

The Healing Power of the *Curanderos'* Songs or "*Icaros*":

A Phenomenological Study

Dissertation Proposal

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ABSTRACT

The literature on the healing effect of the Peruvian Amazonian curanderos' songs or icaros is scarce despite their central position in the curanderos' healing practices, particularly in ayahuasca rituals. The purpose of this study is to explore in-depth the experience of the icaros as healing with a focus on the perception of their musical features, during a lived sound-recorded ayahuasca group ritual. The study will be conducted at Takiwasi, center for the study of traditional medicine and the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Tarapoto, Peru, as well as in other areas of the Upper Amazon. Participants will be five men and women with prior experience with the brew who have intensely felt one or more icaros as healing. The research approach is qualitative and the method phenomenological. Data collection will be based on the participants re-listening to musical extracts of the session and subsequently entering a writing and open-ended interviewing process about their experiences.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background Context

This study aims to explore in depth the experience of the songs utilized by Peruvian Amazonian healers in their practices, or “*icaros*”, as healing, in the context of the ritualistic use of “*ayahuasca*”. *Ayahuasca* is a powerful hallucinogenic brew with psycho-integrator properties, used for millennia in shamanic practices in the Upper Amazon and Orinoco basins (De Rios, 1972; Luna, 1984; Metzner, 1999). Even though the *icaros* are considered the main expression of the healers’ or “*curanderos*” power and have a central place in their healing practices (Giove, 1997; Luna, 1992), specific literature on them is scarce, particularly with respect to how the *icaros* heal. There are two groups of studies that have considered *icaros* so far. Social and medical anthropological studies analyze the cultural, spiritually-centered perspective of the *curanderos* on the matter, or refer to socio-cultural factors that may influence this healing effect. Very few of them consider psychological aspects. Ethnomusicological studies are rare or have focused on the healing songs of particular indigenous groups.

How does music affect healing is the broader contextual query that motivates this study. This quest is anchored in personal experiences and professional developments of the researcher on the roles of music in expanded states of consciousness, and the effects of music, particularly of singing and chanting, on physical, psycho-spiritual, and social transformation. Particular interest is put on studying and spreading out traditional healing practices involving the use of music that are culturally close to the researcher. This study aims to shed some light on this broader question from one particular manifestation in a specific cultural context and healing setting. The focus on the healing experience of the songs under study is expected to contribute to the understanding of what is the essential meaning structure that supports the perception of music as healing.

Description of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore in depth the experience of the icaros as intensely healing for five usual ayahuasca drinkers, men and women, during a sound-recorded ayahuasca ritual. The icaros are the main healing tools used by the traditional Amazonian healer during ayahuasca sessions. Participants are requested to be experienced drinkers –to have had twelve or more sessions- in order to support a higher discriminatory capacity from multiple experiences under the effects of ayahuasca (Shanon, 2002). The study seeks to describe comprehensibly and vividly the phenomenon as it was lived, with a particular focus on the perception of musical features that may have stood out in the healing experience of the icaros. Specifically, this study attempts to collect information about the kinds of feelings, physical sensations, and mental processes present during the experience, and to describe their psychological meanings or essences for the participants.

The methodological approach selected for this study is qualitative research, since it directly addresses the multidimensionality of the human nature, and offers enough flexibility and rigor to explore in situ a scarcely studied phenomenon like the one under research. The particular research method to be utilized is Descriptive Phenomenology (Giorgi, 1985). This method focuses on the meanings attached to the experiences in order to bring forth the structural psychological essence of a phenomenon. Listening to musical extracts of the session will remind the participants of their lived experiences, cautioning a richer description of them. Written reports and open-ended, in-depth interviews will constitute the basic data to be analyzed.

The study will be mainly conducted in Takiwasi, Peru, center for the study of traditional Amazonian medicine and for the rehabilitation of drug abuse, and in other areas in the Upper Amazon during a six months period. The center utilizes ayahuasca

rituals as the major therapeutic tool around which the rest of the methods revolve. The Peruvian context offers a legal frame to the use of ayahuasca for healing purposes.

Significance of the Study

This exploratory research is expected to shed light on the psychological meaning structure of a healing phenomenon typically sought for in Amazonian healing practices. Its relevance is threefold: (1) it would contribute to enrich the psychological understanding of a culturally bonded phenomenon, central in Peruvian traditional medicine, which has been mainly studied whether from the ethnocentric perspective of the curanderos or from the perspective of the social anthropologist; (2) the study expects to contribute to the existent body of knowledge on the healing effects of music, particularly of songs under the influence of hallucinogenic plants consumed in ritual context; (3) the exploratory character of the study aims to open up areas for developing further specific research on the phenomenon.

This study enriches and broadens the East-West Psychology perspective because it approaches particular healing aspects of an important Western shamanic tradition, normally not considered as a part of the Western psycho-spiritual heritage. Eastern has developed complex musical healing systems that may share universal aspects with the use of music in Amazonian healing practices, which would be interesting to explore in further studies.

Key Concepts

The concept of healing is used in this study in a broad integral sense. It implies the improvement and/or maturation of the health condition of one or more of the dimensions of a person: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual, resulting in a

positive systemic impact on all of them (Jaimovich et al, 1997). Healing implies a subjective experience as well as objective external signs of improvement of the health condition of an individual. This study will focus on the subjective experience of healing.

The concepts of icaros and ayahuasca rituals are developed and contextualized in depth in the next section.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on icaros is scarce and is normally found as one of the elements considered in broader anthropological studies on Amazonian shamanism.

Given the specificity of the research topic and in order to bring it forth from its background position in the literature, this section starts covering the particular theme of the icaros. Then, it progressively contextualizes it into its general related themes, namely icaros in amazonian shamanism or “*curanderismo*” and in ayahuasca healing rituals. Subsequently, a broader subsection about the use of music for healing and therapeutic purposes is developed, emphasizing its role in shamanic healing practices. The logic of the presentation goes therefore from the particular to the general, offering an initial understanding of what the theme under study is, and then, presenting a gradual contextual perspective.

Icaros in Context

Generalities.

Icaro is the generic name given to the songs utilized by the urban “*mestizo curanderos*” –or mixed race healers- of the Peruvian Amazon basin and by some indigenous healers of this region during their ritual works (Giove, 1993; 1997; De Rios,

1972; Katz & De Rios, 1971; Metzner, 1999; Luna, 1984; 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991).¹ Luna (1992, p. 233), speculates the word *icaro* to be a castilianism from the Quichua² verb *ikaray*, which means “to blow smoke” in order to heal.³ The verb “*icarar*” employed by the curanderos indicates the ritual act of singing or whistling an icaro on a person, substance, or object, in order to invest it with a specific power or property - protection, healing, cleanness, vigor-, as well as to influence the will or cause harm to a person (Giove, 1993; Luna, 1992). The icaros are employed in healing contexts – preparation of remedies, healing sessions-, in special activities –fishing or hunting for certain animals, bewitching-, and in ayahuasca rituals, one of the main psychoactive plant-brews used in amazonian curanderismo for diagnosis, healing, divination, and learning purposes (Luna, 1992; Metzner, 1999). Icaros have been described as the “quintessence of shamanic power” (Luna & Amaringo, 1991, p. 13), the curandero’s “healing weapon, the wisdom, the means of his personal energy, the symbol of his power, his heritage to the apprentice” (Giove, 1997, pp. 7-8), including but transcending the healing context.

Despite their crucial role in curanderismo, the literature on icaros is scarce. They have been mainly studied or referred to by socio-cultural and medical Anthropology. Ethnomusicological studies on icaros have been conducted by Katz & De Rios (1971), Padilla in Luna (1984), among a few others. However, the literature in both fields is broader regarding the shamanic songs of particular amazonian indigenous groups (Bellier, 1986; Hill, 1992; 1993; Gebhart-Sayer, 1985; Lucas, 1971; McLean, 1994; Olsen, 1973; Siskind, 1990). The increasing scientific and popular interest in the healing, therapeutic, and visionary properties of the ayahuasca brew in the last decade, has motivated some psychiatrists, transpersonal psychologists and ethnopsychologists to pay attention to their utilization in ritual contexts, in which music in the form of songs and hymns appears to play a crucial role (Andritzky, 1989; Giove, 1993; Metzner, 1998;

1999a).⁴ Even though the literature repeatedly alludes to the musical experience during ayahuasca rituals, Shanon's (2002) study on ayahuasca is the only one that offers a systematic phenomenological perspective of the music under the effects of the brew. His study is broad, and refers to music that ranges from classical to ethnic as one of the elements of the ayahuasca experience in different contexts.

Icaros in Vegetalismo.

Peruvian mestizo curanderos combine the use of medicinal plants, icaros, tobacco blowing, sucking the sickness, and often massage, baths, diets, and other techniques, in order to address the physical, psychosomatic, and psychosocial healing requests of a vast urban poor and rural population that still nestles strong indigenous elements (Giove, 1993; Luna, 1984; 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991; Mabit, J., 1993; Zuloaga, 1997).⁵ They refer to themselves as "*vegetalistas*", thus pointing out that their power and medicinal knowledge derive directly from the spirits or "*madres*" (mothers) of certain plants, also called plant-teachers or "*doctores*" (doctors), usually psychoactive (Chaumeil, 1993; Luna, 1984; Luna & Amaringo, 1991; Mabit, M., 1996; Metzner, 1999; 1999b; Narby, 1998). It is often a tutor-vegetalista who mediates the transmission, protecting the apprentice and indicating him or her the strict conditions of isolation, diet and sexual abstinence needed to receive the knowledge from the plant-teacher, which comes in the form of visions or dreams. It is in this initiation period, but also after it that the *vegetalista* receives the *icaros* from the plants and from the tutor (Andritzky, 1989; Chaumeil, 1993; Giove, 1997; Luna, 1992).

In the *vegetalista* cosmology, each animate and inanimate being has *icaros*, even stones and metals (Luna, 1992). According to Luna & Amaringo (1991, p. 13), "The *icaros* and the phlegm⁶ -both of them have material and unmaterial qualities- represent a transference of the spirits of each plant, with all their knowledge and theriomorphic and anthropomorphic manifestations, into the body of the shaman", therefore constituting his

or her essential power. By singing the icaros, the vegetalista can whether use the properties of the plant, animal, or object, or unite with it.

