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Bachelor Thesis



Psychedelics as Tools for Self-Development: An
Integral Approach

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Abstract

This project attempts to explore and answer the question *“As seen from an integral perspective, how can psychedelic substances best be used as tools for self-development?”*. In order to explore this, the project utilizes Spiral Dynamics and Integral Theory, in particular the Quadrant Model, put forth by author Ken Wilber. The paper features 3 separate interviews as its primary research data, supplemented by an excerpt from Graham Hancock’s book *“The Divine Spark”* and an excerpt from Dr. Richard Louis Miller’s book *“Psychedelic Medicine”*. In the analysis, the research question is explored by the application of Spiral Dynamics in order to delineate the personal growth, experienced by the subjects, as result of using psychedelic substances. In extension of this, these changes are positioned in relation to The Quadrant Model. Followingly, the literary excerpts are also analyzed, and so provide an additional layer of depth to the analysis. Concludingly, the findings of the project form a comprehensive framework based on The Quadrant Model. The function of this framework is to offer anyone, who seeks to utilize psychedelic as tools for personal development, valuable insights and considerations in order to ensure a successful outcome.

Introduction

It has been nearly half a century that scientific experimentations with psychedelic substances have been interrupted due to legislative orders and the 'war on drugs'. The valuable outcome of the scientific studies conducted under medical settings in the 50s and 60s, have led to a recently renewed interest in the research of psychedelics. Today, there has been an increasing global tendency to consider psychedelic substances to have positive and profoundly valuable short-term and long-term effects on the individual. Its potentials were not only revealed in the medical field, but a large number of subjective reports have demonstrated them as tools for personal and cultural growth. Despite the clinical success, there has been too little attention paid to such aspects, representing an insufficient amount of integral studies on ways to induce psychedelics in the aim of self-development. Therefore, this research seeks to address the following questions: How can psychedelic substances best be used as tools for self-development?

The aim of the paper is to provide a conceptual theoretical framework on the optimal way to use psychedelic substances as tools for personal development. By employing qualitative methods of enquiry, we attempt to illuminate an integral approach that sheds light upon various factors that are needed to be considered when undergoing a psychedelic experience with the purpose of self-development. The holistic approach presented by Ken Wilber, notably Integral Theory is applied on the data, gathered from the interviews as well as on the following materials: an excerpt from Graham Hancock's book *"The Divine Spark"* and an excerpt from Dr. Richard Louis Miller's book *"Psychedelic Medicine"*.

Problem Field

The activity of ritually consuming psychedelic substances such as LSD, Psilocybin Mushrooms and Ayahuasca is a cultural phenomenon that, since its introduction to the West in the 1950's and 1960's, has attracted increasing amounts of attention from both academia, science and curious individuals from across the globe. The source of this global attention can be linked to the widely accepted phenomenon, at least in the related fields of study and literature, that these substances are capable of inducing altered states of consciousness that can provide the subject with deeply profound and transformational personal experiences.

Numerous authors have collectively written hundreds of books and articles on the subject at hand. Each providing the world with one of many ways of which one might best attempt to understand the peculiar, strange and surreal realms of the psychedelic experience, as well as what role it might fill in contemporary society.

Each field of study hold an entirely unique perspective on the nature of these mind-altering substances. The scientific field of neuroscience is interested in the neurochemical process that is followed by the consumption of the psychedelic substances, holding the belief that the key to the psychedelic mystery lies in the brain chemistry (Swanson, 2018) In contrast to this, you find psychologists who are deeply interested in the promising results that are linked to what can be described as psychedelic-assisted therapy. These psychologists or psychotherapists focus on the therapeutic aspect of the experience that is associated with moderate to high doses of psychedelic substances. Rather than prioritizing and emphasizing the study of brain chemistry, the key value of the psychedelic substances is to be found in their capacity and potential to act as transformational and profound tools in the context of therapy. Other fields of interest might insist that the collectively available resources and attention are best spent in areas focused on the political, social or cultural aspects of the phenomenon of psychedelic substances.

The object of interest is completely dependent on the individual school of thought or field of science, from which one approaches the subject at hand. Following this, the point in case here is that each distinct perspective is only one piece of the puzzle, a partial

understanding of the whole, and more importantly, each perspective is valuable in of itself, however, a truly comprehensive understanding should address and include all of these seemingly contradicting perspectives. So how does one unite these and integrate these different conflicting views of the nature of psychedelic substances?

This is essentially the central problem of which we seek to explore, understand and provide an answer to.

Problem Formulation

The main presupposition present as a foundational premise for this paper is that the experience that is subsequently produced and facilitated by the consumption of psychedelic substances, under optimal circumstances, has intrinsic personal psychological value to the subject. It is in extension of this presupposition that the interest for our specific research question lies. That is, if the psychedelic experience has the innate potential to provide the individual with unprecedented personal value, how does one best assure a functional output? Following this, by applying the ways of Integral Theory we aim to provide a integrative and united (within limits) understanding of the nature of psychedelic substances used with the aimed purpose of personal growth.

The aim of this integral understanding of the subject at hand will (hopefully) stand as an applicable model or guide as to how one might best approach, interpret and integrate the psychedelic experience in order to successfully achieve a functional output (personal growth).

Therefore, our problem formulation is as follows:

As seen from an integral perspective, how can psychedelic substances best be used as tools for self-development?

Literature Review

The author, called Ken Wilber has produced numerous works, with his first book being published in 1977. Since then, he has published multiple books, which have been received in controversial ways throughout the many corners of the academic world. Nevertheless, his books keep inspiring passionate responses from readers across the world, be it positive or negative. The aim of this literature review is to outline the historical development of Integral Theory, which is the theoretical framework put forth in his books, as well as to touch upon academic articles that attempt to further expand upon his work. To finish up, we will elaborate on any apparent gaps, or shortcomings, of the theory, alongside with criticisms. Our specific standpoint is Ken Wilber's *"A Theory of Everything"* (2000) and the article *"Introduction to the Integral Approach"* (2006). To contrast our presentation of the original works, we introduce an article by Jan Tønnesvang, Nanna B. Hedegaard and Simon E. Nygaard, called *"The Quadrant Model - what is it and how it can be used in practice"* (2015). In essence, throughout his work, Wilber posits that the dynamical nature of evolution itself is not bound or reserved to the physical and exterior realms of reality, but instead, it is equally extended to and existent in the interior realms of reality, particularly, as proposed in his works, in the area of human culture and consciousness (Wilber, 2006).

There are a number of works that have had an influence on the development of Integral Theory, and the following list is by no means exhaustive, but it covers those ones that have had greater impact. To begin with, we must mention Abraham Maslow, and his *"Hierarchy Of Needs"*. The *Hierarchy Of Needs* is a psychological framework that attempts to explore the different variety of essential human needs, through the fulfillment of innate human desires (Maslow, 1943). The *Hierarchy Of Needs* is articulated as constituting five different levels, visualised as a pyramid structure, wherein the base level consists of the most basic human needs, such as acquisition of food, water and shelter. Each of the ascending steps is accompanied by an increase in the complexity of the needs. The top-level is articulated as the innate desire for "self-actualization", and implicit in this stage is a sense of fulfillment and harmony through adhering to your own highest potential. In the hierarchy of needs, each level is predicated upon the next, in the sense that one has to fulfill the

needs of the current level in order to care about the fulfillment of the next level. For example, if one has gone several days without food or water, one is extremely unlikely to care about the fulfillment of one's highest personal potential. It should be noted here that the hierarchy of needs did not have a direct influence on Spiral Dynamics, but that it was very influential in shaping the work of Dr. Clare Graves.

During the 1950's, Dr. Clare Graves collected a rather momentous amount of psychological data. His concern was to examine the adult process of maturation, and in doing so, he hoped to combine perspectives on human nature, and psychological maturity. This has led to the birth of *"The Emergent Cyclical Levels of Existence Theory"* (ECLET) (Taborga, 2011). Implicit in ECLET is the dynamic interaction between external circumstances, and internal neuronal systems. Graves believed that human beings develop an array of bio-psycho-social coping systems in order to deal with problems in their life-worlds. In order to analyse the data he collected, Graves employed a trained panel to classify the data. Initially, the categorization *"yielded two groups: one for individuals whose concept of the mature adult was denying/sacrificing self and the other about expressing self"* (Taborga, 2011). The group concerned with self-sacrifice was seen as seeking external control, and extracted their purpose and meaning of life through input from the external environment. The input they had got from the external environment then became catalysts for modifying and improving the self. The other group, the express-self group, had a different focus in life. Their focus was on internal control, and their actions came from a sense of inner direction with a focus on a change in the external world. As the research matured, Graves et. al. ended up with a collection of five different levels of value systems. These definitions were all articulated by their subjects in relation to what they considered *"mature adult personality in operation"* (Taborga, 2011):

- Express self impulsively at any cost
- Deny/sacrifice self for later reward
- Express self in calculating fashion at the expense of others
- Deny/sacrifice self now for getting immediate acceptance
- Express-self as self desires but not at the expense of others

As the years went on, and Graves continued his research, it became clear to him, upon following up on the lives of his subjects, that their perspective on the concept of mature adult changed over time. It was, at this point, that he theorized an *“evolutionary cycle that alternated between expressing self and denying/sacrificing self”* (Taborga, 2011). Following this conceptualisation, Graves noted a sixth classification. This group was considered to be similar to the other groups categorized by the denial/sacrifice of self, however this one was seen to evolve from *“express self but not at the expense of others”* and the primary focus of this group was existential realities (Taborga, 2011). Through the 1960’s, the ECLET had seen further development and maturation. Graves concluded that his *“classifications represented the amalgamation of unique life conditions and mind capacities that form part of human evolution”* (Taborga, 2011). The particular life conditions were an array of problems that the individual needed to solve, and the mind conditions were related to the problem-solving neurology, active in the individual. Graves puts forth that ECLET theorized human evolution from primitive man to contemporary beings *“not just physically but socially and psychologically”* (Taborga, 2011). These were presented as eight levels of human existence, and implicit in each stage is a combination of life conditions and mind capacities.

Graves utilized a simple two-letter notation system in the formation of the levels. The first letter (A-H) represents life conditions, and the second letter (N-U) denotes mental capabilities. According to Graves, individuals evolve upwards the different stages, however he also notes that people could regress backwards if their circumstances become particularly harsh or change drastically.

Now, a short presentation of the double letter stages implicit in ECLET will be presented. This list is superficial and by no means exhaustive. The purpose of the presentation is to provide a contextualised perspective on the stages. Note that these stages bear resemblance to the stages articulated in the theoretical framework *“Spiral Dynamics”*, will be explored in the theory section.

A-N

Beige - Automatic - Purely reactive - Maintaining physical stability

B-O

Purple - Autistic - Traditionalism/safety - Achievement of relative safety

C-P

Red - Egocentric - Exploitation/Power - Living with self-awareness

D-Q

Blue - Absolutistic - Sacrifice/salvation - Achieving everlasting peace of mind

E-R

Orange - Multiplistic - Scientific/materialism - Conquering the physical universe

F-S

Green - Relativistic - Sociocentric/community - Living with all humans

G-T

Yellow - Systemic - Accepting/existence - Instilling sustainability in the planet

H-U

Turquoise - Differential - Experiencing/communion - Accepting existential dichotomies

Finally, we shortly note the conditions for transitioning from one stage to the next. It should be noted here, as in the beginning, that ECLET is primarily concerned with the symbiosis of external circumstances and internal neurology. This is apparent in the conditions for transition through the stages. The conditions are articulated as *“1. Potential in the brain - 2. Resolution of the existential problems in the current system - 3. A dissonance associated with the breakdown in the solutions at the current level - 4. Insight into the new way of solving problems - 5. Overcoming barriers of relationships and other constraints - 6. Practice and affirmation of the new way of solving problems”* (Taborga, 2011).

In the following section, we take a look at the works of Don Beck and Chris Cowan, who did their studies alongside with Clare Graves. Don Beck took inspiration from the work of Graves, and thus he worked to expand and improve it. This resulted in the birth of a theoretical framework called *“Spiral Dynamics”*, which has come to be an important part of

“Integral Theory” which our project will be primarily concerned with. Naturally, Integral Theory itself will be introduced later as a part of the literature review.

Don Beck and Christopher Cowan both studied with Graves before his death in 1986. Another ten years had passed before they published *“Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change”* (1996). The book posits a set of different stages, which are composite of different value systems. The theory suggests that as one matures through life, one adopts value systems of increased complexity to deal with the problems of existence in a particular context. In Spiral Dynamics the different stages are articulated as value memes or ‘vMeme’ which can be defined as *“the magnetic force which binds memes and other kinds of ideas in cohesive packages of thought, value systems, political forms, and world views of entire civilizations”* (Butters, 2015). In this sense, we can take the stages to be the cohesive structure of world views that inform a particular individual or group. Further definition is articulated as *“VMEMEs ‘structure the thinking, value systems, political forms, and world views of entire civilizations’”* (Butters, 2015). Spiral Dynamics is visualized as a spiral, and every stage is attributed a colour. The spiral is said to represent the *“expansive, open-ended, continuous, and dynamic”* (Butters, 2015) development of consciousness. Initially the stages did not have colours associated to them, but they were allegedly introduced after Cowan used a colour scheme in preparation of teaching materials and to ease students familiarization and distinction of each stage (Butters, 2015).

