

Ayahuasca Use Throughout Time: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Ayahuasca is the most common term which refers to a plant based hallucinogenic beverage made with the jungle lianas *Banisteriopsis Caapi* (Schultes 1972:35; De Rios 1984:8). Through a review of this literature, my project evaluates how the changing geographic boundaries, cultural context and worldview of ayahuasca users alter the intention and meaning of ayahuasca usage. This paper provides a contextual overview of hallucinogenic plants in Central and South America, key themes in shamanism and Amazonian shamanism. Local Amazonian ayahuasca use in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, Brazilian ayahuasca religions, neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism literature is presented and analyzed drawing upon Van Gennep's (1960) "Rites de Passage", Victor Turner's (1970) "Liminality", Shaw and Stewart's (2003) problematization of syncretism and Grimes' (1992) characteristics of the reinvention of ritual. Literature regarding therapeutic/medicinal ayahuasca use and ayahuasca legality is also presented. I argue recent and contemporary ayahuasca use may utilize traditional elements of Amazonian shamanism, though depart from Indigenous cosmology as ideologies governing it's use become syncretic, institutionalized and influenced by Western individualism.

Keywords: Ayahuasca, Amazon, Brazilian Ayahuasca Religions, Neo-shamanism, Syncretism, Liminality, Hallucinogenic plants, Literature Review

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1.1 Introduction

Ayahuasca, an Indigenous Quechan term meaning “spirit vine”, is the most common term which refers to a hallucinogen made from the jungle lianas *Banisteriopsis Caapi* (Schultes 1972:35; De Rios 1984:8). Ayahuasca has been used for centuries in Northwestern Amazonian countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil (De Rios 1984; Labate and Cavnar 2014). Ayahuasca is most commonly prepared into a tea-like beverage in combination with other psychoactive plants. The active chemical components of the beverage include harmine, harmaline, tetrahydroharmine and dimethyltryptamine (DMT) (De Rios 1984).

In the context of South American shamanism, ayahuasca is used for spiritual and medicinal purposes (De Rios 1984; De Rios and Rumrill 2008). Globalization and foreign romanticism of Indigenous shamanism have contributed to a change in the nature of this hallucinogen’s use (Fotiou 2016). My study will examine the following research question: How do the changing geographic boundaries, cultural context and worldview of ayahuasca users alter the intention and meaning of ayahuasca usage? I argue that the intention and meaning surrounding ayahuasca use is transformed according to the identity, culture of its users and context. In Amazonia, ayahuasca is most commonly used in religious and healing contexts. The plant itself is often viewed as divine, and the ayahuasca rituals are spiritual with the intention to heal, cure or bewitch (De Rios 1984). The usage, intention and meaning associated with ayahuasca is altered when ayahuasca moves geographic and cultural boundaries to be used by

foreigners for spiritual enlightenment, self-realization, or for therapeutic, medical and recreational purposes.

Previous literature has studied the ethnobotany of ayahuasca. Rivier & Lindgren (1972) have studied the ayahuasca beverage's botanical components of *Banisteriopsis Caapi* stems and *Psychotria viridis* leaves and its use amongst the Sharanahua and Culina tribes in Peru. Ayahuasca has also been classified and studied by Harvard ethnobotanist R.E. Schultes (1972).

Ethnopharmacology has examined ayahuasca's application as a narcotic. Schmid, Jungaberle and Verres (2010) studied ayahuasca self-therapy among fifteen Europeans suffering from disease. Also, Anderson (2012) analyzed literature suggesting ayahuasca may be used as treatment for anxiety and depression.

Ayahuasca has been studied in relation to Indigenous cosmology. This is evident in G. Reichel-Dolmatoff's (1978) study of *yajé* (another term for ayahuasca) artwork and mythological origin stories of the Tukano Indians. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976) also studied Tukano cosmology as an ecological adaptation. The ritual use of plant hallucinogens returns the participant to "Creation", motivating them with strong ecological responsibility (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976). Spirits are believed to have influence over the environment's future which gives shamanism and the shaman's senses induced through hallucinogenic visions significant control and management over these resources (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976).

Furthermore, ayahuasca has been studied in the context of globalization, tourism and expanded use. Holman (2011) found appropriation and commodification were evident on ayahuasca tourism websites, while De Rios and Rumrill (2008) discuss ayahuasca drug tourism and the rise of "new shamans" as a dark outcome of globalization. According to Fotiou (2016), the romanticized image of ayahuasca shamanism perceived by the foreigner ignores injustices

Indigenous people experience. The spiritual and identity crisis amongst Western ayahuasca users was studied by Lewis (2008) using Turner (1967) and Douglas' (1966) theory of liminality. This literature has led to discussions of ayahuasca's legality in foreign countries, especially in regards to the spread of Brazilian ayahuasca religions (Labate and MacRae 2010).

This question will be examined by providing a literature review of ayahuasca use throughout time. First, I provide a brief overview of hallucinogenic plant use in Central and South America and shamanism. Next, I present the three themes used to contextualize my argument: shamanic knowledge, good and bad shamanism and neo-shamanism which were drawn from the work of Atkinson (1990), Taussig (1986) and Whitehead and Wright (2004). I then provide a background of ayahuasca usage and introduce Arnold Van Gennep's (1960) "rites of passage" (as cited in Turner 1969) and Victor Turner's (1970) "liminality" concepts used to analyze the local ayahuasca uses, practices, rituals and ceremonies in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. In the following section, I use the concepts of syncretism, changes in ritual and religions drawing on Shaw and Stewart (2003) and Grimes (1992) to analyze Brazilian ayahuasca religions, neo-shamanic phenomenon and ayahuasca drug tourism. I then present literature on ayahuasca's medicinal and therapeutic uses and information about ayahuasca legality in Brazil, the United States and Canada. Finally, I discuss insights into this literature and use characteristics from Frisk and Nynäs (2012) work on religious change and globalization to frame this discussion.

This project discusses the implications of contemporary ayahuasca usage and how this departs from traditional South American shamanic practices. This is relevant as the prominence of scientific research, bioprospecting and notions of intellectual property have led to legalization, patents and biopiracy of plant species from the South American region. A review and analysis of

this literature provides important reminders of ayahuasca's legacy, its shamanic uses, purposes, meanings, how this is changing and the historical and contemporary significance of hallucinogenic plants.

1.2 Methodology

This project's literature has been drawn from subject areas of shamanism, history, archaeology, anthropology, ethnography, ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, scientific studies, drug tourism and neo-shamanism. Books from the University of Guelph's McLaughlin Library and affiliate libraries at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo were found by searching key terms on the Primo and Omni database such as "ayahuasca", "ayahuasca ethnography" and "ayahuasca" using a relevant country or author.

I used these key terms (ayahuasca, ayahuasca ethnography, ayahuasca + country) while searching for peer-reviewed sources on online engines and databases such as Google Scholar, Primo, JSTOR and Annual Reviews of Anthropology. Legal documents were obtained from the Government of Canada "Justice Laws" website. Furthermore, general Google searches were used to find recent and relevant ayahuasca news events from publishing companies such as CBC, CTV and the Montreal Gazette. One article by CBC was written in French, therefore the Google Translate engine was used to translate the information to English.

1.3 Hallucinogenic Plant Use in Central and South America

Hallucinogens, or "psychotropic" substances cause changes physiologically and in mental activity. (De Rios 1984:20). Teas, brews and snuffs with various hallucinogenic plant and chemical compounds have been used in Indigenous and South American shamanism contexts for thousands of years to achieve good and evil results, to heal, bewitch and see prophecies (De Rios 1984). Notably, hallucinogenic plant species have been known for their bitter and revolting taste

and many require complex preparation in order to effectively induce an altered state of consciousness (Furst 1972:xi). I will discuss some central and well researched psychedelic botanical species in order to provide a brief overview and understanding of hallucinogenic plants in the region, illustrate their role in shamanic and healing contexts along with their contemporary consumption, intention and meaning.

Hallucinogenic mushrooms, *Psilocybe Mexicana*, referred to as *teonanacatl*, meaning “Flesh of the Gods”-were used extensively throughout Central America (Furst 1972:7; De Rios 1984:31). Mushroom worship took place in Mesoamerica as early as the Aztec civilization (De Rios 1984:30). Consumption of these mushrooms would lead to intense visions, sometimes excitement or a meditative mood (Schultes 1940:430). Teonanacatl was used for medicinal purposes, such as to cure a fever, or in religious ceremonies to understand divination through visions (Schultes 1940:436). Archaeological “mushroom stone” artifacts have been uncovered in highland Guatemala and southeastern Mexico dating as far back as 300-500 B.C. (Furst 1972:7). Spanish chroniclers and the Catholic Church persecuted the Indigenous pagan mushroom ritual and sent the cult into hiding for approximately four centuries (Furst 1972:7; De Rios 1984:31). Contemporary research on the use of teonanacatl is limited.

Coca plants such as *Erythroxylon coca* species, have been documented as a stimulant, containing chemical contents of cocaine (Cartmell et al. 1991). Archaeological evidence such as Mochian pottery from the Classic Epoch of Peru’s northern coast depicts scenes of coca chewers (Martin et al. 2012:424). Ethnohistorical accounts also suggest Peru’s royalty near the time of conquest in 1230 A.D restricted coca use (Cartmell 1991:261). After this time, the plant’s divine status was recognized and became central in religious rituals (Cartmell 1991:261). Ritual use of coca in South America consisted of consumption by the Indigenous medicine man in order to

enter into a trance state, communicate with supernatural forces, enhancing meditation and incantations (Martin et al. 2012:424). Coca was commonly chewed in order to induce the effects, and some individuals still chew coca today. Contemporary consumption of Coca is powdered cocaine narcotic.

Furthermore, plants from the *Solanaceae* family including the subgenera *Datura* and *Brugmansia* species, known as the “devil’s apple” or “angel’s trumpet” has been one of the most widely used hallucinogens (Kerchner and Farkas 2020; Schultes 1972:46). These species are considered toxic due to the presence of atropine and scopolamine alkaloids in the entire plant (Kerchner and Farkas 2020:38). *Datura* was used by the Ecuadorian Jívaro to discipline unmanageable children, believing the spirits would advise them (Schultes 1972:48). The Chibcha people of Colombia administered *Datura aurea* to women and slaves to induce a state of unconsciousness prior to burying them alive (Schultes 1972:48). In northern Peru, *Brugmansia* species also referred to as *misha* or *floripondio* are used by Andean shamans for therapeutic-divinatory, initiation rites, phytotherapy, to treat illness and for black magic to cause damage to the individual that is often irreversible (De Feo 2004:222–223). Topical application of *Brugmansia* leaves may result in an altered state of consciousness, whereas when it is internally administered, the alkaloids will depress the central nervous system as an intoxicant (De Feo 2004:226). Contemporary studies have examined *Datura* and *Brugmansia* as highly toxic and poisonous plants and there have been reports of these species being used for criminal purposes in America, Asia and Europe (Kerchner and Farkas 2020:30). Despite recognition of the species’ toxic composition, it has been used recreationally. *Datura* users experience anticholinergic delirium and frequent use often leads to hospitalization, psychosis and even death (Vearrier and Greenberg 2010).

Peyote, *Lophophora williamsii*, is a small spineless mescaline cactus used widely throughout Mexico, its use eventually spreading to the south-western United States Indigenous people (De Rios 1984:33). Peyote-cult members may use the plant for communication with spirits, to heal and to cure (De Rios 1984:33). Peyote consumption leads to strong auditory and visual hallucinations, although complete consciousness is not lost and the user may control their body and stay in touch with their senses (Schultes 1938:702). Early Mexican accounts of peyote use emphasize the cactus' medicinal abilities over its visionary experience (Schultes 1938:704; De Rios 1984:33). In 1960 botanists discovered antibiotic properties in peyote (McCleary, Sypherd, and Walkington 1960; De Rios 1984:33). Peyote was not only used by the Aztecs but also the Huichol Indigenous people who would conduct peyote rituals in the desert, singing and weeping all day (Peter T. Furst 1972:137). North American Indigenous people such as the Navajo, have incorporated peyote into their Church rituals (De Rios 1984:34). Today, recreational use of peyote is illegal in the United States, except when used sacramentally in the Native American Church (Bouayad 2019).

The San Pedro Cactus, *Echinopsis pachanoi* (*Trichocereus pachanoi*) known for its active mescaline ingredient, has had a significant historical legacy in Amazonia (De Rios and Cardenas 1980:238). The cactus grows in the Andes mountain region and a significant amount of archaeological evidence of San Pedro use has been uncovered in Northern Peru (De Rios and Cardenas 1980). An analysis of ceramics of the ancient Nazca people who lived from 100AD to 800AD depicted images of the San Pedro cactus' unique star shaped circular marking (De Rios and Cardenas 1980:238). Since the 1940s, San Pedro has been documented as having ritual use as an "entheogen" used as a tool to assist with a shaman's journey to other worlds and induce visions in order to diagnose and cure magical illnesses caused by sorcery or bewitchment (Glass-

Coffin 2010:59). San Pedro usage has become more popular in the United States as a recreational drug, although its legality is uncertain due to its mescaline chemical component banned by the *American Controlled Substances Act* (Bullis 2008:197). Furthermore, a town in southern Ecuador has experienced a significant increase in “psychedelic tourism” use of the San Pedro cactus to the extent that the cactus’s sustainability is being threatened due to overharvesting (Glass-Coffin 2010:60).

It is evident uses, intentions and meanings of hallucinogenic plant species change over time, in different geographic boundaries and when it is used by individuals from various cultures. Hallucinogenic plants have a significant role in divinity, spirituality and even the development of cultural artifacts. Though several had positive, enjoyable experiences and effects on communities and continue to do so recreationally today, there are some, such as *Erythroxylon coca*, *Datura* and *Brugmansia* which have been used with negative and destructive intentions. Nevertheless, these species have a significant place in Amazonia historically and culturally, while many have continued to be used recreationally in Europe and North America. Ayahuasca has followed a very similar trajectory to these species.