Luna (1992) identifies six types of icaros according to their function: (1) for calling or invoking a person, plant, animal, also mentioned by Katz & De Rios (1971), McLean (1994), and Siskind (1990) among the Sharanahua; (2) for protection –*icaros arkana*-, whether for the curandero or the client, also in De Rios (1971); (3) for winning the love of someone –*huarmi icaros*-; (4) for healing and curing, in Luna (1984), Bellier (1986) among the Mai Huna people, Gebhardt-Sayer (1985) among the Shipibo-Conibo people; (5) to modify the effect of ayahuasca or other plant teachers, also in De Rios (1971; 2002), Katz & De Rios (1972), Narby, (1998), Presser-Velder (2000); (6) for other purposes, for example, to affect the elements.

Icaros in Healing.

The etiology of illnesses among vegetalistas is usually attributed to external causes, like envy, malice, or revenge of people, dead spirits, or the spirits of nature, and is produced by soul-loss, intrusion of pathogenic objects, or breaching of a taboo or group norm. These beliefs are remnants of indigenous cosmologies and are widespread among the Peruvian population (Andritzky, 1989; De Rios, 2002; Luna & Amaringo, 1991). However, in their treatments curanderos often incorporate Christian symbolism (Giove, 1993), which represents a cosmological syncretism. According to some anthropologists, curanderos are playing a key cultural role bridging, giving meaning, and integrating different cultural beliefs, thus constituting a referent for groups experiencing acculturation trauma, as well as taking care primarily of culture-bound syndromes (Mizrach, 2003) of psychosomatic character (De Rios, 1971; Luna, 1984).⁷ With respect to the curanderos' concept of health, Zuluaga (1997, p. 131) affirms that they “recognize the illnesses with a broader criterion than in modern medicine, since not only the body is checked, but also the personal story, the relationships with oneself and with others, the

lifestyles, emotions, and desires”.⁸ Health does not only refer to the physical realm but also means to be in harmony with the visible and invisible environment. The body seems to be conceived as a mind-body unity, dwelled yet transcended by a spiritual dimension (Mabit, J., 1996; 2003).

The icaros seem to synthesize the healing beliefs: they are conferred magical properties; icaros are mostly sung in Quichua or Spanish, therefore partly understood; their words allude to plants, animals, and spirits that have power and symbolism or are embedded in mythic conceptions, but also allude sometimes to biblical passages or Christian symbols; some of them even take the melodies of popular songs (De Rios, 1971; Giove, 1993).⁹ The melody itself is believed to have healing powers (De Rios, 2003; Giove, 1993; Luna & Amaringo, 1991), aspect that from a music therapeutic standpoint can activate different layers of sonic identity -included the sonic social and archetypal structures- thus contributing to recover and reconstitute the person's wholeness (Benenzon, 1998; Benenzon et al, 1997)¹⁰. Through chanting, the curandero is believed to communicate with the spirits realm, and to mediate the healing. The singing voice as embodied song could be seen as constituting a relational bridge among clients, curandero and spirits, concrete and magic at the same time, which seems to synthesize the essence of the integral health beliefs. See Rittner (1996) and Rittner & Hess (1996) for the relational aspects of the singing voice.

Ayahuasca Healing Rituals

In vegetalismo, ayahuasca (*Banisteriopsis caapi*, the vine of the soul) is conceived as one of the most powerful plant-teachers, and has been extensively used among indigenous groups of the Upper Amazon and Orinoco basin for millennia (Luna & White, 2000; McKenna et al, 1998). Ayahuasca, known with names like “yage”, “*natem*”, “*nishi*”, “*Santo Daimé*”, is a psychointegrator brew prepared with a vine of the same

name and other plants, which give it its hallucinogenic properties.¹¹ Pharmacologically, of the four alkaloids contained in the drink, DMT or N-Dimethyltryptamine is the chief responsible for the hallucinogenic effects, while harmine, a MAO inhibitor present in the vine, prolongs these effects in the body (Callaway, 1999; Riba and Barbanoj, 1998).¹²

Ayahuasca is known traditionally as “*la purga*” –the purgative– given its strong emetic properties (De Rios, 1971; Luna, 1984; Mabit, 2003; Mizrach, 2003). Physically, it also produces in some people diarrhea, salivation, and sweating, among other symptoms (Zuloaga, 1997). Psychologically, the brew has been described with the metaphors of non-specific amplifier of psychic contents and microscope, alluding to its power to give direct access to hidden and subtle realms of the human psyche (Metzner, 1998; 1999a).¹³ It is also affirmed that it offers a full confrontation with the true self, promoting the integration of the whole person (Andritzky, 1989; Mabit, 2003; Shanon, 2002). Some studies show positive healing effects on cancer (Quinlan, 2001; Topping, 2002), drug abuse rehabilitation (McKenna et al, 1998; Giove, 2002), and general psychological maturity (McKenna et al, 1998).

In vegetalismo, apart of its role during the initiatory period, the brew is taken ritualistically, usually in groups, for the purposes of diagnosing and/or curing illnesses and for accessing hidden knowledge through divination, communication with the spirits, or traveling to distant places (Andritzky, 1989; Luna, 1984; Metzner, 1999).¹⁴

The Ritual Healing Context.

Employing Leary’s term (1964)¹⁵, the “setting” of the ritual is as follows. Clients are encouraged to follow a specific diet and sexual abstinence before the session (Mizrach, 2003; Mabit, J. 1993). Usually, the rituals are conducted in a natural context, at night. People sit in a circle on the floor, led by the “*ayahuasquero*” –name given to the vegetalista specialized in ayahuasca-, who sets a kind of altar in front of him or her with the shamanic tools, namely the brew, the “*schacapa*” –a bundle of dry leaves used as a

rattle-, “*mapachos*” –tobacco cigarettes- or a pipe for tobacco, “*agua de florida*” –a type of cologne water-, magical stones, personal power objects, and sometimes, other musical instruments. First, there is a conversation phase while the participants arrive; second, a non-verbal working phase starts, in which the ayahuasquero charges the brew through blow-smoking and whistling and gives an amount to every participant; third, during the effects of the brew, that last from four to six hours, the session is conducted in the dark, being reality mediated by aural, smell, and eventually touch stimuli with the schacapa; fourth, there is a final conversation phase with the participants who stay (Andritzky, 1989; De Rios, 1971).

The role of the ayahuasquero is that of guiding the experience, protecting, modulating, and controlling the group and individual factors involved in the ceremony through the icaros (Giove, 1993; Presser-Velder, 2000), doing healing interventions, and sometimes translating the visions into meaningful contents (De Rios, 1972).¹⁶

Ayahuasca Icaros.

They are sang and/or whistled, and are accompanied at specific times by the rhythmic, massive sound of the schacapa¹⁷ (De Rios, 1972; Luna, 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991; McLean, 1994; Mizrach, 2003). Their main practical functions are to influence, structure, and promote the continuity and flow of the trance state, affecting the quality and the content of the experience (Andritzky, 1989; Metzner, 1998; 1999c; Narby, 1998; Presser-Velder, 2000).¹⁸ According to Giove (1993, p. 10), under trance effect the icaros help to metabolize the visions, remove subjective contents, guides the self-exploration, and is at the same time the link to the normal plane of reality. Ritually, the first icaros sung are for protection, invoking spirit helpers, and for “*subir mareacion*” or calling the visions. Then, specific icaros are chosen according to the health needs of the participants (Chaumeil, 1993; Gebhardt-Sayer, 1985; Siskind, 1990). If someone

becomes frightened, “*icaros para sacar mareacion*” or to decrease the intensity of the visions are sung (Luna, 1984; 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991).

De Rios (1972; 2002) and Katz & De Rios (1971) suggest that the quickening or slowing down of the visions is related to fast or slow rhythmic patterns in the songs.¹⁹ Metzner (1999a) also attributes a central role to the steady, fairly rapid rhythm of the icaros, which would keep the flow of the visions, avoiding to get stuck in any type of experience.²⁰ The soft, soothing quality of the singing and whistling would have a calming effect during the rush, smoothening the entrance into the unconscious realms (Katz & De Rios, 1971). The mathematical structure of music in terms of tone and rhythm has been suggested by De Rios (2003) to operate as a “jungle gym”, offering to the person under ayahuasca influence culturally programmed pathways to follow. It has been suggested that the use of precise tones through whistling as well as the preponderance of certain intervals in the melody of the icaros, would have a role at the physiological, chemical, and/or energetic levels of the experience (Giove, 1993; Katz & De Rios, 1971; Mizrach, 2003).

Because musical analyses of icaros are few and narrow it is difficult to draw general conclusions about their musical characteristics. However, it can be said that their rhythm tends to be regular and fast, with variations that include syncopes. At the melodic level, the diatonic pentatonic scale typical of Andean music seems to be preferred, being the normal intervallic distance not broader than of fifth. The structure of the songs tends to be of a maximum of three to five musical phrases that are repeated several times. Expressively, the icaros are sung softly with few variations, and often include blows and suction at the end. These general features were taken comparing the studies from Katz & De Rios (1971); McLean, (1994); and Padilla in Luna (1984).

Other Ayahuasca Music.

The ayahuasca brew is consumed ritually as a sacrament in three Brazilian syncretic churches: Santo Daime, Barquinha, and Uniao do Vegetal, having the last two ones spread to Europe and the United States. All of them include chanting or solo singing as one of the components of their collective rituals (Metzner, 1998; 1999c). Particularly interesting at this respect is the Santo Daime church, which gathers its doctrine in “*hinarios*” or collections of hymns channeled by different members under the ayahuasca effects (Luna & White, 2000; Polari, 1999). The singing of the hymns involves the entire congregation, led by a group of female singers, accompanied by simple rhythmic dancing.

Neo-shamanic groups that use ayahuasca ritualistically, combine evocative recorded music with singing and/or rattling (Metzner, 1998). Shanon (2002) describes the use of classical music in this context.

Phenomenology of the Musical Experience Under Ayahuasca Effects.

Shanon (2002) points out that the main sensation under ayahuasca is that of otherworldliness, entering into an unknown reality.²¹ Although the visual phenomena under ayahuasca are the most salient ones, all other perceptual modalities are also enhanced (Shanon, 1998; 2002). Audition is sensed to be more acute and subtler (Katz & De Rios, 1971), so that music and sounds feel fuller and stronger and there is the perception of getting sounds beyond the normal auditory threshold, including unknown melodies, that may make people sing (Shanon, 2002). Strassman (2001) refers to high pitched vibrations, buzzing, humming, whining, crinkling, whirring, and crunching sounds are often heard under DMT effects, which coincides in part with Harner’s (1973) and Narby’s (1998) descriptions under ayahuasca influence of a continuous buzzing and humming sound inside the ears, “the sound of running water”.