Spiral Dynamics has seen application in a number of different areas. One particular instance is the end of apartheid in South Africa, where Beck and Cowan were credited with helping to change the perception of the former oppressors. Nelson Mandela employed the strategy of using a rugby game to *“transcend racial and class identification and unify the country”* (Butters, 2015). This happened through more than sixty trips between the period of 1981 and 1988. Their influence might have helped Nelson Mandela steer the attitude from one of revenge-against-oppressors, to one more focused on acceptance and inclusion. It is posited that employing the rugby game as a means of unifying the country, was Spiral Dynamics at work. In this sense Spiral Dynamics was not used to alter existing value systems, but to bring emphasis and focus on an already existing value system (Butters, 2015). There are primarily three practitioners of Spiral Dynamics - namely Beck, Wilber and Cowan (Cowan deceased 2015). Each of these authors have different interpretations as to what Spiral Dynamics is, which in turn affects how they apply it. Cowan had a company for

several years, prior to his demise, in which he taught Spiral Dynamics aimed at organizational- and business management. Beck continues what Graves dubbed *“the eternal quest”* of perfecting the theory through practical application. Finally, we have Ken Wilber, who paired Spiral Dynamics with the AQAL model creating Spiral Dynamics Integral, or Integral Theory. Each of these different authors have different interpretations on what Spiral Dynamics is and how it should be used in practice. These authors have worked together in the past, but it has often led to internal criticisms and bickering.

There are numerous criticisms of Spiral Dynamics, which will be presented in the following section. First and foremost, there is the criticism of hierarchization that has to be noted. On the most fundamental level, Spiral Dynamics is presented as a form of hierarchization through the different stages. This in itself cannot be outright denied. However, it is extremely important to stress here that Spiral Dynamics is not exclusively about ascending through higher and higher stages. It is essential to understand and stress that being at a “higher” stage is never considered to be “better” nor is it meant to appear in such a way. Rather, instead of perceiving the stages as expanding on a vertical axis, one could perceive them laterally instead (Wilber, 2006). The act of employing a colour scheme to the different stages was done to limit this hierarchization. From the onset Beck and Cowan *“were cautious about creating a hierarchical structure in which ‘higher’ automatically meant ‘better’. Instead they used colours”* (Butters 2015, p. 69). Nevertheless it is an ongoing concern. Another criticism is related to post-colonial attitudes within Spiral Dynamics. Here the concern is whether or not using, for example, the colour of beige (one of the lower stages, colour associated with the savanna) is upholding colonial attitudes. It should be noted here that there are slight modifications and differences in the colour schemes used by the different practitioners of Spiral Dynamics, and while the colour might change, what is implicit in the stage itself remains static.

Integral Theory is the theoretical framework put forth by Ken Wilber, and it was created by pairing a number of existing theories into a comprehensive *“theory of everything”* (Wilber, 2006). An in-depth overview of Integral Theory will be presented in our theory chapter. The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview. One important aspect of this framework, as presented by Integral Theory, is the stage formations of Spiral Dynamics (Wilber, 2006).

The result is a rather dynamic model, with complexity and nuance. The AQAL model has many aspects, and the name is meant to signify "*All Quadrants, All Levels.*" (Wilber, 2006, p. 26). The quadrant model is an attempt to dissect phenomena in the world and place them into several different essential categories. This is done to achieve an overarching perspective in relation to the particular phenomenon in question. It should be noted here that the quadrants are intimately interconnected, and an aspect placed in a particular quadrant might have influence on aspects placed in other quadrants (Wilber, 2006).

The model is visualised as a square divided into four parts. Each of the quadrants, or squares, denote different ways of viewing a phenomenon. The *upper-left quadrant* signifies the internal subjective dimension, the *upper-right quadrant* reflects externally observable behaviour and physiology, the *lower-left quadrant* manifests in the collective cultural sphere with its implicit meanings and understandings and the lower-right which is concerned with everything externally observable in the plural sense, such as technology, systems and legislation, economy etc. Also implicit in the AQAL model are "*lines*", "*states*", "*stages/levels*" and "*holons*" (Wilber, 2006).

The conception of a "*line of development*" is interwoven with the conception of multiple intelligences. *Multiple intelligences* is a conception coined by Howard Gardner (Gardner, 2006), and it denotes that there is more to intelligence than the classical IQ spectrum. Gardner proposes a number of intelligences including cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, musical intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence amongst others (Gardner, 2006). In this perspective it is thought that people adhere more strongly to any couple of these intelligences, while the rest are overlooked. Thinking in terms of multiple intelligences, a *line of development* could represent a given intelligence. In this sense, an individual's primary intelligences might be emotional intelligence and kinesthetic intelligence. The emotional and kinesthetic *lines of development* are then the two intelligences the individual adheres most to, and are the most likely to be well-developed (Wilber, 2006).

The conception of "*states*" is meant to signify "*states of consciousness*". According to Wilber, there are a number of states of consciousness apart from the three major "*waking, dreaming, deep sleep*" (Wilber, 2006, p. 5). It should be noted here that all the states are perceived as being temporary, and they change over time. These might include meditative states, altered states, peak experiences and so on. In the integral approach, these states of consciousness are seen as having implicit growth value for the subject (Wilber, 2006). In this

project, we will go into depth in relation to the prospective growth to be acquired from an altered state such as a psychedelic experience. *“Stages- or levels of development”* are concerned with the unfoldment of growth. The conception of stages is articulated as a contrast to *“states”*, in the sense that stages are the permanent acquisitions of traits inherent to a *“state”*. One might have a peak experience and all that comes with it, but a *state of consciousness* is temporary and morphs into a different *state of consciousness* over time (as seen in the transition from waking state of consciousness during the day, to a dreaming state of consciousness while sleeping). As mentioned, a stage of development could be the permanent acquisition of traits experienced in a *“state of consciousness”*, but more generally it refers to reaching a progressional milestone. A simple example could be a child's linguistic development in the sense that *“once a child develops through the linguistic stages of development, the child has permanent access to language”* (Wilber, 2006, p. 6). Some proposed stages of development are *“egocentric, ethnocentric and worldcentric”*. These three stages all have a central focus to them: (the *“me”* of the *egocentric* stage, the *“us”* of the *ethnocentric* stage, the *“all of us”* of the *worldcentric* stage), and it is articulated that through a process of growth the individual expands its frame of reference to include an expanding sense of self. Another example of this could be that it would happen through a meditative practice such as yoga or meditation, in the sense that over time the meditative state could become more permanent and permeate deeper into normal waking consciousness.

The idea of *“holons”* is something quite essential to the works of Wilber. In this project we will not be utilizing this conception too often, but it is important to note it, due to it being fundamental to Integral Theory. A *“holon”* is simultaneously a self-regulating, self-contained unit, while also being a part of a bigger self-regulating, self-contained unit. Examples of holons could be the progression from *“atoms to molecules to cells to organisms”* (Wilber, 2006), here each stage of progression is a self-contained unit, while simultaneously being an integral part of an even bigger unit. This perspective is closely linked to the perspective on growth as unfolding in stages, where you are not able to skip the lessons of one stage, as articulated by Wilber *“you can’t go from atoms to cells and skip molecules”* (Wilber, 2006).

In order for Integral Theory to become widely recognized by the academic community, there are a number of qualifications that must be met. This section of the literature review is going to discuss the *“barriers and gateways”* for the acceptance of

Integral Theory into the academic community. This part of the literature review is based on an essay by Jeff Meyerhoff called *"Integral Studies and Academia, Barriers and Gateways"* (2015). In the essay, Meyerhoff presents a number of points that are either required for academic entry, and goes through some *"barriers and gateways"* in relation to Integral Theory. His first point is establishing a *"social location"* through aligning with an academic institution doing a similar kind of research. As academia is institutionally based, establishing them in a physical location would aid the legitimacy of Integral Theory. Meyerhoff states that this would give Integral Theory *"the social location in which to exist, increase its power to persuade, be adopted by more people, perpetuate itself and so have a greater effect on the world"* (Meyerhoff, 2015). This argument is juxtaposed to non-academic or quasi-academic institutions who might have a more biased, or loosely-ended, predisposition towards the creation of knowledge. Meyerhoff elaborates on the two different aspects of academic validation, which must be adhered to, if Integral Theory has any hope for academic acceptance.

The first criteria for academic validation is epistemological in nature. Here the knowledge in question is examined and it is considered fit or unfit for academic acceptance on the basis of some criteria. Does the knowledge represent the way the world is? Does the knowledge have empirical support backing it up? Is the knowledge coherent, or does it fit with other knowledge? Does the knowledge have predictive values? The other aspect of academic validation is social in nature. This aspect is concerned with the consensus of the academic community, and it must be accepted by a large enough percentage of the community in order to be legitimized.

The second criteria functions from a basis of social prestige, and that in order to be recognized, it must be accepted by a number of people that hold the power to accept it (Meyerhoff, 2015). Integral studies have contended with the obstacles, and the way it has done so, is through what Wilber calls *"orienting generalizations"*. Orienting generalizations was the method initially proposed by Ken Wilber and it works through deducing the accepted knowledge into its most basic components (Meyerhoff, 2015). The example offered by Meyerhoff is that of the debate in developmental psychology regarding the Piagetian four-stage framework of individual cognitive development. It has to be noted here that much debate has gone into what constitutes the different stages, however the consensus is that there are four stages. This general consensus on a framework is the

“orienting generalization” and Wilber used this agreed-upon knowledge to create his theory.

One of Meyerhoff’s central points of criticism is what he considers the selective nature of the sources implicit in theory formation. In Meyerhoff’s perspective, the chosen sources seem to be selected so, as to pre-validate the thesis, and he argues that they seem to be chosen on a basis of usefulness rather than credibility (Meyerhoff, 2015).

There are a number of barriers and gateways for the entry of integral studies into academia. Followingly, the barriers will be presented, and then we will elaborate on the gateways for acceptance. The first barrier presented by Meyerhoff runs along the dichotomy of *“Specialization vs. Integration”* (Meyerhoff, 2015). The current state of academia is highly specialized, and trained academics to focus on one narrow aspect of knowledge, resulting the formation of niche communities and specialized journals. Integral studies try to reconcile this specialization through the attempt to synthesize the different understandings into a coherent whole. This is, of course, problematic as the integral practitioner would have to have a truly vast and comprehensive insight into the fields in question. The attempt to integrate the academic disciplines is not something new to academia, however, as Meyerhoff demonstrates with an example from the field of sociology. The example shows the collective efforts of Comte, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, Park and Parsons to establish a “coherent enterprise” of which they conclude that *“It was indicative of the social and intellectual challenges that this aspiration for unity would face, however, that its original proponents and their successors rarely agreed on much beyond the goal itself”* (Meyerhoff, 2015).

The next barrier is the insistence in integral studies on the *“spiritual dimension”*. This is not surprising as it runs counter to dominant paradigms of an anti-religious, anti-mystical, materialistic caliber in post-Enlightenment Western science. Meyerhoff proposes a way around this by a movement towards phenomenological and empirical description of spirituality that does not involve supernatural entities, but that describes it in terms of the farthest reach of human development (Meyerhoff, 2015).

The following barrier articulated by Meyerhoff, namely *“Integrating the Human and Natural Sciences”*, is closely related to the previous barrier of specialization vs. integration. It comes as no surprise that there has been a longstanding debate as to what constitutes, even whether there is, a division between the sciences. According to Meyerhoff some have tried to eliminate the division by conceptualizing *“humans and their societies without the*

subjective attributes of intention and choice, seeing humans as another animal or as a system” (Meyerhoff, 2015). However conceptualizing humans merely on an objective basis does not offer sufficient justification, as can be seen in common terms in folk psychological language such as “willing,” “intending,” “imagining,” “believing”, which are still used in the social sciences (Meyerhoff, 2015). The problem here, as articulated by Meyerhoff, is to be found in the basic language conceptions used in the two fields. In these fields “either a natural scientific or systems-oriented language is used for all phenomena including humans with the concurrent loss of the folk psychological language and texture of human experiencing or we retain the latter and have difficulty integrating it with the objectivizing, natural scientific language that has been so successful in describing physical, chemical and biological phenomena” (Meyerhoff, 2015).

