine other as perceived as the Mother Mary that seemed to coincide with the arrival of an alternate other that</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		came with a sense as a recognition of cruelty that then followed with the sensation as though being taken out of the crib with feelings of surprise and confusion as to the apparent sudden change in circumstance.
He picked me and laid me on my back. Then he started unstrapping my diaper and then he pulled my diaper back. Then he started putting his hand up me.	P6 experienced being physically assaulted and violated by the man.	P6 reported having a somatic, auditory and visual sensation of being taken as though being physically lifted up into what felt like the control of another, a sense of uncertainty and confusion that then felt as though being laid down somewhere else with the sensation of having a diaper undone with a sensation like having the diaper pulled away with a sense that felt like exposure then as if, to have the man's hand inside of the body with a mental and emotional awareness that felt like a sense of confusion.
I'm looking over for where'd she goes. Then he was even like, he was wondering what I was looking at, so he looked off over in the corner to see what I was looking at and of course he didn't see anything.	P6 experienced feeling confused at the disappearance of the Divine Mother and seeks for her that causes the man to also look to see what the child is looking for.	P6 reported staying focused on what had been the vision of the Divine other that had felt in attendance, a sense of loss and puzzlement that then shifted to a sensation of confusion at what seemed like the disappearance of the

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>Divine Mother that P6 described the intent as to where that other as the image of Mother Mary had been with such a feeling of focus as if, to cause the man to look and question what P6 was perceiving that P6 then felt this other could not see what was shown to P6, a sense that he was not worthy to have such a vision.</p>
<p>I'm just like whew you know. I was so mesmerized by her and then here he comes in and he just totally ruined the whole thing. Then he's doing this thing to me that's invading my privacy.</p>	<p>P6 experienced feeling disorientated after being torn from the state calm reassuring beauty of the vision into the man's destructive molestation as he assaulted her sexually.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling a sense of exasperation as the notion of being in a state of sacred space filled with somatic feelings of love, recognition and a visual sense of immense beauty, as if, in a place where it felt like peaceful assurance given from what was described as a benefic female other, a sense of a caring mother that then shifted to a sense of disorientation that accompanied a sensation of being torn from the previous feeling of calm reassurance into what felt like a form of assault through what appeared to be the reception of another's acts of aggression that had a somatic sense of feeling as if, being</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		enter by force by the perceived other with a mental and emotional awareness of cruelty with the specific idea that personal space had violated and in a sense been taken away, a sense of loss and abuse.
<p>That went on for about a minute or two and then people came home, like my mom and whoever she's with, they came in. He starts putting my diaper back on and wrapping it back up and they came walking in the bedroom. He goes oh I was just changing her diaper. I remember thinking ... I couldn't speak at the time really. I was a very quiet child anyway. It's not like I could put together in words. I was just thinking that's not what he was doing.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being physically violated for several minutes before others approached causing the man to stop his assault and hide his true actions. P6 experienced feeling unable to speak up for herself as she was too young and did not know how to formulate the words to express what had truly happened, and fully recognized she knew he was lying.</p>	<p>P6 reported being in a state of somatic visual and auditory awareness of what felt like being forcibly penetrated as if, being raped by a perceived other that was like a representative of a person from the past, a sense of conviction and validation as through what was understood was like a kind of a imparted knowledge from the plant medicine that this was somehow an actual true past event as if, it had actually happened as somehow shown, that then appeared to be interrupted by additional others as if, approaching that then followed the distinct sensation as if, having a diaper pull up and fasten to the skin as through a somatic expression with feelings of bewilderment that felt as if, the act lasted for an extended period of</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>time with an emotional, and mental notion that this was an unspeakable act that felt highlighted by the feelings of not having the ability to speak as in a sense to give testimony to the truth along with a mental awareness that was described as knowledge that felt like the other had hid the act through lying. P6 reported feeling a sense of confidence in knowing even at what appeared to be that young age that it felt like the perpetrator misrepresented the truth with a sense of P6 knowing right action from wrong, a sense of validity and resilience.</p>
<p>I grabbed ahold of my aunt and was hanging on to her neck really tight. I remember her even commenting god, what are you hanging on to my neck so tight for. She had come out of the room with my sister because she knew that people had gotten home. Then I pointed over into the corner where the woman was. Everyone was looking over there and they're like oh maybe there was somebody looking, a prowler outside the window. I was thinking in my mind; I'm thinking in my mind that's not it.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being traumatized and clinging to her aunt for protection as she pointed to where the vision had been. P6 experienced she was unable to get the others to validate the vision as they had not seen the vision and she could not communicate about her vision. P6 experienced others guessing about her communication as they could not understand her. P6 experienced knowing others did not understand the truth about what happened.</p>	<p>P6 reported a sense of safety through a perceived visually somatic, emotional and mental awareness that was described as clinging onto the aunt that then felt like P6 immediately preceded to inquire with the others as to what felt like the whereabouts of was seemed like the Divine Mother that had seemed to have gone that then felt that the others were unable to know, a sense of not</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		being understood. P6 reported feeling a sense of being traumatized and felt unable to get validation about the vision with a sense as if, they had no knowledge, incapable as it seemed like there was no way to communicate as it felt as though the others did not understand the truth about what happened, a sense of not being seen, heard or understood.
