By Adrian Auler, MA

To understand research in the field of psychedelic medicine, it is necessary to define the terms used. The history of uninformed attack on mind-expanding substances in the 1970s resulted in the use of terminology with negative connotations. We compare the relevant terms used, so readers can understand the dialogue of this developing, cutting-edge research at CIIS.

“Entheogen” was first defined in The Road to Eleusis (1978) by Wasson, Hofmann, and Ruck. They proposed “a new term that would be appropriate for describing states of shamanic and ecstatic possession induced by ingestion of mind-altering drugs” (p. 139). “Entheogen” is meant to address the aspects of these medicines that cause shamanic, indigenous cultures to consider them sacred.

Wasson et al. felt the Greek word entheos was appropriate because it means “the god within” and referred to ecstatic possession, prophetic seizure, erotic passion, or the transport of creative artistic states; while the root gen denotes the act of becoming; so the combination means “entering a state of inspiration,” and variations on that theme. Its strict use would refer only to “vision-producing drugs that can be shown to have figured in shamanic or religious rites”. A looser construal may include “other drugs, both natural and artificial, that induce alterations of consciousness similar to those documented for ritual ingestion of traditional entheogens” (p. 139). Entheogens have the pragmatic value to primary cultures of providing visionary cosmology, enhancing one’s comprehension of the world, and facilitating healing; this is why they have earned the adjective “sacred” and are still in use after thousands of years. Psychology has focused mainly on aberrant mental states and behavior, so Wasson et al. wished to avoid labels for sacred substance derived from the root “psycho”—such as “psychotomimetic,” which implies that these substances induce psychosis—due to negative associations arising from the chaos of the 1960s and the ensuing government disinformation campaign.

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Dear new student,

Welcome to CIIS. We are a vibrant community that offers an array of interesting programs and activities designed to support your learning and growth as a student. My hope is that you will become active and engaged participants in this process, and as result, you will feel that you made a wise choice in coming to CIIS. It’s like the reverse of a funnel—you go in what seems like a narrow opening, but then it opens up into a wider view.

This issue of Cambio on entheogens is brought to you by the campus group ERIE (Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education), and is intended to help educate and inform us on an often-misunderstood subject.

I would like to express my appreciation to ERIE for its leadership on this issue and its desire to educate the CIIS community and beyond. ERIE’s work represents the fourth of the CIIS Seven Ideals, which reads:

Fosters multiple ways of learning and teaching. The Institute honors many learning modalities and ways of knowing—intuition, body-knowledge, creative expression, intellect, spiritual insight.

Thank you, ERIE, and keep up the good work.

Shirley Strong
Dean of Students and Director of Diversity

The use of entheogens for healing, divination, spiritual development, and community building extends far into the history of humankind. Terence McKenna suggests that early hominids may have eaten their way to higher consciousness with psilocybin mushrooms on the African savannas long ago. Although it is challenging to determine when entheogens were first used by humans, it is evident that entheogenic plants and fungi have demonstrated sustained communal value in diverse cultures around the world.

From ayahuasca in the Amazon to Amanita mushrooms in Siberia, entheogens play an important role in creating community. They are used to access information to assist individuals and communities in maintaining health, dispelling sickness, and gaining insights for resolving societal challenges. Their global use points toward an innate human curiosity to explore consciousness and commune with others and the great mystery.

ERIE (Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education) recognizes the historical importance of and growing interest in entheogens, and values their role in society. We host events to create a community where information about entheogens is shared in exploration of their potential for providing insight into and healing for modern global challenges. Please join us at the next ERIE event!

Shirley Strong
Dean of Students and Director of Diversity
On April 28, 2012, the ERIE student group hosted “Entheo-Visioning: Exploring Entheogenic Potentials” (www.erievision.org). We convened this conference to invite others to join us in a discussion of cutting-edge research on entheogens. Our vision for the conference was to explore topics outside of the biomedical paradigm.

The response was amazing! The ERIE conference attracted a packed crowd, including a diverse range of academics from Bay Area transpersonal schools—ITP, JFK, Pacifica, and Stanford—and Bay Area residents who were hungry for serious, grounded research with a new vision. Our event included such topics as San Pedro, cannabis, Iboigane, 5-Meo-DMT, LSD, and ayahuasca; entheogenic nutrition; integration of experience; reconnecting with nature; Jungian archetypes; alchemy; and the ontology of entheogenic spaces.

