Editors’ Introduction:
Special Issue: Health, Healing & Consciousness

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ABSTRACT
This special edition by guest editors, Cheryl L. Fracasso, Kaleb R. Smith, and Stanley Krippner, presents 22 articles that cover a vast array of interdisciplinary and multicultural views on health, healing, and consciousness. The reader is sure to be intrigued, as cutting edge models of consciousness are presented, along with original research that examines the effectiveness of various mind/body healing methods ranging from yoga, meditation, Aikido, and medicinal drumming, to the use of psychedelics for healing, and many other thought provoking topics.

Key Words: health, healing, consciousness, interdisciplinary, multicultural

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Introduction
The many cultures and eras of human development can be characterized by their systems of health and understanding of the body, mind, and spirit. In this way, medicine can, in its shamanic origins, be thought of as a branch of spirituality, with the physical manifestation of an illness being considered only one facet of disease. The Western medical model, characterized by materialistic reductionism, has been described as developing away from this more holistic body-mind-spirit approach to health and wellness, but that is not to say progress is not being made towards acknowledging the whole self in the West, especially in regards to the gradual but persistent integration of Eastern spiritual technique and philosophy since the 1960s. Meditation, for instance, has slowly but surely been accepted by mainstream medicine as a healthful personal practice, both physiologically and psychologically, if only as a means of stress relief. Other non-Western approaches to health acknowledging the interrelated body-mind-spirit aspects of self, like herbal medicine, yoga, and acupuncture, just to name a few, have continued to gain acceptance by the general public, despite initially being deemed as alternative medicines many in the mainstream medical community. This synthesis of cultural practices and cosmologies separated by millennia of time and thousands of miles increasingly informs the progress of Western science in its search for health and the attainment of healing.

Our selected authors for this special edition with NeuroQuantology represent the richness of both this East/West synthesis and the synthesis of the physical, psychological, and quantum sciences, including explorations of indigenous and shamanic healing practices and their unique implications. Each of these perspectives suggests an exceptional range of human potential which may be made available by various practices of healing and consciousness.
alteration; two components of selfhood which, as many of our authors will describe, are often intimately tied. By joining these multiple perspectives on health and healing, the current volume hopes to contribute to this greater cultural integration of novel and non-Western conceptions of consciousness. Accordingly, we are pleased to present this special edition on health, healing, and consciousness, which contains 22 articles which are sure to tantalize the reader’s interest, as we explore everything from interdisciplinary views on consciousness to multicultural views of health and healing.

The special edition begins with an article by Ede Frecska, Mihály Hoppál, and Luis E. Luna titled “Nonlocality and the Shamanic State of Consciousness.” In their exploration of nonlocality as it applies to the journey of the shamanic healer, Frecska and colleagues present us with a novel framework for the indigenous shaman’s “soul flight” derived from contemporary research in quantum physics. This interdisciplinary interpretation of ancient spiritual techniques for accessing specific states of consciousness introduces the terms “nonlocal-intuitive” and “perceptual-cognitive” to describe the different channels of information available to the shaman. These terms represent a valuable theoretical perspective of shamanic practice, integrating sophisticated explanations sure to break new ground in the field.

“A Three-Layered Model for Consciousness States” by Arushi Kak, Abhinav Gautam, and Subhash Kak discusses a three-level hierarchical model to explain research in anesthesiology that supports a disembodied state of consciousness. Kak and colleagues suggest that the state of consciousness is dependent upon the degree to which preconscious and memory states are accessible to awareness, and discuss the mechanism for what they term “higher level nodes” that are non-physical in disembodied states of consciousness. A measure to explore these states on a spectrum is presented, along with other thought-provoking views of how activity across the brain can be quantified using an entropy-based metric, in addition to how “non-physical nodes” corresponding to consciousness states may be governed by quantum dynamics.

Following this, Kathleen Noble, John Joseph Crotty, Aarshin Karande, Alexa Lavides, and Andrzej Montaño present an article titled “Why Consciousness? Teaching at the Leading Edge of Mind Science.” Many kudos are in order to Noble and her colleagues, as they successfully launched a transdisciplinary and integral Minor in Consciousness program in 2014 at the University of Washington Bothell campus—the first of its kind at a public research institution in North America. A four-year study is explored, which overview the intellectual and personal effects of studying consciousness from this perspective for undergraduate students who enrolled in the first course in the Minor’s sequence from 2012-2015. Noble and colleagues found that introducing the study of consciousness within the context of scientific revolutions and paradigm shifts proved particularly efficacious and may be a useful strategy for those who are interested in teaching or learning about consciousness in less than supportive, mainstream academic environments. Congratulations Dr. Noble and colleagues!