The astrophysicist, Eric Chaisson, has conceptualized a story of everything on the basis of a mathematical formula which *“ranks level of complexity according to amount of energy used by the system in question”* (Meyerhoff, 2015) that conceptualizes humans as highly complex in terms of size versus energy usage. However, this articulation completely neglects the inner subjective dimension of human experience, a dimension which is of paramount importance in the articulations of Wilber. This example provides contrast in relation to the different angles of articulation. *Explanatory vs. hermeneutical, objective vs. subjective* and so on. A truly integral practitioner would have to reconcile these modes of articulation.

Another barrier is the conception of consciousness. In integral studies the conception of consciousness is something that is prevalent, however problems arise when one tries to include and integrate an academically acceptable model of consciousness. The phenomenon and development of consciousness is something that is explored in growing fields such as philosophy of mind, cognitive science, neuroscience and history (Meyerhoff, 2015) and it is only natural that each field will have its own angle and articulation as to what it is, and how it is to be explored.

The angle articulated in integral studies proposes that consciousness is something intrinsically subjective, as can be seen in the AQAL model where one-quarter is allotted to the internal subjective experience of the individual. This goes counter to definitions articulating consciousness as being something objective, and so the difficulty of defining what it is and who has it is paramount. The final barrier articulated by Meyerhoff is the *“directionality”* of integral studies. There is a trend within integral studies to view the

temporal aspects of the model a certain way, as for example with evolution, seeing it as a process of simplicity unfolding into complexity. The critique here is whether or not this represents a legitimate pattern, or whether integral practitioners are choosing this pattern for value-laden reasons. The general perspective in integral studies is that evolution is heading in a particular direction. Meyerhoff sees this as a barrier because *“A direction is different from a description or explanation of how what was past led to what is present. A direction asserts that there is, inherent in the process of unfolding, a destination or tendency to become more one way rather than another”* (Meyerhoff, 2015).

This perspective is in stark contrast to the more commonly accepted perspective of the Neo-Darwinian Synthesis, which asserts that organisms evolve in relation to the environment they find themselves in. Implicit in this paradigm is that organisms simply adapt to the environment they find themselves in, for better or worse. The emphasis on directionality through complexity as an organizing principle in integral studies leads us to a sub-barrier of *“Big History”*, a field which is trying to do something similar to Wilber, namely creating a *“history of everything”*. It should be noted here that Meyerhoff simultaneously considers Big History a barrier and a gateway, and so it will both be included here and under *“gateways for academic entrance”*. Big History, however, takes a different approach to writing the story of everything than Wilber, as one of their practitioners elaborate *“our history of the universe has concentrated on one obscure planet orbiting one obscure star simply because that planet happens to be our home”* (David Christian, 2014).

While there is a number of barriers for the acceptance of integral studies into academia, there is also a number of gateways which could provide a golden opportunity. In this section the gateways to academic acceptance, as articulated by Meyerhoff, will be presented. The gateways presented are mostly concerned with integral studies aligning themselves with an already established field, thus increasing their credibility and influence. The first gateway presented, namely *“Evolution Towards Complexity”* ties in closely with the barrier of *“directionality”*. The prevailing view in the natural sciences that there is no intended destination to nature, but that it unfolds *“according to patterns, laws and chance”* (Meyerhoff, 2015).

In this paradigm complexity is not favoured over simplicity, although specific environments might. However, the perspective of directionality is not completely devoid in academia and integral studies could gain some favour by aligning with fields that could

verify this tendency. One evolutionary biologist, Daniel McShea, is attempting to find a way of measuring, and thus verifying or denying, that increasing complexity is a process or tendency in the evolution of life. Meyerhoff suggests, this is the kind of research that could benefit integral studies. As mentioned in the section articulating the barriers of academic entry, the field of *"Big History"* will also be included as a gateway. This is seen as a gateway as integral studies is concerned with "a theory of everything" (Wilber, 2000), which is aligned with the goals of Big History. The aim of Big History, is articulated as *"a first attempt at formulating a coherent theoretical framework for big history"* (Spier, 2010).

This approach may indeed constitute an entire interdisciplinary research agenda that, if pursued, would allow scientists ranging from astronomers to historians and anthropologists to collaborate in unprecedented ways while speaking the same scientific language. Aligning themselves with Big History could provide a helping hand to integral studies. However, the emphasis on personal growth, subjectivity and spirituality is not a concern shared in Big History.

The next gateway is that of *"interdisciplinarity"*, which alludes to the field of interdisciplinarity within academia. In this context, interdisciplinarity denotes a broader term, which implies *"the rethinking of the academic divisions of knowledge intended to produce new, more unified and more useful knowledge."* (Meyerhoff, 2015). The tendency of wanting to integrate the different academic fields is not something foreign to academia, and a book such as *"The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity"* is the epitome of such an attempt. The researchers of this field historicize the academic disciplines and they note that the *"sturdy"* divisions within academia are historically recent (Meyerhoff, 2015). The critique presented by both interdisciplinarity and integral studies are similar in nature, as they are both concerned with academic specialization. The field of interdisciplinarity should provide an inspiring example to integral studies, however, as it has solidified its hold in academia by founding *"Association of Integrative Studies"* in 1979, followed by their journal *"Issues in Integrative Studies"* in 1982.

The next gateway is named *"The New Science"* and it is presented as both a barrier and a gateway. Implicit in the new science is the work of Jantsch (1980), Laszlo (1987) and Wilber (1995) and their emphasis on conceptions of *"Self-organization," "Emergence,"* and *"Complexity"*. Besides Wilber, the works of these authors will also be commented upon, as they face the same trial collectively, that of academic acceptance. Meyerhoff argues that it is a barrier as these approaches stem from an alternative scientific tradition, which has *"its*

roots in the unsuccessful systems theory of the 1950s" (Meyerhoff, 2015). It is considered to be a gateway because there is a minority in academia pursuing this alternative perspective in a thorough manner. If this perspective was to increase its influence, it could provide an opportunity for integral studies to align with them, thus increasing its own influence (Meyerhoff, 2015). Integralists often employ the concept of complexity to provide directionality to natural and social processes, which places humans at the peak of the evolutionary path. The emphasis on complexity makes it a troublesome barrier for academic acceptance, in the light of mainstream science's criticism of teleology. A part of an integralist's work also involves using complexity in order to examine systems, with the goal of limiting the reductionism seen in conventional science. Here the emphasis is on integrating and understanding the relationships between *"parts and wholes"* in order to better understand the hierarchy (or holarchy) in question (Meyerhoff, 2015). The angle of this inquiry is different though, as it sees complexity as non-directional and synchronic, whereas the other view of complexity is seen as a diachronic tendency causing greater evolution over time. The synchronic aspect is of interest to the integralist on the basis that it is non-reductionistic and requires the individual to employ systems thinking. The diachronic aspect is more problematic, however, as implicit within is the integralist seeking to identify some phenomena as more complex than others, and furthermore, that evolution itself has a tendency towards increasing complexity over time.

The concept of emergence, similarly to complexity, is concerned with *"...the integrity of higher, more complex levels and does not direct one to reduce, take apart, and analyze in the sense of divide into more and more elemental units."* (Meyerhoff, 2015). As a contrast to reduction, emergence permits a scientific way of sustaining the integrated nature of phenomena. Meyerhoff considers the concept of emergence problematic because he sees it as a placeholder for processes that are not scientifically explainable. The conception of self-organization seems appealing because it articulates a *"self-propulsive or autonomous creative and self-maintaining process"* (Meyerhoff, 2015). This process arises from the entity studied, and forms a contrast to the perspective of a mechanistically causal, and entirely determined reality, which seems to negate free will. In order to be academically accepted, these relatively new concepts must adhere to the criteria of scientific investigation, namely *"prediction," "experimentation," "mathematization," "explanatory usefulness," "elegance"* and *"agreement with other results"*. The Santa Fe Institute is an institution that focuses on complexity, emergence and self-organization, and allying with this institute could be an

opportunity for integral studies. However, it could also be implied that their success or failure is dependant on this attempt to remake science (Meyerhoff, 2015).

The final gateway for academic acceptance is that of “*Pluralism*”. The underlying assumption here is that scientific reductionism offers a prevailing tendency, and that by attempting to break reality down into its most basic components, it undermines the quality and integrity of the field in question. However, Steven Horst (2007) argues that this is an outdated perspective on reductionism, and that it rarely happens in the practice of contemporary science. In his perspective, understanding science as reductionistic is remnant of the image of science from fifty to sixty years ago. Horst proposes “*Cognitive Pluralism*” that puts emphasis on cognition in producing “*irreducible representational systems*” (Meyerhoff, 2015). While Wilber has an adverse attitude towards reductionism, there is a trend towards “*perspectival understanding of knowledge creation*” (Meyerhoff, 2015) in academia, and this pluralism is something that is a part of Integral Theory. The turn towards pluralism in academia has made it a common topic in philosophy, political science, religious studies and social theory. Wilber has tried to contend with the implications of pluralism with his engagement in *perspectivism* and his concept of *enactment*. Since the mid-90s, Wilber has been making an effort to incorporate the implications of the developmental model and integrate “*the understanding that new individual and collective developments in cognition and consciousness mean that new objects of inquiry will be brought into existence*”, within his theoretical framework (Meyerhoff, 2015). As the observers develop their perspective, they will co-construct new worlds. While there are philosophical and psychological difficulties with this articulation, it lends a challenge to the thinking required, although this challenge remains implicit in the postmodern, post-analytic pluralistic trend in the humanities.

As broad as the scope, scale and comprehensiveness present in Wilber’s ideas and claims is, it is no wonder that from his debut as an author he has faced a lot of criticism and intellectual opponents throughout his life as an author and philosopher. In light of this, It is absolutely appropriate to conceive of Wilber’s work as being controversial. Although his attempt to unify seemingly opposing fields of study and systems of thoughts is in itself admirable and worthwhile, various academic thinkers, authors and, in particular, psychologists, have criticised a variety of his arguments, methods and choice of sources, and perhaps most interestingly of all: his persona (Manson, 2012).

An adequate overview of the most popular and essential points of criticism of Wilber's work will now be presented.

The first essential point of criticism, as articulated by Jeff Meyerhoff in his essay "*Six Criticisms of Wilber's Integral Theory*." (Meyerhoff, 2006), is that Wilber, in an attempt to summarize what he perceives to be the agreed-upon current consensus within numerous fields of study such as the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and mysticism, makes the mistake of assuming that there is such an agreement in the various fields (Meyerhoff, 2006).

Perhaps more importantly, Meyerhoff argues that Wilber's so-called "orienting generalizations" is not really comprehensive or reliable presentations of the accepted consensus in the different fields of study. Rather, Meyerhoff points out that Wilber tends to appoint and specifically choose individual thinkers of each field, whose ideas conform to Wilber's own ideas, and mistakenly present them as an adequate representation of an entire field - i.e Wilber falls victim to what Meyerhoff calls "*a curious pre-enlightenment way of validating statements by reference to authority*." (Meyerhoff, 2006) which is contrary to Wilber's own emphasis on the reliance of science as a desired truthmaker (Meyerhoff, 2006). What Wilber refers to as a summary of the contemporary research is in reality a single perspective in an unfolding debate.

A second point that Meyerhoff made is that Wilber's claim, that every major mystical tradition essentially shares the same essential insights, is incomprehensive and flawed at best. Meyerhoff argues that Wilber cannot confidently claim that every major mystical tradition has a common core, as there are examples of academic sources that would prove otherwise. Moreover, Meyerhoff notes that "*Wilber adopted the four stages of mysticism in the late seventies. And while the stages may describe Wilber's and other's personal mystical progress, they don't necessarily describe everybody's*." (Meyerhoff, 2006).

Perhaps the most interesting criticism of Ken Wilber as an academic is one of personal character and attitude rather than intellectual disagreement. Meyerhoff points out that the behavior and attitude of Ken Wilber as an intellectual/academic is deeply flawed. Hereby, Meyerhoff refers to Wilber's uninvolvedness in properly, as claimed by Meyerhoff and others (Meyerhoff, 2006), addressing criticism and intellectual challenges. In addition, Meyerhoff accuses Ken Wilber (and in addition, his followers) of having never truly responded to what he calls "*...the most incisive criticism of his theory found at integralworld.net*" (Meyerhoff, 2006). And that instead of addressing and correcting what

Wilber himself claims are misrepresentations of his theory, he disengages from the debate and requires that the critic ought to reach out to him personally in order to fully understand his theory and receive his validation of their interpretation. This, according to Meyerhoff, is preposterous compared to the norm in contemporary intellectual debate (Meyerhoff, 2006).

This point is thoroughly expanded on by Mark Manson in his article, called *"The Rise and Fall of Ken Wilber"* (Manson, 2012).

In this article, Manson describes in detail his fascination with Wilber's work as a whole, as well as his own personal development as aided by Wilber's many valuable and brilliant thoughts and insights. However, after having attended an Integral Intensive weekend in Boston (a conference arranged by and for the followers of Integral theory) Manson had his view of Ken Wilber and his Integral movement drastically changed. According to Manson, this weekend seminar profoundly altered his views on the Integral community and Wilber himself, as the seminar was a combination of *"self-indulgence"* and a series of conversations about *"how integral we were and how important we were to the world without seemingly doing anything on a larger scale about it"* (Manson, 2012, p. 6).