In the movie DMT: The Spirit Molecule, Rick Strassman suggests that biomedical science faces a theoretical dilemma because they can’t explain the processes experienced in the mystical states of consciousness induced by entheogens. ERIE’s vision, as expressed in our conference, is to learn from the indigenous elders who have known this for millennia; and to continue research in a Western, academic framework so we, too, can understand this important human dimension that assists our search for meaning in the cosmos.

Our Vision
We believe that the time has come to recognize and acknowledge the harmful effects of the materialist-reductionist paradigm on the human psyche and society. ERIE is engaged in crafting in its place a multidimensional, integral, and evolutionary worldview that we believe offers the best hope for the future of our species and the biosphere. It entails remembrance of our once-respectful relationship with nature and the lessons that it has to offer us.

Our Temporal Stance
Entheogens have been used since prehistory by indigenous peoples and we seek to partake of the corpus of information, both natural and supernatural, their elders have learned from Plant Teacher and held in trust for millennia. We honor our modern elders such as Hoffman, Grof, the Shulgins, Metzner, Leary, Luna, and McKenna; standing on their broad shoulders to survey the current state of entheogenic research. Looking forward, we strive to envision the coordination of ancient indigenous wisdom with current Western research in order to render a composite picture, both meaningful and applicable to the life of contemporary Westerners.

Our Purpose
We invite others to join our efforts to conceive this synthesis and achieve an inspired, creative vision of the future.
ERIE GROUP PROFILE

ERIE—Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education—began as a group of student researchers in the East-West Psychology program, looking for space in which to discuss entheogenic experiences. In spring 2012 we formed a CIIS student group to become more organized, host events, and share our research. Our first public project was the successful Entheo-Visioning conference held in April, organized a month after our formation.

The purpose of ERIE’s three functions is summed up in its mission statement: The Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education mission is to provide a safe context for three areas of the entheogenic dialogue: 1) discussing contemporary research and scholarship involving sacred medicine, 2) holding space to share and integrate those experiences, and 3) envisioning an educational paradigm involving plant teachers in a Western context.

We continue to organize new academic dialogues. We’re developing peer integration groups because many therapists do not currently have non-pathological language for the entheogenic experience, whereas fellow journeyers do; also, peers can relate better.

Core members of ERIE are Amata Albero, MA; Adrian Auler, MA; Alan Jones, BA; Natalie Metz, ND; Larry Norris, MA (founder); Krista Rhinehart, MFTi; and Jordane Tofighi, MA. ERIE is supported by EWP adjunct faculty Susana Bustos, PhD; EWP coordinator Ishtar Kramer, MA; and EWP core faculty Craig Chalquist, PhD.

ANNOUNCING

THE CIIS KRANZKE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP FOR PSYCHEDELICS AND ENTHEOGENS

by Frank Echenhofer, PhD

The Robert Joseph and Wilhelmina Ann Kranzke Research Scholarships are awards of up to $5,000 per year for research and study of psychedelic/entheogenic plants or substances. The approaches acceptable for a Kranzke research project include a wide range of disciplinary and methodological perspectives, including the psychology of consciousness; historical, literary, ethnographic, shamanic, spiritual, therapeutic, indigenous, or traditional healing practices; educational; and others to be determined by the Kranzke committee.

The Kranzke committee is a CIIS faculty committee comprised of CIIS core faculty members.

Students interested in applying for a Kranzke Scholarship should initially approach a CIIS core faculty member to sponsor his/her research. The CIIS faculty Kranzke sponsor has the responsibility to supervise all phases of the Kranzke research from the initial application to the completion of the research project in accordance with the Kranzke research guidelines.

The guidelines for the Kranzke Research Scholarship are currently under review. Please check MyCIIS for more information once the guidelines and application become available.
In the past few decades, the shamanistic and religious use of visionary plants and fungi has been progressively more available to the Western seeker. Within this equation, we find phenomena such as the international expansion of the Brazilian ayahuasca churches, Westerners undertaking apprenticeship with indigenous or mestizo shamans in and outside their original countries, maestros traveling worldwide, and the emergence of a variety of ritual forms and understandings of these substances as they spread, including—I may venture—the therapeutic use of high doses of their active principles.

Since the offerings have grown along with the demand, we may expect an increase of people seeking or needing integration after rituals that do not hold, as part of their practice, a stable group of peers and/or a deeper bonding with the guide, and where their participants tend to be left to their own resources shortly after the work is over. Even if full transformative experiences may occur, most often people need support and conscious intent in order to assimilate and express in actions the inner openings that these powerful experiences can catalyze. The fact is, the understanding of self and the cosmos may clash in the insights gained during ritual work, or, on the other side of the spectrum, the experience may end up stored as a curious story in the back of one’s mind.