There is beautification of the perceived music: many people report to hear marvelous, heavenly, sublime music, and also discovering deeper nuances and fine distinctions in previously known music. “With frequency drinkers state that the music they heard sung during the sessions had a pivotal influence in their experience. Often songs are characterized as being enchanting and the music is said to have wondrous power to carry those who listen to it far away to other worlds” (Shanon, 2002, p. 310). In traditional contexts, it is described that the spirits arrive singing varied and exquisite, as well as terrifying songs (Langdon, 2000; Luna & Amaringo, 1991).

Synesthetic experiences under ayahuasca influence are common: the visions are simultaneously seen, heard, and/or smelled²² (De Rios, 2003; Luna & Amaringo, 1991; Shanon, 2002). Sound-images and sound-patterns possible to interact with are often referred to among indigenous groups (Gebhardt-Sayer, 1985; 2000; Langdon, 2000; Narby, 1998; Siskind, 1990), and also among other type of ayahuasca drinkers. Usually the interaction with the sound-image is experienced as full of meaning. Among the Shipibo-Conibo, these sound-patterns are the expression of the health state of a person and can be influenced by songs (Gebhardt-Sayer, 1985). At times, the phenomenon of music itself, its relationship with the cosmos and the human psyche, as well as the creative process, are the contents of the experience (Shanon, 2002).

Music in Healing Practices

Generalities.

The use of music for healing purposes has been present for millennia in most of the cultures around the world (Redmont, 1997; Rouget, 1985; Timmerman, 1987; Wright, 1989). Often, the premise underlying that use is that sound and music are directly linked to the spiritual realm, whether being considered of divine origin, divine nature, or mediators between God(s), the spirits and the human beings: in both cases,

an earthly reflection of a vibratory activity taking place beyond the physical world.²³

Therefore, music has been described as holding an inherent power to re-harmonize, re-order, re-connect, re-align, and/or transform an undesired or unhealthy condition into a superior –and more holistic- one (Chetananda, 1991; Rudhyar, 1982; Tame, 1984). The same premise underlies most of the historical use of sound and music to influence states of consciousness for spiritual, divinatory, or healing purposes.

There are two disciplinary fields that can be considered modern developments of the use of music for therapeutic or healing purposes: Music Therapy (see Bruscia, 1989; Davis, 1992; Hanser, 1987; Smeijsters, 1999; Thayer, 1968) and Sound/Music Healing (see Gardner, 1990; Goldman, 1991; Leeds, 1999; Perry, 2002; Thompson, 1999).

Music Therapy founds its work on the biological, psychological, and psychosocial effects of the use of music for therapeutic purposes. Most of the Sound/Music healing methods and techniques are based on the physical and biological effects of sound and music, while many of them are also or purely inspired on ancient metaphysical knowledge.^{24 25}

According to van Putten (1993), the current developments of these fields do not offer yet a cohesive theory explaining the healing potential of music and sound. Clearly, the phenomenon itself is complex and involves multiple dimensions

Music in Shamanic Healing Practices.

One of the distinctive features of shamanic healing practices is the achievement of a trance state in ritual context, through which the shaman is able to access the spirit worlds in order to get help for a sick person (Drury, 1989; Fericgla, 2001; Grim, 1983; Halifax, 1979).²⁶ Harner (2000) states that the majority of the consciousness-altering techniques used for that purpose are music based. While a minority of these techniques is based on the ritualistic use of hallucinogenic plants, music still constitutes a key ingredient of these rituals.

It is important to remark that the shamanic trance state seems to be supported by an innate but trainable psycho-physiological component as well as by a cultural one responsible of its variability among cultures (Rouget, 1985; Fericgla, 2001). Conscious intention and a meaningful ritual context, part of the cultural set and setting in shamanic healing practices, play a structuring function that contributes to the safety of the shaman's trance state (Metzner, 1997; Rittner & Hess, 1996). From that perspective, the ritualistic and pervasive use of music in shamanic practices may impact the two mentioned components offering a structuring referent to the trance state, which is consistent with certain regularities but also with the particularities of the trance music among cultures.²⁷ However, music is one element of the complex network that supports the trance, and its impact may be dependant of the constitution, quality, and cohesiveness of that network.

There are two main musical expressions consistently utilized in shamanic healing practices: singing or chanting, and/or steady drumming or beating (Ebersoll, 1985).²⁸ As a particular type of shamanic songs, the icaros share several of their general characteristics: (1) shamanic songs are the manifestation of the shaman's power and intent (Drury, 1989; Grim, 1983); (2) they are often received in dreams, during trance states, or during initiatory periods; (3) their functions are to induce the trance state, invoke and summon the spirits, and guide the shaman's journey (Eliade, 1964; Halifax, 1989; Kalwait, 1992). Halifax (1989) conceives these songs as the expression of the transformed psyche and spirit of the shaman, therefore having the distinctive power to heal both the singer as well as the sick person.

From a sound/music healing perspective, sung songs have a melody, rhythm, a timbre range, among other features that may have a relationship to their healing power. Music Therapist Sabine Rittner (1996) describes common elements in singing and voice from which is possible to derive therapeutic/healing functions: (1) they are primary

expressive forms; (2) physiologically, sound emission and sound reception involve the systems responsible for breathing and moving²⁹; (3) interpersonally, prosodic distinctions support emotional communicational aspects; song/voice also impacts the experience of psychological distance/closeness; (4) the voice timbre reflects the anatomic-physiologic as well as the psychological condition of the person. Several sound/music healing systems base their health diagnoses on the overtone spectrum of the voice, which gives it its timbre (Edwards, 1977; Thompson, 1999; 1996; 1990). Voice and singing, along with breath, have been described as the most intensive body means for self-suggestion and consciousness focalizing, key ingredients for ESC induction (Rittner, 1996; Rittner & Hess, 1996).

The second typical mode of musical expression in shamanic healing practices is drumming or the production of a monotonous and steady percussion sound with sticks, rattles, and other instruments (Horrigan, 2000; Metzner, 1997). Icaros are intrinsically rhythmic and normally the schacapa replaces the function of the rattle. From the anthropological perspective, the drum represents the shaman's horse, the carrying means for his/her trip into the spirit worlds, and offers voice to the spirits (Eliade, 1964). Drumming acts as a focusing device as well as a concrete referent that enables the shaman to sink into trance (Drury, 1989). Jilek's classic research among the Salish Indians found that rhythmic shamanic drumming produced a drumbeat frequency in the theta wave EEG frequency (4-7 cycles/second) (cited in Drury, 1989, p. 39). In waking state, this brainwave range is associated with deep meditation states, daydreaming, memory enhancement, increased creativity, integrative experiences, receptivity for new experiences, behavior and belief system changes, as well as with the production of catecholamines and endorphins (Thompson, 1999).

Summary

Literature focusing specifically on icaros is extremely scarce. The topic is generally found as one of the elements in Amazonian curanderismo and associated with ayahuasca rituals. The major body of literature referring to the icaros consists in anthropological studies, although some ethnomusicological research has been done as well. Their healing potential in shamanic practices has been mainly described from a cultural, spiritually centered perspective, predominantly considering the curanderos' view. Secondly, some studies relate the healing potential of the icaros to psychosocial factors, and lastly, to some musical features that might play a role on healing, particularly under the effects of ayahuasca. The experience of the icaros as healing under ayahuasca influence, which is the focus of this research, has not been studied. It is proposed that an in-depth exploration of the lived experience would show a comprehensive and meaningful interrelationship of the significant elements present in the phenomenon, thus offering a more integral understanding of it and probably opening new areas for research.

III. METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore in depth the experience of the icaros or curandero's chants during an ayahuasca group session. The focus of the study will be on experienced ayahuasca drinkers who perceive one or more icaro(s) as healing.

Two complementary research questions are: (1) what is the basic phenomenology of the inner experience? (2) If the data allow it, what are the particular perceived musical features involved in the experience of the icaro(s) as healing?

Type of Research

The study is framed in the qualitative research paradigm. Several of the characteristics of this paradigm are appropriate for approaching the subject matter. First, the lived experience of the healing aspects of the icaros has been scarcely documented. Therefore, an exploratory study of the phenomenon that allows its initial mapping and the incorporation in the design of unknown aspects that may arise during the research process, seems to be able to best address it (Marshall & Rossman, 2000). Qualitative research allows a focus on individual lived experience and offers the flexibility to redesign aspects of the study around key emergent material coming from the phenomenon itself as well as from the context in which it appears (Creswell, 1998; 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2000). Second, the study will be conducted *in situ*, thus being closer to a field study. The general features of the main research site and the context in which the phenomenon occurs have been carefully considered in the research design that will be addressed later. It has also been discussed in depth with key persons from Takiwasi. However, the researcher might expect changes to arise and some given situations to evolve. The qualitative research paradigm acknowledges the complexity of studying a phenomenon in its natural setting, thus encouraging a sensitive and flexible attitude in the researcher and in the design itself (Marshall & Rossman, 2000). Third, the phenomenon under study is complex and rich. It involves an induced non-ordinary state of consciousness in which external aspects like the ritual setting and the music itself, as well as inner aspects like bodily sensations and inner visions are experienced in different ways than in normal consciousness (Grof, 2000; Metzner, 1999).

The qualitative paradigm of inquiry appears to be a sensitive frame to address the phenomenon under study since it aims to acknowledge and to systematically approach the multi-dimensionality inherent to human phenomena, capturing their richness and subtleties while holding the perspective of their wholeness (Creswell,

1998). Fourth, this paradigm fosters the active participation, closeness, and sensitivity towards the research participants on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 2000), which seems to be crucial for the data collection process of a phenomenon that might involve deep personal issues (Giove, 2002; Metzner, 1999) as well as the experience of ineffability, as described by classical literature on non-ordinary states of consciousness (Grof, 1990; Tart, 1975; 1979).

The qualitative research paradigm nestles methods that go in a continuum of merely describing and classifying the data until methods that emphasize a critical observational stance towards them (Moustakas, 1994). The selected method for this study belongs to the latter, for the reasons that will be explained next.

Selected Research Method

The particular research method chosen for this study is Descriptive Phenomenology, as developed primarily by Giorgi from the Husserlian philosophical approach to knowledge (Giorgi, 1985; 1987; 1997; 1998; 2000). The phenomenological tradition of inquiry aims to understand the essence of a phenomenon as it was lived and described by participants in a study (Creswell, 1998; 2003; Giorgi, 1985; 1995). Therefore, the individual's description of a concrete experience of the phenomenon is the locus of the data that the researcher is interested in. The description of the participant's experience goes through a process of analysis that unveils the patterns and relationships of meanings that structure the essence of the phenomenon itself (Creswell, 2003; Giorgi, 1997; Moustakas, 1994). In Giorgi's words, "an essence is the most invariant meaning for a context" (1997, p. 242).