Essentially, in the eyes of Manson, the members of the Integral community (and Wilber himself) fell victim to what Integral Theory itself had warned about: exclusion and lack of integration of opposing views. Manson adds: *"...most conversations involved esoteric spiritual topics, impulsive self-expressionism and re-explaining the integral model in 4,102 different ways. For a philosophy based on including and integrating as much as possible, its followers sure expressed it by forming a nicely-sealed bubble around themselves"* (Manson, 2012, p. 6). In essence, the main point that Manson makes in his article is that Ken Wilber's personal attitude towards his academic opponents, his unwillingness to properly address his criticism and his seclusion from people with radically different opinions eventually led to Wilber giving into what he, through his own work, had sought out to change. According to Manson, Wilber failed in the precise ways that his own model predicted and warned about, that is to say, Ken Wilber ironically failed to integrate the faults and flaws of his own thinking and attitude.

Concludingly, Manson notes that *"...what he seems to have missed is that worshipping consciousness development itself, Wilber's so-called "second-tier" thinking, leads to the same disastrous repercussions...vanity, power, guilt, obsession"* (Manson, 2012, p. 9). Wilber's journey as an author and academic should, in Manson's opinion, serve as a

cautionary tale, wherein one should approach any systems of thoughts, theories or models with care and developmental hierarchies are proposed, as one can easily fall victim to assigning one self to *“higher”* or *“better”* positions or stages of such models or systems.

Theory

In this chapter we intend to explain the angle from which we are going to use Ken Wilber's Integral Theory in order to better understand how the psychedelic experience and its integration could serve as an agent for self-development. In this context, we are going to concentrate on two models within Integral Theory, that address psychological development: The Quadrant Model (also known as the AQAL model) and Spiral Dynamics. In order to provide a comprehensive view of the historical development, the criticism and the applications of Wilber's Integral Theory, a section will be dedicated to an overview of such areas, as well as addressing the current state of knowledge on Wilber's work in general.

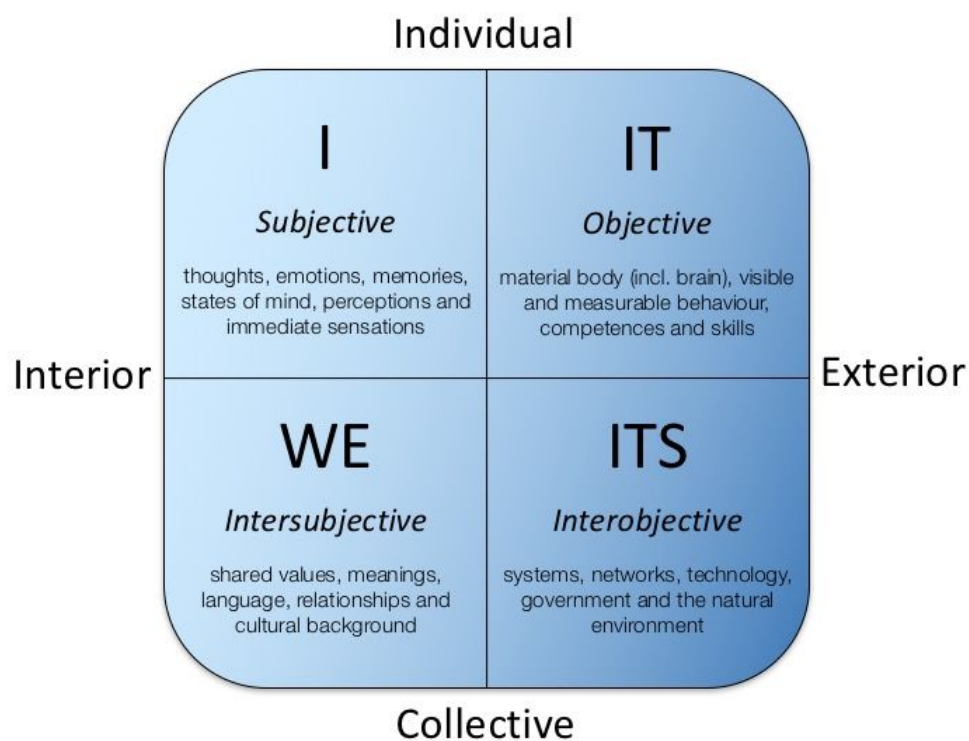
Integral Theory

Ken Wilber's Integral Theory seeks to provide a set of resources for a more comprehensive way to perceive oneself and its environment. Essential to the theory, lies the conceptions of five different aspects or layers of possible growth areas. These conceptualizations consist of "*quadrants*", "*levels*", "*lines*", "*states*" and "*types*". These five different growth areas serve as theoretical concepts for this project. According to the integral approach, the four quadrants are always present in one's immediate experience, as well as in any situation or phenomenon. Only by recognizing their presence and significance, one is able to form a fully integral understanding of a given phenomena. In addition to this, one can add *levels*, *lines*, *states* and *types* to the quadrants, a total of five elements, for additional depth. This comprehensive and integral understanding is essential as it creates the best possible foundation for any future action to be taken, in order to pursue a desired goal. In the case of our paper, the desired goal is the acquisition of personal growth in any of the above mentioned areas. (For example see: "*lines of development*")

The Quadrant Model

The quadrant model is a way of viewing phenomena, and it rests on four basic perspectives. The model posits that there are four ways of viewing phenomena, capturing four dimensions of personal experience.

According to Ken Wilber's Integral Approach, the four elements of the Quadrant Model are present in one's awareness at all times and influence how one perceives reality. Each quadrant represents different, instrict dimensions of the human experience. The four quadrants are the *"individual interior"*, the *"individual exterior"*, the *"collective interior"* and the *"collective exterior"* and all experiences can be perceived through each of these four aspects. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p. 4) Therefore, the quadrants serve as lenses to look at the psychedelic experience and demonstrate weather it instigates or contributes to personal growth. Ken Wilber proposes that only by recognizing their presence, one can facilitate psychological, spiritual or cognitive self-development.



Every experience manifests through *"individual"* and *"collective"* expressions, as well as every quadrant has an *"interior"* and an *"exterior"* dimension. The *upper-left quadrant* refers to the *"individual interior"* , the *upper-right quadrant* to the *"individual exterior"*

dimension. Meanwhile, the *lower-left quadrant* refers to the “*interior collective*” and the *lower-right quadrant* encompasses the “*exterior collective*” dimension of the experience.

The individual interior, *upper-left quadrant* is centered around one’s subjective, intrapersonal relations, such as immediate sensation, emotions and thoughts. This subjective perspective reveals how one relates to the experience that is happening to oneself and others. By applying this theoretical framework, the analyzed data might shed light upon changes in the way attachment patterns form. Additional subjective transformative tendency may touch upon the subject’s emotional interior, motivational factors and value system.

The individual exterior, *upper-right quadrant* is objective in its nature. This quadrant refers to the behavioral, neurological and physiological aspects of the observable human experience. When looking at the data from the perspective of the *upper-right quadrant*, we aim to reflect upon one’s relation to learning processes, that might have been instigated by a psychedelics experience. Furthermore, we intend to draw upon one’s approach to dealing with neurological dispositions or challenges that are reflected in direct behavioral changes as a consequence of a psychedelic experience. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p. 5)

The collective interior, *lower-left quadrant* includes interpersonal relations to one’s cultural environment. It covers how one experiences collective activities and attach shared meaning to them. It has to be noted that the way one interprets these experiences highly contributes to self-understanding. The language used in the interview will be investigated from this perspective in order to reveal possible ways in which psychedelics influenced the subject’s relation to its cultural environment, norms and beliefs.

Finally, the last collective exterior, *lower-right quadrant* offers systems that are collectively experienced on a social level. This collective side reflects shared horizons of meaning and shared understanding as seen in social systems. Looking at the global stance on the usage of psychedelics in the perspective of this quadrant, might elucidate the implications of social conditions of using psychedelics. The way legislative orders position psychedelic substances influences the public opinion, and thus might have an effect on one’s relationship to the substance. Additionally, the availability of prior scientific knowledge concerning psychedelics might also shape the intersubjective perspective of the user. Such questions are addressed in the interview part of the research. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p. 6)

These different dimensions of the human experience serve as a theoretical base for this project. The Four Quadrants of Ken Wilber's Integral Framework (also referred to as AQAL Model or Quadrant Model) offer a template for personal practice that include diverse perspectives in order to understand how they fit together. We intend to use this model in order to see which segments are more likely to be influenced by the psychedelic experience, which quadrants have gained new, profound depth due to the experience and which ones might be overlooked.

Even though all the quadrants are intertwined and manifest simultaneously in all experiences, this project has the tendency to focus more on specific qualities of a quadrant, that are potentially more relevant to the context, wherein the project is shaped. This methodological reduction is necessary when addressing a particular, narrowed-down perspective for research. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p.8)

The various aspects of each quadrant, which are called "*levels and lines of development*" offer attention points that reveal a further distinction in relation to a phenomenon. When analysing the gathered data from the *upper-left quadrant's* perspective, we apply attention points, such as *emotional, moral and cognitive lines*. Thus, on the spectrum of development of each of these perspectives, we intend to point out possible tendencies for change, instigated by a psychedelic experience. The carefully conducted and structured interview might reveal transformational patterns in the way one relates to the phenomenon. These transformational peak experiences seem to play a crucial part in forming one's way of thinking and feeling, affecting one's psychological and emotional setup, which most possibly influences the development of one's moral line as well. Additional aspects will be investigated throughout the research, such as cognitive changes in order to see whether the psychedelic experience contributes to an altered behavioral change. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p. 10) These lines can develop separately in each quadrant, but can also influence one another.

Each of these *lines of development* can further be divided individually according to their *levels of development*, which is an indicator of how complex they are and where one stands on the spectrum of development of a given *line of development*.

In the Quadrant Model, these *levels of development* are separated in relation to how one relates to oneself and its environment. There are three *levels of development*, the first one is the preconventional stage, called the "*egocentric*" level of development. This level reflects a self-absorbed view, wherein dominant worldviews and beliefs arise from a mere personal

perspective. It disconsiders any external factors that stand in contrast to one's own approach and is fully centered around one's own desires.

The second development level is the conventional stage, which reveals a care for values that are beyond the individual and directed towards the cultural environment. This level is referred to as the so called "*ethnocentric*" level of development. It considers various different perspectives and ways of thinking that are generated within one's cultural environment. Although at this point of development, one has still not yet developed a care for those ideas and views that are rooted beyond the cultural horizon. (Tønnesvang et al, 2015, p. 9)

The most advanced level of development in the Quadrant Model appears in the postconventional stage, which implies a "*worldcentric*" perspective, where values such as compassion and empathy raise beyond one's close environment, and expands to a care for all humanity and all material and immaterial aspects of reality. In this stage, one can identify with multiple point of views that involve various different types of worldviews and beliefs.

In the process of analysing the data gathered from the interview, we focus on the language use to deduct the different levels in various lines of development. For instance, the cognitive development line will be discussed by looking at the information from a upper-left quadrant's perspective and see if the language use reflects the subject's motivations and aspirations as serving his own interests, or develops a more open view and a complex care for one's culture or all of humanity.

Spiral Dynamics

As Ken Wilber affirms, after being culturally isolated for a long time, humanity gradually starts reaching cultural integrity, something which was encouraged by modern technology, mass-communication and migration (Wilber, 2000). However, this does not mean that humanity, as a whole, achieved an integral understanding of the *kosmos* (from greek: the whole of existing, including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual realms), which would presume a comprehensive view of all fields such as art, morals, science, religion and so on (Wilber, 2000). Yet the question is, how can one achieve an integral understanding in a social climate of identity politics, culture wars and ethnocentricity?

In this sense, to better understand how an integral understanding of the world

emerges, Wilber presents what is commonly known as Spiral Dynamics - a theoretical framework developed by Don Beck and Chris Cowan. It is concerned with delineating different “*stages*” which are constituent of a particular set of beliefs, values and attitudes. These stages are also articulated as memes, with the term ‘meme’ denoting the entire value structure of a given stage. An assumption in the model is that as one moves up the spiral, one ‘transcends and includes’ the perspectives of the previous stages (Wilber, 2000). Hereby, It should be noted that the stages are by no means deterministic in nature, and that one is never merely at one stage or another, but rather includes elements from different stages or activates different stages in different circumstances. In the following section the stages of Spiral Dynamics are presented. This is a general overview, yet very concise.

The first stage in Spiral Dynamics is the **beige development stage**, which is concerned with basic survival instincts (safety, food and water for example). It can be characterized by a physiological motivational system and a purely reactive structure of values (Wilber, 2000). This development stage includes the behavior observed in early and less complex human societies, wherein survival has been the predominant social concern. In addition, the early or less complex stages of human behavior, such as the base survival instinct of a baby, is also categorized within this stage. Moreover, the beige development stage also covers people who suffer from severe mental illnesses or serious neurological problems (Wilber, 2000).