“The Indigenous Healing Traditions in Calabria, Italy” by Michael Bova, Stanley Krippner, Ashwin Budden, and Roberto Galante, brings the reader on an interesting journey to Calabria, Italy, where the four co-authors spent several weeks in 2003. Bova and colleagues share intriguing interviews with local people about folk healing remedies, discuss a Feast Day they attended honoring St. Cosma and St. Damian, and share details about two visits to the Shrine of Madonna dello Scoglio, where they interviewed its founder, Fratel Cosimo.

Harris L. Friedman, in his article “Using Aikido and Transpersonal Psychology Concepts as Tools for Reconciling Conflict: Focus on Aikido and Related Martial Arts, such as Hapkido,” discusses how Aikido, and related martial arts, such as Hapkido, offer insights for reconciling conflict at intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, and global levels. Friedman suggests how these operate can be understood scientifically using psychological concepts, especially from transpersonal and transcultural psychology. Some basic approaches for applying these principles are explained, and case examples of their application across different levels for reconciling conflict are provided.

“Medicinal Drumming: An Ancient and Modern Day Healing Approach” by Sal Núñez reviews the medicinal drumming praxis, an ancient and modern day ceremonial approach to psychological and spiritual well-being. A brief overview of similar, but culturally diverse healing modalities is presented, along with a background
on the evolution of certain Afro-Caribbean rhythms that are centerpiece to the drumming ceremony, and are used to activate and channel healing energy within a group setting. Distinctions between different drumming styles are explored and an explanation regarding the uniqueness of ceremonial drumming is offered. The conceptualization of the medicinal drumming praxis is operationalized into stages that sequentially unfold over the course of the ceremony. A discussion about the manner in which rhythms, plant medicine, song, storytelling, colors, and symbols are used to produce an effect is presented, along with elements such as water, air, fire and earth.

Judson Davis, in "The Primordial Mandalas of East and West: Jungian and Tibetan Buddhist Approaches to Healing and Transformation," draws meaningful comparisons between the Tantric branch of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and the depth psychology of Carl Jung. Of central importance to this comparative analysis is the archetypal symbol of unitive wholeness, the mandala: a universal symbol, considered both sacred and transformative to many traditions, not simply the Tibetan Buddhism that so influenced Jung. In its innumerable manifestations in various cultures and eras, the primordial mandala form is proposed to represent something universally human and, as Davis conveys, can be utilized in a therapeutic context to facilitate transformative personality change and healing.

The next leg of our journey leads us to Ida C. LaChiusa's article, "The Transformation of Ashtanga Yoga: Implicit Memory, Dreams, and Consciousness for Survivors of Complex Trauma," which discusses results of a mixed methods study that explored whether body-work, such as Ashtanga yoga, can lead to improved affect regulation and body awareness among survivors of complex childhood trauma. LaChiusa presents themes that emerged from interviews with 31 female participants, which revealed that Ashtanga yoga did help them with affect regulation and body acceptance. LaChiusa concludes that a consistent Ashtanga yoga practice may help female survivors of complex trauma improve their ability to regulate emotions, as well as improve body awareness, resulting in improved consciousness of various aspects of experience.

Next, Garret B. Wyner and Joshua D. Wyner share an intriguing case study in their article "You and I: Psycho-Spiritual Health and the Voice of Love." The authors examine individual, group, and collective psycho-spiritual health implications of a case where a patient experienced a moment of "spiritual perfection," during which he felt "immersed in a self-transcendent spirit of love" that brought with it a sense of self-actualization. Wyner and Wyner found that the patient reported a vivid sense that intentional wrongdoing harmed himself far more than others, and psycho-spiritual health was directly bound with loving others. Through this case, the authors aim to provide readers with an appreciation for the utility of such an experience and knowledge, particularly as it relates to overcoming issues related to addiction, freedom, and power that can enable us to become actualized beings.

Joseph Zamaria's article, "A Phenomenological Examination of Psilocybin and its Positive and Persisting Aftereffects," presents a study that examines the positive and persisting psychological and behavioral aftereffects in eight individuals who reported consumption of psilocybin-containing mushrooms. Zamaria interviewed eight adults who reported using psilocybin in the past and reports 11 themes that emerged within three categories. The author discusses these themes in depth and concludes that the positive and persisting aftereffects related to the consumption of psilocybin may be useful for psychological healing and growth, and that these aftereffects should continue to be studied.

Kaleb R. Smith, in his article, "Modeling the Flesh of God: Hyperpriming and the Teanánácatl Cults of Mexico," explores the teanánácatl mushroom cults of pre-colonial Mesoamerica through the lens of contemporary cognitive psychology. By drawing from sophisticated modern research into the effect of psilocybin on the faculties of semantic memory, Smith contends that many aspects of the traditional teanánácatl velada, or "night vigil," can be interpreted using the theoretical framework of semantic hyperpriming.