1.4 The Historical Use of Ayahuasca

Though archaeological evidence of ayahuasca is difficult to obtain due to the organic and decomposing properties of the plant substance, the little evidence that exists indicates ayahuasca has been used for thousands of years. Recently, in May 2019 organic residues from a ritual bundle were radiocarbon dated to 1,000 C.E (Miller et al. 2019). Found during archaeological excavations in Lípez Altiplano of southwestern Bolivia, the residues contain two primary ingredients of ayahuasca- harmine (from *Banisteriopsis*) and dimethyltryptamine (DMT) (Miller et al. 2019). The multiple plant species present in this ritual bundle also suggests hallucinogenic

plants travelled significant distances, possibly indicating their importance and ritual use in Pre-Colombian times (Miller et al. 2019).

As noted in Whitehead and Wright (2004) and Taussig's (1986) work, shamanism was not welcomed by Spanish and Portuguese colonial invaders. This was affirmed during the Inquisition in 1616, when the Catholic Church prohibited the use of hallucinogenic plants by Indigenous populations, punishing them with torture or death (Labate and Cavnar 2014: vii). Some of the earliest known colonial encounters with ayahuasca came from Jesuit missionaries during the 1600s, who spoke of it as a "diabolic potion" made from Peruvian Amazon lianas (Labate and Cavnar 2014: vii). An early Spanish chronicler Hernando Ruiz de Alarcon described hallucinogenic plants as a powerful means to communicate with the devil who deceives the individual with hallucinations (Labate and Cavnar 2014:viii).

During the late 19th and early 20th century, the increase in extraction and commercialization of rubber, a time period known as the "Amazon rubber boom" led to an increased number of rubber tappers in the Amazonian region (Weinstein 1983:1) In this context, rubber camps came into contact with Indigenous groups who partook in ayahuasca rituals, which influenced the creation of Brazilian ayahuasca religions. Ayahuasca also became a part of rubber camp culture as evident in testimonies by rubber camp bosses in the 1970s which reveal ayahuasca was banned as it caused an indifference to work (Labate and MacRae 2010).

Western scientific inquiry into ayahuasca began in the mid 19th century. In 1851, a British plant explorer Richard Spruce identified the vine in upper Rio Negro of the Brazilian Amazon and gave it the name of "caapi" (Schultes 1972:35). Spruce later named the plant *Banisteria Caapi*, which eventually became more correctly *Banisteriopsis Caapi* (Schultes 1972:35). In the early 20th century an active chemical compound of the ayahuasca vine –

harmine (originally named bansiterine) was identified by Louis Lewin (Labate and Cavnar 2014:xi). Harmine was proposed as a cure to Parkinson’s disease, until a pharmaceutical corporation marketed the treatment “L-Dopa” (Labate and Cavnar 2014:xi). Nevertheless, ayahuasca disappeared from Western focus and reappeared during the Second World War when Harvard botanist R.E. Schultes encountered the hallucinogen and eventually discovered a second critical enhancing chemical compound in the ayahuasca brew – DMT, found in *Psychotria viridis* leaves (Labate and Cavnar 2014:xi). Overall, ayahuasca’s history can be interpreted as one of ideological, religious conflict, influenced by power structures and even the “rubber boom”. In reviewing this literature, I argue ayahuasca and hallucinogenic plants are significant in the development of culture, ritual, cosmologies, medicine and recreational use.

1.5 Shamanism

Shamanism is a focusing concept for this paper and important in understanding the intention and usage of ayahuasca. Shamanism may be understood as a belief system in which rituals and ideologies are understood to be associated with the “Otherworld” (Furst 1972:viii). The origins of shamanism are believed to date back to Neanderthal man (ca. 100,000 years ago) (Furst 1972:ix). The similarities between beliefs and motifs of different shamanisms indicate the antiquity and universality of altered states of consciousness and the human psyche (Furst 1972:ix).

Shamans are religious healers, sometimes referred to as witch doctors, medicine men or sorcerers who directly interact with spirits (Walsh 1989). This differs from priests who interact with and convey the message of the divine through scriptures (Walsh 1989). Shamans from different parts of the world often represent the guardian of the human psyche and ecological realm responsible for their community. Shamans usually require extensive training and have

been perceived as psychologically unstable and inauthentic due to their “shamanic performances” which contain very specific actions and sounds such as slurping or gagging to emphasize action and effectiveness (Atkinson 1992; Beyer 2009). Despite these claims, shamans may serve important functions in the community to heal, cure, remove curses, deliver incantations or bewitch others (De Rios 1984:19).

In South America, Indigenous shamanism in general may be characterized by cosmological beliefs rooted in ecology and animism (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976;1978). Indigenous shamanism diversified and was inter-ethnically spread during the time of the “Rubber Boom” (Chaumeil 1992; Labate and MacRae 2010). This has led to an increase in individuals with mixed blood, such as the Mestizos (Spanish and Indigenous descent) practising shamanism and incorporating Indigenous shamanic styles, but also other traditions and languages (Chaumeil 1992). Hallucinogenic plants have been used by several facets of Indigenous and Amazonian shamanism to reach altered states of consciousness and communicate with the spirits, the otherworld, and understand illness and bewitchment through vivid visionary experiences. Through understanding ayahuasca’s use in different types of shamanism, it is evident that geographic, temporal and cultural boundaries influence and shape the shaman and shamanism’s intention, use and meaning of ayahuasca.

1.6 Contextual Frame

Jane Atkinson’s *Shamanisms Today* (1992) avoids homogenous characterization of one single shamanism by introducing ethnographic literature to identify local, regional, national and transnational connections. *In Darkness and Secrecy* by Whitehead and Wright (2004) studies the repressed side of shamanism, known as “Dark Shamanism” which encompasses the knowledge and power framework of assault sorcery and malicious witchcraft in shamanic practice.

Furthermore, Michael Taussig (1986), studied shamanic adaptations to colonization among the Putumayo Indians in southwestern Colombia, indicating their shamanic practices use elements of history. These three works have three common themes used to explain the nature of shamanic practices. These texts describe the unique sources and systems of knowledge in South American shamanism, the existence of both good and bad shamanic practices along with how shamanism has become adapted into some form of “neo-shamanism”. These three elements will be used to frame my discussion of how cultural, geographic boundaries and worldviews associated with ayahuasca use have changed the nature of its use and meaning.

1.6.1 Theme #1: Shamanic Knowledge

These three works mention shamanic specialists and hallucinogenic plant-users are able to access unique power and knowledge through achieving an altered state of consciousness. According to Atkinson (1992), South American fieldworkers found “jumpstarting” their consciousness through the consumption of hallucinogens would produce visions and shamanic senses. Lagrou (2004) in *Darkness and Secrecy* mentions ayahuasca is often consumed with the intent to get information about distant places, the real intentions of opponents in conflicts, the motives of visitors, future events and illness-causing agents. When analyzing such trace phenomena, Atkinson (1992) stresses the importance of considering associated knowledge structures, rituals and society.

The existence of “psychedelic shamanisms” highlights the different structure of knowledge in shamanism compared to the West (Atkinson 1992). Shamanism values individual consciousness whereas Western society values culturally centered knowledge, society, history and development (Atkinson 1992). Furthermore, shamanism also possesses an “implicit social knowledge” according to Taussig (1986) which refers to what influences one’s knowledge

without one knowing and the interaction of history and memory in constituting this knowledge. Taussig (1986) argues this process has involved the conquest of Indigenous societies and the decomposing of their religious practices. For example, pulverized bones turn into an “evil wind” which has the power to do harm amongst the Putumayo Indians (Taussig 1986:366,372). This wind specifically comes from the dead pagans of the preconquest times, before violent Spanish colonization (Taussig 1986). One Putumayo boy interviewed by Taussig (1986), consumed *yagé* (another term for ayahuasca) during the time of the rubber boom atrocities in the region. His hallucinations had the scene of a white man with a bayonet chasing him (Taussig 1986:140). These are perhaps examples of how historical events may shape experiences during shamanic altered states of consciousness, such as the boy’s visions during the *yagé* ritual (Taussig 1986). The knowledge, whether spiritual or self-reflexive, attained through ayahuasca consumption is important in understanding differences between the local and western uses my project will present.

1.6.2 Theme #2: Good and Bad Shamanism

Whitehead and Wright (2004) argue we must investigate the reasons behind the colonial desires to repress what they believed to be the “satanic” shamanic facet of Indigenous culture. As briefly mentioned by Atkinson (1992), Porterfield (1987:734) claims shamanisms are manipulative, destructive and deceptive. This aligns with Taussig’s (1986) finding that shamanic practices among the Putumayo Indians also use sorcery, killing and torture.

Whitehead and Wright (2004) specifically focus on this malicious side of shamanic practice and draw upon examples using ayahuasca. Although ayahuasca is more associated with healing, sorcery may be put into the brew by “dark shamans” and it may be used for selfish seductions (Pollock 2004). For example, the Kulina people believe in a mysterious condition

referred to as “ramikka dzamakuma aka” (ayahuasca fever/ sickness) (Pollock 2004). This condition occurs when a man smears parts of the boiled ayahuasca vine on the clothes or hammock of a woman he would like to seduce (Pollock 2004). Initially aphrodisiac effects are produced, but then the woman will become ill and die unless treated by a “wiwimade” (storyteller shaman) from the opposing tribe (Pollock 2004). Furthermore, dark shamanism is evident in imagery such as Pablo Amaringo’s paintings of his ayahuasca visions (Whitehead and Wright 2004). These paintings clearly depict an attack sorcery scene of an evil shaman trying to harm an individual counteracting his evil acts. Whitehead and Wright (2004) argue violent truths such as these have been repressed in efforts of deception, recapitulation of knowledge and to deny radical cultural difference. My project will elaborate on this idea by examining themes of good versus bad shamanism in Amazonia and in ayahuasca drug tourism.

1.6.3 Theme #3: Neo-Shamanism

Atkinson (1992) introduces the term neo-shamanism, which refers to a reworking of shamanic traditions to fit American and European cultural idioms. This type of spiritual alternative arose out of 1960s and 1970s drug culture in Europe and the United States which coincides with a contemporary emphasis on rapid results in one’s self help and actualization journey (Atkinson 1992). These neo-shamanic practices are developed out of a foreigner’s assumption of “magic” being associated with Indians and their shamanism (Taussig 1986).

Neo-shamanism is developed out of a desire to satisfy the needs and expectations of the patient. Atkinson (1992) explains the notion of shamanic performances referencing Joralemon’s (1986) work who argues a Peruvian shaman’s performance in urban and rural settings are shaped by the client’s desires at the scene. Similarly, Taussig (1986) provides examples of how

Putumayo Indians use their magic to create “evil eye” bracelets for the white people, and treat white children if they are sick, although colonists have criticized Indian magical practices.

Contrary to neo-shamanic beliefs rooted in western moral standards, good versus bad, light and darkness, Amazonian shamanism is not a loving animism but rather a predatory animism, which act upon the world in order to cure, fertilize and kill (Fausto 2004). Neo-shamanic rites often deceive this truth through the lack of blood and tobacco, “the hallmark of shamanism” (Fausto 2004:158). Neo-shamanic practices containing hallucinogens are popularized and important for shamanic practices in general though they are not as widely used as tobacco. My project will elaborate upon neo-shamanism using evidence of ayahuasca globalization and drug tourism.

Part 2: Local Use – Ethnographic Accounts

2.1 Rites of Passage and Liminality

To analyze and understand the altered state of consciousness and acquired knowledge during ayahuasca rituals and visionary experiences in local, religious and contemporary contexts I will draw upon Arnold van Gennep’s (1960) “Rites de Passage” – which refer to rites which accompany a change of state, social position and age in the individual (sometimes referred to as “passenger”)(as cited in Turner and Turner 1970:93; Turner 1969). State in this context refers to a stable or recurrent condition which is culturally recognized (Turner and Turner 1970:94). The rites of passage of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin and aggregation (Turner 1969; Turner and Turner 1970). Separation refers to the symbolic detachment of the individual or group from their place in the social structure or from their set of cultural conditions (Turner and Turner 1970:94). The following stage is the liminal period, in which the traits of the ritual subject are ambiguous. This is essentially a period of transition, where the individual has

no definite definition of their state, identity, culture or social status (Turner and Turner 1970:94). In the last stage, the passage is “consummated” and the individual is now expected to behave according to the ritual’s desired outcome and cultural norms (Turner and Turner 1970:94).

Although van Gennep (1960) coined this phase and term “liminality” it has been expanded upon by Victor Turner. Turner (1970) has used the concept of liminality to analyze rituals and practices among the Ndembu in 1967. Periods of liminality are viewed as inter-structural situations where the individual is no longer and not yet classified as having a cultural position, status or identity (Turner and Turner 1970:93). In this liminal phase, one may become vulnerable, distressed and their personhood may be threatened as they undergo a period of reflection (Turner and Turner 1970:93; Lewis 2008:118). Consequently, this period may be marked by feelings of anxiety, vulnerability and altered states of consciousness (Lewis 2008:118). Rites of passage and liminality have been used by Sara E. Lewis (2008) to analyze Western use of ayahuasca and subjects’ experiences of spiritual crisis and personal growth. Difficult experiences, or “spiritual emergencies” the individual experiences after ayahuasca use may be understood in the context of liminality (Lewis 2008).