Descriptive Phenomenology requires from the researcher the building up of a dialogical setting during the data collection phase (Giorgi, 1986), which provides the participant with a non-constraining space to express his/her experience as close as

possible to the way it was lived, and allows the researcher to assume the attitude of the phenomenological reduction through bracketing (Giorgi, 1987; 1992; 1997). The reduction implies the conscious withholding of current knowledge about the phenomenon on the part of the researcher, in order to be fully present to the subject's description, as well as the abstention of existential claims regarding it (Giorgi, 1997; 1998). Consequently, the interview or self-report questions ask for concrete, precise, and detailed descriptions but are broad and open-ended. Further interview questions follow the criterion of getting a concrete lived experience with a minimum of generalizations and abstractions, being reduced to ask whether to describe more or to give a concrete example. The omissions, prejudices, details in the description are considered an expression of the presence of the participant to the phenomenon as lived and construed by him or her, therefore, key data for better understanding the phenomenon's deeper meaning structures (Giorgi, 1997).

The analysis of the descriptions requires a special sensitivity towards the discipline or disciplines framing the study, necessary to detect the meanings of the phenomenon beyond their natural or philosophical ones (Giorgi, 1985; 1986). According to Giorgi: "Meanings are discovered only reflectively, not straightforwardly" (1986, p. 13). Even though Giorgi does not address the issue of studying transpersonal or transegoic experiences, which defies the main-stream psychological attitude, Valle and Mohs (1998) give some interesting insight to their research from the existential phenomenological approach, proposing finally the development of a transpersonal-phenomenological psychology.³⁰ While adhering to Descriptive Phenomenology, given the phenomenon being studied, the main general frame of this research is psychological in an extended sense, which includes a transpersonal attitude, sensitive to shifts in stance with respect to the contents of consciousness, proper of the experience in expanded states of consciousness (Grof, 1980; Tart, 1979; Wilber, 1989). However, a

multidisciplinary approach would be used to discuss the findings, including the fields of music/healing, anthropology, mythology, and hallucinogens.

The selection of the Descriptive Phenomenological research method for this study facilitates an in-depth exploration of how the phenomenon of the icaros perceived as healing presents itself to experienced ayahuasca drinkers under the influence of the beverage. The icaros are defined in this study as the healer's songs used during ayahuasca sessions. Ayahuasca is a hallucinogenic beverage traditionally used in ritual context for healing and accessing knowledge in the Amazon and Orinoco basins. The phenomenon under study is complex, involving at least five general dimensions of experience: the context or setting, the inner state and predisposition of the participant or set (Grof, 1980; Leary et al, 1983; Metzner, 1999; Strasmann, 2001), the ayahuasca effects, the icaros sung by the curandero, and the perception of healing.

The phenomenological assumption is that the phenomenon as lived experience reflects an essential pattern of relationships of meaning that selects, shapes, and gives a unified coherence to the multiplicity of aspects and dimensions already identifiable or not from an external perspective, or "natural attitude" (Husserl in Kohak, 1980). It is precisely this essential meaning pattern that this study seeks to clarify, in order to better understand how the phenomenon of the icaros in their healing function (Luna, 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991) stands up in lived experience. This pattern would illuminate known and unknown meaning aspects regarding how the phenomenon presents itself in experience. It would also give specific information about what perceived musical features appear to be meaningful in the experience of the icaros lived as healing, how the music is perceived and organized in the context of the phenomenon as a whole.

Research Sites

The study will be mainly conducted in Takiwasi, a pioneering drug abuse rehabilitation and traditional medicine research center located in the city of Tarapoto, province of San Martin, North-Eastern Peru, in the mountain zone of the Amazonian Rainforest (Andritzky, 2000; Presser-Velder, 2000)³¹, as well as in the Upper Amazon nearby. Takiwasi is a legally constituted center that has been working as a therapeutic community for about ten years, combining Western psychotherapy and medicine with traditional mestizo Amazonian healing practices (Giove, 2002; Narby, 1998). Takiwasi treats mostly interned male clients, poli-addicted primarily to a crack variant called basic paste of cocaine, alcohol, cannabis, and/or cocaine (Giove, 2002). Even though the center uses a broad variety of medicinal plants and different traditional healing techniques, ayahuasca rituals, done once a week, are one of the main therapeutic tools in Takiwasi, given their vast purging effect and the rich symbolic material they provide for the progress of psychotherapy (Presser-Velder, 2000).

Takiwasi's healing approach supports the self-exploration of the therapeutic staff with the techniques that are used with the clients (Giove, 2002). In this context, the therapeutic staff is also involved in the ayahuasca rituals, whether as participants or as leaders, some of them assuming the role of the curandero after a period of rigorous training. Takiwasi offers ayahuasca sessions, among other traditional healing techniques, to visitors and participants to their seminars. Mestizo curanderos or vegetalistas (Luna & Amaringo, 1991) often spend some weeks or months a year working at Takiwasi, but do not stay there permanently. Therefore, even though this study will be mainly conducted in Takiwasi, it may also include ayahuasca sessions with curanderos of the region, which will broaden the possibilities of access to information-rich cases.

In agreement with Jacques Mabit, director of Takiwasi, the research stage will last for a minimum of five months. The offers and requirements of the institution for the

stage are specified in Appendix D, and were negotiated person to person during a field trip to Takiwasi in January 2003 as well as through email.

The Peruvian context offers a legal frame for the study of the icaros under ayahuasca influence, both, inside and outside Takiwasi, as well as access to a diverse population, which will caution the presence of a reasonable variation in the phenomenon. As the main research site, Takiwasi also offers an experienced and contained environment, appropriate for the safety of the participants and the researcher.

Participants

The participants in this study will be five experienced ayahuasca drinkers, who report to have experienced an *icaro(s)* as healing during an *ayahuasca* session. Gender will not be a sample selection criterion. Two reasons support this decision: (1) the focus of the study is on the phenomenon itself; (2) there is a lack of information on the distribution of the phenomenon under any demographic criteria.

An experienced ayahuasca drinker is defined as someone who has ingested the beverage in a ritual context at least twelve times. There are two reasons for this selection criterion. First, it attempts to select individuals who are potentially able to discriminate with a higher degree of clarity than beginners would do, their sensorial experiences, emotions, thoughts, insights, the sequence of events, and the perceived musical features contained in the experience of the icaros as healing. This discrimination is crucial given the complexity of the ayahuasca experience itself, and the focusing of the study on a particular aspect of it. Experience with the beverage has been described as increasing the discriminatory capacity of the drinker (Shanon, 2002). Second, the number of twelve sessions would select potential drug abusers participants of Takiwasi in their fifth month of treatment from an average of nine (Giove, 2002), which would assure some degree of advance in their rehabilitation process. This would imply a higher level of psychological

integration, which would increase the reliability and richness of the description of their experience, and would decrease the possibility of adverse consequences for their treatment resulting from the interviewing process.

It is important to clarify that the inclusion of drug-addicts in rehabilitation process in the sample is based upon the phenomenological assumption that they are just one of the possible variations of experiencers of the phenomenon, rather than a special group. This variability would only contribute to enlighten the deeper meaning structure of the phenomenon itself.

Specifically, the participants will be selected based on the following criteria:

- a) Men and women older than 21 years old, who are considered legally adults under the Peruvian laws.
- b) Spanish-speakers.
- c) Experienced ayahuasca drinkers, meaning persons who have consumed ayahuasca in ritual contexts twelve or more times.
- d) Individuals who, after having participated in an ayahuasca ritual, that has been sound-recorded by the researcher, answer positively the question: "During this ayahuasca session, have you experienced one or more of the curandero's songs as intensely healing for you?" This criterion will be further explained in the data collection procedure.
- e) Availability and willingness to participate in the research as it is designed.

The only criterion to exclude an individual from the sample is if they have experienced a psychotic episode in the last 24 months.

This purposeful sampling expects to select information-rich cases for the study of the phenomenon under focus (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). The selection question in point (d) looks for people who manifest the phenomenon intensely. This is called

“intensity sampling” by Creswell (1998, p. 182), being one of the sampling possibilities to get information-rich cases.

Each potential participant will receive an information letter describing the purpose of the study and the criteria for inclusion in the study (Appendix A). The consent of a person to participate will be confirmed by their agreement in signing the Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) and the Bill of Rights of Participants in a Psychological Research (Appendix C) in their Spanish version. The content of these forms will be explained in detail to the participants to make sure that they understand and agree with every point in them.

Since the frequency, distribution, and the specificity of the manifestation of the phenomenon among the population is unknown, the sampling will initially include participants who have experienced one or more icaros as intensely healing even if they are not able to identify it (them) from the sound-recording that they will be provided with before the first interview. However, if the possible participants identify an icaro(s) with sufficient frequency, the possible participants who were not able to identify it (them) will not be included in the study. This procedure offers enough flexibility to address the phenomenon as it is, as well as to keep the option to deepen into the second research question regarding particular musical features associated with the healing experience.

General Guidelines and Questions to Participants

As described above, the entire phenomenological research process requires a shift in the researcher’s attitude that allows him/her to be as present as possible to the interviewee and his/her description (Giorgi, 1997). This full presence is sought through the phenomenological reduction or bracketing (Giorgi, 1998; 2000; Patton, 2002). It implies to gain some clarity about the researcher’s preconceptions regarding the phenomenon and to suspend them during the study, in order to encounter it freshly and

to describe it as experienced, withholding of existential claims of what is presented by the participants (Giorgi, 1997).

As a researcher, I will need to make conscious and bracket, among other aspects: (a) personal expectations of possible findings, based on my theoretical knowledge and personal experiences of the phenomenon; (b) personal physical, sensorial, emotional and imaginal reactions towards the music identified by the participant as having been strongly healing; (c) preconceptions regarding the experience and meaning delimitations of healing; (d) the aspiration that it might be possible to grasp the entire depth of an experience that involves an expanded state of consciousness through a verbal description and analysis; (e) the possible tendency to “psychologize” the material encountered, in terms of reducing the perspective of the experience to a purely egoic experience; (f) the expectations created by the findings obtained in previous stages of the research process, which might influence the following interviews.