<p>Anyway, that was a really beautiful profound experience for me. As I was laying there, and I had this whole memory that was actually the first memory I had of any type of being molested.</p>	<p>P6 experienced that the Divine Mother had been with her and she was reminded through an exquisite vision that held the first buried retention of being sexually assaulted as an infant.</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling a sense of healing in a form of insightful awareness as a kind of optimistic sensation helped to give a sense of protection through the presentation of what appeared as new off-putting knowledge within the expression of the <i>Miração</i>, healing vision, through a sense as if, in the presence of a celestial Mother that felt as though a protection through what felt like the process to unfolded what felt like a secret hidden within that seemed to hold trauma that was described as having no prior remembrance that felt in a way genuine as what seemed to be the first incident of what</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		felt like being sexually assaulted as an infant, a sense of shock and revelation that seemed plausible and with a sense of high probability that appeared to have been accepted as valid.
<p>It was also amazing that I, the most beautiful part was that the Virgin Mary came to comfort me. In the Daime that's her church, and she was care taking me from infancy. It was just very comforting. That's a beautiful, beautiful thing to remember. So much so I was like gosh how could I forget something like that, you know? Of course, I was not even two when it happened. That's the first part of that. Should I go on?</p>	<p>P6 experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary being with her to support her since the beginning of her life and that she now was in the Divine Mother's sacred place where she continued to be uplifted. P6 experienced wonder and confusion in what way she could have she recalled this awareness prior but realized she was only a toddler.</p>	<p>P6 envisioned a connection with a celestial Other that was described as the Virgin Mother Mary, felt as a physically present within the <i>Miraçãõ</i>, healing vision, that seemed to constitute by a mentally, emotionally, visually auditory and somatically felt sensation with an accompanied sense of smell of presence with magnificent imagistic and aural sensation that included a sense of warmth and compassion, as was felt like an authentic exchange with feelings described as comfort and reassurance that seemed to soften what was presented as painful knowledge that was described as being sexually abused as though to have a reference to the past that also seemed to keep the focus on a sense of the</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>compassionate awareness that was felt as the Divine Mother presence there as if, always in attendance as a presence felt through the awareness both described as mentally and emotionally with feeling of hope and a sense of faith that felt like that divine presence continues to maintain that same connection as what feels like being watched over as if, in a sense of feeling as though receiving spiritual care. P6 envisioned that through the church that was described as being under the spiritual domain of the Virgin Mary's felt in a sense continuously connected with a sense of synergy like a type of concerted effort through a perceived alignment that felt related and was described as the celestial Other Virgin Mother Mary felt like a life protector, a sense of security and solace. P6 reported a sense of mental preponderance with feelings of confusion in what felt like a lack of recall both in what appeared as potential sexual</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>abuse and a sense that there seemed to be a celestial Other as if, a form of what felt like continuous support that then seem to enter a state of logic with thoughts as if, long ago that then became consciousness of what felt like truth that P6 had been an infant during what was perceived to be the time of abuse, a sense of shock as if, acknowledging an unimaginable act somehow made more unfathomable by the understanding that P6 was apparently less than 2 year.</p>
<p>Okay, again, I was laying down and I was crying just like ... I was just crying. There were just like sort of tears of relief and joy, just a relief really. Unfortunately, since there was a guardian that was on duty that just didn't have very good boundaries. I'm going through this beautiful wonderful experience and needing to cry. This woman just kept coming over to me and asking me if I was okay. I'm trying to tell her, look I'm fine, I'm fine. I need to cry. I tell you she probably asked me like six or seven times, but you're crying. She just</p>	<p>P6 experienced a needed release through her tears as they were cleansing and required for her healing process. P6 experienced another person who could not respect her process and continued to interrupt her healing by inflicting her own agenda on to what P6 should be doing and intruding on her process by constantly requesting to be in dialogue.</p>	<p>P6 reported an intensely deep desire for a sense of physically release through an act of crying as if, to utilize the ability to release tears as a way in kind to release the emotional hardship P6 as what was perceived as the pain that was felt as an awareness of sexual abuse, a sense of sorrow and trauma. P6 reported feeling as though P6's mental and physical boundaries were not being honored as there was another member that felt like an</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>didn't get that the crying was part of it.</p>		<p>intruder in what felt to P6 as like a process of healing. P6 reported encountering another member that felt intrusive with feelings of disconnection and what seem like an inability to communicate to assert what felt like a boundary for personal space that felt like not being heard or understood.</p>