2.2 Peru

Ayahuasca – the term, the vine and it’s use are identified as having its origins in Peru (De Rios 1984). Anthropologists have studied ayahuasca use in Eastern Peru amongst the Matsigenka tribe (Baer and Snell 1974). According to Matsigenka shamanism, man has a soul, referred to as *isure* which can separate itself from the body in hallucinogenic trances, illnesses and accidents (Baer and Snell 1974:65). If a demon or evil spirit gets a hold of the individual and they will die (Baer and Snell 1974:66). Therefore, the shaman consumes ayahuasca, referred to as *kamaranpi*, enabling him to see the *saankariite* - the ancestral gods or spirits (Baer and Snell 1974).

In the Upper Amazon, ayahuasca may be consumed with an ayahuasca leader known as an *ayahuasquero*. *Ayahuasqueros* are suited to treat illness caused by interpersonal factors such as stress, conflicts and tensions (De Rios 1984). These healers only accept patients they believe will have some success and will not accept those believed to be weak, psychotic or have an illness treatable using biomedicine (De Rios 1984). These healers require extensive training – which is indicative of the skill, power and respect associated with ayahuasca knowledge. In Beyer's (2009) "Singing to the Plants", he mentions personal encounters with *ayahuasquero* Don Roberto who became an apprentice to his uncle at the age of fourteen. His apprenticeship lasted two years in total which was considered very quick (Beyer 2009:105). During the apprenticeship period, the *maestro* (teacher) *ayahuasquero* manages the diet of the apprentice while protecting them and regulating their visions through the use of songs, known as *icaros* (Beyer 2009). It is important the *maestro* is trusted, as there is a fear the *maestro* may not teach everything they know or have ulterior motives (Beyer 2009). Don Roberto has taken over teaching his own son, after fears the teacher was being deceptive – which is why the medicine was not resonating with him (Beyer 2009). The good or bad intentions of the *ayahuasquero* impact whether ayahuasca will be used for good or bad shamanic purposes.

Marlene Dobkin de Rios (1984) conducted fieldwork in Iquitos, Peru, centred around the urban slums of Belén which are modern areas with a recent jungle heritage. According to De Rios' observations, when a poor person becomes ill in Iquitos, they may be recommended an *ayahuasquero* (1984:61). Before the session, patients are given dietary prescriptions to avoid eating salt, lard or sweets and may even be prescribed sexual abstinence (De Rios 1984). This is done in preparation of the purge of ayahuasca healing as the vine is believed to possess a jealous guardian spirit (De Rios 1984). Ayahuasca is usually administered during healing sessions of

large groups of people. These sessions are conducted at night by the healer in isolated jungle areas at the edge of the city (De Rios 1984:69). Patients may bring gifts for the healer or the object of their beloved individual if seeking love incantations (De Rios 1984:69). The participants sit in a circle and at around ten o'clock at night the healer will distribute a communal cup of the ayahuasca beverage, singing, whistling, blowing tobacco smoke and reciting oracles as the beverage is passed around (De Rios 1984). It may take over a half an hour for participants to experience the drug's symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea, along with visions (De Rios 1984). Ayahuasca visions vary based on the individual, but often visions of jungle animals, a river, the person who bewitched them, meaningful symbols or renditions of their innermost thoughts would appear (De Rios 1984). As the evening progresses, the healer moves around the circle assisting each patient in interpreting their visions to discover the cause of their illness (De Rios 1984). The healer may blow tobacco smoke over the patient to cure illness, but if a patient experiences bodily pain in a particular area, the healer will suck on the area to draw out a spine or thistle -representing the enemy or evil spirit which caused the pain/ illness (De Rios 1984). The session ends in the early hours of the morning, four to five hours after strong intoxication (De Rios 1984). Observations from De Rios' (1984) fieldwork demonstrate these healing sessions are no longer a simple translation of "Indian" beliefs and have been adapted over time to an urban environment. Although, ayahuasca appears to treat symptoms of stress and anxiety as experienced today and in the past (De Rios 1984).

This ceremony may be analyzed according to the three rites of passage: separation, margin (liminality) and aggregation. When the participants leave the city and are in a jungle setting, they are physically separated from their normal environment. This removes the participant from their cultural conditions. Furthermore, before the actual ayahuasca ceremony,

participants practice *la dieta*, which separates them from indulgences and entities the spirits may find jealous. This type of diet also removes the participant from their normal eating habits and way of life. As all participants must follow the diet and leave the city for the ceremony despite their age or class – it can also be said they are removed from their social structure. The liminal period in this ritual experience is constituted by the intense symptoms of the participants. Once participants consume ayahuasca, they are removed from their state and sense of “self” in the altered state of consciousness. During this state the shaman is essentially assisting the participant through the transitory experience regarding visions, acting as an interpreter and doctor to discover any anxieties, illnesses and cure them. The effectiveness of the experience on the participant is not obvious until the ceremony is over. At the end of the ayahuasca ritual, during the aggregation stage, the participant is supposed to feel enlightened after engaging with the plant spirits, experience a spiritual awakening and cleansing becoming pure and cured – as the ayahuasca ridded them of evil.

Though these are examples of ayahuasca and *ayahuasqeros*' healing abilities may seem inherently good, there have been suspicions of ayahuasca use for sorcery/witchcraft. *Brujos* (witches) may use the ayahuasca purge for evil means (De Rios 1970:297). They may collect money for the service knowing their patient will not get better or be satisfied, or slip dangerous plants into the ayahuasca beverage (De Ríos 1970:297). De Rios has found data to suggest witchcraft and witches may suffer from psychosis (1970:299). Though there have been claims of ayahuasca used for evil and stories in Amazonian novels, very few *ayahuasqueros* will admit to using the substance for evil purposes (De Rios 1972:95). De Rios mentions the story of a violinist in Belén who underwent an *ayahuasquero* apprenticeship but quit upon the maestro asking him to perform evil magic to complete his training (1984:95). Therefore, the rituals and

stories of good ayahuasca shamanism tend to prevail over focus and evidence of evil ayahuasca shamanism in the Peruvian context.

There is a female distinction in ayahuasca use in most Indigenous practices and in some mestizo shamanism contexts. There are very few female shamans among Peruvian mestizos due to fear of menstruation (Beyer 2009:18). Plant spirits, according to Peruvian *ayahuasquera* Dona Maria will often not go near a woman who is menstruating (Beyer 2009:18). Menstruating woman at an ayahuasca ceremony are believed to disturb the shaman's abilities and the visions of everyone partaking in the ceremony (Beyer 2009:19). Regarding the growth of ayahuasca, the vine must not be seen by a woman, especially one who is menstruating in fear the plant will become resentful and damaged (Beyer 2009:19). Among the Piro tribe, women who are menstruating and have recently had sex should not participate in the ceremony (Beyer 2009:19). The Shuar are one of the unique people that does not make any distinctions regarding ayahuasca use based on sex (Beyer 2009:18). Despite these beliefs regarding female participation in ayahuasca, Dona Maria says she has experienced very little prejudice as an *ayahuasquera* (Beyer 2009:19).

2.3 Ecuador

Naranjo (1979) studied the use of *Banisteriopsis* species among the Jibaro Indigenous people of the Ecuadorian rainforest. In the context of Jibaro mythology, ayahuasca is referred to by the Shuar word of *natema* (or *natem*). According to these beliefs, *natema* allows regular people to speak to the gods (Naranjo 1979). Similar to beliefs of people in Iquitos, the Jibaros believe disease may occur due to magic- essentially manipulated supernatural/spiritual power which influences the natural environment. The witchdoctor has the responsibility of understanding and controlling magic and uses *natema* to find the origins of serious diseases

(Naranjo 1979). In preparation for a ceremony to treat the serious illness of a patient, the patient's family boils the *Banisteriopsis Caapi* vine along with *yagi* until a reddish-brown liquid remains (Naranjo 1979:132,137). In a separate vessel, a tobacco potion is prepared called *tsangu* (Naranjo 1979:132).

Preparation for this ceremony requires the witchdoctor healing the patient to fast so as not interfere with the cure (Naranjo 1979). The witchdoctor arrives at the patient's family's hut in the evening, and the ceremony begins with the witchdoctor's ingestion of tobacco helping to call upon this spirit to possess him and help cure the patient (Naranjo 1979:132). The patient lies on a table or cloth in the centre of the house. (Naranjo 1979:132). The witchdoctor then drinks the entire cup of *natema* which induces vomiting to cleanse the body (Naranjo 1979). The ingestion of *natema* helps the witchdoctor call upon the spirits resting in the forests and the rivers to guard him so he may treat the patient and enable his power darts (spiritual powers) (Mader and Gippelhauser 2013:82). These spirits also guard the witchdoctor from attacks by enemy shamans (Mader and Gippelhauser 2013:82). The steps that follow are similar to the ritual mentioned in Iquitos, involving chants and sucking the evil from the patient. The witchdoctor in this case also passes *shinguishingu* (a type of hallucinogenic plant) leaves over the patient, massages and blows on the afflicted parts of the patient's body (Naranjo 1979). However, the patient does not appear to consume the beverage. The witchdoctor also sips the tobacco beverage during the session to control the effects of ecstasy and hallucinations from *natema* (Naranjo 1979). At what Naranjo (1979) calls the "climax" of the ceremony, the witchdoctor claimed to have found the *tunchis* (evil) making the patient ill. The witchdoctor then presents the object – often a splintered piece of wood or animals such as worms, frogs, or scorpions to affirm the success of the ceremony and ritual to the family and the patient (Naranjo 1979:132). As the witchdoctor's

visions also indicated who cursed the individual with the *tunchi*, the witchdoctor often asks follow up questions before magically returning the *tunchi* to the original perpetrator (Naranjo 1979:134). Mader and Gippelhauser (2013) interview Sucúa, a shaman from the Ecuadorian Amazonian basin. Sucúa mentions how patients may ask him to bewitch the other shaman using the same powers which caused their own illness (Mader and Gippelhauser 2013:83). Sucúa states he has the knowledge to punish the sorcerer who caused their pain – which is why sorcerers have to be cautious and drink *natem* to call upon their own darts and guardian spirits (Mader and Gippelhauser 2013:83).

Elements of this *natem* ceremony in Ecuador demonstrate an underlying theme of good and bad shamanism. According to Mader and Gippelhauser (2013) the *natem* healing ceremony represents a power and spiritual conflict between shamans and sorcerers. Even the distinction between the healer and sorcerer is based upon community connections, social status and relations (Mader and Gippelhauser 2013:82). Though this was described in the context of Jivaroan shamanism, this theme and conflict is evident and applicable to several ayahuasca rituals and ceremonies in the Amazon.

Unlike the ritual previously described in Peru, the patient in this *natema* ritual does not have a liminal phase characterized by an altered state of consciousness. Rather, the patient's liminal phase may be characterized by an ambiguous state or identity of being in between good and bad evil spirits and darts (spiritual powers/entities). Interestingly, the witchdoctor is the one consuming the beverage and enduring a liminal phase of his own in order to find the cure and obtain the knowledge required to heal. The witchdoctor goes through the stage of separation, for example, through the intensive diet. The separation the patient undergoes at the beginning is a bit unclear, though one could infer the patient being placed in the centre of the room is a form of

separation and isolation. Separation also occurs during the liminal phase as the evil magic and darts are separated from the individual's soul and spirit. This inference may also be applicable to the previous ayahuasca ceremony mentioned in the Peruvian context. Separation from evil is often the goal of healing in Amazonian ayahuasca ceremonies. Also, interestingly in this *natem* ceremony, though the patient is the one who is consummated – having been cured, the family of the patient is part of the aggregation phase. Not only the patient but also the family must be satisfied by the effectiveness of the witchdoctor's work. Overall, the patient in this ceremony moves from a phase of evil affliction to one that is cleansed, spiritual and safe.

In many populations that practice shamanism, such as in the Peruvian context previously mentioned, the witchdoctor must undergo extensive and specialized training. Witchdoctors are selected among the Jibaro community due to their physical strength, intellectual powers, moral character, age or experience (Naranjo 1979). Through this education, the apprentice learns how to use *natema*, identify and acquire the power of gods and demons (Naranjo 1979). The power of this hallucinogen comes with great responsibility as it allows them to heal, discover hunting locations or how to attack enemies, but it also comes with a great amount of risk and fear (Naranjo 1979; Beyer 2009; Mader and Gippelhauser 2013). If the witchdoctor treats the patient and the patient dies, the family of the patient may attribute the witchdoctor's malpractice as a cause of death. The family may even decide the patient's death must be avenged (Naranjo 1979:134).

Bennett (1992) found *Banisteriopsis Caapi* is the most widely used hallucinogen amongst the Shuar Indigenous tribe in Ecuador. The Shuar also refer to ayahuasca as *natem*, and prepare the beverage somewhat differently compared to other regions and tribes. A Shuar shaman by the name of Pedro Kunkumas prepares *natem* by splitting the *Banisteriopsis Caapi* vine that is one

to two metres in length into small segments which are then placed into a pot with a few litres of water (Bennett 1992:486). *Diplopterys Cabrerana* and unidentified *Malpighiaceae* species are also added to the mixture which is then boiled until it reaches a syrup-like consistency. *Natem* ceremonies are held at night due to the effects of the alkaloids in the mixture which may cause photosensitivity and to allow healing shamans to counteract the work of bewitching shamans which is also done at night (Bennett 1992:486). The Shuar ceremony described by Bennett (1992) is similar to the ceremony described by De Rios (1984), as the shaman and the patient are the ones who consume the beverage. As mentioned by De Rios (1984), the presence of cigarette smoke is important in the ceremony to ward off evil spirits.

2.4 Colombia

According to G. Reichel- Dolmatoff's (1970) ethnographic accounts among the Tukano Indigenous tribe in Vaupés, Colombia, this group refers to ayahuasca by the term *yajé*. According to the Tukano, *yajé* represents their return to the origin of things – the maternal womb (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1970). The experience allows the participant to see divinities, the universe, the first humans and animals, essentially, it allows them to acquire knowledge of the otherworld (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1970;1978). The experience is religiously convincing, and after the individual drinks *yajé* they die and are revived (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1970). Describing the participant's experience in terms of death and rebirth is symbolic of the self-separation, liminal phase and new identity evident in ayahuasca ceremonies previously described.

