

30th World Summit on Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, Psychotherapy and Philosophy

March 18-19, 2019 | Chicago, USA

SCIENTIFIC TRACKS | DAY 2

CLINICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY 2019, VOLUME 5 | DOI: 10.4172/2471-2701-C1-002

The revival of indigenous medicine: Plants as healers of mind, body, and spirit

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Statement of the Problem:

When asked about the sickness of the West, the beloved shamans say, “It’s quite simple. You have severed your connection with Spirit. Unless you reconnect with Spirit and do so soon, you’re going to bring the whole house of cards down around your heads and ours.”

Methodology & Theoretical

Orientation: Our team is currently participating in a fully immersive study of sacred, ceremonial, indigenous healing techniques within a variety of South American and North American lineages. Through our studies in Brazil, Peru,

Mexico, and on our home soil—the United States—we are witnessing first-hand the cultural fusion of ancient practices within modern society. Our approach arrives from three angles: given Jaclyn Costello’s background in Comparative Spiritual Studies and Creative Writing, her research is shared poetically, exploring indigenous healing techniques and how they work upon one’s spirit. Since Estefania Herrera has a background in Health Sciences, hers is a scientific approach, exploring the ways indigenous healing techniques work upon the body and how they are applicable to our current medical system. Alina Lindquist, with a background in Anthropology and Yoga, is researching the body-mind connection in indigenous medicine and how this connection leads to a greater sense of overall well-being within the individual.

Findings: Shamans, especially those from the Amazon, are currently mounting a reverse missionary activity, hoping to heal the spiritual disconnect they witness in Westerners. Rightly or wrongly, many of these shamans believe the remedy for this disconnect to be sacred plant medicines such as Ayahuasca, “the vine of the soul.” It is our collective finding that plant- medicines, such as Ayahuasca, can be used in a respectful, ceremonial fashion to help Westerners reduce anxiety, heal from trauma, and harmoniously integrate all parts of themselves to build happier, more ‘conscious,’ more purposeful lives

Biography

Jaclyn Costello received an MFA in Fiction & Poetry Writing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she now teaches multidisciplinary seminars in the Honors College and leads a meditation program called ‘Mindfulness in the Mountains.’

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