The second stage, and namely **the purple development stage** is characterized by an animistic way of thinking and relies on a dualistic view on the world (good versus bad) and traditionalism (Wilber, 2000). Belief in magical spirits and the power of kinship are major characteristics for this stage, as well as a tribalistic nature of existence (Wilber, 2000). Characteristics of this stage can be observed in ethnic tribes, community rituals or superstitions for instance.

As we advance up the spiral, we proceed to **the red development stage**, which can be described by power, impulsiveness, a perception of the world as dangerous and full of threats (Wilber, 2000). The predominant way of thinking is an egocentric one and the motivational system is primarily concerned with survival (Wilber, 2000). This stage can be seen in feudal kingdoms or rebellious teenage behaviour for example.

Further on, the **blue development stage** is characterized by identification with the community, determined by an authority and a powerful order that needs to be followed

(Wilber, 2000). It can be associated with an absolutist type of reasoning, motivation for safety and order, rigid social hierarchies, and it only acknowledges a single right way of doing things (Wilber, 2000). This stage can be described as fundamentalist, conventional and conformist, with examples such as Puritan America, totalitarian regimes or the formation of ancient nations.

Next, the **orange development stage** represents an escape of the self from the previous stage. Here the world is perceived as a rational, machine-like game, where the core values are hard science and materialism, as the ways used to seek the truth are highly objective and mechanical (Wilber, 2000). Examples of this stage could be reflected in corporate business, the business mentality found on Wall Street, in colonialism or in the values expressed and developed during the age of The Enlightenment (Wilber, 2000).

Following this, the **green development stage** can be characterized as the opposite of the previous stage, as it is represented by a strong sense of community, ecological and cultural sensitivity, prevalence of feelings and subjectivity over rationality (Wilber, 2000). The way of reasoning for this stage can be described as relativistic, inferring from a tendency to deny hierarchies and the fall of meta-narratives (Wilber, 2000). Examples of this stage could be the hippie/psychedelic youth movement of the 1960s, the development of postmodernism, political correctness or what is commonly referred to as identity politics.

The stages up to, and including, the green stage are viewed as components of the first tier type of thinking. The latter is characterized by integrating the knowledge from the previous stages by advancing up the spiral, yet also denying the existence of previous or future stages (Wilber, 2000). More than that, Wilber notes that one can usually find that there is a certain resistance directed towards the concepts that are characteristic to the stages that lie beyond. On the other hand, the second tier along with the stages within it are characterized by an integration of all the knowledge from the previous stages as well as an acknowledgement of the the existence of the concepts characteristic to them (Wilber, 2000). This way, the second tier develops an integral way of thinking, something manifested also by its component stages.

The first stage of the second tier is the **yellow** one, where the world is viewed as a multitude of systemic hierarchies (or holarchies). On this level, social equality is complemented by natural systems of ranking and competency overrules power, status or

sensitivity (Wilber, 2000). The primary motivation for this stage is being fully integrated in the world's functional systems (society or nature for example) and also developing potentials that could help contribute to the collective evolution (Beck, 2005).

The last stage known so far is the **turquoise development stage**, which could be described by a possibility of a 'great unification' of the feelings, knowledge and a potential of the emergence of a new kind of spirituality (Wilber, 2000). This stage has the feature of being aware of the constructed process of meaning-making, unifying all cognitive processes such as thoughts, intuition, altered states of mind and even dreams in order to perceive the outside world in a holistic way (Cook-Greuter, 2005).

Another aspect of the stages is that there is a shift in focus observed from stage to stage, changing the emphasis from the individual to the collective - and then back again. Following Howard Gardner's statement that human development can be described as a constant decline in *egocentrism*, an overall decline in *egocentrism* within each new stage can also be observed (Wilber, 2000). However, this does not equate to an attitude, wherein there is less focus on self-care or individuality. What it means is that there is a continual decrease in narcissistic behavior and thought patterns and a continual increase in consciousness, which consequently leads to a broader and more inclusive and integral worldview (Wilber, 2000). Furthermore, the self reacts less and less to impulses with every stage, and becomes more capable of genuine compassion, love and care.

Terminology

In this section, we seek to define and elaborate on some of the central and key concepts used and referred to throughout the project.

Set and setting

The term was originally introduced and coined by Timothy Leary in 1961, and since then, it has become widely used and recognized by researchers studying psychedelic therapy. The term denotes the context for psychedelic experiences in particular. "*Set*" is meant to signify the mental state that the person brings to the psychedelic experience such as thoughts, expectations and mood. "*Setting*" is meant to signify the social and physical

environment surrounding the subject of the psychedelic session. One aspect of this is the importance of having a guide, a so-called trip sitter, to help navigate the person through the experience (Hartogsohn, 2017).

The Self

As the purpose of the project is to attempt to form a comprehensive understanding of how an individual may best utilize psychedelic substances as tools for *self-development*, it is apparent that a definition, or an overview, of a specific understanding of the self should be presented. There is a multitude of different understandings of the self, be it psychological or religious. Therefore, as the project is based on Ken Wilber's work, it is also fitting and cohesive to continue to use his definitions, understanding and interpretation of the self. Wilber's interpretation suggests that the self is an integrative concept that encompasses states of consciousness (ordinary and altered), levels of development (*egocentric*, *ethnocentric*, *worldcentric*) and lines of development (emotional, cognitive, behavioral and so on). The focus of the project is put on psychedelic drug-induced states of consciousness and the influence they have on these multiple aspects of the self. Drawing upon Ken Wilber's approach, it can be suggested that the self is rather considered to be a "*center of gravity of the various levels, lines, and states, all orbiting around the integrating tendency of the self-system*" than a monolithic entity (Wilber, 2006, p. 25). In this sense, the self is considered to be able to identify itself with a set of characteristics of all levels of development, which determines the motivations, needs and drives one identifies with. This capacity of self-identification appears to be a crucial part in creating the sense of self (Wilber, 2006, p. 23).

Self-Development / Personal Development

Furthermore, as the project deals with the notion of personal development or self-development, the meaning of this term has to be addressed. What is meant by personal development or self-development? Speaking to Wilber's use of the self, personal development is a term used to describe any expansion, development, change or advancement taking place in the upper quadrants (usually limited to the upper-left quadrant). As the focus is personal development, the project will tend to refer to changes happening on the individual interior or individual exterior level, as these quadrants deal

with changes happening on a personal and subjective level. An example of personal development could be an individual's movement from one stage of development to another (from stage Orange to stage Green), or it could describe more subtle personal development such as advancement in any of the lines of development, be it cognitive, emotional, moral etc.

Method

Starting from one of the premises of this paper, that is to say, the many-faceted aspect and perspective readily available for investigation in the context of any given subject as proposed by Ken Wilber's work. This baseline leads us to consider and choose several methods of data collection that we deemed appropriate and viable. In this context, the objective and ambition of this paper is to approach and address the four major essential aspects of the subject at hand, and subsequently attempt to provide and form a satisfactory and comprehensive understanding of the subject - an integral understanding that, by its definition, sufficiently takes into account all such four perspectives. Consequently, it becomes apparent that the optimal and most viable methodological approach in regards to the form of our research is one that draws upon and utilizes several different tools for data collection. Therefore, for the explicit purpose of this paper, and taking into consideration the many concealed aspects of our research question, one of the tools chosen to assist us in the collection of useful and relevant research data is that of interviews.

To better understand the process of qualitative interviews as well as all the different practical considerations behind them, references will be made to *Thematizing and Designing an Interview Study* by Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (Kvale et al., 2009). The process of conducting qualitative interviews contains many relevant considerations within. According to Kvale et al., there are seven stages of an interview inquiry. Thus, in the process of formulating the purpose of the our interview study, as well as the specifics and practicalities of it, several considerations were taken that resulted in the following:

All of the interviews (Interview A, B and C) were conducted, at the request of the interviewees, at their own home. This, of course, is the optimal place to conduct the interview, due to the intimate and personal nature of the discussed topic. Thus, conducting the interview in the home of the interviewees best allows them to feel safe and maintain a level of comfortability that would contribute to establish a friendly, open and non-judgmental atmosphere.

Several email correspondences were held with interviewee A before Interview session A itself took place. These correspondences included a short and limited presentation of our interest in the subject, and our reasonings for wanting to consult the interviewee. This was done based on our intention to provide the interviewee with a basic knowledge of our topic of interest, as well as a short description of what to expect. We did this based on the fact that we intended to allow the interviewee time to prepare for the interview, as well as to give the interviewee the possibility to make any objections to the details and practical aspects of the interview. Interview A consists of all four researchers being present during the interview session, wherein two were passive notetakers and merely observing, and the remaining two had the role of actively interviewing. This was done to ensure a smooth and well-organized interview session. In extension of this, Interviewee A did not have any objections to the fact that all four researchers were present during the interview. This was most likely due to the interviewee being a representative of a larger institution.

Interview session B was shorter in duration, as compared to Interview A (primarily to due the limited timeframe). As the Interviewee B is a relative of one of the researchers in question, and due to the personal and intimate nature of the topic, we decided that it would be more efficient if it was a one-on-one interview.

Interview session C was also shorter in duration as compared to Interview A, but this was primarily due to natural circumstances. Due to the intimate and personal nature of the interview questions and topic, this interviewee also preferred the one-on-one format, and therefore, only one researcher was present during the interview. All of the interviews were audio recorded as to easen the process of transcription.

These decisions, alongside with the details regarding the specifics of the interviews, were primarily based on several group discussions. Discussions revolving around, amongst other things, the possibility for us to find and arrange a meeting with certain people of interest. Following this, the deciding factor constituting the reasoning behind our choice of

method is based on the fact that we had a certain confidence in our ability to prepare and set up interviews with these different people. People that would, due to their position, be able to provide us with both a unique and comprehensive perspective on all four areas of interest (the four areas explained in The Quadrant Model.)

Thus, in extension of this, our primary and direct source of research data is that of three different interview sessions with three different interviewees (two of them, who have chosen to remain anonymous). Interviewing these people allowed us to get a comprehensive view, unique perspectives and indispensable insight into all four essential angles of approach in relation to the specific interest expressed in our problem formulation. In addition to these three different sources of research data, we have also chosen, as a means of supplementation, to utilize and reflect on two pieces of literary text, stemming from the field of psychedelic research. One of the texts is an interview that have been professionally conducted, and then presented in the book *“Psychedelic Medicine”* (Miller, 2017). The other text is an excerpt stemming from the book *“The Divine Spark”* (Hancock, 2015), consisting of a psychedelic research paper. By using these materials, this project will be able to provide comprehensive, detailed and well-formulated opinions and reflections on all of the four different perspectives that we seek to address.

Methodology

The purpose of the qualitative interviews conducted as a means of research data collection for our project is to extract and construct an informational foundation for the project in its totality. Moreover, interviews serve as methods to extract what we perceive as valuable insights. Personal insights that serve as a particular example of how one (in this case our interviewees) can arrange and organize the plethora of information, opinions and perspectives regarding psychedelic substance consumption into a comprehensive, unifying, and perhaps most importantly, successful practice. Moreover, our specific approach and considerations underlying our interview questions were formed primarily in accordance with the four distinct perspectives expressed in the Quadrant Model. These considerations together deeply influenced the way we formulated the questions, each question belonging to and inquiring about one or more of the four different quadrants.

For example, we had questions specifically targeted towards inquiring about areas related to the *upper-left quadrant* (individual interior) and other questions that inquired about *lower-right quadrant* (collective exterior). We believe that this is an effective and viable approach to the interview questions as it allows for a clear distinction between the different areas of interest, as well as it provides a clear structure for the interview process itself, alongside with the analysis of the interviews. The interview questions are available in the Appendix.

The particular method chosen for the purpose of this paper, as mentioned further above, has its own advantages and disadvantages. As the nature of our method is qualitative, the most apparent advantage is its ability to derive a large amount of valuable data from a single source. This, we argue, is the most appropriate methodical approach to assist us with our task at hand due to our distinct interest in deriving valuable information from particular key sources such as individuals, authors and scientists related to the psychedelic community. In addition, this extracted information would not have been as easily available or, arguably, even possible to obtain if the applied method were to be of a different nature such as quantitative. It has to be noted that, at any rate, a methodical approach that sought to collect quantitative data, would not have been particularly useful or interesting in the light of this paper's exact goal.

However, this method is not without limitations or disadvantages. Considering the fact that our own research data collection consists of three interviews with three different people, it is evident that no general final verdict or truth regarding the subject at hand can be conclusively decided. Thus, in an effort to circumvent such preemptive restriction, various other key sources will be used as supplementation in conjunction with the interview data. Moreover, by basing our conclusions on the data from a variety of individual sources, through the means of analysis, we might miss out on broader and more statistically based connections.