Only male community members are *yajé* healers and consume the beverage, whereas women dance during these ceremonies. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1970) describes his firsthand experience consuming ayahuasca amongst the Tukano Indigenous people of the Vaupés region in 1968. Throughout the evening ceremony, Reichel- Dolmatoff (1970) drank *yajé* along with

Tukano men six times in one evening over approximately thirty-minute intervals, beginning at eight o'clock in the evening. His symptoms were similar to those previously mentioned, while he also experienced sweating, an increased heart rate, a sense of euphoria and drowsiness (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1970). *Yajé* visions according to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1978) may be peaceful and positive or absolutely terrifying and can be categorized into three stages. In the first stage after bodily reactions, *yajé* images appear and the subject feels like they are in the milky way (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978). In the second stage, one experiences dreamlike senses and sees larger, irregular shapes, possibly even supernatural beings (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1970). The final third phase is marked by swirl colours and shapes which make the person feel like they are lost in a dream (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978). Reichel Dolmatoff's (1978) *yajé* experience does not have the same ritual intentions previously described in Peru and Ecuador. Whereas healing, cures and discovering the cause of illness or misfortune may be the reason why ayahuasca rituals are performed, they may also be used for the experiential/spiritual purpose during the liminal phase, with no other desired goal or mission other than to have a spiritual and enlightening experience. In Reichel-Dolmatoff's case, he was not cured but knowledgeable of ayahuasca spirits, the altered state of consciousness experience which in light of other ayahuasca rituals mentioned, may be recognized as the "consummated" stage. This also indicates the intention of the individual partaking in the ritual may guide the efficacy or transition through rites of passage stages. Partaking in an ayahuasca ceremony simply for the altered state of consciousness experience will be revisited in the neo-shamanism and ayahuasca tourism section.

Taussig (1986) encountered *yage* (another term for ayahuasca) multiple times while exploring the Putumayo region between 1969-1985. Taussig (1986) mentions that *yage* only grows in the lowland and foothills region of the rainforest and is believed by the Putumayo

“Indians” to be a special gift from God exclusively for their use (Taussig 1986:140). The Cofán Indians located south of the Putumayo River told Taussig the origin story of *yage* which illustrates the influence of Indian and Christian tradition. According to the Cofán, when God made the world, he plucked a hair from his head and planted it in the ground for Indian use only – blessing it with his left hand (Taussig 1986:140). After consuming *yage*, the Indians developed the rites and beliefs of the shamanic complex, but this only made God angry (Taussig 1986:140). The Indians then gave the *yage* beverage to God which gave him the unpleasant symptoms but many wonderful visions (Taussig 1986:140). God then believed that the person who consumes *yage* suffers, learns, but then becomes distinguished (Taussig 1986:140). Before Taussig drank *yage* at a ceremony, he describes how the healer sung to the pot of *yage* to rid the beverage of the evils it brings from the jungle, asking for good painting visions (Taussig 1986). Taussig’s (1986) notes on his experience at the beginning appear to indicate discomfort, paranoia and self-hate. His body is distorted, he sees horrible animals, his life story plays out before him as he vomits and experiences diarrhea (Taussig 1986:141). In the second half Taussig relaxes and sees his healer as a tiger (Taussig 1986:141). Despite his vivid experiences in this *yage* ceremony, he later consumed the beverage and did not experience any hallucinations. Based on Taussig’s description, he did not consume *yage* for a specific purpose such as to heal, cure or bewitch, but for the experience – similar to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976;1978). However, his altered state of consciousness, or what could be classed as the “liminal” phase of his experience was characterized by discomfort and unpleasant experiences. This perhaps aligns with the description of the distressed state Victor Turner (1970) used to characterize the liminal period of Taussig’s self-reflection.

Several *yage* experiences mentioned by Taussig (1986) illustrate his concept of implicit social knowledge. For example, the healer Taussig saw as a Tiger – Jose Garcia, mentioned his own *yage* experiences consisted of many fat cattle (Taussig 1986:141). Interestingly, the World Bank has financed cattle in the region since the 1970s (Taussig 1986:141). Furthermore, a boy consumed *yage* in the lowland area of Putumayo with his father and his vision consisted of him being chased by a white man with a machete and bayonet (Taussig 1986:380). This happened at around the time of the rubber-boom atrocities. These examples indicate that implicit social knowledge might have an influence in one's experience during the liminal period of *yage* ceremonies and consumption. The amount of agency the participant has in the visionary experience is debatable. The ritual experiences described above indicate the participant is the one subject to the experience – puzzled by it, confused and watching the images appear during their altered state of consciousness. However, as Taussig's (1986) implicit social knowledge and ethnographic accounts of *yage* indicate, the individual's past experiences during this liminal period may have more of an impact than one may have expected. This raises questions such as, does liminal phase shape the individual or does the individual shape the liminal phase?

Additionally, Taussig (1986) noted a regional conflict in obtaining and using *yage* among the Putumayo Indians. The Sibundoy medicine men of the lowland Sibundoy valley are known to have skill and knowledge of *yage* and *yage* visions (Taussig 1986:152). These lowland shamans are fearful of selling *yage* to the highland shamans because of its scarcity. However, this lowland population has also been fearful, stating the highland Indians mix *magia* (magic) with *yage* to dominate them... and even if they refuse, the *magia* could kill them (Taussig 1986:154). The theme of good and bad shamanism is embedded within this regional conflict of *yage* skill and knowledge.

Furthermore, the Tukano have derived their graphic art and pottery designs from *yajé* visions. During his fieldwork, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1978) asked Tukano members to draw what they saw once consuming *yajé* and explain their artwork. Biá, a Tukano participant, drew a vision seen after consuming three cups of *yajé*. The image drawn contains female and male sexual symbolism (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978) (see Appendix A). Biá's design after consuming four cups of *yajé* features vertical and angular line projections which symbolize log-drums and snakes while small blue circles represent the Daughter of the Master of Animals in her embodied form of a tree frog (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978) (see Appendix B). These examples illustrate how *yajé* consumption has important spiritual and cultural meaning for the Tukano. The artwork of the Tukano also provides graphic evidence of the liminal period participants experience during the *yage* rituals and Indigenous cosmology.

In the 2014 documentary "Colombia: The Sacred Plant of the Amazon" emergency doctor Bernard Fontanille investigated *yagé* (another term for ayahuasca) use on the Moca plain in the Putumayo district. There are over twenty-two varieties of *yagé* in the Putumayo area ("The Sacred Plant of the Amazon" 2014). According to the cosmological origin story of *yagé* among the Ingu, *yagé* has two main parts in the creation story to represent the two main plants making the brew. The Creator's hair is said to be the vines of *yagé* (*Banisteriopsis Caapi*) ("The Sacred Plant of the Amazon" 2014). The Inga shaman- a "taïtas", Aureliano Garreta Chindoy mentions *yagé* may not be produced in the city because there is too much interference such as pollution and contamination ("The Sacred Plant of the Amazon" 2014). When *yagé* is prepared in the jungle and the mountains of their ancestors, the presence and knowledge given to them is transferred into the beverage ("The Sacred Plant of the Amazon" 2014). When the Fontanille asked Chindoy if *yagé* may be dangerous, Chindoy replied, "if the process is not respected it

becomes dangerous” (“The Sacred Plant of the Amazon” 2014). The hallucinations from the *yagé* experience are believed to be visions – messages to better understand the world. The *taitas* like Chindoy, guide humanity through the entire universe through the interpretation of visions (“The Sacred Plant of the Amazon” 2014). The experience may be therapeutic or initiatory depending on the participant. The cosmological origin story of *yagé* and its intention support the notion that users are supposed to reach the consummated stage of enlightenment.

Part 3: Ayahuasca Use – Syncretism and Neo-shamanism

3.1 Syncretism and Reinvention of Ritual (Grimes 1992; Shaw and Stewart 2003)

In the following section, I will focus on the themes of syncretism and neo-shamanism in Brazilian, European and American contexts. This analysis will use the analytical concepts of syncretism, the reinvention of ritual and religious change. Syncretism refers to a process of acculturation and merging of elements from various cultures to form one “new” whole (Nash 1967:369). Shaw and Stewart’s (2003) introduction to their book, “Problematizing Syncretism” focuses on issues associated with the term in the field of anthropology. Syncretism has been associated with meaning “inauthenticity”, “contamination” – essentially implying the infiltration of a “pure” tradition (Shaw and Stewart 2003:1). There are also positive connotations associated with the term in post-modern anthropology which considers syncretism essential to religion, ritual and culture (Shaw and Stewart 2003:1). Clifford Geertz (1988) notes how contemporary individuals and groups improvise performances drawing upon a variety of symbols, foreign media and languages (Shaw and Stewart 2003:1). Syncretic existence has been deemed a process of cultural decay by Lévi-Strauss (1955) but this position may be perceived as ethnocentric alongside the monoculture of the “Caribbean” (Shaw and Stewart 2003:2). These comments on

the problematization of syncretism will be useful in understanding the evolution of the meaning and intent of Brazilian ayahuasca religions and ayahuasca drug tourism's use and rituals.

Syncretism is closely related with the idea of reinventing ceremonial and ritual practices as the static and traditional definition of rituals and ceremonies are challenged. Grimes (1992) notes how Turner (1967) has reinvented the definition of ritual itself from being “static, structural and conservative” to one that is “flowing, processual, subversive” (Grimes 1992:22). In his article Grimes (1992) first challenges the notion of ritual being traditional by proposing it is invented and formed as ritualists enact them (Grimes 1992:24). Rituals are often considered collective but may also exhibit individualistic tendencies through the transformation of the self and the neurotic experience of a private ritual (Grimes 1992:27). The pre-critical characteristic of ritual – assuming individuals participate in rituals unselfconsciously is also widely held rather than individuals being self-reflective and critically aware in ritual participation (Grimes 1992:32). Finally – though meaningfulness and symbolism may be widely held perspectives of rituals, they may be also referential (Grimes 1992:35). Grimes' (1992) four critiques of characteristics associated with rituals will be used to understand meanings and intentions of ayahuasca rituals in context of Brazilian ayahuasca religions and ayahuasca drug tourism.

3.2 Brazilian Ayahuasca Religions

The expansion and fall of the rubber tapping industry in Brazil, is a common origin story of three Brazilian ayahuasca religions created in the 20th century- Santo Daime, Barquinha and União do Vegetal (UDV). These religions are still active in Brazil today and have expanded into parts of Europe and North America (Labate and MacRae 2010).

3.2.1 Santo Daime

Santo Daime was created in the 1920s or 1930s by Raimundo Irineu Serra, known as

Mestre Irineu (Labate et al. 2010). In the 1930s he moved to Rio Branco and organized a new religion influenced by the ayahuasca culture he encountered while working as a rubber tapper (Labate et al. 2010). His religious group is called Santo Daime because Irineu developed the religion in a place known as Alto Santo which means “holy rise” and referred to ayahuasca as Daime, meaning “to give” – derived from the grace received from a divinity (Labate et al. 2010).

There are several corporeal techniques (e.g.: techniques of movement, body care, consumption) used to work with ‘Daime’ – allowing one to access the spiritual world (Cemin 2010:40-41,43). The main sacred space for practitioners is the Amazon rainforest and the Eclectic Centre for Currents of the Universal Light (CECLUS) which is divided into a hall, a place for preparing Daime and a secondary forest (Cemin 2010:44). Santo Daime rituals combine elements of Catholicism, Amazonian shamanism, and African spiritualism (Blainey 2015:288). Christian symbols used by the Daimistas include the Holy Cross referred to as the “Caravaca Cross”, an image of the Lady of Immaculate Conception, a Holy Bible, a glass of water to symbolize help to spirits in need and three candles which represent the Holy Trinity (Cemin 2010:45). Interviewees have described Mestre Irineu’s doctrine and the rituals of Santo Daime as a “recapitulation of all that Christ taught” (Cemin 2010:51).

Santo Daime rituals are referred to as *trabalhos* “works”, referring to the spiritual work of the body and mind (Cemin 2010:39–40). These “works” involve not only Daime but meditating, singing and dancing (Blainey 2015: 288). The *feito* stage, the preparation stage, is divided into four phases: gathering, cleaning, macerating and preparing/ cooking the vine (Cemin 2010:47). This preparation usually takes place on the weekend closest to the last new moon of the month. The gathering phase is perceived as a *trabalho*, as a group of the best “woodsmen” from the CECLU centre enter the forest, a spiritual origin place for Daimistas (Cemin 2010:48;

Vazquez 2008:284). This journey constitutes a rite of passage for members taking their first trip into the forest, as the experience is difficult for novices who are usually acquainted with urban life (Cemin 2010: 49). While gathering necessary materials in the forest for Daime rituals, members travel off man made paths and trails, endure thorns, dangerous insects, species, holes, rains and slides (Cemin 2010:49). The individuals become a social being – a “man of Daime” while facing these fears and challenges (Cemin 2010:49). This gathering stage in itself follows Van Gene’s “Rites de Passage” (1960) (as cited in Turner and Turner 1970; Turner 1969). Through this ayahuasca preparation activity the gatherers experience a change in social status among the Daimistas. The gatherers are physically separated from their urban surroundings. It could be argued that the margin phase would be the physical journey – the beautiful yet dangerous encounters with nature, testing the gatherers abilities in that moment. Upon successful discovery of the vine, gathering of supplies and return to the church safely, the individual is consummated as an experienced woodsmen and valued member of the Daime community.