In "Shamanic Vision Quest: Native American Ritual, Depth Psychology, and Renaissance Natural Magic," Kathryn LaFevers Evans portrays the shamanic vision quest through dreamtime cosmologies, common to the disciplines of Native American ritual, depth psychology, and Renaissance natural magic. Whether through the Native American medicine
wheel or medieval geocentric cosmology, the author suggests these disciplines are grounded in the physics of gravity: the most mundane law governing life on earth, yet perhaps also the most obscure law at play in quantum physics.

Molecular genetic research of the role of mitochondrial dysfunction in the pathogenesis of epilepsy is described by Marco Marchionni, Simone Caramel, and Sergio Stagnaro in their case study of an 11-year-old child born with an Inherited Real Risk (IRR) of the disease. The authors suggest this mitochondrial etiology is a core feature in the clinical investigation of Quantum Biophysical Semeiotics (QBS), the constitution of which may provide physicians with a valuable tool for diagnosing epilepsy in its early preclinical stages. With such crucial early diagnosis, pre-primary and primary preventative steps can be taken, as in the case study reported in their article "Integrated Quantum Therapy in an Epileptic Child after 13 Years of Inherited Real Risk of Epilepsy in Evolution: A Case Study."

"The Neural Mechanisms Underlying Personality Disorders" by Barbara Gawda, Ryszarda Bernacka, and Agnieszka Gawda, provide a valuable review of recent research of the neural mechanisms underlying personality disorders. Schizotypal, avoidant, antisocial, and borderline personality disorders are highlighted in this concise and thorough overview of the neurological correlates seen in patients afflicted with these conditions. By understanding the deeper neurobiological changes that accompany those changes in emotion, cognition, and behavior seen in personality disorders, clinicians are afforded a more comprehensive understanding of the systems at play, potentially informing the diagnosis and treatment of those conditions.

Richard Norman, in his article "The Quantitative Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perturbation-Theoretic Approach to the Complexity of Neuronal Systems in the Neuroses," presents a compelling approach to Freud's unconscious which proposes to utilize modern neuro-quantitative technologies, such as fMRI and PET scanning, as a frame of reference to inform novel experimental designs into unconscious processes. Referred to as a "perturbation-theoretical framework" throughout his article, Norman describes the use of an unconscious stressor within the research context, intended to reveal the unconscious content of functional subsystems within the brain; information which may be used in a diagnostic capacity.

In "Speculation of Shaktipat as Spooky Action at a Distance," Juan J. Rios recalls a powerful personal experience of the yogic shaktipat, or kundalini-type, which he suggests may be conferred over a distance by Hindu yogis of significant spiritual attainment. Rios speculates the possible mechanics of such long distance transference of subjective experience utilizing the fascinating phenomenon of particle entanglement, drawn from the field of quantum physics. Albert Einstein referred to entanglement as "spooky action at a distance," and Rios’ unique spiritual experience certainly was that!

Pratibha Gramann, in her article "Creation, its Process and Significance: Samkhya—Evolution and Involution," describes India’s philosophical system of Samkhya as it relates to physicality, consciousness, and the Indian creation cosmology. Key to her interpretation of this ancient yogic philosophy is the integration of evolution and its inward psychological counterpart, termed “involution.” This mental framework is based on the ancient Samkhya conception the three gunas, or three cosmic energies which combine to compose the universe; both its outward and inward dimensions. In the ancient Indian philosophy of Samkhya, we find an advanced systemic understanding of consciousness and personal development predating Western psychology by millennia. It is integrative cross-cultural theoretical work, like Gramann’s contribution, which bring to light an ancient science of consciousness to inform contemporary research into the origins and future of the human mind.

The power of directed intention on living systems has fascinated Debra A. Midyette for over 20 years. Here, in her double-blinded pilot study of the differentiation and subsequent influence of such directed intention on human blood cells, she has designed a means of measuring this subtle force of attention within the physical body, taking great lengths to control for extraneous variables and potential biases. By focusing on two emotional states, “anxiety” and “tranquility,” Midyette employed darkfield microscopy and an independent blinded observer to analyze the influence of water imbued with these distinct emotions on the blood samples of a participant holding a vial of the water (with analysis including blood platelet, lipid, and anemia profiles). The results of this study are truly
fascinating and reaffirm the power that our thoughts and emotion have over, not only our health, but the health of those around us.

“A Mixed Methods Study of Telepathic Interspecies Communication with Therapeutic Riding Horses and their Recovering Wounded Veteran Partners” by Deborah L. Erickson, Debbi Fisher, Bob Woelk, Wanda Bucker, and Crystal Ashley, investigates the therapeutic effect of the human/animal bond, and the extensive ranges of communication that may exist between a horse and its rider, many of which are proposed to be non-verbal, or telepathic, in nature. By establishing equine telepathic communication sessions with the partner horses of 7 US military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the authors aimed to investigate potentially new directions for the treatment of this often debilitating mental health disorder.