In order to caution the assumption of the phenomenological reduction as a researcher, I will keep a journal throughout the research process about my personal and theoretical thoughts, emotions, etc., which might help me distinguish between my own material and that of the participants.

Two main broad, open-ended questions will be asked to participants in this study. Their place in the data collection phase will be described later. The questions are:

1. “Describe your experience with the curandero’s songs that were strongly (intensely) healing for you during the ayahuasca session. Give as much detail as possible. You may include your aural perceptions, bodily sensations, visions, smells, tastes, thoughts, emotions, or any aspect that stood out for you as having been a part of the experience”.

2. "Describe as detailed as possible how did you perceive the music that was strongly healing for you. You may refer to musical features and how they stood out in your experience".

The concept of healing will not be delimited or defined to the participants, but left to their interpretation and experience. However, it is important to point out that the word healing is used in the interview question rather than curing, since the former might arise in the participants a more holistic consideration of health and wellbeing issues, namely physical, psychological, social, than the latter, normally associated with the "fixing" of physical or emotional illnesses (Jaimovich et al, 1997).

Data Collection Procedures

This first phase of the study would involve sound-recordings of the music during the sessions, an initial written report by the participant of his/her experience after having re-listened to extracts of the music of the session, and one or two open-ended in-depth tape-recorded interviews, one hour and a half to two hours each. The whole data collection phase will be done in Spanish. The procedure would follow the subsequent steps:

1. *Sound recording of ayahuasca sessions.* Once or twice a week, a session guided by a curandero will be entirely recorded with his or her previous consent. Attendants to the ritual will also be informed in advance of the study and the sound recording step.
2. *Selection of participants.* The selection criterion question regarding the presence of the phenomenon under study in the attendants' experience will be asked the day after the ritual: "During this ayahuasca session, have you experienced one or more of the curandero's songs as intensely healing for you?". The researcher will keep a record of the frequency of the manifestation of the phenomenon in every

session. If a person answers positively to this question, he or she will be given the Introductory Letter to Research Participants (Appendix A), the Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), and the Bill of Rights of Participants in a Psychological Research (Appendix C). The potential participant will be then selected as a participant if he or she meets all the selection criteria and consents to be a part of the study. The participant will keep copies of the mentioned documents. Next, a time for the first interview will be agreed upon between researcher and participant. The interviews will be conducted in a private office at Takiwasi or elsewhere.

3. *Written report of the experience.* One week before the interview, the participant will receive a 30 minutes tape or CD with a 2 minutes extract of every icaro of the session in which he or she participated. The person will be requested to listen to it and then to write down a written report of her/his experience following the first interview question guideline. Two additional questions will be asked: 1. "Having listened to the music, do you remember what icaros or icaros were particularly felt as having a strong healing effect on you? If your answer is positive, please write down the CD track number or numbers that you do think correspond to it (them)." 2. "How sure are you that the selected icaro(s) is the one(s) that affected you? Express it in a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 "I am not sure" and 5 "I am totally sure"."

The CD and the written report will be turned back to the researcher at least two days before the interview. As stated before, participants who were not able to identify the icaro(s) that was (were) intensely healing for them would be excluded from the sample if the frequency of participants who do remember it (them) and have answered "3" or more on the scale, allows the constitution of such specific sample.

4. *Preparing the first interview.* The researcher will review the written report and look at areas to clarify, to verify, and to describe further. A recording will be prepared, either with the entire icaro(s) identified as strongly healing by the participant, or with a five minute random selection of the music of the session in the case of the participant's being unable to identify the icaro(s).
5. *First Interview.* First, the participant will be requested to sit comfortably and relaxed, eyes closed, and to go back to the session in which the experience occurred, before listening to the prepared recording. This procedure would facilitate the memory of the lived experience according to the concept of specific-state memory (Strassman, 2000). This concept refers to aspects of the experience that are only remembered under a similar state in which they were lived. Second, the participant will answer the second open-ended question regarding his or her perception of the music itself. Third, the parts of the initial written report that might need clarification or further exploration will be addressed.
6. *Second interview.* The written report and the first interview will be transcribed and studied with the phenomenological expert of the committee via email. If there were still areas that need clarification, verification, and/or further description, a second interview will be set with the participant. The transcription of the two interviews would be combined and treated as one text.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure follows the four essential steps addressed by Descriptive Phenomenology (Giorgi, 1985; 2000), which presupposes an all-pervading presence of the phenomenological reduction attitude.

Step 1: Getting a sense of the whole. Implies the reading and re-reading of the written report and the interview(s)'s transcription(s) in order to grasp the holistic constitution of the experience's description, as well as to get familiar with its language. Creswell (1998) and Patton (2002) use the notion of "horizontalization" of the data, which emphasizes some aspects of the phenomenological reduction attitude, meaning to read the description bringing a non-judgmental perspective to all its statements, approaching all of them as being equally important for the constitution of the experience.

Step 2: Discrimination of meaning units. The description is re-read from the beginning and divided into workable units. In the context of a psychological sensitivity and focused on the phenomenon being researched, any time the researcher experiences a transition in meaning within the participant's description, that is, in the inner relationship of the person to the fact, a meaning unit will be marked in the text (Giorgi, 1998).

Step 3: Transformation of the person's language into phenomenological psychological expressions. Through reflection and the method of free imaginative variation, the researcher tries to capture the essential most invariant psychological meaning of the experience contained in each unit, and finally describes it using a wording closer to her discipline of study. The method of free imaginative variation consists in taking different perspectives, frames of references, etc., regarding the possible meanings (Creswell, 1998) and ways to express them as accurately as possible (Giorgi, 1985).

Step 4: Synthesis of the structure of the experience. Through free imaginative variation the researcher selects the most invariant meaning constituents and use them as the basis for a description of the structure of the experience.

The four steps are followed for each transcript and written report, and the final step consists in a composition of the structural description of the group as a whole, which expresses the essence of the phenomenon as it has appeared in this context (Creswell, 1998).

In order to arrive at a consensus and sufficient validation, the process of analysis will be carefully cross-checked in its entirety by the phenomenological expert on the research committee Barbro Giorgi. The analysis will be also cross-checked by the other committee members. For the sake of rigor, the data analysis will be approached firstly in the language of the descriptions, i.e. Spanish, since this would account for meaning nuances in the use of particular words or expressions. However, a translation in English of the entire transcript will be simultaneously sent to the committee chair, the phenomenological expert, and the external committee member

The data analysis section will include a final section with the researcher's descriptions of and reflections on her phenomenological experience of bracketing during the process of data collection and analysis. This seems to be particularly important, given the nature of the phenomenon under study and the possible need of methodological adjustments for further phenomenological research on these realms of experience.

Formal musical aspects that might be linked to the perception of the music by the participants will be considered in the discussion section of the phenomenological analysis process.

Standards of Quality and Verification

The standards of quality for phenomenological research refer to qualitative questions that the researcher is expected to pose him/herself during the whole research process, and desirably, to share and check-in with other researchers or readers of the study, in order to verify that the findings of the study are accurate from her or his standpoint (Creswell, 2003).

According to Giorgi (1988), two aspects need to be cautioned in order to get phenomenological validity as well as reliability: the phenomenological reduction and the description of essences. He clarifies:

“(Phenomenology) tries to raise the content of experience to the eidetic level through essential description. If the essential description truly captures the intuited essence, one has validity in a phenomenological sense. This means that one adequately describes the general essence that is given to the consciousness of the researcher. If one can use this essential description consistently, one has reliability.” (Giorgi, 1988, p. 173).

Polkinghorne (1989, p. 57) has developed a set of five questions, also referred to by Creswell (1998), that will be used as a guideline for quality standards in this study, since it addresses concretely the two main issues posed by Giorgi:

1. Did the interviewer influence the content of the participants' description in such a way that that the descriptions do not truly reflect the participants' actual experience?
2. Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview? This question will be also posed to the translations.
3. In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified this alternative?
4. Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?

5. Is the structural description situation specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations?

These questions will be checked-in by the researcher with herself as well as with the phenomenological expert and other committee members to whom transcripts and details of the analysis will be made available. The goal would be to verify that the criteria the questions identify have been respected in the course of the study. The researcher's journal on personal thoughts, emotions and theoretical ideas arising during the data collection and the data analysis phases will also be used by her in order to identify and enlighten aspects that might have been veiled by preconceptions or other personal biases.

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to the inquiry of the phenomenon of the icaros as healing, regardless of other experiences that might be elicited by them. It will explore the phenomenon only in experienced drinkers. The study is also confined to study the phenomenon in ayahuasca sessions guided by curanderos.

Several possible limitations in this study are foreseen:

1. The presence of the researcher in the main research site for a prolonged period of time. This situation may influence the dynamics among the potential participants belonging to the therapeutic community in different ways. Some of the permanent therapeutic staff and interns might feel uncomfortable with her continuous presence during the sessions or they can get finally used to it. Both possibilities could affect their general experience during the sessions. They could develop bonds with the researcher as well, that might facilitate the disclosure of deep personal experiences of the phenomenon, but for a similar reason they could try to please the researcher embellishing the description of their experience. The researcher will need to be aware of

the possible interferences generated by her presence, as well as to cultivate an open, honest attitude towards the people, her role there, and the object of her study.

2. The participation of the researcher in the sessions. This study aims to inquire into fresh experiences of the phenomenon, which means that it will be an ongoing process until five persons, who had spontaneously presented the phenomenon and agreed in participating in the study, have been procured. With the constant presence of the researcher reminding them about the study, the potential participants might develop more sensitivity and/or expectations towards the occurrence of the phenomenon. The researcher does not know how this would influence the frequency in the occurrence/non-occurrence of the phenomenon in the group as well as within the individuals. This situation could be addressed during the interviewing process.

3. The verbal approach to a phenomenon lived in an expanded state of consciousness. This point has two aspects: it might bind the expressive tools of the person for describing an experience that is assumed to be difficult to put into words; this situation could therefore affect the data analysis process. During the interviewing process, the researcher will be attentive to the participant's difficulties in wording parts of his or her experience, checking that difficulty with the participant as well as allowing him or her for time to find the right words or spontaneous non-verbal ways to express it.

4. The delimitation of a phenomenological psychological attitude that includes the frame of Transpersonal Psychology. This seems to be relevant in order not to reduce the intuition of essences to the perspective of the subject experiencing from a normal state of consciousness. The literature reveals how under expanded states of consciousness the limits of the egoic identity shift, accessing new realms of being from which the contents of consciousness also acquire new meanings. The sensitivity not only towards the content, but also towards the experiencing self in itself is addressed by

this field in psychology. Some criteria will need to be developed during the research process in order to facilitate the conscious assumption of that attitude.