The *feito* process continues on the Saturday afternoon as women clean the Chacrona (*Psychotria viridis*) leaves and men traditionally clean the *Jagube* (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) leaves (Cemin 2010:49). Interestingly, these leaves are not cleaned with water, but by passing one’s hand over them to remove insect residue and symbolic impurities (Cemin 2010:49). The final strenuous stages of preparation take place at five o’clock in the morning on Sunday, as the Daime (ayahuasca vine) is pounded for approximately seven hours until it is completely macerated. The Daime and leaves are then boiled for several hours (Cemin 2010:50–51; Vazquez 2008:284). This process represents conquest for participants involved but also the acquisition of “spiritual gifts” such as love, honesty, obedience and endurance (Cemin 2010:51). This preparation phase for participants does not neatly fit into Van Gennep’s (1960) separation,

margin or aggregation phase. Although, separation is occurring as the plant transforms from its natural form and is brewed into the Daime beverage.

During the *feito* when each member ingests the Daime, they undergo their own suffering or joyous visionary experience- a common theme amongst *Banisteriopsis caapi* users in various contexts (Cemin 2010:51). The *miração*, “visionary experiences” illustrate lessons in pictures, and according to Daime beliefs transport practitioners to the “spiritual realm” (Cemin 2010:51). The experience of being in this virtual world creates a sense of belongingness for the group. The “Our Father” is prayed during the experience with participants saying, “let us go to thy kingdom” (Cemin 2010:51). This visionary experience is reminiscent of the liminal phase experienced in other ayahuasca rituals described. The *feito* concludes with a gathering to discuss participant’s experiences and spiritual lessons (Cemin 2010:51). In this concluding social gathering, the participant assumes a new social belonging due to participating in the experience. Experiencing the effects of Daime and experiencing the spiritual realm is the goal of the ritual and transformation. Participants also leave with a newfound spiritual knowledge which often inspires them to continue with Santo Daime’s activities.

Santo Daime welcomes anyone who wishes to participate in their religion and rituals, but there is a popular proverb cited stating “The Daime is for everyone, but not everyone is for the Daime” (Blainey 2015:295). This is due to the sometimes challenging psychological experiences Daime users face (Blainey 2015:295). The potentially uncomfortable and terrifying visions and sensations under the influence of Daime is a potential “dark” outcome of the ritual.

The sacredness of the beverage shares similarities with traditional shamanic uses previously mentioned. Mestre Virgílio of the CECLU explains the importance of practitioners maintaining sexual abstinence, a special diet, mental health and hygiene (Cemin 2010:50).

Santo Daime has moved beyond its geographic origin in Acre, Brazil and the CECLUS hall to parts of North America and Europe. Balzer (2005) examines the introduction of Santo Daime rituals in Berlin, Germany. He notes that participants attending an information session prior to the ritual retreat were apprehensive once hearing of Santo Daime's emphasis on Christian ideas and symbols – especially as Christian beliefs were being challenged in Germany's New age of reform (Balzer 2005:5). During some of the first Santo Daime rituals in 1993 and 1994 participants experienced “side effects” and horror like hallucinations, causing participants to leave and sessions to end early (Balzer 2005:10). Blainey (2015) investigated ayahuasca use among Damistas in Belgium and found the rituals and ingestion of daime also helped them heal or treat health problems such as addictions, depression, social anxiety while increasing levels of happiness, inner peace and humility (Blainey 2015). Therapeutic ayahuasca use will be revisited in Part 4.

3.2.2 Barquinha

The ayahuasca religion Barquinha, meaning “little boat” emerged in 1945 and was created by Daniel Pereira de Mattos, a friend of Irineu's (Labate et al., 2010). Mestre Daniel's experiences with Daime led him to believe he should have his own religion (Labate et al., 2010). Barquinha is comprised of three components: “blessed rituals”, “works of charity” and “dance” (Dawson 2016:244). Charity is an especially important value and mission in this religion (Frenopoulo 2010:83–84). The “Holy Cross boat” is a founding symbol of Barquinha for religious members as it represents the mission left behind by Mestre Daniel and the journey ahead (Araújo 2010:75). The Blue Book is the Barquinha book of teachings, containing psalms (Araújo 2010:75-76).

Like Daimistas, practitioners of Barquinha refer to *Banisteriopsis caapi* as Daime (Araújo 2010:73). Daime is believed to be “sacred water” or “Holy Light” and is not accessible at any time to anyone (Araújo 2010:75; Frenopoulo 2010:95). People must undergo a series of trials and rituals in order to be worthy of experiencing what Daime has to offer (Araújo 2010:75). Interestingly, ingesting Daime is not central to Barquinha ritual and healing practices. One may be healed without the use of Daime (Frenopoulo 2010:86). Instead, a greater emphasis is placed on the ritual performance considered “extrospective” (Frenopoulo 2010:86) .

The Obras de Caridade (charity works) is offered every Saturday evening, intended for members of the public to meet with healers who offers them spiritual aid, cleansing or advice (Frenopoulo 2010:90). These members of the general public deemed as “clients” visit the Church at around seven o’clock on the Saturday evening and are assigned a healer according to their predicament (Frenopoulo 2010:91). At seven thirty, the charity works ritual begins with the offering of Daime, although the beverage signifies worship during the ritual rather than the healing connection between the client and spirits (Frenopoulo 2010:91). After this a liturgical service is conducted in a very similar fashion to Catholic tradition, reciting the Apostles Creed, Our Father and Hail Mary, the mediums summon the spirits and a type of healing workshop takes place with the clients (Frenopoulo 2010:93,103). Daime may also be ingested by patients of spiritual surgeries conducted on the 27th of each month (Frenopoulo 2010:93). Though these rituals do not emphasize or focus on the visionary effect of the Daime itself, it still holds symbolic importance for its users and members of Barquinha, as a method of transcendence, cleansing, diagnosis and treatment (Frenopoulo 2010:95). Similar to Amazonian shamanic rituals, the healing occurs during the liminal phase.

3.2.3 União do Vegetal (UDV)

União do Vegetal, UDV emerged in 1961 and was founded by José Gabriel da Costa (Labate et al. 2010). Mestre Gabriel also worked in rubber camps but did not meet the founders of the other ayahuasca religions (Labate et al. 2010). UDV refers to ayahuasca as *Vegetal* or *Hoasca*, and the beverage specifically contains *Banisteriopsis Caapi* vine and *Psychotria viridis* leaves (Goulart 2010). According to Mestre Gabriel, *hoasca* does not harm the health of the recipient should be used by people freely to assist with mental concentration (Soares and de Moura 2011:277–278).

De Rios (2008) visited 11 UDV temples in four cities across Brazil and was able to observe a *hoasca* UDV ritual. According to her observations the ritual took place at 9:30pm –the same time ayahuasca ceremonies are often conducted by *ayahuasqueros* and shamans in the Amazon (e.g.: Peru and Colombia) (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:116). The officiating *mestre* (leader), group of *mestres* and councillors were present, surrounded by the participating individuals (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:116). The ritual began with a prayer by the *mestres* and the councillors, followed by the administration of *hoasca* to each participant (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:116). The participants said a prayer and gave thanks before drinking the tea (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:116-117). The *mestres* and councillors drank more *hoasca* than new participants. Before the effects of the *hoasca* set in, UDV rules and statutes were read and a prayer was said in honour of Cain in the Old Testament (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:117). Prayers were said with the desire to guide the ritual towards the “path of light” (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:117).

The ingestion of *hoasca* induces an altered state of consciousness called *burracheira* (Brissac 2011:137). In UDV, this term means, “strange force”. The effects of the beverage last

for the four hour duration of a session (Brissac 2011:137). The *burracheira* experience – another altered state of consciousness liminal phase is described by a young university student interviewed by Brissac (2011). According to the student, the experience nurtures the spirit and allows one to have a new sense of reality (Brissac 2011:137). The UDV book also states the effect of *hoasca* may be compared with a “religious ecstasy” and *burracheira* is a divine force which the *mestre* guides one through (Brissac 2011:138). Knowledge is also very central in this experience, and the feeling during the *burracheira* affirms this spiritual knowledge and insight (Brissac 2011:144).

Several parallels are drawn between UDV beliefs, practices and Catholicism. UDV has adopted several Catholic holidays such as Christmas (Goulart 2010:110). For example, Mestre Gabriel, his birth and leadership are often associated with Jesus Christ (Goulart 2010:110). Kardecism and its primary doctrine of Spiritism – intervention of the spirits of the dead, combined with its spiritist and esoteric beliefs has also been incorporated into UDV (Goulart 2010:111). Mestre Gabriel blended Kardecist notions of reincarnation with Judeo-Christian and Indigenous local beliefs to formulate a UDV principle belief in which Mestre Gabriel is a reincarnated version of the first person on Earth able to drink the *vegetal* (ayahuasca), this occurring during the time period of King Solomon’s reign in Israel (Goulart 2010:113). UDV myths also follow the Amazonian ayahuasca belief that men and women are transformed into the plants which form the sacred *vegetal* (Goulart 2010:113). Finally, UDV also draws upon the Afro-Brazilian religion, Umbanda’s notion of “spiritist center” in a similar manner to Santo Daime and Barquinha (Goulart 2010: 114). UDV has also established a medical scientific department to conduct scientific inquiry into the effects of ayahuasca (Goulart 2010:115). This scientific element of UDV is also tied to a rejection of folk healing practices (Goulart 2010:115).

UDV has become a well-established international Brazilian religion. According to Soares and Patriotade Moura (2011) UDV has over twelve thousand registered followers worldwide. There are one hundred and forty officially recognized UDV units in countries such as Brazil, the United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal (Soares and de Moura 2011:277).

3.3 Syncretism, Ritual Reinvention and Globalization

Santo Daime, UDV and Barquinha adapting ayahuasca use in this manner may be perceived as infiltrating a tradition from the perspective of Amazonian shamans, as the altered state of consciousness experience and the spiritual connection have been shaped and reinforced by predominately Catholic and Christian texts (Shaw and Stewart 2003). The syncretism evident in Brazilian ayahuasca religions has created a new system of ritual, religion and culture associated with ayahuasca use. The creation of these religions has essentially institutionalized ayahuasca use contributing to the globalization of ayahuasca use.

I would argue there is some ambiguity when applying Grimes' (1992) characteristics of the reinvention of ritual from its traditional origin when comparing Brazilian ayahuasca religions with local Amazonian ayahuasca rituals and use mentioned. Rather than the Brazilian ayahuasca religions' rituals becoming flowing, progressive and subversive, I would argue the dominant Christian structure of the ayahuasca rituals contributes to their structural and conservative nature. However, this syncretic change would indicate ayahuasca meaning and practice is flowing – although the established rules, scriptures and institutionalized practices in a specific centre have made ayahuasca use “static” and structured in the institutional setting. According to Grimes (1992), rituals may move from collective to individualistic practice and focus. However, the collective and individual experience are still fundamental in Brazilian ayahuasca rituals – as

noted in the preparation, administering, the ayahuasca “tea” experience itself and post-ritual socialization.

Furthermore, Grimes (1992) also suggests traditional rituals are pre-critical rather than self-reflective, but evidence from the Brazilian ayahuasca religions suggests both are important characterizing features. The Brazilian ayahuasca religions’ self-reflective feature is primarily drawn from the ayahuasca visionary experience. Barquinha appears as the one ayahuasca religion which does not strongly emphasize self-reflective tendencies in their rituals, as ayahuasca is not as central to their practices. However, there is also a strong focus on bodily participation, following structured rituals and scripture framing the ayahuasca experience, as noted by De Rios (2008) in her UDV observations.

Grimes (1992) also questions whether rituals are traditionally meaningful or referential. Brazilian ayahuasca religions through syncretic processes have incorporated primarily Christian and Catholic symbols into their rituals and belief system. Ayahuasca itself has taken on different names (e.g.: Daime, hoasca, vegetal) with a spiritual meaning derived from Christian beliefs (e.g.: Daime is sacred water and Holy Light). However, the participant’s visionary experience after ingesting the tea in the context of the concrete ritual practices provides them with an opportunity to derive their own referential meaning (e.g.: discovering God, self-reflection). Overall, this analysis suggests the ritual context, structure and the physical surroundings of ayahuasca use have changed. However, the meaning of its use still holds strong spiritual, self-reflective and therapeutic connotations similar to use in Amazonia.

3.4 Neo-shamanism & Core Shamanism

Neo-shamanism may be understood as a spiritual path towards personal enlightenment and self-reflection induced through altered states of consciousness and use of shamanic

cosmology (Wallis 1999:42). Neo-shamanism essentially adapts past and present traditional and local Indigenous shamanism in a manner which fits the needs and desires of the “Western” individual. It has been created out of beliefs, activities and practices from Western internet, movies, books and workshops, and as mentioned by Atkinson (1992:322) psychedelic shamanism has risen out of 1970s counterculture (Townsend 2004:4). The “Harner method” is perhaps an early example of neo-shamanism practice, as he creates the concept “core shamanism” (Wallis 1999:42). Professor of anthropology Michael Harner studied shamanism in Amazonia and other societies, coming to the conclusion that there are core shamanic features underlying these very different shamanic societies (Wallis 1999:42). Core shamanism according to Harner’s findings consists of an experiential method of drumming to contact spirits, reach spiritual reality and ask the spirits for assistance (Townsend 2004:4). Professor Harner and colleagues at the Foundation for Shamanic Studies conduct workshops in order to teach western individuals these methods of transcendence (Townsend 2004:4; Wallis 1999:42).