<p>It was just; it was a little distracting when I'm having this process happen that was really beautiful. I was just, felt really held. I felt really loved and cared for. The fact that it just totally moved me to the bone that the Virgin Mary would come and hear my cries and come to comfort me.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being interrupted during her healing process both during the initial vision and at the remembrance. P6 experienced a profoundly life affirming vision that helped to heal her feelings of abandonment and reassured her of Divine support and care.</p>	<p>P6 reported an impression that the process had been derailed with a sense of feeling interrupted by what was described as another member that felt filled with awe and wonder at what felt as if, a life altering connection through what was described as the interaction with the Divine Mother within the <i>Miração</i> that had a sense of being loved and supported by an infinite all loving divine mother as if, someone cared as though P6's pain was acknowledge when needed comfort.</p>
<p>Anyway, at some point it was really hard to, you know, because that guardian just wouldn't leave me alone. I could just see that I wasn't going to be able to lay there</p>	<p>P6 experienced the realization that she would not be allowed to continue her healing process in the way it felt natural to follow because the other person has focused</p>	<p>P6 reported feeling interrupted with a sense of inference by another member that P6 felt ill equipped to communicate even</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>and play it out like I wanted it to be played out because this woman kept coming over to me. She was concerned for me but she just ... I could not make her understand that she need not be concerned for me. I was fine, I was just crying. Anyway, she just, I don't know, she just zeroed in on me and just like wouldn't leave me alone.</p>	<p>their intention onto her and would not leave P6 alone.</p>	<p>though feeling gravely distress and mentally dealing with emotional traumas, actually felt the need to cry in safety that there was a notion of being held by a divine presence of love, a sense of comforting support and that felt the person who appeared as caretaker was not ok with P6's process as a sense of being too traumatic that drew P6 in a sense set aside P6's desire and healing to calm the reaction of the member that felt as if, unable to state the conditions of the internal state that then complied with the desire of the other person feeling in a sense unable to communicate an established boundary.</p>
<p>Then L came by. As I was laying there this other thing was happening with my arm and it was almost like a medium type thing where something else was ... It wasn't like a bad thing at all. I thought it was interesting that some mediumship was coming through with my arm. I laid there for like ten minutes and watched this thing happen with my arm.</p>	<p>P6 experienced an expression of mediumship as she channeled energy through her body that P6 witness with awe inspired curiosity.</p>	<p>P6 reported a sense of being unable to process trauma as wished that shifted awareness to a part of the physical body to act seemingly of its own volition in what appeared to be an expression of mediumship, a sense of being connected to what was thought to be the astral, a sense of freedom as permission to have self-expression where the arm moved</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>in a swaying fashion with a somatic sensation as if, the movement came undirected from an awareness of personal volition instead through some Other that appeared to have in a sense independent physical motor control of the single limb without any feelings of disconnection that seemed to evoke more of a spectacle with feelings of mystery and distraction as acting in a foreign way without feelings of judging the action and allowing it to be ok that felt somewhat of a curiosity as it was happening.</p>
<p>Then L came along and said okay it's time to get up. When I got up, I remember I got up and I was ready to get up and I felt really good. I came up with just like an ear-to-ear grin. I just thought I had went through this really amazing experience. I'm sure everybody else is having their amazing experience but I just couldn't wipe the smile off of my face. Then I went back and sat in my chair and then started, got back into the singing. Of course, I was new at the singing so it's not like I was ... I was doing my best to follow along.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being instructed to come back to standing and as she rose up, she felt a buoyance fill her and color her mood with joy. P6 experienced making a conscious effort to sing well as she returned to group participation.</p>	<p>P6 reported being instructed to stand as though to come to vertical position with a feeling of buoyance and filled with a sense of exuberance joy and happiness as if, being renewed with feelings of enthusiasm that rejoined the singing feeling free to participate making a conscious effort to follow the <i>hinários</i> hymns and participate with the group feeling a sense of belonging and a sense of being</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		inexperience as singing in Portuguese was new.