An innovative article by Ashley Whitaker, “David Bowie: Transience and Potentiality,” presents a creative approach to understanding the various effects music has on listeners, which draws from fields of existential psychology and philosophy, with a focus on the infamous musician, Davie Bowie. Whitaker argues that the avant-garde visuals in David Bowie’s performance acts, and the frequently experimental nature of his catalogue of work throughout his music career, serve to inspire fans to overcome feelings of existential anxiety by offering a platform wherein those fans can safely remain ensconced in that anxiety alongside Bowie, and explore “absurdity” as fellow travelers of life. From this perspective, Whitaker certainly presents the reader with a unique lens to view music, and how it has the power to move and promote healing in its fans.

In “Operational Definition: The ‘Achilles Heel’ of Meditation,” Roberto Cardoso, Elaine Sales, Liliana Centurione, Mario S. Bazzarella, and Mary U. Nakamura describe the “Achilles’ Heel” of meditation research: the operational definition. While meditation is an ancient and potentially powerful spiritual exercise with numerous established health benefits, much contemporary research of the practice has been notoriously difficult to replicate. By proposing a potentially viable operational definition and methodological approach to the study of meditation, the authors attempt to dispel the vagaries and establish a consensus of the psychophysical effects which can be generalized across the various meditative techniques. Cardoso and colleagues conclude that future research of the neural, cognitive, physiological, and/or behavioral effects of meditation would find benefit in adopting the clear and comprehensive operational definition given here.

The special edition is concluded with an article by Cengiz Mordeniz titled “Pain Perception within Consciousness.” Mordeniz examines many facets of the conscious experience of pain. As a multifactorial subjective response, the perception of pain appears to be composed of a complex matrix of neural information, with sensory, cognitive, and affective dimensions. By understanding how pain perception is modulated by an individual’s state of consciousness, Mordeniz proposes that specific alterations of consciousness could be implemented clinically for the alleviation of pain related to chronic conditions.

About the Special Issue Editors

Cheryl L. Fracasso, Ph.D. is currently a psychotherapist in private practice with a specialty in spiritual psychotherapy, career counseling, and stress management, while pursuing post-graduate clinical psychology licensure at Saybrook University. She serves as faculty at University of Phoenix, and is an editorial/advisory board member with NeuroQuantology, and advisory board member with the American Center for the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences (ACISTE). She is currently conducting an international study on near-death experiences (NDEs) with co-researchers Harris Friedman and Joshua Wyner on electromagnetic and physiological aftereffects of these experiences. In addition, she has served as Principal Investigator for three studies on NDEs that have explored clinicians’
knowledge of NDE aftereffects and therapeutic implications, cultural variations of NDEs from a Muslim/Iranian perspective, and integration issues associated with various physiological aftereffects. Her research interests include near-death experiences, spiritually transformative experiences, energy medicine, electromagnetic hypersensitivity, and developing training initiatives for practitioners in a therapeutic/clinical setting to enhance awareness and multicultural sensitivity when working with the NDE population.

Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Saybrook University, Oakland, is a Fellow in four American Psychological Association (APA) divisions, and past-president of two divisions. Krippner received his Ph.D. in Special Education from Northwestern University. He is a pioneer in the study of consciousness, and he conducts research in the areas of dreams, hypnosis, shamanism, and dissociation, often from a cross-cultural perspective with an emphasis on anomalous phenomena that seem to question mainstream paradigms. Formerly, he was director of the Kent State University Child Study Center, Kent OH, and the Maimonides Medical Center Dream Research Laboratory, Brooklyn NY. He is author or co-author of many books, including, Extraordinary Dreams, Personal Mythology, Dream Telepathy, and Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans, and co-editor of Healing Tales, Healing Stories, Mysterious Minds, Debating Psychic Experience, The Psychological Impact of War on Civilians: An International Perspective, and Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence. He received the APA Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Development of Psychology in 2002, the Society for Psychological Hypnosis Award for Distinguished Contributions to Professional Hypnosis in 2002, the Ashley Montagu Peace Award in 2003, and lifetime achievement awards from the Association for the Study of Dreams and the Parapsychological Association. He also holds Fellow status in several additional organizations including, the Association for Psychological Science, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality.

Kaleb R. Smith, M.A., is a transpersonal therapist, researcher, and Ph.D. candidate at Saybrook University. His previous work at the Neurophenomenology Laboratory at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology investigated the EEG signature of attentional modulation in the isochronic brainwave entrainment phenomenon. This work with high resolution arrays prepared him for his subsequent EEG research work at Stanford University’s Psychophysiology Laboratory, which explored the event related potentials seen during induced emotional regulation responses. Currently a mental health counselor with a private practice in Seattle, WA, his doctoral research attempts to measure the influence of attentional aids on the efficacy of psychotherapy.