Neo-shamanism is advertised as a belief system and means available to any individual seeking spiritual enlightenment. There have been several critiques of neo-shamanism. Wallis (1999) critiqued Harner’s core shamanism workshop by devaluing the several years of training, practice and experience a shaman partakes in only to reduce it to something attainable in a few minutes (Townsend 2004:43). Neo-shamans have also been referred to as “plastic medicine men” and accused of “playing Indian” (Kehoe 1990; Harvey 1997 as cited in Townsend 2004:43). Johnson (1995) explains how core shamanism and neo-shamanism decontextualize shamanic practices from their cultural and traditional practices (as cited in Wallis 1999:42). Neo-shamanism is also known for avoiding the “dark” side of shamanic practice including sorcery and witchcraft. Whitehead and Wright (2004) wrote the book *In Darkness and Secrecy* to

specifically contradict this romanticized notion of neo-shamanism becoming increasingly widespread. Furthermore, the shaman is often perceived as an “Indian” and exotic Amazonian individual untouched by the civilized world, therefore believed to be close to nature. Several scholars also note how the romanticized perception of shamanic practices does not adequately recognize the impact of colonialism, Indigenous, state and political conflict and the injustices they have and will continue to face (Fotiou 2016:151). In the following section I will present ethnographic examples and studies of ayahuasca drug tourism and use Shaw and Stewart’s (2003) and Grimes’ (1992) work to indicate how ayahuasca neo-shamanism and drug tourism departs from local Amazonian uses mentioned.

Ayahuasca Drug Tourism

Contemporary use of ayahuasca has changed its geographic boundaries and purpose. Neo-shamanism has led to the commercialization of ayahuasca shamanism (De Rios and Rumrill 2008). This system has been created to accommodate for the influx of ayahuasca drug tourism, which occurs when people from the United States, Canada and Europe travel to ayahuasca origin countries such as Peru to experience the “borrowed mysticism” of the sacred vine (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:2).

Ayahuasca drug tourism has become significant in Peru. Fotiou (2016:160), during her fieldwork between 2003-2005 noticed an increase in the number of tourists in Iquitos, Peru travelling specifically to experience ayahuasca. In the summer of 2005, Fotiou (2016:160) learned there was an American expat in Iquitos who began organizing a shamanism conference for first time users, drawing in scientists, shamans and foreigners. The publication of an article by National Geographic journalist Salak (2006) describing ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos also sparked the interest of foreigners (Fotiou 2016:161).

Foreign visitors to ayahuasca sessions often suffer from depression, anxiety, stress or eating disorders, have an interest in drugs or are looking for spiritual guidance (De Rios and Rumrill 2008). De Rios and Rumrill (2008:47) interview Guillermo Arrévalo, a Shipibo Urban Shaman, who comments on the western tourist's desire to use ayahuasca. He mentions that these tourists seek ayahuasca to try and solve their own personal problems and crisis' but also to find and experience the spiritual field (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:48). He also explains how Europeans and Americans may seek ayahuasca usage to treat depression and feelings of loneliness (discussed in the following section) or to "develop their spirit" (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:48). Such desires may indicate a cultural spiritual crisis among westerners due to spiritual neglect and a Western cultural emphasis on materialism (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:48). A study by Winkelman (2005) interviewed ayahuasca retreat ritual participants. Some described they sought the ayahuasca experience to feel like God (Winkelman 2005:212). Others cited connecting with plant spirits and entities as part of their primary motivation to partake in this experience (Winkelman 2005:212). Emotional healing from past trauma was also a significant motivating factor in this study, and also found to be true by Shaman Arrévalo who estimates eighty percent of young women seeking ayahuasca use have suffered a rape trauma (Winkelman 2005:212; De Rios and Rumrill 2008:48–49). Interestingly, though many of these participants had used psychedelics previously, only one of the participants in Winkelman's (2005:214) study referred to the drug-induced altered state of consciousness as motivation for using ayahuasca. This raises the question as to whether ayahuasca drug tourism is actually a suitable phrase to describe this phenomenon, as most tourists seem to perceive the experience as ayahuasca spiritual enlightenment. Prayag et al.'s (2015) research note on ayahuasca drug tourism indicates how ayahuasca spiritual seeking participants consider themselves as "spiritual tourists" and the

“good tourists”, whereas they categorized the recreational drug seeking ayahuasca participant as the “bad tourist” (Prayag et al. 2015:2) . This signifies a dichotomy of “good” and “bad” ayahuasca tourists.

Several studies have examined different elements, traits and types of ayahuasca drug tourism. The beverage and experience for drug tourists is facilitated by “technicians of ecstasy”, also known as neo-shamans, who lack the healing and ayahuasca knowledge training of Indigenous and traditional users (De Rios & Rumrill 2008:2). Neo-shamans are motivated by significant economic gain from the drug tourism market as foreigners are often willing to pay \$1,000-\$1,500 per week for an ayahuasca ritual retreat, whereas local people may pay \$20-\$30 (De Rios and Rumrill 2008). Neo-shamans may develop false rituals and procedures, insulting the traditional and Indigenous spiritual meanings of ayahuasca, scamming tourists of an authentic experience simply for an easy business transaction (De Rios and Rumrill 2008; Fotiou 2016).

Kavenská and Simonová (2015:353) interviewed 77 individuals from Czech Republic, European countries, South America, the United States and Canada about their ayahuasca experiences. Participants experienced personal development, acquired deeper self- knowledge, and a feeling of inner peace (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:353). Under the influence of ayahuasca, the respondents felt like they had self-control over their experiences and behaviour and were able to cure traumatic experiences by reliving unconscious memories (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354). Similar to the effects mentioned in Amazonian ayahuasca rituals, participants explained the bad side effects of ayahuasca such as vomiting, diarrhea and nausea, but also the fearful and terrifying visions making them feel as though they were meeting with a demon (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354). Despite this, participants found facing these evils

made the experience positive and meaningful (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354). Despite the altered state of consciousness experience, the participants explained they organized their shamanic ayahuasca experience via a mediator who did not organize the experience properly and put too many participants in one group (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354–355). Furthermore, some stated the shaman did not seem as if he could guide the session successfully, and some even mentioned the shaman fell asleep, was tired or drunk (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354). There was one participant who mentioned the shaman tried to seduce her while under the influence of ayahuasca, and she did end up having sex with the shaman during the retreat (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:354). Issues of language barriers, conflict situations with Indigenous people, unsuitable conditions and environments for ayahuasca use characterize the experiences of these participants (Kavenská and Simonová 2015:355).

Furthermore, Holman's (2011) study examined the prominent discourses of ayahuasca tour websites and ayahuasca tours advertised online between 2007-2009. This study found tours advertised to an ayahuasca drug tourist were often offered by western-born individuals (Holman 2011:96). A corporate discourse was evident on these sites, also indicative of capitalist influence. Phrases and terms such as "specialize" and "excellent service" were used, and companies were advertising their experience, reviews and track record, reminiscent of tourist business practices (Holman 2011:98). New Age discourse was present in this analysis, as websites were strong advocates of spirituality, personal growth and individual transformation (Holman 2011:100). Lastly exotic discourse was also a common characteristic of these websites, as they emphasize the isolated, jungle and wild experience (Holman 2011:101). This discourse analysis aligns with elements and assumptions neo-shamanism and core shamanism previously mentioned.

The intention and meaning of the tourists' ayahuasca use, its success and effect on ayahuasca practices in Amazonia is subjective and open to interpretation. The spiritual tourists mentioned by Prayag, Mura, Hall and Fontaine believe they have had minimal negative effects on local ayahuasca tradition, culture and use as they are the ones seeking authentic spiritual enlightenment rather than a "trip" like the "bad tourists" (2015:2). Although according to Prayag et al.'s (2015) comments, individual tourists do contribute to the perceived negative effects on Amazonian ayahuasca shamanism. The existence of neo-shamans, ayahuasca retreat businesses has led to deterioration of traditional Amazonian shamanic practices but also in some cases cultural appropriation. The critiques of neo-shamanism mentioned previously apply to ayahuasca drug tourism as decontextualization of shamanic practices.

Although these drug tourists may be looking for an authentic, spiritual and enlightening experience, there are several factors to consider. Ayahuasca administered by imposter healers may lead to errors impeding on the participant's safety. For example, a British teen died after consuming *yagé* during a tribal ritual while travelling around Colombia and a Canadian man committed suicide during his ayahuasca visions at a designated ayahuasca centre in Montreal (Bilodeau and Morissette 2019; Thelwell 2014). Also, a New Zealand woman shared her story of being sexually abused by a shaman at an ayahuasca retreat in Peru (Casserly 2020). Furthermore, a Canadian said he was forced to kill a British man in self defense after he attacked him with a knife under the influence of ayahuasca (Grierson and Siddique 2016). These factors demonstrate the negative implications of neo-shamanism and drug tourism as it is de-territorialized from Amazonian origins both geographically and culturally (Tupper 2009).

Analyzing ayahuasca drug tourism in light of "rites de passage", I argue the separation, margin, otherwise known as "liminality" and aggregation are quite distinct. The separation stage

for western ayahuasca drug tourists is characterized by their physical separation from the western world – being placed into the exotic and foreign realm of the Amazon rainforest. The significant difference in place of origin versus ayahuasca experience location also removes the Western individual from the pressures and practices of urbanization, careers, obligations and expectations, placing them in different cultural environments as well. The margin or liminality phase is the main motivation of these ayahuasca drug tourists – induced by ayahuasca’s altered state of consciousness, this phase allows the drug tourist to undergo self-realization, a cleansing from the stressors, traumas and problems from their everyday lives and find their inner spiritual self. As Turner (1970) described in his description of liminality, these ayahuasca drug tourists also experienced the unpleasant side effects of the liminal period- such as anxiety, fear and vulnerability as they faced their unconscious demons in intense hallucinations. The final consummated phase by ayahuasca drug tourists was relatively similar in terms of spiritual enlightenment and realization. However, ayahuasca tourists may not have successfully passed through these ritual stages if their ritual experience was not properly led or harmful. Overall, these stages may differ to local and Brazilian ayahuasca religions in that the entire experience was adapted to the Western consumer. Especially as ayahuasca ritual businesses and retreats use ayahuasca’s liminal phase and healing qualities as a selling feature, these parties will be constructing the ayahuasca ritual’s quality and experience to ensure its efficacy.

3.5 Syncretism and Reinvention of Ritual – Neo-shamanism and Ayahuasca Drug Tourism

Taking into consideration Shaw and Stewart’s (2003) comments on syncretism, the idea that ayahuasca neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism are contaminating the traditional practice and positively reinventing the traditional practice are applicable. Inauthenticity is a theme characterizing ayahuasca tourist businesses and retreats – especially evident in Kavenská

and Simonová's (2015) interviews highlighting the shaman's lack of experience and failed leadership. Inauthenticity also characterizes ayahuasca drug tourism as ayahuasca is removed from its shamanic ritual practices and only elements fitting the desires of Western consumers are included – distorting and modifying the local use of this brew. Though in light of postmodernist thinking in anthropology, the neo-shamanic beliefs and values shaping ayahuasca use in drug tourism may be perceived as a way of making the practice and the brew more relevant, applicable and widespread to survive as a practice beyond the realm of local Amazonian shamanism. Overall, though the effects of ayahuasca drug tourism may be perceived as the “cultural decay” of the static understanding of local Amazonian shamanisms, it could also be perceived as a form of dynamic cultural change.

Ayahuasca neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism also align with Grimes' (1992) four characteristics of the reinvention of ritual. Firstly, the neo-shamanic ritual has been formed according to how the businesses, hired shaman or retreat structures led the experience. They are incorporating what they believe to be the key practices associated with the tradition based upon notions of neo-shamanism, western desires and are enacting this reinvented form of ayahuasca Amazonian tradition. The ayahuasca experience is not always conducted in a particular manner as some may have positive or harmful ayahuasca ritual experiences. Furthermore, as Grimes (1992) emphasizes the reinvention of ritual's transition from the collective to the individual, I argue ayahuasca drug tourism premised on the western autonomous individual, self-reflection and individual spiritual journey characteristics of neo-shamanism does emphasize the individual drug tourist rather than the collective group. However, as evident in local Amazonian examples of ayahuasca rituals, the collective participants were not always emphasized- although, local Amazonian ayahuasca rituals were based upon coexistence with nature, plants, and divine

entities. Therefore, the individualistic and self-development characteristics of ayahuasca drug tourism are more pronounced than in traditional Amazonian ayahuasca rituals. In regard to Grimes' (1992) critique of rituals not necessarily being pre-critical but self-reflective, I also argue ayahuasca drug tourism is heavily based upon self-reflection. Although in comments about the western ayahuasca drug user's experience, they did consider the ayahuasca ritual inherently meaningful along with the referential meaning derived from their visionary experience. Through a careful examination of these factors, it is evident ayahuasca drug tourism uses elements of the exotic Amazonian shamanism in constructing its own experience and meaning. Spiritual enlightenment, self-reflection and the altered state of consciousness characterize the intention of drug tourists to use ayahuasca - giving the beverage inner spiritual meaning.

Part 4: Therapeutic Use and Legality

4.1 Therapeutic and Medicinal Uses of Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca use has also proved to be effective for various therapeutic and medicinal purposes. The chemical characteristics of ayahuasca are consistent with pharmacological substances already used in the psychiatric treatment of depression (Labate, Anderson, and Jungaberle 2011:232–233). A study by Sanches et al., (2016) administered 2.2mL/kg of ayahuasca to patients with recurrent depression. This research found ayahuasca to be associated with an increase in psychoactivity in patients, and significant decrease in depression related scale scores (Sanches et al. 2016:77). Overall, results indicate with more testing ayahuasca could become a fast-acting antidepressive treatment (Sanches et al. 2016:77). Researchers have advocated for an increase into research of ayahuasca's anti-depressive properties, but this has proven difficult due to ayahuasca's illegal status in many nations.