<p>Then in this same work ... I was moved from where I was sitting. L and N were moving people around. They kept moving me behind M. It was an amazing, amazing place to sit. It was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had in the Daime. I mean along with seeing the Virgin Mary come to help me but Padrinho Sebastião's language had come through N. I felt like there was this line from the ... the Daime serving table was behind me. Then I was behind M, and N was to the right of M. I felt this line going from the Daime table right through the center of my heart and it was like a chord and N was, she was, I can't think of the word right now. Meaning she was doing her mediumship and it was Padrinho Sebastião was coming through her. Then I could feel like something was breathing me, Padrinho Sebastião or I don't know what it was, but my breath was not my own. I was being breathed which was really interesting. That whole process was very, very interesting and I felt totally elevated in this high vibration that was like out of this world. I've never had an experience like that, even till now, and I've had lots of amazing experiences.</p>	<p>P6 experienced being relocated to a new seat behind the leader of the ceremony and felt an astonishingly powerful energetic shift in her consciousness as soon as she was seated in that place. P6 experienced an incredible transformative energy that moved her awareness to encompass the energetic link of force the connected the primary energy centers within the ceremonial space to her psychic awareness in the center of her heart. P6 experienced witnessing a medium channel the revered presence of Padrinho Sebastião that raised the energy within the rite to a level that had allowed members to enter higher states of alternative consciousness. P6 experienced an alternative state of consciousness that had a somatic component of a sensation and awareness that her body was an apparatus that was being operated in an exaggerated fashion by the energetic vibrational forces of the visiting spirit of Padrinho Sebastião in mimicry of breathing. P6 experienced a profound change in her perceptual state of consciousness that allowed her awareness to encompass</p>	<p>P6 reported being physically shifted to a new position in the ceremonial space that was placed behind the leader of the ceremony that seemed to be felt as an astonishingly potent animated alteration felt through a sense of somatic, auditory and emotional awareness as what was described as an encounter with an incredible transformative spiritual energy that had a sense of dynamic momentum and strength expressed as increase physical vigor and heighten sensation of emotional elation that shifted awareness to encompass what felt like an palpable somatic energetic force that seemed both active inside and outside of the physical that seemed connected to what was described as the primary energy centers within the ceremonial space. P6 reportedly felt a somatic connected and envisioned this as a linking force of psychic energy like a direct line of power stretching</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
	<p>an expanded view of totality that effectively uplifted her mental, emotional and spiritual consciousness through the physical senses.</p>	<p>between the power centers within the rite space of the <i>salão</i> sacred space that felt as though it transversed through the heart center with a sense of elevated awareness at witnessing what was described as a medium channel the revered presence of <i>Padrinho Sebastião</i> that seemed to raise the momentum of the ceremony through a sense of excitement within the rite to a level that seemed to influence members to enter what was described as higher states of alternative consciousness. P6 reported an alternative state of consciousness that had a distinctive somatic sensation and mental awareness that the body felt like that of an apparatus that was in a way being operated in an exaggerated fashion by what felt like the energetic vibrational forces of what was described as the visiting spirit of <i>Padrinho Sebastião</i> founding father of mediumistic lineage of the church, in what felt like a mimicry of breathing that felt</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		witnessed in both a feeling of awe and wonder and that of physically sense the body being used as a respirator. P6 reported a profound change in the perceptual state of consciousness that allowed awareness to encompass an expanded view of totality that felt as if, effectively uplifted the mental, emotional and spiritual consciousness even higher to an envisioned higher vibrational realm through the physical senses as what appeared as an impromptu participatory mediumship.