Addressing these and emergent possible limitations and difficulties during the inquiry process might offer the possibility of developing creative and new research solutions for further studies in these less explored areas of experience.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Introductory Letter to Research Participants (English Version)

Date:

Dear :

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study on the experience of an icaro(s) as healing during a sound-recorded ayahuasca session. I appreciate the unique contribution you can make to this study.

The purposes of this letter are to reiterate some of the issues that we have already discussed and to ask for your signature on the consent form you will find attached.

This research is part of my doctoral work at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, U.S.A., and is sponsored by it; as well as being hosted and consented to by the institution and/or individual curandero who has offered the ayahuasca session in which you have participated.

I am using a qualitative research model to address the question: How does the experience of an icaro as healing during an ayahuasca session feel and manifest itself? This research model will allow me to describe and comprehend in depth the characteristics and meanings of your personal experience.

You have recently participated in an ayahuasca session that was sound-recorded by the researcher, and you have given a positive answer to the question: "During that session, have you experienced one or more of the curandero's songs as intensely healing for you?" Participants in the study will be also asked: (a) to have taken ayahuasca twelve or more times in their life; (b) to be 21 or more years old; (c) to have not had any psychotic episodes during the last three years.

If you meet the criteria described above, please continue reading below.

You will be requested to first listen to brief sound recordings of the music of the session in order to help you recall your experience, and next, to describe the experience of one or more songs perceived as intensely healing in writing and through an interviewing process. I am seeking vivid, accurate and comprehensive portrayals of how the experience was for you: images, thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and memories related to it, as well as an in-depth description of how you

perceived musical features that might have stood out in your experience of the song(s) as healing during the session.

This study will allow a better understanding of this phenomenon, which has been barely explored and discussed. The inquiry process opens the possibility of getting a better personal insight of your lived experience.

I appreciate your participation and your commitment in time and energy in this research. If you have any further questions before signing the release form, please ask it now. I can also be reached at ... (Tarapoto's phone number) in case of any doubt or further questions you may have later on regarding any aspect of the research.

Sincerely,

Susana Bustos

Carta Introductoria
Para Los Participantes En La Investigacion
(Spanish Version)

Fecha:

Estimado :

Gracias por su interes en participar en este estudio sobre la experiencia del icaro como sanador durante una sesion de ayahuasca que ha sido grabada. Sinceramente aprecio la contribucion personal y unica que usted aportara a esta investigacion.

El proposito de esta carta es el de reiterarle algunos topicos que ya hemos conversado anteriormente, asi como pedirle que firme el formulario de consentimiento informado adjunto.

Esta investigacion es parte de mi trabajo doctoral en el Instituto Californiano de Estudios Integrales, en los Estados Unidos, institucion que la patrocina. La institucion y/o curandero con quien usted tuvo la sesion de ayahuasca tambien la apoya y consiente con su diseno.

El modelo de investigacion que estoy empleando es cualitativo y pretende abordar la siguiente pregunta: Como se siente y manifiesta la experiencia de un icaro como sanador durante una sesion de ayahuasca? El modelo cualitativo me posibilitara describir y comprender en profundidad las caracteristicas y significados de su propia experiencia personal al respecto.

Usted participo recientemente en una sesion de ayahuasca cuyo sonido fue grabado por la investigadora y respondio afirmativamente a la siguiente pregunta: "Durante esa sesion, experimento usted uno o mas de los cantos del curandero como intensamente sanador(es)?" Este estudio espera ademas que sus participantes: (a) hayan tomado ayahuasca doce o mas veces en su vida; (b) tengan 21 anos o mas; (c) no hayan tenido ningun episodio psicotico en los ultimos dos anos.

Si usted cumple con estos criterios, por favor continue leyendo mas abajo.

Se le pedira primero escuchar breves grabaciones sonoras de la musica de la sesion, de modo de ayudarlo a recordar su experiencia, y despues, describir por escrito y luego verbalmente a traves de un proceso de entrevistas, la experiencia de uno o mas de los cantos que usted percibio como intensamente sanadores. Lo que busco es un retrato vivido, preciso y comprensivo de como usted vivio esa experiencia: imagenes, pensamientos, sentimientos, sensaciones corporales y memorias asociadas a ella, asi como tambien como percibio ciertas caracteristicas de la musica que pueden haber sido importantes para usted durante la experiencia del canto como sanador durante esa sesion.

Este estudio permitira una mejor comprension de este fenomeno, escasamente explorado y analizado. El proceso de investigacion en si abre una oportunidad para ampliar su percepcion consciente de la experiencia vivida y hacer introspeccion frente a ella.

Realmente aprecio su participacion y compromiso de tiempo y de energia en esta investigacion. Si tiene cualquier pregunta que quiera formularme antes de firmar el formulario de consentimiento informado, puede hacerlo ahora. Frente a cualquier pregunta que pueda surgirle posteriormente sobre cualquier aspecto de la investigacion, por favor, no dude en contactarme en el siguiente telefono....

Cordialmente,

Susana Bustos

APPENDIX B

(B-1) Participant Informed Consent Form For Takiwasi's Clients (English Version)

1. "Susana Bustos, a Ph.D. candidate in Humanities with a concentration in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California, has requested my voluntary participation in a research study at this institution. The title of the research is: The Healing Power of the Curanderos' Songs or "Icaros": A Phenomenological Study."
2. "I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to explore the experience of an icaro(s) as healing during an ayahuasca session that was sound recorded by the researcher."
3. "I understand that my participation has no formal relation to my treatment at Takiwasi, and that Takiwasi is informed and consents to the main characteristics and goals of this research."
4. "My participation will involve listening to a 30 minute recording of extracts of the icaros sung during the ayahuasca session, writing a report of my experience of an icaro(s) as healing in that session, and identifying which icaro(s) was (were) perceived by me as healing, all of which I will do by myself. My participation also involves one or two tape-recorded interviews, both an hour and a half to two hours long, at a mutually agreed time and place with the interviewer. In the first interview, if I was able to identify the icaro(s) I experienced as healing, I will be asked to listen to it in its entirety. In the contrary case, if I was unable to identify the icaro(s), I will be asked to listen to a five minutes random selection of the music of the session."
5. "I have been advised that the research does not involve any physical risk to me or predictable hazards. The only potential risk could be an emotional response related to remembering my experience during the ayahuasca session. I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer a question or to end my participation in this study at any time. If I decide to remove myself from the study, I will continue to work in my program at Takiwasi without any penalty. I also know that I have the possibility of processing any emotional response with therapists at the center."
6. "I have been informed that I will not be financially compensated for my participation. The potential benefits of the study are a better understanding of my internal experience, as well as increased personal insight and a sense of increased value to my recovery path."
7. "I understand that the results of the study may be published and that my name or identity will not be revealed. I will be identified only with a capital letter."
8. "I understand that all the information collected will be held in strict confidence. Audio-recordings, transcripts and the written report will be held in a locked environment to which only the researcher will have access. My name will not be on any of the materials."

9. "All records will be left in Takiwasi's locked research archives for possible further study once the researcher leaves the center. I understand that these records will not reveal my identity, since I will be identified by a capital letter."
10. "I have been informed that any questions I have concerning the research study or my participation in it, before or after my consent, will be answered by Susana Bustos (Tarapoto's phone number) or by the faculty sponsor of this research, Dr. Janis Phelps at CIIS, (415) 575-6243."
11. "I understand that in case of injury, if I have questions about my rights as a participant in this research, or if I feel I have been placed at risk, I can contact the chair of the Human Research Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103."
12. "I have read the above informed consent. The nature, demands and benefits of the project have been explained to me. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefit to myself. In signing this consent form, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. A copy of this consent will be given to me."

Signature of participant:

Date:

13. "I certify that I have explained to the above participant the nature, purpose and potential benefits associated with participation in this research study, and have answered all questions that have been raised."
14. "I have provided the participant with a copy of this signed consent form."

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

(B-1) Formulario de Consentimiento Informado de Participación
Para Clientes de Takiwasi
(Spanish Version)

“Susana Bustos, candidata a Ph.D. en Humanidades con una concentración en Psicología del Este y del Oeste en el Instituto Californiano de Estudios Integrales, San Francisco, California, ha requerido mi participación voluntaria en un estudio de esa institución. El título de la investigación es: “El Poder Sanador De Los Cantos de los Curanderos o “Icaros”: Un Estudio Fenomenológico.””

“He sido informado(a) de que el propósito de esta investigación es explorar la experiencia del icaro(s) como sanador durante un ritual de ayahuasca que haya sido grabado por la investigadora.”

“Entiendo que mi participación no tiene ninguna relación formal con mi tratamiento en Takiwasi, y que Takiwasi está informado y de acuerdo con las principales características y fines de esta investigación.

“Mi participación involucrará escuchar una grabación de treinta minutos con extractos de los icaros cantados durante la sesión con ayahuasca, escribir un reporte de mi experiencia de uno o más icaros que yo haya percibido como sanadores en esa sesión, e identificar cual fue el icaro(s) que yo percibi como sanador, todo lo cual hare por mi mismo. Mi participacion tambien involucra una o dos entrevistas grabadas de una hora y media a dos horas de duración cada una, las cuales serán realizadas en un lugar y un tiempo acordados mutuamente con la investigadora. En la primera entrevista, si me fue posible identificar el icaro que experimente como sanador, se me pedira escucharlo por completo. Si, por el contrario, no me fue posible identificarlo(s), se me pedira escuchar cinco minutos de alguna parte de la musica de la sesion en que participe.”

“He sido notificado(a) de que esta investigación no involucra ningún riesgo físico para mí, ni inconvenientes predecibles. Su único riesgo potencial podría ser una respuesta emocional relacionada con el recuerdo de mi experiencia durante la sesión. Entiendo que tengo el derecho de rehusar contestar a alguna pregunta y de poner término a mi participación en este estudio en cualquier momento. Si decido poner termino a mi participacion en el estudio, continuare con mi programa de rehabilitacion en Takiwasi sin ningun tipo de sancion. También sé que tengo la posibilidad de procesar cualquier reacción emocional con los terapeutas del centro.”

“He sido informado(a) que mi participacion no tendra ninguna compensacion financiera. Los posibles beneficios de este estudio son comprender mejor mi experiencia interna, así como aumentar mi capacidad de darme cuenta de lo que vivo y revalorizar mi camino de rehabilitacion.”