Although research is fairly recent, fragmented evidence and trends have proven ayahuasca may be an effective method to treat drug addiction. A Canadian study of ayahuasca-assisted therapy for drug addiction was conducted amongst members of a coastal First Nations band (Thomas et al. 2013). The results suggested participating in ayahuasca retreats may be associated with a reduction in cocaine, alcohol and tobacco use (Thomas et al. 2013). An interviewee in a study of ayahuasca use among individuals in Catalonia, Spain – Jaimie, mentioned he turned to psychotherapeutic use after enduring several methods and treatments for his heroin addiction in the conventional biomedical system (Apud and Romaní 2017:32). The alternative and last resort treatment of ayahuasca was beneficial to Jaimie as he found the intense introspective experiences under the influence of ayahuasca extremely helpful and healing (Apud and Romaní 2017:32). Furthermore, a study by Loizaga-Velder & Verres (2014) also found ayahuasca to be a valuable and effective therapeutic treatment for substance dependence. The 13 therapists interviewed (traditional and western) stated ayahuasca is a valuable therapeutic tool which may make therapy and treatment shorter and more effective (Loizaga-Velder and Verres 2014:66). The 14 ritual participants mentioned ayahuasca has played a significant role in maintaining substance abstinence and using substances less frequently (Loizaga-Velder and Verres 2014:66). Like Jaimie, participants noted ayahuasca use helped them introspectively understand causes of their addiction and work through psychological issues (Loizaga-Velder and Verres 2014:66).

In order to understand the reasoning behind ayahuasca's potential as a drug treatment, Liester and Prickett (2012) have analyzed the biochemistry, experience and effect of ayahuasca to develop four hypotheses. The first based upon biochemical theory predicts the anti-addictive properties of ayahuasca are exerted by reducing dopamine levels in the brain (Liester and

Prickett 2012:203). Their second hypothesis based upon physiological theory suggests these reduced dopamine levels in certain areas of the brain interfere with a component associated with maintenance and development of addictions (Liester and Prickett 2012:205). The third hypothesis uses psychological theory to reason ayahuasca may treat addictions by helping to resolve personal traumas, understand decision making and potential outcomes of decisions (Liester and Prickett 2012:206). This hypothesis aligns with evidence mentioned as participants such as Jaimie had introspective experiences. Liester and Prickett's (2012) fourth and final hypothesis is particularly interesting as it states, "ayahuasca treats addictions by facilitating transcendent experiences" (Liester and Prickett 2012:207). Participants reach this transcendence through the visionary experiences of ayahuasca and often go beyond the limits of their ordinary world. These psychological and transcendence hypotheses align with the altered states of consciousness and acquired knowledge found in shamanic rituals and ayahuasca use in general.

There have been claims the therapeutic and medicinal success of ayahuasca may be attributed to the way in which it is administered. In an interview with Jacques Mabit, the director of the Takiwasi Center for Addiction Rehabilitation and Traditional Medicine Research in Tarapoto Peru – a centre which has used group psychotherapy and plant medicines such as ayahuasca, Mabit claims the context and setting of ayahuasca treatment is just as important as the substance itself (Labate et al. 2011:241). Mabit explains how ayahuasca temporarily reduces rational functions and allows the subject to discover the transcendental dimension, which is believed to manifest in the patient and lead to self-reparation (Labate et al. 2011:231). Therefore, the environment and ritual in which ayahuasca is consumed, and the leaders and therapists guiding this treatment must be prepared, experienced and genuine to effectively treat the patient. According to Mabit, consuming ayahuasca in an improper, inauthentic ritual with dishonest, poor

intentions and inexperienced leaders will lead to ineffective and potentially harmful experiences (Labate et al. 2011:231).

These potentially harmful experiences, “spiritual crises” upon therapeutic and medicinal use of ayahuasca have been examined by Lewis (2008). One of the informants Lewis (2008) mentions, Will (pseudonym), sought out plant hallucinogens such as ayahuasca to manage his depression (Lewis 2008:116). Will purchased ayahuasca on the internet and did not consume the substance in a formal ritual or with the guidance of a shaman/*curandero* (Lewis 2008:116). Although Will mentions he felt as though he was acquiring spiritual knowledge from the use of ayahuasca and other hallucinogenic substances, he felt an element of isolation because he could not incorporate this knowledge into his real life (Lewis 2008:116). Will’s wife even divorced him because she found spiritual beliefs and related “drug” use problematic (Lewis 2008:116). The story of Will demonstrates the importance of surroundings, ayahuasca knowledge and the power and transforming of the individual experience when using ayahuasca in therapeutic and medicinal instances. Essentially, when participants enter the “liminal period” or phase of their ayahuasca experience/ ritual, healing and transformation occurs. Depending on the amount of guidance, preparation or the individual’s ability, this liminal phase in the process may lead to spiritual crises such as Will’s or therapeutic and medicinal healing mentioned in the previous examples. This once again demonstrates the “good” and “bad” elements of ayahuasca use. Though ayahuasca has been removed from traditional, local, shamanic instances geographically and somewhat culturally, there is still an emphasis on appropriate environment and guidance when using the substance in Euro-American instances.

4.2.1 Ayahuasca Intellectual Property

Medical, therapeutic, recreational, local and shamanic use of ayahuasca has been inhibited by issues of legality in several states. For example, ayahuasca has been subject to an American patent debate. In 1986, American scientist Loren Miller obtained a patent for a strain of the ayahuasca vine (Fecteau 2001). Amazonian tribal leaders were extremely angered by the patent due to the long cultural history and importance of ayahuasca in Amazonia. Therefore, in 1999 a council representing 400 Indigenous tribes in the Amazon filed for and obtained rejection of the U.S. patent on ayahuasca (Fecteau 2001). This revocation was short lived, as in 2001 Miller appealed against the patent's rejection and won (Tupper 2009). His patent was reinstated until its expiry in 2003- 17 years after the patent's initial filing (Tupper 2009). The issue of biopiracy arises during this case while also demonstrating a significant loss for the Indigenous cultural property.

4.2.2 Brazilian Legalization of Ayahuasca

The emergence and popularity of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions brought ayahuasca's legality into question during the mid 1980s (Labate et al., 2010). UDV presented a case to Brazil's Federal Narcotics Council requesting *Banisteriopsis Caapi* be removed from the Division of Medications' list of prohibited substances (Soares and de Moura 2011:280). The vine was originally prohibited due to a misunderstanding that it contained DMT, while it is actually the *chacrona* (*Psychotria Viridis*) that does (Soares and de Moura 2011:280). In launching this case the UDV agreed to collaborate on scientific studies to test the effect of the beverage on users. In 1986, *Banisteriopsis Caapi* was removed from the list of prohibited substances and the UDV along with other ayahuasca religions were given constitutional rights to religious activities, officially published in a 1992 clause (Soares and de Moura 2011:281). Subsequent cases launched by the UDV have challenged age restrictions. Eventually, in November 2004 Brazil's

National Drug Policy Council recognised the right to use ayahuasca in religious contexts, reaffirming the social legitimacy of ayahuasca religions (Labate et al., 2010).

4.2.3 US and Ayahuasca Legality

Furthermore, the United States Supreme Court in February 2006 permitted the use of ayahuasca under the UDV religious system (De Rios and Rumrill 2008). The case was brought forth to the U.S. Supreme Court by the UDV after the chief *mestre*, Jeffery Bronfman had 30 kilograms of ayahuasca tea prepared in Brazil confiscated from his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico (De Rios and Grob 2005:189; De Rios and Rumrill 2008:121). The U.S. government argued the DMT in ayahuasca can cause serious health issues. After all, DMT is on the Schedule I list of controlled substances in the USA (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:122). The UDV requested that the tea be returned for ritual use and provided evidence to show their ritual use of *hoasca* is safe. They also were adamant that *hoasca* use is central and essential to their religious practices (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:121).

Canada and Ayahuasca Legality

Ayahuasca use has come under legal debate in several Canadian cases. *Regina v. Uyunkar* was a prominent criminal case launched against an Indigenous Ecuadorian healer visiting Canada who had a Canadian woman die under her care in 2001 (Tupper 2011:321). Uyunkar was invited to Wikwemikong, Ontario to conduct shamanic rituals using *natem* as part of a cultural exchange (Tupper 2011:321). During the ceremony a 71-year-old elder died suddenly. Uyunkar was charged with administering a noxious substance and trafficking a controlled substance – harmaline, found in the *natem* beverage's sample (Tupper 2011:321). The Ecuadorian healer pled guilty and was sentenced to one year community service in Wikwemikong (Tupper 2011:321).

Interestingly in Canada, religious exemptions for ayahuasca use have been allowed similar to the United States and Brazil. In May 2019, Health Canada granted special exemptions to religious groups (O'Brien 2019). Canada's *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, 1996* prohibits drugs containing DMT and harmaline according to Schedule III. The *Act* contains a provision in which the Minister may allow an exemption due to medical, scientific purposes or in the public interest (Government of Canada 2019). In total, five Santo Daime churches in Canada have been granted this exemption, four of which are in Quebec (Dunlevy 2019). Due to these exemptions and the recent Canadian legalization of cannabis, it is not unreasonable to think that legalization of ayahuasca and other psychotropic plants will be the object of further legal discussions (Lawrence 2016).

Part 5: Discussion

5.1 Globalization and Religious Change: Ayahuasca Intention, Use and Meaning

Frisk and Nynäs (2012) list six characteristics of religious change connected to globalization processes. Using three of these six characteristics to frame my discussion, I will evaluate how ayahuasca traversing cultural, geological and ideological frameworks has changed and influenced the nature of its use and meaning according to evidence presented regarding Amazonian local use, Brazilian ayahuasca religions, ayahuasca neo-shamanism and drug tourism.

5.1.1 From Theological to anthropological (Frisk & Nynäs 2012:9)

Frisk and Nynäs argue globalization has led to understandings of salvation in terms of “inner realization” rather than “outer divinity” (2012:9). Spirituality and Indigenous cosmology characterize Amazonian ayahuasca practices, as evident in reference to plant spirits and *yage* creation stories in Colombia. Therefore, although Amazonian ayahuasca shamanism may be

centred within theological beliefs, they shape the intention and meaning of the individual as their psyche and mind develops through acquisition of knowledge of the inner self, spirits and evils in ayahuasca's visionary experience. The intention, meaning and use in Amazonian shamanism has central theological characteristics accompanied by anthropological experience. I argue "outer divinity" is emphasized in the Brazilian ayahuasca religions – as the subjective experience is explained in relation to syncretic dogmas. Ayahuasca use and meaning to practitioners of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions leads to an understanding and expression of the institution's outer divinity. Inner realization characterizes the ayahuasca intention, use and meaning in the context of ayahuasca neo-shamanism and drug tourism. The experiences and characteristics of ayahuasca drug tourism mentioned are not characterized by theological beliefs. I argue this type of ayahuasca use being centred in consumer experience has made the experience more secular and "anthropological" centred in markets of human experience

5.1.2 Hierarchical to Egalitarian (Frisk & Nynäs 2012:8)

Processes of globalization have also made contemporary spirituality and religious practices egalitarian or "populist" (Frisk & Nynäs 2012:8). This is especially applicable to ayahuasca use in the various contexts described in this review. Amazonian ayahuasca rituals are led by shamanic leaders who are highly trained and presumed to be given power by the spirits and possess inherent understanding of the spirits. This belief places the Amazonian shaman in a significant position of power within the context of shamanic practices and rituals. Gender hierarchy is also evident throughout ayahuasca rituals as men are primarily the participants and users while women are excluded and perceived to be a threat to the ayahuasca spirit and the brew's efficacy. Furthermore, the Brazilian ayahuasca religions are hierarchical in that they are modelled according to the structure of a functioning institution with leaders, particular roles and

a creator – that being either Mestre Gabriel, Daniel or Irineu (Labate and MacRae 2010). Though these religions welcome all participants interested in their beliefs, mission and use of ayahuasca. Neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism are quite egalitarian as participants of different genders from various parts of the world and with different worldviews may participate in the retreat or ritual to experience ayahuasca. As the role of the specialized shaman is diminished in these contexts, the egalitarian nature of neo-shamanism is also evident in the fact that anyone may become “a technician of ecstasy” in the ayahuasca drug tourism market (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:2).

5.1.3 After Death to the Present World

According to Frisk and Nynäs globalization has led to an emphasis on religion in this world rather than the world that is to come (2012:9). I find this characteristic of religious change is ambiguous in the examples of ayahuasca use this review has examined. Though Amazonian ayahuasca shamanism recognizes the spiritual world, participants who seek the work of a shaman, witchdoctor or *ayahuasquero* often do not do so in order to seek information about their soul or spirit in the world to come. Rather it is to manage present day issues, curses, illnesses and incantations caused by good spiritual and malevolent forces beyond this world.

Similarly, the Brazilian ayahuasca religions focus on the present world influence of spiritual entities despite the significant influence of Christianity – a dominant religion which has been traditionally focused on the world after death. The Brazilian ayahuasca religions’ institutionalization of ayahuasca use and syncretic incorporation of various religious dogma governs the present ayahuasca experience. Ayahuasca drug tourism and neo-shamanism embody this notion of turning to present life as the intention is focused on the present ayahuasca

experience in order to acquire knowledge and enlightenment to better one's life and spirituality in the present world.

Though the understanding of turning to "life" in ayahuasca use is also complex as users intend to use the beverage and associate its meaning with a type of present "out of this world" experience characterized by the altered state of consciousness. Ayahuasca provides users in Amazonia, practitioners of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions and ayahuasca drug tourists/ neo shamanic users with access to another dimension of the individual's mind, body and spirituality in this world.

5.2 Contextual Frame Revisited – A Focus on "Good and Bad Shamanism"

The three themes presented at the beginning of this review – shamanic knowledge, neo-shamanism and good versus bad shamanism have been apparent in understanding ayahuasca rituals, use and meaning. The influence of shamanic practices and the importance of ayahuasca's altered state of consciousness in acquiring knowledge remain significant throughout examples described. Although, the shamanic knowledge shaping ayahuasca local use and meaning is selected, adapted and distorted based according to the intention of the institution, ideologies and worldviews of the participants – a phenomenon which may be understood in light of neo-shamanism.