<p>Then when the Padrinho Sebastião said farewell and he left; we went on with the singing. Then I had this other amazing experience. It was all within the two hours of the vision of Mary. I remember even Paolo saying our mother is here in the room with us. That's back when I could smell flowers when she would come up. I'm kind of sad I don't smell them so much anymore, but you could smell these beautiful flowers. Then I knew she was near. There's other signs of course too. I was sitting behind him and I</p>	<p>P6 experienced an alternative state of consciousness that allowed her awareness of the Divine Mother to be witnessed through a somatic experience of smelling fragrant flowers. P6 experienced a shared alternative awareness with other members of a Divine energetic presence in the room. P6 experienced an alternative state of awareness that opened her mind to the Divine Presence of consciousness that appeared in a vision of brilliant light and a feeling of divine glory that sparked feelings of</p>	<p>P6 reported an experience of seemed like shared collective consciousness within the group ritual, a sense of influence that was described as an increased awareness of a spiritual nature that had somatic, visual emotional and mental sensation that included what seemed like the strong fragrance of roses that had a notion to suggest the presence of what was described as Virgin Mother Mary as if, the benefic</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>was like bowed down because I felt like I was at the throne of God. All I could do was bow down because it was so bright in the light and I'm in God's presence. I was just in awe, just in humble service to completely bow down with my hands up in the air. It was just so amazing. It was the most amazing thing. It was an orgasm. I had a complete orgasm in that experience, even checking my underwear later, I've never ... It was amazing.</p>	<p>humility and reverence. P6 experienced a state of enlightened bliss and profound joy that lifted her into a heightened state of ecstasy that included a somatic component of physical arousal ending in an all-embracing sexual climax unlike any other leaving P6 in awe.</p>	<p>celestial energetic presence was in the room. P6 reported a shift in consciousness that had an mental and emotional feeling in awareness of what was described as the Divine Mother's presence that felt in a way to be confirmed through a somatic experience of smelling fragrant roses that were taken as a kind of a sign within the collective group membership that seemed to be a way of affirmation with other members that also reported a similar recognition as a sense of smelling roses, a sense of connectedness as what appeared to suggest a kind of manifestation of Mother Mary within the ceremony. P6 envisioned being amazed with feelings of respect, humility and wonderment by what appeared as a visual expression of increase brightness and somatic intense illumination within a <i>Miração</i>, healing vision of the main altar as if, the seat of God, and envisioned a sense of bowing down with feelings of humbleness at what</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>was described as an altar of divine spiritual energy as if, basking in a Holy Presence and feeling in a way that seemed to radiate through what was described as a physical whole body sensation. P6 reported feeling an ecstatic state emotionally and mentally that seemed to progress to what felt like an explosive level as described as an alternative state of awareness that felt a presence of divine Other that appeared in a spectacle of visual dazzling light and a feeling of celestial grandeur that seemed to provoke feelings of humility and reverence. P6 described a state of what felt like a form of enlightened bliss and profound joy that in a way lifted into a heighten state of what was described as mental and emotional ecstasy that included a somatic component of physical arousal that ended as what felt like an all-embracing sexual climax unlike any other sensation prior and that P6 felt wonderment and a sense of curiosity as to what had seemed to</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		have happened that seemed incomprehensible as if, having no reference point for such an experience.