Drawing from the knowledge of entheogenic traditions and research on the therapeutic use of psychedelics, we find that integration is not a mere result of how one deals with the experience afterwards, but that it is highly influenced by how one prepares for and faces it, as well as by one’s relationship to the given ritual setting, including the guide, the group, and the entheogen itself. In other words, one co-creates the impact that the experience will have in one’s life from the moment one says yes to its possibility. But there is more to this.

One of the biggest challenges when participating in practices nested in shamanic-oriented cultures is that, as Westerners, we miss much of the cosmological container they offer. Each phase, action, and ritual object is embedded in meaning. Whether simple or rich in complexity, this container offers a road map to those aiming to sink into the depths of the psyche and the mysteries of the unseen. As a neophyte from another culture and paradigmatic stance, one barely perceives this container, and even less can one make conscious use of it. It requires a great deal of openness, courage, and engagement with a particular entheogenic tradition to get the most out of what it presents to us.

The quest for integration has many layers: individual, social, cultural, paradigmatic. Certainly belonging to a culture that legitimates and supports the entheogenic ritual work makes integration smoother. It also allows us to better identify the pitfalls along the path, and the shadow aspects of the tradition. In the absence of such a culture, creating bridges that permit us to engage with the voices of our native elders may be a first sane step to undertake.

Susana Bustos is an adjunct faculty member in the East-West Psychology program at CIIS, where she teaches Entheogenic Shamanism and the Research Colloquium. As a therapist, she has specialized in supporting the integration of experiences in non-ordinary states of consciousness. Presently, Bustos is conducting clinical work and research at Takiwasi, a Peruvian center devoted to the exploration of the crossroads between traditional Amazonian medicine and Western psychotherapy.
OK, you finally decided what your passion and intellectual interests are—but they are considered illegal by our government and by mainstream society under the reigning paradigm.

“Illegal?” you say, “But what better way to research the mind and human consciousness and learn about indigenous healing than through entheogenic tools that have been used safely all over the world and have withstood the test of time? How frustrating it is to be immersed in a culture where the superiority complex of modernity leads to closed-minded thinking about ancient ways!” you say to yourself.

But this article is not about how to fight the system; you may be doing that for the rest of your academic career. It focuses on how to tell others—your parents and community—why you’ve chosen to pursue an intellectual quest that is considered high risk, controversial, and illegal. What are some strategies that might help your family and community to understand your choice? These methods do not guarantee support, but they may help you to connect with your authentic self during your entheogenic “coming-out” process.

1. Transparency
Be honest about your choice to be an entheogenic scholar when you talk to anyone: parents, people on the plane, when waiting in line, and anyone who asks you what you do for a living. The more bold and transparent you are, the more likely it will be that people will listen to you. It shows you have thought it out and that you are an ethical, qualitative researcher. Plus you can become a Jane or Johnny Appleseed by sowing seeds of thought!

2. Personal transformation
Share information about the personal transformation and healing these medicines have facilitated in people, emphasizing the difference between taking them with sacred intention or just for recreation.

3. Historical usage
Be ready to explain the indigenous shamanic use of entheogens and compare it with historical Western references (e.g., the Eleusian mysteries; the myth of Santa Claus, etc.) with which most Westerners are unfamiliar. That may give them pause for thought!

4. Successes in biomedical science
Relate current success stories about the use of these medicines in the context of healing (e.g., MAPS trials with MDMA for treating PTSD in veterans, psilocybin to help with anxiety relief in the terminally ill, ibogaine for treating opiate addiction, etc.).

5. Mainstream academic institutions
Mention that Johns Hopkins, UCLA, and NYU are involved in some of the above-mentioned ground-breaking research.

6. Framing the issue
Use contemporary language that avoids the stigma attached to entheogens by detractors. It derives from the propaganda used by reactionaries who opposed the cultural revolution of the 1960s and ’70s.

GOOD LUCK ON YOUR JOURNEY; WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING THROUGH THE PARADIGM SHIFT WITH YOU IN THE FUTURE!
LIST OF RECENT ENTHEOGENIC STUDIES

This short list of important contemporary entheogenic research, most at mainstream institutions, was taken in part from projects being funded by MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (www.maps.org) and the Heffter Institute (www.heffter.org).