Nonetheless, one might assume that valuable scientific knowledge can merely emerge from using a large number of research subjects. Even though it is more likely that quantity offers more reproducible results, a single case study (or three, in our case) can reveal such internal complexities that others might be able to relate to. As a consequence, this type of knowledge claim is said to be as scientific as the knowledge that is produced otherwise. Thus, we consider the chosen knowledge claim to offer potentials to theoretize

our problem in a valid and reliable way. It has to be noted that we intend to stay away from solidifying the knowledge as being valid for all individuals. Therefore, we must reconfirm that this is not the purpose of the project, as implying that the concluded findings reveal a universal truth, would lead to possible flaws due to being built upon a relatively small number of subjects.

Analysis

In our analysis we will be attempting to link the findings of our interview to the quadrant model. This means that we will be attempting to delineate the findings in correlation to the individual interior (*upper-left*), individual exterior (*upper-right*), collective interior (*lower-left*) and collective exterior (*lower-right*) quadrants. In the following section we shortly present what is implicit in the different quadrants, and then we will move into the analysis.

As previously mentioned, the *upper-left quadrant* is concerned with the internal subjective dimension of the phenomenon. Plainly speaking, this quadrant consists of everything related to the individual's subjective experience of the phenomenon in question. For the purpose of the analysis in regards to this specific quadrant, we will be attempting to locate and try to understand the thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and emotions belonging to the interviewee, and how these have possibly changed over time. Potential keywords for the upper-left quadrant could be:

Keywords: experience, subjectivity, thoughts, feelings and phenomenology

(Tønnesvang et. al. 2015)

The *upper-right quadrant* is concerned with objectively identifiable behaviour. This could be a behavioural change that is instigated by a change in the constitution of the upper-left quadrant. This quadrant also covers any measurable physiological changes related to the subject at hand. However, these changes can also have a more complex and indirect nature. In relation the subject at hand, a good example might be that parts of the psychedelic experience altered one of the subject's personal convictions, which in turn lead to a behavioral change such as altered personality, lifestyle or worldview. This alteration in

behaviour could also be the adaptation of a spiritual practice in the everyday life, or a change in diet. Potential keywords for the *upper-right quadrant* could be:

Keywords: behaviour, objectivity, physique, dispositions and physical appearance

(Tønnesvang et. al. 2015)

The *lower-left quadrant* is concerned with the collective cultural understanding, which in turn informs individual self-understanding. In this quadrant, there is the dimensions of meaning collectively created through culture, customs, language and informal group dynamics. Potential keywords for the *lower-left quadrant* could be:

Keywords: culture, intersubjectivity, shared meaning, norms and horizons of interpretation

(Tønnesvang et. al. 2015)

The *lower-right quadrant* is concerned with objectively identifiable in the plural perspective. This could be the physical arrangement of objects in a room, the technology used in a particular context, policies and formal hierarchies. In a more broad sense, it also includes societal conditions and legislations. Potential keywords for the *lower-right quadrant* could be:

Keywords: system, interobjectivity, regulations, technology and interaction

As a means to reduce the confusion between the different cases of interviews, each interviewee will be referred to as either Interviewee A, B or C. Moreover, a short overview of the practical details of each interview will now be presented.

Interview A consists of a single one-hour-interview session with a person of interest, who has decided to remain anonymous for personal reasons (Appendix 1). Therefore, the person will, as of now, be referred to as Interviewee A. Furthermore, in order to contextualize the interview in relation to the topic at hand, that is, the use of psychedelic substances for personal growth, it is to be noted that Interviewee A has, at this moment in time, over 30 years of first-hand experience with psychedelic substances, which has

amounted to over 300 psychedelic sessions of varying specifics. This kind of statistical information is relevant, as it creates a more nuanced and contrasting image of the different interviewees.

Interview B consists of a single 23-minute interview session with another person of interest. This person did not request to remain anonymous, and therefore, the particular details of the interviewee are available to the reader in the appendix (Appendix 2). However, to avoid confusion throughout the analysis, this interviewee will still be referred to as Interviewee B. Additionally, Interviewee B has approximately 2 years of first-hand experience with psychedelic substances, which has amounted to 3 different psychedelic sessions (all of them being for the purpose of personal growth).

Interview C consists of a single 20-minute interview session with a third person of interest (Appendix 3). This person also requested to remain anonymous and will followingly be referred to as Interviewee C. Interviewee C has around 2 and a half years of first-hand experience with different kinds of psychedelic substances for primarily recreational purposes, amounting to upwards of 14 different psychedelic sessions.

This chapter will also feature, as a means of supplementation, an overview and analysis of two distinct pieces of text relevant to the subject at hand. The first text consisting of a long-term follow up study and methodological critique, published by Rick Doblin, PhD, in 1991, of Walter Pahnke's Good Friday experiment conducted in 1962. This text will be examined in the light of this paper's problem formulation, putting its results and conclusions in context of both an integral perspective, as well as the findings of our own interviews. This text is both an excerpt from Graham Hancock's *The Divine Spark: Psychedelics, Consciousness and The Birth of Civilization*, but also exists as a stand-alone research paper. The second text is an interview with psychologist James Fadiman, PhD, titled "The Condensed Psychedelic Explorer's Guide" conducted by Dr. Richard Louis Miller in October 18, 2011 and featured in his book *Psychedelic Medicine: The healing powers of LSD, MDMA, Psilocybin and Ayahuasca* published in 2017.

Both of these texts will act as sources of literary support to the overall aim of the paper to understand the different considerations, both scientific and otherwise, that one, as an individual, should be aware of, when engaging in the consumption of psychedelic

substances with the aimed purpose of self-development. Moreover, they represent, at least to some extent, what the scientific literature tells us about how one should approach these substances to ensure or best possibly guarantee a useful and valuable psychedelic experience, both in the short-term and in the long-term.

However, first of all, an analysis of the three different interviews, conducted as our primary source of research data, will now be presented.

As previously mentioned, the *upper-left quadrant* is, in our case, concerned with the way in which one's subjective experience, beliefs and values are influenced, in this specific case, by the psychedelic experience. In this context, as Interviewee A refers to the first time he had a psychedelic experience, he affirms that he began to be conflicted about the nature of the self: *"...so the question came to me, who am I? I mean my feelings and where I'm coming from, what is the meaning of everything... and just all these questions."* (Appendix 1, p. 1). This particular phenomenon highlights the change in the *upper-left quadrant*, something which arises as a consequence of the psychedelic experience. In order to contrast the outlook on life acquired after having a psychedelic experience, the interviewee also elaborates on his worldview before his first psychedelic experience. As he mentions in the interview, his pre-psychedelic worldview was very much based on his father's teachings, and namely that *"everything was made by a coincidence"* and *"science has declared that God was dead"* (Appendix 1, p. 1). Considering the model of Spiral Dynamics, this type of perspective could be defined as belonging to the rational stage, the core values being represented by science and materialism, something which would be classified as the orange stage of development (Wilber, 2000).

Following this idea, the change instigated by the psychedelic experience can be viewed as a challenge addressed to the unduly rationality characteristic to the orange stage. Consequently, such a challenge arguably determined a shift on the subjective level, and namely on how the interviewee was perceiving the self in relation to the outside world - something which, in terms of Integral Theory, can be defined as the *upper-left quadrant*. At this point, the altered state of consciousness had acted as a trigger on the spiral of development that initiated the End-Phase of the interviewee's orange worldview. This can be argued to have resulted in a questioning of their own core values, such as materialism,

and rigid, dogmatic interpretation of religious ideas. This phase is also characterized by the notion of one recognizing one's own limitations, flaws and biases, and a strong will begins to emerge to explore new aspects of life. (Wilber, 2010)

According to Interviewee A, this transition, triggered by a psychedelic experience, played a crucial part in their self development. By drawing upon such claims, we can argue that the Entry-Phase of a new spiral stage (or level of development) probably started due to the psychedelic experience, which resulted in a consideration and an awareness of values belonging to an exceeding stage(s). The newly gained values reflect characteristics of *the green stage* and above, as Interviewee A states that they discovered new domains of self-care through meditation, music, yoga and a healthy diet. Alongside the consumption of psychedelic substances, these practices, that are capable of inducing higher or altered states of consciousness, contribute to a transformative experience and are part of the integral approach to transformation (Wilber, 2007). Interviewee A confirms the importance of these practices that compliment the psychedelic experience to ensure a beneficial end result towards a healthy self development: *"For me working with psychedelics goes hand-in-hand with a daily practice. That is really important."* (Appendix 1, p, 7). In this subject's case, as a result of a psychedelic journey, the emphasis on self-cultivation became so powerful that, as he says: *"I dropped out of ordinary school and then I started to take courses in psychotherapy, yoga and meditation", "I had my own school and my own education for five - six - seven - years"* (Appendix 1, p. 2-3).

A common manifestation of subjective limitations is judgement and prejudice, something that is necessary to overcome at every stage of development in order to transcend to the higher stage (Wilber, 2000). If an individual still holds a primarily judgmental and diminishing view of the preceding stage, the individual who intends to identify with the values of the exceeding stage has not yet successfully transcended the previous stage and followingly embodied all of its healthy aspects. The tone and use of words in Interview A, can arguably be interpreted as subject viewing his early family environment - an environment that can be characterized by primarily orange worldviews - in a respectful manner and seemingly considers it to be a stepping stone to a more integral thinking.

Various unresolved personal issues can also limit the development of the self, if they are not recognized, accepted and integrated in a healthy manner. There has been thousands of psychedelic-assisted therapeutic sessions conducted in the 50s and 60s, followed by a

great variety of scientific literature suggesting that these substances offer a psychological pathway to follow in order to reach the root of a specific psychological problem that affects the well-being of the present self (MAPS, 2019). In the case of Interviewee A, due to a powerful psychedelic experience, they were able to "peel down the layers" of a particular problem - a problem that had been very limiting to themselves - to the point the core of the issue revealed itself (Appendix 1). As the evidence suggests, Interviewee A claims to have recognized the underlying issues on a personal and cultural level that led to the challenges they had been facing: *"When in the session I went deeper into it, I saw that one layer was related to my grandpa..., and then the experience went deeper and suddenly I saw that it was the whole culture and that the root of my problem was in Christianity"* (Appendix 1, p. 9). This recognition of the reasons and the roots of specific problem is an inevitable step in solving one's particular psychological issue (Grof, 1975).

When talking about the first psychedelic experience itself, Interviewee A describes the visual effects and their insights in detail: *"I saw the guitar and I saw a soul coming out of the guitar and I just knew that I should... my path through this lifetime should be through music"* (Appendix 1, p. 2). In this sense, the visual effects during the psychedelic experience had an influence on the interviewee's subjective understanding of what their vocation in life should be. Therefore, one can argue that these hallucinations or visuals triggered a change in the interviewee's perception of themselves and their intentions (Tønnesvang et al., 2015).

Further on, the interviewee elaborates more on their visual experiences: *"...then it was coming, something nice testing me with swords and spears and after that, it was a deep long experience."* (Appendix 1, p. 2). This description suggests that there could have been an internal conflict which was being visualized by our interviewee as a challenge involving swords and spears. This challenge could have been provoked by a shift in the *upper-left quadrant* (which could have also resulted from changes in some of the other quadrants), in which case it would represent a conflict between the former and the new beliefs - a characteristic of progress from one stage to another in Spiral Dynamics (Wilber, 2000). As a consequence of this conflict the interviewee mentions having new insights about themselves and the world, something which they identify as an attribute of the psychedelic experience : *"shortly, I knew that... that I should explore my mind and I just knew that. And that says something about the psychedelic experience, that you can have one really powerful experience and it just gives you a direction in your life"* (Appendix 1, p. 2).

In this context, the psychedelic experience could be viewed as a tool for challenging existing beliefs, reviewing one's perception of the world and of one's self, and as an instigator for a progression along the stages of the spiral. The peak experience revealed by the interviewee could be perceived as a temporarily expanded state of consciousness, broader, more complex and more encompassing than one's ordinary state of mind; something which could stimulate the progress towards a new stage of development. Thus, the cognitive development line of the interviewee also arguably evolved to another level due to his first psychedelic experience, as he started to consider new approaches and ideas, and he was able to take on new perspectives. Various *worldcentric* views arose, manifested in *the upper-left* and *lower-left quadrant*, that reflect different global concerns, such as universal care for all living organism and the environment we live in. As he states: "*The Psychedelic Center* (fictional name to maintain full anonymity) ... *forms the balance of ecosystems. We have threatened animals, we have big water salamanders, which come here by themselves. so we are supporting all holistic ecosystems*" (Appendix 1, p. 10). According to Spiral Dynamics, this ability to think ecologically only starts to emerge at stage *green*.