“Entiendo que los resultados del estudio podrian ser publicados y que ni mi nombre ni mi identidad serian revelados. Sere solamente identificado con una letra mayuscula.”

“Entiendo que toda la informacion recogida sera conservada en estricta confidencialidad. Grabaciones sonoras, transcripciones y reporte escrito seran manejados bajo llave unicamente por la

investigadora
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materiales fines de investigacion futura. Entiendo que esos
ya que sere identificado con una letra mayuscula.” identidad,

“He sido informado(a) que cualquier pregunta que tenga referida a este estudio o a mi participacion en el, antes o despues de mi consentimiento, sera respondida por Susana Bustos (Numero telefonico en Tarapoto) o por el facultativo que patrocina esta investigacion, Dra. Janis Phelps de CIIS, numero telefonico: (1-415) 575-6243.

“Entiendo que en caso de perjuicio, si tengo preguntas con respecto a mis derechos como participante en esta investigacion, o si siento que he sido puesto en riesgo, puedo contactar al presidente del Comite de Investigacion Humana del Instituto Californiano de Estudios Integrales, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.”

“He de consentimiento informado. La naturaleza, requerimientos y beneficios de este proyecto me han sido explicados. Entiendo que puedo retirar mi consentimiento y discontinuar mi participacion en cualquier momento sin ninguna sancion o perdid no estoy renunciando a ninguna demand na copia de este consentimiento.”

Firma del (la) Participante:

Fecha:

“Certifico que he explicado al (a la) participante sobre la naturaleza, proposito y beneficios potenciales asociados a su participacion en este estudio, y he dado respuesta a cualquier pregunta que ha emergido.”

“Le he entregado al (a la) partic de consentimiento.”

Firma de la Investigadora:

Fecha:

(B-2) Participant Informed Consent Form
For Other Participants
(English Version)

1. "Susana Bustos, a Ph.D. candidate in Humanities with a concentration in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California, has requested my voluntary participation in a research study at this institution. The title of the research is: The Healing Power of the Curanderos' Songs or "Icaros": A Phenomenological Study."

2. "I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to explore the experience of an *icaro(s)* as healing during an *ayahuasca* session that was sound recorded by the researcher."

3. "I understand that my participation has no formal relation to Takiwasi, any other research site, or with the curandero that led the session, but that they are informed and consent to the main characteristics and goals of this research."

4. "My participation will involve listening to a 30 minute recording of extracts of the icaros sung during the ayahuasca session, writing a report of my experience of an icaro(s) as healing in that session, and identifying which icaro(s) was (were) perceived by me as healing, all of which I will do by myself. My participation also involves one or two tape-recorded interviews, both an hour and a half to two hours long, at a mutually agreed time and place with the interviewer. In the first interview, if I was able to identify the icaro(s) I experienced as healing, I will be asked to listen to it in its entirety. In the contrary case, if I was unable to identify the icaro(s), I will be asked to listen to a five minutes random selection of the music of the session."

5. "I have been advised that the research does not involve any physical risk to me or predictable hazards. The only potential risk could be an emotional response related to remembering my experience during the ayahuasca session. I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer a question or to end my participation in this study at any time. If I decide to remove myself from the study I will continue with my work or visit at Takiwasi, at any other research site, or with the curandero without any penalty. I also know that I have the possibility of discussing any emotional response with a counselor at Takiwasi at low cost. Psych. Jaime Torres is the referral person. His telephone number at Takiwasi is 522-818".

6. "I have been informed that I will not be financially compensated for my participation. The potential benefits of the study are a better understanding of my internal experience, as well as increased personal insight."

7. "I understand that the results of the study may be published and that my name or identity will not be revealed. I will be identified with a capital letter."

8. "I understand that all the information collected will be held in strict confidence. Audio-recordings, transcripts and written report will be held in a locked environment to which only the researcher will have access. My name will not be on any of the materials.

records will be left in Takiwasi's locked research archives for possible further study once the researcher leaves the center. I understand that these records will not reveal my identity, since I will be identified by a capital letter."

10. "I have been informed that any questions I have concerning the research study or my participation in it, before or after my consent, will be answered by Susana Bustos (Tarapoto's phone number) or by the faculty sponsor of this research, Dr. Janis Phelps at CIIS, (415) 575-6243."

11. "I understand that in case of injury, if I have questions about my rights as a participant in this research, or if I feel I have been placed at risk, I can contact the chair of the Human Research Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103."

12. "I have read the above informed consent. The nature, demands and benefits of the project have been explained to me. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefit to myself. In signing this consent form, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. A copy of this consent will be given to me."

Signature of participant:

Date:

13. "I certify that I have explained to the above participant the nature, purpose and potential benefits associated with participation in this research study, and have answered all questions that have been raised."

14. "I have provided the participant with a copy of this signed consent form."

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

(B-2) Formulario de Consentimiento Informado de Participación
Para Equipo Terapeutico y/o Visitantes de Takiwasi
(Spanish Version)

“Susana Bustos, candidata a Ph.D. en Humanidades con una concentración en Psicología del Este y del Oeste en el Instituto Californiano de Estudios Integrales, San Francisco, California, Estados Unidos, ha requerido mi participación voluntaria en un estudio de esa institución. El título de la investigación es: El Poder Sanador De Los Cantos de los Curanderos o “Icaros”: Un Estudio Fenomenológico.”

“He sido informado(a) que el propósito de esta investigación es explorar la experiencia de un icaro(s) como sanador durante un ritual de ayahuasca en Takiwasi, que haya sido grabado por la investigadora.”

“Entiendo que mi participación no tiene ninguna relación formal con Takiwasi, algún otro sitio de investigación o curandero que guio la sesión, pero que quien corresponda está informado y de acuerdo con las principales características y fines de esta investigación.”

“Mi participación involucrará escuchar una grabación de treinta minutos con extractos de los icaros cantados durante la sesión con ayahuasca, escribir un reporte de mi experiencia de uno o más icaros que yo haya percibido como sanadores en esa sesión, e identificar cuál icaro(s) es el que yo percibi como sanador, todo lo cual hare por mi mismo. Mi participación también involucra una o dos entrevistas grabadas de una hora y media a dos horas de duración cada una, las cuales serán realizadas en un lugar y un tiempo acordados mutuamente con la investigadora. En la primera entrevista, si me fue posible identificar el icaro que experimente como sanador, se me pedirá escucharlo por completo. Si, por el contrario, no me fue posible identificarlo(s), se me pedirá escuchar cinco minutos de alguna parte de la música de la sesión en que participe.”

“He sido notificado(a) de que esta investigación no involucra ningún riesgo físico para mí ni inconvenientes predecibles. Su único riesgo potencial podría ser una respuesta emocional relacionada con el recuerdo de mi experiencia durante la sesión. Entiendo que tengo el derecho de rehusar contestar a alguna pregunta y de poner término a mi participación en este estudio en cualquier momento. Si decido no proseguir en el estudio podre continuar con mi trabajo o visita en Takiwasi, en algún otro sitio o con el curandero sin ninguna sanción. También sé que tengo la posibilidad de conversar cualquier reacción emocional que pueda tener con algún consejero en Takiwasi a bajo costo. El psicólogo Jaime Torres

Taki

wasi en el teléfono 522-818.”

participación no tendrá ninguna
compensación financiera. Los posibles beneficios de este estudio son
comprender mejor experiencia interna, así como aumentar mi
capacidad personal de darme cuenta de lo que vivo.”

“Entiendo que los resultados del estudio podrian ser publica ni mi identidad serian revelados. S ere identificado con una letra mayuscula.”

“Entiendo que toda la informacion recogida sera conservada en estricta confidencialidad. Grabaciones sonoras, transcripciones y reporte escrito seran manejados bajo llave unicamente por la investigadora

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futura fines de investigacion . Entiendo que esos materiales identidad, ya que sere identif

“He sido informado(a) que cualquier pregunta que tenga referida a este estudio o a mi participacion en el, antes o despues de mi consentimiento, sera respondida por Susana Bustos (Numero telefonico en Tarapoto) o por el facultativo que patrocina esta investigacion, Dra. Janis Phelps de CIIS, numero telefonico: (1-415) 575-6243.

“Entiendo que en caso de perjuicio, si tengo preguntas con respecto a mis derechos como participante en esta investigacion, o si siento que he sido puesto en riesgo, puedo contactar al presidente del Comite de Investigacion Humana del Instituto Californiano de Estudios Integrales, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.”

“He de consentimiento informado. La naturaleza, requerimientos y beneficios de este proyecto me han sido explicados. Entiendo que puedo retirar mi consentimiento y discontinuar mi participacion en cualquier momento sin ninguna sancion o perdid no estoy renunciando a ninguna demand na copia de este consentimiento.”

Firma del (la) Participante:

Fecha:

“Certifico que he explicado al (a la) participante sobre la naturaleza, proposito y beneficios potenciales asociados a su participacion en este estudio, y he dado respuesta a cualquier pregunta que ha emergido.”

“Le he entregado al (a la) participante una copia firmada de esta forma de consentimiento.”

Firma de la Investigadora:

Fecha:

APPENDIX C

Bill of Rights for Participants in a Psychological Research (English Version)

You have the right to:

1. Be treated with dignity and respect;
2. Be given a clear description of the purpose of the study and what is expected from you as a participant;
3. Be told of any benefits or risks to you that can be expected from participating in the study;
4. Know the researcher's training and experience as a psychologist;
5. Ask any questions you may have about the study;
6. Decide to participate or not without any pressure from the researcher;
7. Have your privacy protected within the limits of the law in California, USA and Peru.
8. Refuse to answer any research questions, refuse to participate in any part of the study or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative effects;
9. Be given a description of the overall results of the study upon request;
10. Discuss any concerns or file an anonymous complaint about the study with the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Declaración De Derechos De Los Participantes
En Una Investigación Psicológica
(Spanish Version)

Usted tiene el derecho a:

1. Ser tratado con dignidad y respeto;
2. Que se le dé una descripción clara del propósito del estudio y de qué se espera de usted como participante;
3. Que se le informe acerca de cualquier beneficio o riesgo
participa en el estudio;
4. Conocer el tipo de entrenamiento y experiencia que tiene el psicólogo investigador;
5. Realizar cualquier pregunta que usted tenga sobre el estudio;
6. Decidir o no participar del estudio, sin ninguna presión por parte del investigador;
7. Tener su privacidad protegida, dentro de los límites de la ley del Estado de California, Estados Unidos, y del Perú;
8. Rehusar contestar cualquier pregunta de la investigación, rehusar participar en cualquier parte del estudio, o retirarse del mismo en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia negativa ;
9. Que se le dé una descripción general de los resultados del estudio, si usted lo solicita;
10. Discutir cualquier preocupación que tenga o a enviar un reclamo anónimo sobre el estudio a Human Research Review Committee (Comité para la Revisión de la Investigación Humana), California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Susana Bustos

APPENDIX D

Agreements Between Takiwasi and the Researcher (English Version)

The President of Takiwasi, Dr. Jacques Mabit and CIIS's doctoral researcher Susana Bustos have agreed on the following points for conducting the research entitled: "The Healing Power of the *Curanderos'* Songs or "*Icaros*": A Phenomenological Study" on site.