The theme of good versus bad shamanism in the ayahuasca literature presented raises some interesting points. I did not find as many examples of dark shamanism related to ayahuasca use and meaning as I expected. The examples I did find indicate bad shamans and shamanism is evident in primarily local Amazonian ayahuasca examples, represented as conflicts between shamans, and defined according to the ill or malevolent intentions of the shaman. Dark shamanism in ayahuasca may be evident in adding additional hallucinogens to the beverage, or

possible psychosis and mental disorder may define a dark shaman (De Rios 1970). In the context of Amazonian Indigenous cosmologies, good and bad shamanism have spiritual, divine and evil associations. However, as evident in examples of Brazilian ayahuasca religions, the presence of dark shamanism diminishes and mostly the positive and spiritually enlightening Amazonian beliefs and ideologies – regarding the sacredness of the vine and the acquisition of divine knowledge in an altered state of consciousness are incorporated into the new syncretic institution. Dark shamanism is removed from ayahuasca in ayahuasca drug tourism – as the western tourist is seeking ayahuasca for a positive recreational, spiritual or self-reflective experience. However, “dark” characteristics do emerge in this industry when considering ayahuasca retreat “scams”, poor leadership resulting in violence between participants but also toward participants as noted in cases mentioned of rape and sexual assault (e.g.: Kavenská and Simonová 2015; Casserly 2020).

I also argue the experience of ayahuasca does come with side effects and experiences which may fall under the good and dark distinction. Though feelings of euphoria and pleasant visual and sensory hallucinations characterize ayahuasca experiences, there are uncomfortable side effects such as vomiting, nausea and dark and fearful hallucinations one may experience –as evident in Amazonian use (e.g.: Reichel-Dolmatoff 1970, 1978 and Taussig 1986) and ayahuasca drug tourists’ experiences (De Rios and Rumrill 2008; Kavenská and Simonová 2015).

Extending this good and bad shamanism theme to colonial history and legality provides interesting insights. Due to its foreign, exotic nature, ayahuasca and hallucinogens were banned by Christian missionaries and colonizers upon encounter with the practice, associating ayahuasca’s use and meaning with evil and the devil as mentioned (Labate and Cavnar 2014: vii). Ayahuasca cultural and shamanic practices were and in some cases are identifiable with the

exotic “other”, unknown dangers and illegal narcotics as defined in Brazilian, US and Canadian legislation. Though, with the rise of Brazilian ayahuasca religions and ayahuasca’s institutionalization in syncretic ideologies – a dominant religious influence being Christianity, it could be argued ayahuasca was associated with more positive and spiritual use and meaning – its institutionalization gaining it more legitimacy. The power and presence of these institutions gave them ground to challenge ayahuasca’s illegality, conduct research into ayahuasca’s therapeutic use and gain exemptions based upon religious use and intention. Though considering ayahuasca’s history and Amazonian origins it has been consistently used spiritually and the characteristics of the beverage remain relatively constant. Thus, the good and bad, illegal and legal definitions in the context of ayahuasca shamanism, intention and use are shaped according to dominant worldviews, “legitimate” institutions and “othering” of Amazonian shamanism.

5.3 The Liminal Phase: Ayahuasca Spirituality, Healing and Therapeutic Use

This literature indicates the altered state of consciousness induced by ayahuasca usage characterizes the liminal phase experienced by the individual during ayahuasca rituals. This liminal phase is the desired experience by all ayahuasca users, and I argue this threshold determines it’s meaning for the participant. The ritual context of ayahuasca’s use- whether characterized by the guidance of an Amazonian shaman, consumed during a UDV mass or at a ritual retreat led by a “technician of ecstasy”, and the worldview shaping these practices – whether Indigenous cosmology, shamanic Christian syncretism or Western individualism, influences the individual participant’s understanding and meanings derived from their experience in the liminal phase (De Rios and Rumrill 2008:2).

Individuals usually enter ayahuasca’s liminal phase in the form of an altered state of consciousness in Amazonia, the Brazilian ayahuasca religions or in neo-shamanic contexts with

the intention to undergo a spiritual experience or to heal. The spiritual experience is especially evident in De Rios' (1984) Peruvian ayahuasca ritual experience and Dolmatoff's (1976;1978) and Taussig's (1986) experience among Colombia's Putumayo Indigenous people using *yage* (*yajé*). In local use examples from Amazonia, the shaman guides the participant through differentiating good and evil spirits, eventually casting away evil spirits and "darts".

Understanding the spiritual imbalance or presence of evil spirits also translates into healing the individual – as evils are believed to cause illness. Similarly, though Brazilian ayahuasca religions emphasize spiritual enlightenment and divine knowledge as evident in the *feito*, and end of month ayahuasca ceremonies, there is evidence of spiritual healing – such as in the charity works and spiritual surgeries offered by the Barquinha (Frenopoulo 2010; Blainey 2015). Ayahuasca spiritual healing may be sought by ayahuasca drug tourists, although literature demonstrates therapeutic use may be sought to deal with depression, anxiety and traumatic life experiences and somatic symptoms rather than physical injuries and conditions. Rather, the spiritual experience of ayahuasca's liminal phase is desired and shaped by the Western worldview of individualism – evident in experiences of self-reflection, and spiritual enlightenment amongst ayahuasca tourists and in terms evident on ayahuasca tour websites.

Though ayahuasca healing in Amazonia may be characterized by Indigenous cosmology, beliefs and animism and coexistence with spirits, I argue the intention to heal with ayahuasca changes in its use and meaning once it moves cultural and geographic boundaries into a laboratory or clinical trial. Amazonian ayahuasca shamanic rituals conducted for healing purposes fit descriptions of Indigenous medical models being associated supernatural causation, naturalism, and personalistic systems of disease – when the disease is reminiscent of a malevolent agent and healing (Baer, Singer, and Susser 2013:337). The Amazonian shaman,

shamanic ritual elements and stages contribute to the efficacy of the ayahuasca experience. However, once ayahuasca is removed from this context and used in light of the biomedical model focused on human physiology, pathophysiology and scientific medicine, the setting, understanding and meaning associated with ayahuasca change in comparison to meaning in Amazonia (Baer et al. 2013:12). Rather than being respected and thought of as a spiritual, divine plant entity, ayahuasca is beginning to take on the identity of a pharmaceutical in this medical/therapeutic context. The ritual itself instead of being spiritual and shamanic is becoming a therapeutic method or treatment plan. Efficacy in light of therapeutic ayahuasca use is understood according to biomedicine and psychology. This differs from Amazonian shamanic understandings of healing efficacy – and perhaps even the Brazilian ayahuasca religions, as this is evaluated according to spiritual presence and restoration of healthy state (Baer et al. 2013:340). The changing boundaries of ayahuasca use and its meaning as a result of Euro-American inclusion into the biomedical model may indicate whether it is the environment in which ayahuasca is administered or the beverage itself which has valuable healing qualities.

5.4 Conclusion

Through a careful examination of this literature, it is evident that the intention and meaning of ayahuasca usage is altered when the cultural context, geographic boundaries and the worldview of ayahuasca users changes. By reviewing Central and South American plant hallucinogens this study has contextualized the relevance of studying ayahuasca's legacy and prominence today. Shamanism, shamanic knowledge, good and bad shamanism and neo-shamanism are key themes characterizing ayahuasca literature and intentions and meanings surrounding its use. In examples presented from Amazonia – Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, it is apparent ayahuasca rituals do hold several similarities in ritual structure and spiritual healing

connotations as shaped by Amazonian cosmologies and Amazonian shamanism. Local Amazonian rituals are characterized by positive and good spiritual meanings and purposes, though bad ayahuasca shamanism is apparent but limited in its presence.

When ayahuasca use takes place in the institutionalized settings of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions, its use, meaning and intention are derived from a syncretic array of dogma, practices and ideologies – Amazonian shamanism and Christianity being some of the dominant ones. The spiritual and healing purpose are still apparent in the context of these “new” religions – and the liminal phase is still characterized by ayahuasca’s altered state of consciousness.

Presenting literature regarding neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism illustrates the relevance of ayahuasca use but also how intention, use and meaning surrounding ayahuasca has been shaped according to Western worldviews characterized by human centred individualism and neo-shamanic principles distorting and reinventing traditional Amazonian shamanism. The literature indicates ayahuasca neo-shamanism and ayahuasca drug tourism use ayahuasca in artificial and consumer shaped retreat and ritual experiences in order to experience ayahuasca recreationally, gain inner self-awareness or become spiritually enlightened.

Van Gennep’s (1960) “rites de passage” and Turner’s (1970) “liminality” concept assisted in understanding the intention, use, meaning and overall efficacy of ayahuasca experiences. Liminality was useful in understanding the threshold in which meaning is derived and spiritual healing during ayahuasca’s visionary phase – the altered state of consciousness. Shaw and Stewart’s (2003) understanding of syncretism and Grimes’ (1992) four characteristics reinventing ritual were key in analyzing ayahuasca’s altered intention, use and meaning from its native environment and practices in Amazonia to its use in Brazilian ayahuasca religions and use amongst ayahuasca drug tourists.

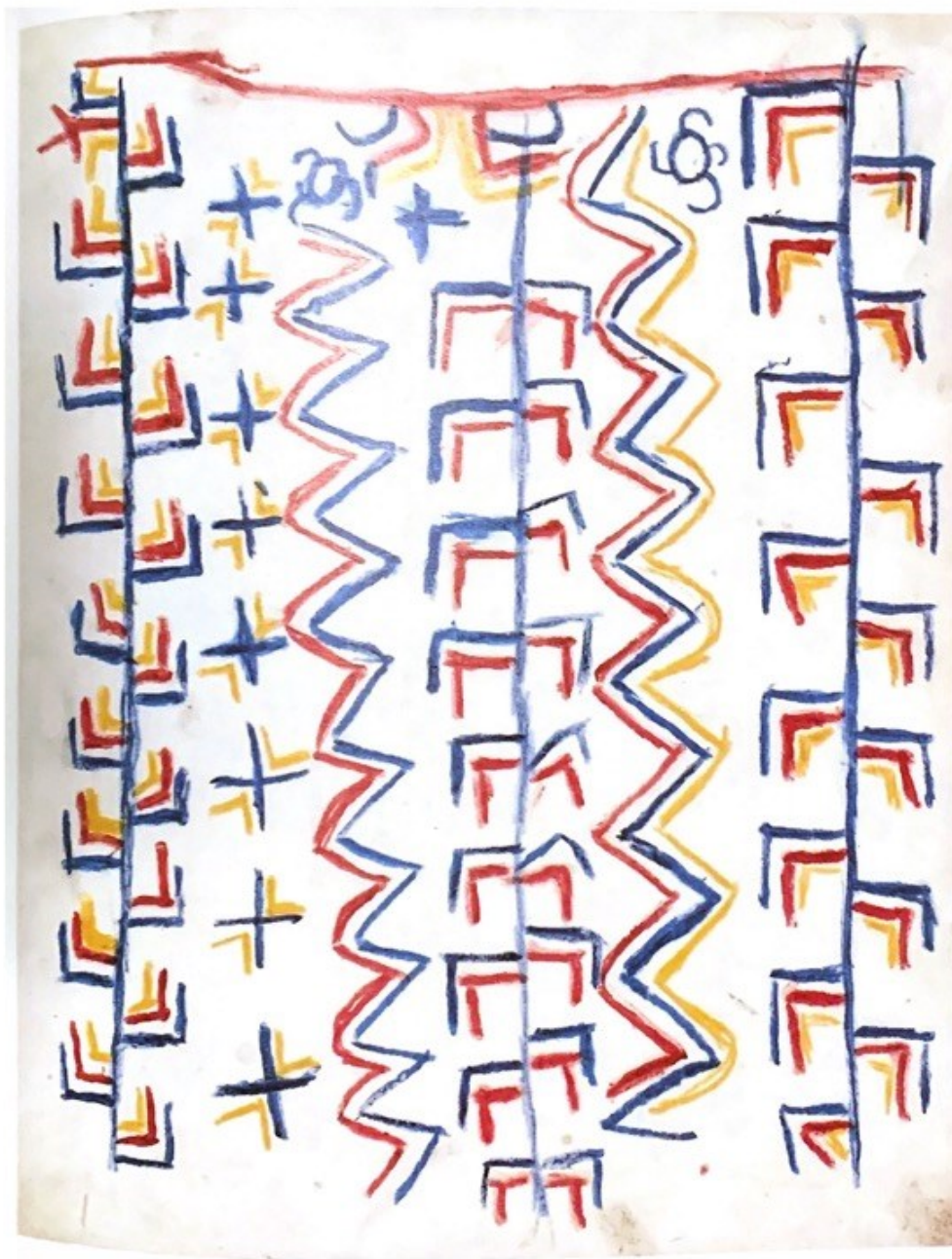
Presenting literature of ayahuasca therapeutic and medicinal uses, along with legal debates of intellectual property and ayahuasca law changes in Brazil, the United States and Canada are also indicative of how ayahuasca traversing its Amazonian environment will be altered in its use, intention and meaning. Through framing my discussion using three of Frisk and Nynäs (2012) characteristics of globalization and religious change, revisiting good and bad shamanism, analyzing key insights according to liminality, healing, spirituality, worldviews and in light of medical models, I articulated several different dynamic approaches to understanding this plant and beverage. As ayahuasca's use, intention and meaning are altered according to cultural contexts, geographic boundaries and the worldview of its users, we must remember ayahuasca's legacy, meaning and purpose from where it began in North-West Amazonia.

Appendices

Appendix A: (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978:54)



Appendix B: (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978:58)



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