Further on, our interviewee introduces a psychedelic experience which later proved itself to be life-changing: "*...it was time for my big initiation. And that was a really special day because there was a lot of things leading up to this very powerful experience*" (Appendix 1, p. 2). The way this particular psychedelic experience is referred to could be interpreted as a considerable change in the interviewee's personality, or even the transition between the first and the second tier in Spiral Dynamics model of developmental stages. This further comment on the experience also serves as a pointer towards interpreting it as a transition between stages: "*I saw that the innermost part of myself, my really true self is actually one with the universal mind. So I had a really... really peak experience. I was flying out and in the stars and the roof was opening and I saw Buddha*" (Appendix 1, p. 2). This statement reflects on how an integral worldview (or at least parts of it) can emerge during the psychedelic experience, as the interviewee experiences a profound sense of unity with all of existence. In this sense, the experience could be perceived as a reflection of a turquoise state of consciousness according to Spiral Dynamics. A turquoise state of consciousness is characterized by a unification of the spiritual and physical realms, something which is expressed in the interviewee's experience by the feeling of unity with the universe and as well as the perception of a divine encounter. However, as the experience escalates, the interviewee affirms: "*And the experience... I was 17 years old at that moment. It was, it was*

too powerful and I was not in the right setting, there was nobody to support me. So, so I actually I lost consciousness” (Appendix 1, p. 2). This assertion reflects the importance of setting - physical and psychological environment, and the influence it has on the psychedelic experience. In terms of Integral Theory, it would mean that the upper-right quadrant (physical preparation) has a considerable influence on the upper-left quadrant (the perception of the experience), something which turned out to make the interviewee’s experience overwhelming. Further on, in relation to the same experience, the interviewee points out the realization that they had “*...two choices: either psychological breakdown or psychological breakthrough.*” (Appendix 1, p. 2). This realization could signify that the only way out of the crisis was to integrate the experience, and thus, in terms of Spiral Dynamics, progress upward the spiral.

When describing the general aspects of a psychedelic experience, Interviewee A refers to the concept of a ‘skin encapsulated ego’ - coined by the British writer and philosopher Alan Watts (Brain Pickings, 2019). This notion stands for one’s separation from everything that is beyond one’s own skin or physical body (Grof, 1992). As Interviewee A further elaborates on this separation as being accompanied by a form of cultural programming, something which in terms of Integral Theory would mean that the lower quadrants are deeply incorporated by the upper-left quadrant - one’s perception of the self and the world. (Appendix 1) Therefore, one of the primary properties of the psychedelic experience, according to Interviewee A, is removing the sense of separation and all the layers of expectancy and cultural preconceptions, which means that the *upper-left quadrant* would be cleared from the influence of the other quadrants, leaving the subject alone with the self. More than that, the integration of the sense of unity has the potential of producing changes on an emotional scale, as the Interviewee A affirms, something which could lead to becoming more honest towards oneself and others (Appendix 1).

Permanent traits of emotional changes initiated by a psychedelic experience can be deducted by looking at the emotional development line of the subjects before and long after undergoing a psychedelic experience (something that will be explored more later). In terms of Integral Theory, these changes reflected in the emotional development line of Interviewee A can be shown by the emerging role of close relationships, and by becoming more attentive to emotions and feelings. By placing the data gathered from Interviewee A within such theoretical framework, it can be suggested that there is noticeable increase in

the capacity for empathy and compassion that occurred as a result of consuming psychedelic substances. As Interviewee A affirms: “... so your relationships become deeper and more honest and more balanced” (Appendix 1, p. 4). In addition, Interviewee A proposes that due to a powerful psychedelic experience, the ability for empathy involves to the extent to which one does not only become more sensitive towards humans, but develops a sense of care for animals as well. This can be an indicator of a transition towards a worldcentric approach. Such emotional transformation affects one’s cognition and, thus, choice of action, as the following answer suggests: “There are many who are doing this journey, who become vegetarian, for example, they don’t want to hurt animals...; and they only want to buy and eat organic food” (Appendix 1, p. 4).

Further on, Interviewee C also elaborates on the emotional transformations that occurred as a consequence of the psychedelic experience on an interpersonal level. The interviewee affirms that having psychedelic journeys together with their friends and/or partner deepened their personal relationships (Appendix 3). This could suggest that interactions while being under the influence of psychedelic substances could have the potential of developing closer relationships, as the experience is mainly focused on subjectiveness, something represented by the *upper-left quadrant* (Tønnesvang et al., 2015). However, Interviewee C also reports changes on the emotional level after the experience, something which is mainly manifested by the feeling of longing for the family (Appendix 3). This could also be interpreted as a change along the emotional line of development, distancing oneself from *egocentric* worldviews, as the subject becomes more aware of their feelings and emotions concerning intimate family relationships. In this context, Interviewee B also elaborates on the influence the psychedelic journey had on intimate relationships: “It has assisted in the breakdown of a lot of taboos in our family and have enabled us to talk about these things” (Appendix 2, p. 1). This change could be interpreted as a shift in the subject’s personal views and values - something portrayed by the *upper-left quadrant*; which then leads to a breakdown of the existing preconceptions and taboos (something addressed by the *lower-left quadrant*) and, therefore, facilitates a more open relationship. This phenomenon has also manifested itself in terms of Interviewee B’s relationship with friends: “I have shared my experiences with my circle of friends, which have led to a gradual increase in their ability to share their own feelings and experiences that was not possible before. Beforehand, people were afraid of talking about the inner world” (Appendix 2, p. 1). This example highlights how a change on the level of the

emotional development line can lead to a behavioral change - talking openly about intimate experiences - something which emphasizes the influence of the *upper-left quadrant* on the *upper-right quadrant*. This change leads to a breakdown of the topics commonly considered taboo (something portrayed by the *lower-left quadrant*), which, consequently, encourages a similar change in other people.

According to Spiral Dynamics and Integral Theory, the essence of a yellow stage individual is integrative and multiperspectival (Wilber, 2010). Interviewee A derives its values and beliefs from a variety of different approaches, combining multiple kinds of eastern schools of mysticism, western scientific knowledge and so on (Appendix 1, p. 10). However, our subject does not claim to have an ultimate answer, the absolute truth and seems to acknowledge various perspectives in a holistic manner and creates an environment in accordance to this approach: *"The Psychedelic Center manifests the emerging paradigm, the new holistic worldview. It is a creative manifestation of the cartography of the psyche, and we are aiming at integrating the total pool of experience from quantum physics to deep oriental mysticism"* (Appendix 1, p. 10). The environment he lives in reflects similar qualities, as objects symbolizing and reflecting various distinct types of spiritual and religious notions are exposed in the entirety of The Psychedelic Center. Interviewee A also adds *"We are also transforming chains of negative patterns.... through such coexistence"* (Appendix 1, p. 11). Considering these defining characteristics from an integral approach, they are indicators of a Tier 2 value-based individual, whose views has passed the boundaries of yellow stage, adopting a worldview where holistic organisms coexist, as small parts of the whole. The dynamic balance The Psychedelic Center seeks to maintain between humans, animal and nature is also a key mission of Interviewee A: *"I think that everyone... I mean even if it is just a little piece ...I think it doesn't make a big contribution to the planet as a whole, but at least a little contribution"* (Appendix 1, p. 11). This claim and all the previously mentioned traits reflect a turquoise mindset in the integral realm. This case illustrates how the *upper-left quadrant*, the cognition influences the *lower-left quadrant*, the perception of meaning and shared values, and the *upper-right quadrant*, which elucidates the behavioral changes due to a transition in their mindset. Many of Interviewee A's accomplishments are said to be rooted in powerful psychedelic experiences they have had, and are realized due to the messages they received throughout these experiences and integrated in their lifestyle. Therefore from an integral theoretical

approach, the evidence presented so far supports the idea that the levels of the different lines of development in the subjective level, such as emotional, cognitive, value and moral lines of development have evolved as a result of integrating the psychedelic experience in a healthy, proactive and constructive manner.

To understand this in terms of a rather simple stage conception mentioned by Wilber, one can say that Interviewee A shows a clear advancement in their different lines of development, moving from the *egocentric* (the preconventional stage) to *ethnocentric* (the conventional stage) to *worldcentric* (postconventional stage) (Wilber, 2006). What is meant here is that, for example, the interviewee's moral line of development i.e his care and concern, has expanded from primarily being limited to the individual (egocentrism), to a broader concern for larger groups of people such as family, community and country (ethnocentrism), and finally to a stage wherein a care and concern for all people, despites of ethnicity, religion or nationality, is included (*worldcentrism*). One can also argue that Interviewee B demonstrates or shows, following one of their psychedelic experiences, both an expansion and enhancement of their values line of development. This is based on Interviewee B's statement that: "*I think that I have achieved a better understanding of what love is.*", which is followed by: "*Love for my fellow people, for my family, for my wife... She might not agree (laughter), but at least from my perspective – and especially, and most importantly, love for myself.*" Similar to the previous example, this statement indicates a particular pattern of growth. In this case, this growth pattern is exemplified as more of an enhanced and expanded perception of a certain value, rather than as a clear development from *egocentric* to *worldcentric*.

In the case of Interview A, on the interobjective level, qualities of the *lower-right quadrant* suggest that in order to have a beneficial outcome of the psychedelic experience, false information about the substance has to be eliminated (Appendix 1, p. 12). Misinformation and biases in regards to a wide range of psychedelic substances are forced upon mainstream audiences by different state apparatuses, such as media platforms. The idea of conscious media that provides science-based, valid information as a source to gain prior knowledge about psychedelic substances is supported by Interviewee A when talking about several elements to take into consideration when aiming to have a beneficial psychedelic experience (Appendix 1, p. 12). In the view of this subject, this scientific background and preparation for a psychedelic journey is greatly emphasized: "*it's a really*

personal thing, the way you do it. The important thing is that that you do it" (Appendix 1, p. 13). Here, it is suggested that there is no single proper way for everyone to prepare for such journey and not all types of preparational practices resonate with those subjects who intend to undergo a psychedelic journey. However by saying: *"We are in the spiritual field almost all the time. The thing is to do something which really makes you excited and I think that is the most important lesson actually"* (Appendix 1, p. 14), Interviewee A suggests that the key for the preparation for a psychedelic journey is basically a preparation for life, pursuing what makes one excited. He adds: *"I prepare the journey for that (life) and then the psychedelic journey will be part of the longer journey"* (Appendix 1, p. 13-14). This claim suggests that the notion of preparation, interpretation and implementation is an endless loop of self development, where all activities can be transformed to a spiritual practice that facilitates a healthy process of integrating the psychedelic journey.

In extension of this, Interviewee B also shared a similar understanding of how one might best approach the psychedelic experience (as seen from the perspective of the *lower-right quadrant*). When asked what kind of physical environment is most suited for a psychedelic session the interviewee answered: *"That is something I believe is very subjective and changes from person to person. A place without interruptions. And then I think... you know... then we go back to the whole ritualization. The more ritualized it is, the better, the more religious, the more powerful the experience is"* (Appendix 2, p. 7). The ritualization of the psychedelic session or experience is something that is continually insisted on by Interviewee B. The emphasis on a ritualization of the psychedelic experience is most likely expressed by the interviewee due to the suggestible nature of the drug-induced experience itself. The psychedelic experience, by nature, is one of increased suggestibility and reactivity, that is, one's sensitivity to internal and external input is increased immensely (Swanson, 2018). This expanded perspective might help us better understand Interviewee B's view on the importance of, what is essentially, set and setting. To dismiss this genuine concern might prove to be detrimental to the individual as is expressed by Interviewee B: *"I see it as very important that you see it as a ritual, you know, that you have a certain way of doing it. I think that the experience is not very beneficial at all, if you leave out the ritual. I believe it can become very risky.. or uncertain, in terms of what direction the journey takes"* (Appendix 2, p. 3). To understand or interpret this concern in relation an integral understanding of the psychedelic session is that the emphasis here is in regards to the interrelatedness of the quadrants, in that all of the quadrant have a significant effect on the

positive outcome of the experience (in regards to self-development/life transformation). And that, by dismissing or ignoring aspects of either one of the four quadrants, the potential for a unsuccessful outcome or low-value experience increases.

Further on, when talking about set and setting, the inner world also plays an important role in regards to how the psychedelic experience is going to play out. In this sense, some cultures have the custom of entering the journey with a clear purpose.