The researcher will be offered from Takiwasi:

- Access to the clients' files, research files, and any other information required from Takiwasi in order to facilitate the development of the study.
- Consentment to sound-record at least one ayahuasca session a week.
- Permission to request the participation of its clients, therapeutic staff members and visitors in the research.
- Logistic support in the research process, including a private office to conduct the interviews, Internet access in the center, and back-up sound equipment in case of need.

The researcher will be requested from Takiwasi to:

- Realize a five-month stay at the center.
- Leave a copy of the research protocols and research results of Takiwasi's participants for possible further research conducted by the center. The material will be treated with standard research confidentiality –it will be locked, and no personal identification will be on it-.
- Offer 15 hours a week of clinical counseling to its clients, and/or therapeutic training to its staff, and/or participation in other Takiwasi's activities.

Signatures: _____

Dr. Jacques Mabit

President

Takiwasi

Susana Bustos

Doctoral Researcher

CIIS

Date:

Acuerdos entre Takiwasi y la Investigadora
(Spanish Version)

El presidente ejecutivo de Takiwasi, Dr. Jacques Mabit, y la investigadora doctoranda Susana Bustos de California Institute of Integral Studies, han llegado a acuerdos sobre los siguientes puntos para conducir la investigación titulada: "El Poder Sanador de los Cantos de los Curanderos o "Icaros": Un Estudio Fenomenológico" en este centro.

Takiwasi le ofrecerá a la investigadora:

- Acceso a los archivos terapéuticos de sus clientes, a sus archivos de investigación y a cualquier otra información que ella requiera de Takiwasi para facilitar el desarrollo del estudio.
- Su consentimiento para participar y realizar la grabación sonora de por lo menos una sesión de ayahuasca por semana.
- Permiso para solicitar la participación en el estudio de sus clientes, personal terapéutico y visitantes.
- Soporte logístico durante el proceso de investigación, incluida una oficina privada para conducir las entrevistas, acceso a Internet en el centro y equipo de sonido de respaldo, en caso de necesidad.

Takiwasi requiere de la investigadora que esta:

- Realice una estadía de cinco meses en el Centro.
- Deje una copia de los protocolos y resultados de investigación con participantes de Takiwasi para que el centro desarrolle posibles futuros estudios. El material será tratado con la confidencialidad de investigación estándar: bajo llave de acceso restringido y sin identificación personal de ningún participante.
- Ofrezca al centro quince horas semanales de servicios terapéuticos a sus clientes y/o entrenamiento terapéutico a su personal y/o participación en otras actividades de Takiwasi.

Firmas: _____

Dr. Jacques Mabit

Susana Bustos

Director Ejecutivo

Investigadora Doctoranda

Centro Takiwasi

CIIS

Fecha:

NOTES:

¹ Some of the literature reviewed seems to indistinctly use the word *icaro* to refer to the songs used by mestizo curanderos, as well as to the songs used by indigenous healers. Anthropologic and ethnomusicologic studies conducted among amazonian native groups allude to the healers' songs in their language, and show their functional and aesthetic specificities in their cultural context.

² Quichua language is Quechua dialect, the latter being the main stem-tongue of several ethnic groups of the Amazon basin.

³ However, according to Giove (1993), there is no translation of the word into Spanish or other native languages.

⁴ In the last five years, recordings of *icaros* –or *ayahuasca* songs- have been increasingly available to the open public, particularly through the Internet. Different organizations around the world, interested in shamanism and in the *ayahuasca* tradition have their musical archives and are recording *icaros in situ*. See for example Lawler and Lawler's project (2002) on the preservations of these songs through Amazon SpiritQuest, at <<http://www.biopark.org/peru/icarprop.html>>.

⁵ Mabit (1993, p. 1) states that the traditional medical ways are still the primary operational health care system in the Peruvian jungle to which people go, since it is empirically efficient, deeply rooted in the culture, and financially accesible.

⁶ The phlegm is called *yachay*, *yausa*, *mariri*, or medicine, and it is utilized to suck out the illness from the client's body. It has magical and concrete reality, and is transmitted by the plants, the tutor or both to the apprentice (Luna, 1984).

⁷ Andritzky (1989), ethnopsychologist, also shares this vision.

⁸ Luna (1986, cit. in Andritzky, 1989) describes the closeness that these kind of healers develop with their clients as having therapeutic value in itself, a kind of psychological hygiene even for healthy people: they host their clients at their house, are interested in

their emotional and financial problems, and tell them stories that entertain and inform them.

⁹ It is important to note, however, that the icaros in native language are considered more powerful than the ones in Spanish, which is correlated with the prestige attributed to a curandero if he or she was trained under the tutelage of an indigenous shaman (Luna, 1984; Luna & Amaringo, 1991).

¹⁰ Benenzon (1998), creator of a major music therapeutic method, identifies four levels of sonic identity based in the “iso” principle. This principle is defined as the infinite whole of sounding, acoustic, and movement energies belonging to the individual and characterizing him/her. These levels are: group, cultural, gestalt, and universal. The universal sonic identity is the deepest one, containing the basic unconscious sounding energies characteristic of the human being, namely: the binary rhythm of the heartbeat, the sounding movements of the water, the sounds of inspiration and exhalation, the pentatonic scale with their intervals of second and third, the tonic and the dominant, the perfect chord, the *ostinato*, the canon, and the silence.

¹¹ Ayahuasca is usually combined with chacruna –*Psychotria viridis*–, but has been described to be combined with around twenty other plants, depending upon the sought effects: to travel, to see, to get teachings (Andritzky, 1989; Riba and Barbanoj, 1998).

¹² DMT is present in several hallucinogenic plants used in shamanic rituals around the world and is also endogenously produced by the human body (Strassman, 2001).

¹³ These metaphors are applied to hallucinogenics in general. Their therapeutic potential derives from the functions implied in the metaphors.

¹⁴ Andritzky (1989; p 140) calls this last type of ritual use of ayahuasca, that involves the people of a town, “medical ritual party”, since it seems to seek social cohesion and the psychological hygiene of the group.

¹⁵ The set and setting hypothesis state that the internal expectations, intention, and motivations for a psychedelic experience, as well as the external context, including the presence of the guide, are its primary determinants (Grof, 1980; Leary et al, 1964; Metzner, 1998; 1999; Strassman, 2001).

¹⁶ It is important to point out that during the sessions there are moments of silence, in which ayahuasquero and clients are absorbed in their visions (Luna & Amaringo, 1991). Silence breaks may play a grounding role in the experience.

¹⁷ The use of schacapa has three functions: 1. to *ventear el mal*, which means to take away the sickness through the wind they produce while beating on certain parts of the body of the client; 2. to energetically “seal” a client in order to protect him from negative influences; 3. to stimulate the visions during ayahuasca sessions (Luna & Amaringo, 1991, p. 33).

¹⁸ For the Sharanahua “without singing, only snakes appear” (Siskind, 1990, p. 25).

¹⁹ The mentioned authors give a key importance to the high degree of suggestibility people are in the trance state, which would enable the ayahuasquero to condition the visions through verbal and non-verbal interventions.

²⁰ It is interesting that for the curanderos the key aspect of the icaros resides on the melody, and for foreign Western researchers, it is the rhythm. This aspect will be developed in the section on music and healing.

²¹ Shanon's study collected descriptions of ayahuasca experiences in traditional and non-traditional contexts.

²² Langdon (2000) explains that the Siona people take yage to know their universe, which is composed by different domains, each of them characterized by particular sounds, rhythms, music, smells, and colors. Through learning the songs of the yage people, the Siona believe to be able to visit them again.

²³ For example, the Nada Brahma branch of the Vedic tradition conceives Sound as the first manifestation of Spirit, the Cosmic Vibration, the "Soundless Sound" –*shabda*– at the origin and basis of all the matter and energy in the Universe. Audible sounds –*vaikhari*– are faint echoes of the ineffable primordial Sound, which is beyond the compass of human hearing (Behrendt, 1987; Limbrick, 1991). Sufism, Tibetan Buddhism, Kashmir Shaivism, the Jewish tradition based on the Torah, esoteric schools as Theosophy and Rosecrucianism, among others, share a metaphysical explanation for sound (Chetananda, 1991; Gass, 1999; Hoffman, 1994; Tame, 1984).

²⁴ The developments of both fields are wide. Music Therapy is more consolidated and validated as a consistent discipline among the main-stream therapeutic community than Sound/Music Healing methods, which have been flourishing predominantly as alternative healing methods.

²⁵ See examples of physiological and neurophysiological studies coming from both fields in: Aldridge (1996); Chollet (2000); Edwards (2000); Thompson (1996). Psychological and psychosocial theories regarding the use of music for therapeutic purposes are found in: Benenson (1998); Bonny (1978); Schapira (2000), among others.

²⁶ See Rittner & Hess (1996) and Rouget (1985) for a characterization of the trance state.

²⁷ Regarding the relationship between music and expanded states of consciousness (ESC), Rittner & Hess (1996) state that certain types of music can potentially induce an ESC, direct it, and bring it back to the ordinary waking state.

²⁸ See examples of the shamanic use of songs and drumming in different cultures in Cook, 1997; Eliade (1964); Halifax (1989).

²⁹ The phenomenon of "organismic resonance" consists in the body's neuro-vegetative empathetic response towards the voicing or singing of or with others.

³⁰ They basically apply the notions of perennial philosophy to particular types of lived experiences, which seem to show a distinction between mind and consciousness. The former detents the characteristics of intentionality, pre-reflectiveness, and reflectiveness, while the latter is experienced as a ground from which the common experience and the felt-sense emerge, among seven other characteristics (Valle and Mohs, 1998).

³¹ Takiwasi in Quechua means “the singing house” (Presser-Velder, 2000). Mabit (1996) explains that this name was given to the center because “the therapeutic song or “ikaro” is the favorite healing weapon used by Amazonian shamans and also in Takiwasi” (p. 1).