**Johns Hopkins** (2006)—*The spiritual significance of mystical-type experiences with psilocybin.*

**NYU** (in progress)—*Psilocybin for treatment of anxiety in terminal cancer patients.*

**Harvard Medical School** (under development)—*Psilocybin and LSD in the treatment and prevention of cluster headaches.*

**UCLA-Harbor Medical Center** (in progress)—*Psilocybin in the treatment of cancer patients.*

**University of Arizona** (in progress)
—*Psilocybin in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder.*

**Imperial College, London** (2012)
—*Psilocybin for the treatment of depression.*

**MAPS** (in progress)
—*MDMA for relief of PTSD in Veterans.*

**Takiwasi, Peru** (in progress)
—*Ayahuasca in the treatment of substance abuse.*

**St. Kitts, W.I.; Healing Visions Institute for Addiction Recovery, Ltd.** (study completed and data sent to FDA, 2007)
—*Ibogaine for the treatment of addiction.*

The term “hallucinogen” implies that visions experienced under the influence of psychedelics are illusory and meaningless. Dr. Humphrey Osmond, the American physician who coined the word “psychedelic” in 1957 because the root “psyche” is anomalous, hoped it would convey “reveals the soul” instead of mental delusion. Dr. Timothy Leary and graduate student Ralph Metzner of Harvard were partly responsible for its popularization in the counter-cultural revolution forty-five years ago, after they had some success in treating alcoholism with LSD, and due to Dr. Leary’s positive personal experiences. But “the Establishment,” or entrenched powers, reacted to the wave of rebellion and liberation characterizing the simultaneous emergence of the psychedelic revolution, the sexual revolution, and the civil rights movement with a propaganda campaign that defamed psychedelic use with inaccurate, sometimes totally false, often hysterical misinformation. Wasson et al. did not feel that shamans taking sacred medicine in a solemn ceremony for the purpose of healing or guidance should be seen as taking a “psychedelic” substance, with its negative popular connotations.

William A. Richards (2002) emphasized that these substances had been used “in the context of religious ceremonies” for more than 2000 years by cultures where they were considered sacred (p. 144). He, too, prefers the term entheogen and quotes Brother David Stendl-Rast (2001) as saying that entheogens might be best understood as “sacramentals—a manifestation of nature...through which faith encounters God’s power”; or we might say, “the divine.”

Entheogenic researchers at CIIS prefer to not use the term “drugs,” which refers only to physical effects resulting from their use. Entheogens do produce physical effects, but these are incidental to the purpose for taking them. Entheogens are used for their broad-spectrum, psycho-emotional amplification and introspective properties, not for their physiological effects.
ERIE (Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education) was constituted as a student group at the end of March 2012 and organized the Entheo-Visioning Conference a month later. Over the summer we screened two films: *Ibogaine: Rite of Passage* and *Entheo: Genesis*. In late July, we orchestrated a presentation and panel discussion examining the use of entheogens for the treatment of addictions within the larger context of culture and society.

ERIE has also begun another type of event: our integration circles. We began sponsoring circles during the summer and plan to continue them through the school year. These peer support groups create a safe space in which extraordinary experiences can be shared and, if so desired, discussed. The space held by the circle is nonjudgmental and anonymous.

On October 6, 2012, ERIE hosted Justin Panneck, author of *The Knight of Darkwood: The Last Tree Whisperer*. He spoke about “Entheogens, Alchemy, and Archetypes.”

ERIE core members are student volunteers working hard to organize events for CIIS and the Bay Area community. Stay tuned for exciting new developments as the fall progresses!

REVIEW
OF THE ERIE SYMPOSIUM: NOVEMBER 4, 2012
by Adrian Auler and Larry Norris

It rocked! About twenty-five people were present as the event began, but the crowd grew to at least sixty by the afternoon. We estimate more than eighty people attended. Psychedelic SF, a local, non-academic organization that has assisted ERIE since our inception, hosted a table there, showing their support of ERIE yet again.

These were the symposium’s presentations: Frank Echenhofer spoke about methods for navigating and integrating visionary experiences arising from entheogenic and other practices. He will offer a course on this topic in the spring. Indigo Warman delivered a fact-filled talk about the medical and spiritual uses of marijuana and the current status of legislation concerning its use. Larry Norris described his process of expressing the encounter with plant teacher through the medium of art. Veronica Hernandez gave a captivating account of her developmental journey as a Peruvian therapist. She described the intersection of sexuality, sensuality, and spirituality in nature and through entheogenic shamanic practice as an expression of embodied spirituality. Keynote speaker Robert Forte delivered an engaging talk illuminating dark aspects in the history of entheogens, such as their co-opting by governmental and military organizations, and problems that can arise from a naïve approach to their use. His talk sparked many questions and comments. The crowd was very involved and many lingered after the event to share impressions.

ERIE will host its last event this semester, a discussion of health and entheogens led by Natalie Metz, on December 3, 2012. Stay tuned!