<p>Then, here we go again. A church member comes along. This was when she really, she did not have her boundaries in check at all. Here I am and it is the most beautiful place I could ever be in my life. She comes and she starts shaking the back of my head, my neck and my shoulders, saying V, V, you need to open your eyes and start singing. I'm just like, I'm in this beautiful place and I'm thinking who in the fuck is back there? Then I'm like okay don't be cussing here at the throne of God. I was really trying to be patient. I didn't know who it was at the time because my eyes were closed, and I was in some other land. I was in another realm; it was totally where I wanted to be. Then somebody takes ... She wouldn't stop; she was like the guardian in there with my other experience. I was in the most heavenly place I could possibly be, and she would not ... She just kept shaking me, shaking me, shaking me. She wouldn't stop, stop, stop. I needed to open my eyes and I needed to start singing. Anyway, I finally just had to leave from that peaceful</p>	<p>P6 experienced being in a euphoric state of blissful consciousness when a church member came behind her and physically assaulted her during her meditation demanding that she begin to sing by violently and repetitively shaking her head back and forth. P6 experienced a delayed reaction to her physical assault because she was so enraptured by the alternative state of consciousness that filled her inner space. P6 experienced ripe anger in response to the assault but mitigated her emotional response back to calm and tried to remain blissful in spite of the continuous assault on her physical body. P6 experienced having to relinquish her blissful inner peace and begin to sing due to the relentless demands of another member. P6 experienced self-awareness that she did not stand up for herself by honoring her own voice in the situation and to keep better boundaries with others. P6 experienced compassion for the other person while still recognizing that P6 desired to be more responsible for</p>	<p>P6 reported being in a euphoric state of blissful consciousness when the awareness was interrupted by another member that physically assaulted P6 during meditation by what was described as demanding that P6 begin to sing by way of violently and repetitively shaking P6. P6 reported feeling ripe with anger in response to the assault but chose to mitigate the immediate emotional response in an attempt to calm and remain in the blissful state that felt warm and comforting despite what felt like an assault on the physical body. P6 reported feeling a familiar sense of having to relinquish personal desires as in a sense of not doing what felt most comforting in order to in some way to accommodate another's desires that made a self-awareness that this felt like an expression of not speaking to</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
<p>place because this woman would not stop. She just wouldn't stop. Anyway, I guess that pretty much sums it up. I just finished the work and that's back when my boundaries weren't so good either because I should have ... She apologized after the work. That old me said, you know, it's okay but really honestly, I should have told her it really wasn't okay. I appreciate you acknowledging you stepped over the line, but I wish I would have spoken my truth about how it affected me at the time rather than saying it's okay.</p>	<p>being clear about what the experience meant to her while allowing others to acknowledge her truth instead of just saying that their actions are permissible because it seemed easier than sharing her feelings about the experience.</p>	<p>demand a sense of honor, respect and in a way claim a personal boundary as feel secure and respected by others. P6 reported a feeling of compassion for the other person while still recognizing what felt like a desire to be more responsible for being clear about what the experience meant to P6, in a way to allow others to acknowledge what P6 saw as truth instead of seeming to act in agreement because somehow finding the words to communicate felt challenging and that seemed easier than sharing feelings about the experience.</p>
<p>I see where that comes from now, too. It's all part of that first experience of being molested.</p>	<p>P6 experienced a profoundly insightful moment of self-awareness while seeing a pattern of abuse that repeats throughout her life in different scenarios that was born out of the initial act of sexual molestation at almost 2 years old that does not honor the autonomy and personal space of P6.</p>	<p>P6 reported having a profoundly insightful, a sense of understanding healing that felt in a way explicative and healing as to bring a sense of compassion within a moment of self-awareness that felt contemplative and that seem to see what was described as a psychological pattern of programming within the mental and emotional reflection that in a way did not honor autonomy and personal boundaries</p>

P6 Meaning units	P6 Transformed meaning units	P6 Further transformations
		<p>due to what was perceived as sexual abuse that was described as repeated throughout life in different scenarios that felt as though began with what was seen during the <i>Miração</i>, healing vision as what was understood as the initial act of sexual molestation that apparently began under 2 years of age.</p>
<p>Yeah, that pretty much wraps up that vision, that most profound vision that I had. Knowing that she's been there for me.</p>	<p>P6 experienced a profound change within the rite through a divine vision of Mother Mary that has P6 recognized it's an eternal presence with her.</p>	<p>P6 reported a profound change as a sense of recognition and support as a mental and emotional expression that an eternal presence of what felt like a celestial other described as the Mother Mary was felt as continuous presence with feelings of hope as if, to reassure and affirm a sense of connection with the Divine Mother that felt actively in attendance.</p>

APPENDIX J  
Participant Art Expression  
RES 9500 P6 creative expression of experience  
Jacqueline Senator Orcutt



APPENDIX K  
Participant Art Expression  
RES 9500 P2 creative expression of experience  
Jacqueline Senator Orcutt

Hinario Little Bird  
received by P2

You are a little bird on wings so wide  
You can fly, you can fly  
You can fly, you can fly  
Above the waves, through the storm  
On wings so wide you will soar  
On wings so wide you will soar

You are a little bird, in a foreign land  
Walk with me, hand in hand  
Into the darkness through the night  
Walk with me, you are the light

You are a little bird, in an open sky  
No one to stop you, nowhere to hide  
Where will you go, who will you be  
What will you know within the dream?