In relation to changes in behaviour, interviewee A points out that they started manifesting right after the first psychedelic experience: *“I started to read a lot of books: Alan Watts, about Zen- Buddhism and Hinduism and it just gave a lot of questions to me [...] my friends were going to parties, I was going down to the beach - sitting and meditating”* (Appendix 1, p. 1). In this context, it is observable that the subjective perception of the psychedelic experience and its integration determined some changes in the *upper-right quadrant*, something which manifested by a change of interests and the adoption of new practices. However, this is not the only way in which the *upper-right quadrant* could manifest itself as a consequence of the experience; the changes could also involve letting go of some practices or habits from before the experience. As an example, Interviewee A describes the changes resulting from, what they identify, one of the most powerful psychedelic experiences: *“I dropped out of ordinary school and then I started to take courses in psychotherapy, yoga and meditation”* (Appendix 1, p. 2). As we can see, our interviewee took up and also let go of some practices such as going to school, something which elucidates that the subjective understanding of the psychedelic experience as mind-manifesting, which is what the term ‘psychedelic’ actually means, (Appendix 1, p. 2), determined the subject to focus on activities which would serve the same purpose and let go of the practices that perceived by the subject to be inappropriate. In the context of Integral Theory, dropping out of school could be perceived as letting go of a practice which empowers the influence of the *lower-left quadrant* on the *upper-left quadrant*, since in most cases school provides individuals with common accepted knowledge within a society, something which forms cultural preconceptions about the world.

A case that exemplifies another way in which the impact of the psychedelic experience can affect habitual behavior in the individual is that of Interviewee B. When addressing whether the psychedelic experience changed or altered their approach to aspects of their lifestyle such as diet or training, the interviewee explains: *“...Of course my*

relationship to alcohol has, following my experiences, been much better.. or much smaller. I don't enjoy alcohol in the same way as I did before, or I don't know about enjoyment, but my consumption of alcohol has decreased drastically" (Appendix 2, p. 2). When asked whether they believed this to be a direct result of their psychedelic experience they assured: *"Oh, yeah definitely. Definitely... I don't have good experiences with alcohol anymore... or I don't know if I had before. Perhaps it was an escape before. But now I'm more aware, not that I can't drink it anymore, but I'm just more aware that alcohol does not benefit me compared to before"* (Appendix 2, p. 2).

The behavioral changes triggered by the psychedelic experiences are also highlighted and subjectively explained by Interviewee C: *"when you smoke during a psychedelic trip and it doesn't feel good, then that memory stays with you"* (Appendix 3, p. 2). As we can see in this case, the subjective experience of a particular activity during the psychedelic experience can influence one's decision of repeating the same activity after the experience. In other words, the *upper-left quadrant*, which focuses on the perception of a behavior during the psychedelic experience, can influence the *upper-right quadrant* by deciding to let go of this behaviour or habit in this case. However, as it has been mentioned earlier, this subjective experience can also determine someone to embrace new habits, something that is also emphasized by Interviewee C: *"Same thing with stretching during a psychedelic trip. It feels amazing. And remembering how amazing it feels, it can drive you to do it again."* (Appendix 3, p. 2).

Furthermore, the same interdependence between the *upper-left and the upper-right quadrants* can be observed in relation to changing emotional habits or thought patterns, something which is described by Interviewee C: *"if you're suffering from depression, you will realize the thought pattern loops that are going through your head over and over, which are resulting in depression"* (Appendix 3, p. 3). In this case, the perception and the awareness of one's thoughts during the experience can lead to understanding the processes through which different emotions and thought patterns are formed, something that can serve as a starting step towards a desired change. More than that, the interviewee reveals a personal problem which has been overcome by experiencing awareness of the thought processes which lead to an undesired behaviour, namely procrastination: *"psychedelic trips helped me in recognizing it when it's happening, recognizing the little games that your mind is playing with you and being aware of how it works, how it creeps on you, it helps overcome it"* (Appendix 3, p. 1). In this context, the memory of becoming aware of some thought patterns

in the *upper-left quadrant* can be integrated in the *upper-right quadrant*, something which could potentially change particular characteristics of one's behaviour.

When talking about self expression in the context of psychedelic experiences, Interviewee C affirms that one's thoughts are overwhelmingly fast-paced and different from their usual state, something which could determine one's need to express oneself in a different way (Appendix 3). This phenomenon is also reflected by Interviewee A's personal examples of how their subjective visions during the psychedelic experiences have been integrated in their life. One example reveals how their visions of holographic drawings about building "*a modern space station, a simple and modern great castle*" (Appendix 1, p. 3) have constituted the fundamental idea for building their house and integrating the psychedelic experience. Another example from Interviewee A also elaborates on how their visions about music cosmology have been expressed: "*Each track in this album should follow the progression of the zodiac sign and so it was the combination of the mythological theme and the zodiac sign that gave the theme for that track*" (Appendix 1, p. 7). These cases mirror the influence of the *upper-left quadrant* on the *upper-right quadrant* and namely how subjective experiences during a psychedelic journey can generate new ways of self expression.

When discussing the cultural preconceptions concerning psychedelic substances, one common characteristic among our interviewees is that these have changed as a consequence of undergoing a psychedelic journey. In this sense, Interviewee C affirms that their assumptions were based on the common knowledge conveyed by the media and educational institutions: "*I believed the lies that the media is feeding you or the teachers in school or are telling you about this. And I think that's what everybody thought – that it's something bad and wrong and it makes people crazy*" (Appendix 3, p. 4). The same tendency can be observed in Interviewee B's assertion: "*I myself, of course, also had this cultural preconception of it, that it was something.. you know.. hippie.. or something bad. You know, it's a taboo in your society. That is an opinion that I grew up with*" (Appendix 2, p. 3). These affirmations highlight the way in which one's opinion about psychedelic substances can be shaped by culturally accepted knowledge within the society, without being questioned. However, both of the interviewees mention that the psychedelic journey itself had an influence on the way they perceived these substances afterwards: "*I was surprised by the meaningfulness of it. It's not comparable to anything else before the experience*" (Appendix 3, p. 4). In this context, the change portrayed by the interviewees could be interpreted as a

development within the *upper-left quadrant*. The subjective perception of the psychedelic experience came in contradiction with the subjects' cultural preconception of psychedelic substances in general. Consequently, the subjects stepped out of the commonly accepted discourse on psychedelics, this, arguably, highlights the way in which the *upper-left quadrant* instigated a change in culturally-originated personal attitudes - something rendered by the lower-left quadrant, potentially altering the way that they engage aspects of the lower-left quadrant. However, Interviewee A reports that for them it took some time for the negative cultural preconceptions to shift, giving an example of how they influenced the integration of a powerful experience: *"I thought that it was up to something like damage on my brain because that was the myth in the 60s, also that LSD should damage your chromosomes"* (Appendix 1, p. 8). This example highlights the way in which the *lower-left quadrant* has the potential of influencing the subjective perception of the psychedelic experience, and namely how cultural beliefs can influence the way in which the psychedelic experience is integrated. Nevertheless, Interviewee A affirms that their assumptions about psychedelic substances have been shifted by the experience itself and by reading relevant literature (Appendix 1, p. 8).

If one - after or while undergoing a psychedelic journey - is limited in self-expression due to the substance being illegal or a social taboo, it appears to be difficult to interpret and integrate the experience. This suggestion is supported by the findings demonstrated in Interview A and C. As Interviewee A's case shows, a limitation in self-expression emerged due to cultural perception of psychedelics: *"it was very few people that I could talk to, because I knew that they would just like look at me like I was crazy"* (Appendix 1, p. 8). In order to properly integrate a powerful experience and self-reflect in a healthy manner, Interviewee A refers to the importance of expressing the messages manifesting within altered-states of consciousness, such as dream-states or psychedelic-induced states. In addition, Interviewee C supports the idea of free self-expression not only afterwards the experience, but while it is happening: *"the person should feel safe to express themselves, not feel judged in the environment that they're in"* (Appendix 3, p. 7). Therefore these findings highlight the crucial role of free self-expression, that has been limited to some extent by cultural and legal considerations. The data reported here appear to support the assumption that this quality of the *lower-right quadrant* (environment, social systems) can instigate a

behavioral change in the *upper-right quadrant*, which thus can influence the outcome of the psychedelic experience.

To understand and synthesise the different considerations concerning how aspects of each of the lower quadrant may positively or negatively affect the psychedelic session in its entirety (pre-session, session and post-session) several views are presented by our interviewees. Some of the considerations belonging to the *lower-left quadrant* (collective interior) included recommendations for the individual to engage in a study of the relevant psychedelic literature as a helpful tool to prepare for and, followingly, understand and interpret the psychedelic experience. This is expressed, in particular, by Interviewee B: *"...It might also be really helpful to read a lot of literature regarding these experiences... you know, after having had them yourself, as to help you to understand and interpret them. This is absolutely an advantage, something that I recognize post-experience."*(Appendix 2, p. 5). Seen from an integral perspective, the study of relevant literature before and after a psychedelic session is essentially an exploration of what kind of role each of the four quadrants play in the psychedelic enterprise, and can could be considered a gateway to a comprehensive and integral understanding of the subject at hand.

According to our interview data, a positive cultural perception of psychedelic substances plays a major role in the successful integration of a psychedelic journey. This is arguably due to the interrelatedness of the four quadrants. A positive cultural perception of psychedelic substances (an aspect of the *lower-left quadrant*) is something that has a significant direct or indirect effect the other quadrants. This, for example, is exemplified by Interviewee B: *"If the purpose is therapeutical or ceremonial, then of course, it is crucial that you have support or accept from your nearest. I think it is really hard to deal with these experiences alone."*(Appendix 2, p. 4). In this case, according to the interviewee a positive cultural perception of psychedelic substances, in the form of an accepting and supportive social environment, is crucial to a successful integration. To contrast this, one can argue that valuable psychedelic experiences are absolutely able to emerge from situations void of a supportive social environment, and that would be a fair point. In extension to this, according to Interviewee B, it is a question of how you choose to use psychedelic substances: *"If perhaps the purpose is more.. you know a "party drug", then it might be something completely different, then it's a different environment. Then it might be something that everyone is doing and then there's no judgment."*(Appendix 2, p. 4). However, the data

collected from the interviews demonstrate a significant preference for a supportive external environment in general.

The Condensed Psychedelic Explorer's Guide

The interview *"The Condensed Psychedelic Explorer's Guide"* is an attempt to delineate a how-to when dealing with psychedelic experiences. In relation to our project, the section titled *"Six Variables for a Safe and Beneficial Psychedelic Session"* strikes a particular interest. In this section J. Fadiman delves deeper into as to what is paramount in securing a successful psychedelic experience, namely *set and setting*. A psychedelic experience that is safe, healthy and meaningful to the individual in question is generally regarded as a "successful" psychedelic experience. The six variables he proposes as implicit in *set and setting* will be examined further below, followed by an analysis of the *set and setting* in relation to the four quadrants. The six variables are presented as such:

"First, the mental set.

Second, the physical setting which should be safe and comfortable.

Third, the sitter - I recommend, recommend, recommend a guide who can assist you if you get into places that are frightening or difficult.

Fourth, the substance - there are many kinds of psychedelics and how much you take matters.

Fifth, the session itself - how the six to twelve hours run, what you do during that time.

Sixth, what kind of a life group you come back into - to people who support this kind of expanded awareness? Or to people who feel that you have just done something either evil or dangerous?"

(Miller, 2017)

The first variable presented as *"mental set"* is concerned with the mental attitude or intention of the individual in question. What is their motivation for consuming psychedelics? Is it for recreation or self-discovery? Religious purposes or psychotherapeutic purposes? In terms of the quadrants this adheres to the upper-left as it is concerned with the internal subjectivity of the person that seeks to have a psychedelic experience.

The second variable is *"setting"*, which is meant to signify the physical setting one consumes the psychedelic substance within. Fadiman proposes that the most optimal setting is one that is as safe and comfortable as possible. Furthermore, he proposes that one is in possession of headphones, or earbuds as well as an eye mask. Fadiman also stresses the

importance of music during a psychedelic journey, as it can greatly enhance the experience that one has. He draws upon the examples from his own sessions, where he reports that the subjects obtained an increased sensitivity to the composition of the music itself - and that the music should be instrumental in order to encourage the subjects to focus on the tones themselves. The extended purpose of the headphones is to filter the noises of the environment, and as for the eye mask, he proposes that one might want to spend some part of the journey exploring the inner space, and a later part exploring the nature outside. The location is incredibly important as the duration of the psychedelic experience may as well vary from four to twelve hours depending on the consumed substance. In terms of Integral Theory, the setting could be placed in the *lower-right quadrant*, as it is concerned with the physical space itself. The earbuds and other accessories could be perceived as the physical objects inhabiting the space where the psychedelic experience is about to happen, thus they serve as means for providing a comfortable space for the psychedelic-induced session.

The third variable is the sitter, in other words the guide, whose importance and crucial role Fadiman highly emphasizes. From his perspective, a guide is “...*someone who knows the terrain, who’s been there a number of times, who is not disturbed by a little difficulty*” (Miller, 2017 p. 63). The nature of a psychedelic experience can be highly mutable, and therefore, in light of this, it can be considered extremely important to have a guide that can help one to make sense of the experience both during and after the experience. Fadiman elaborates this point by emphasizing “...*the reason for having a guide is the same reason you start with a guide when scuba diving or learning to fly a plane*” (Miller, 2017 p. 63). As a more practical example, in a metaphoric sense, he proposes that “*the image that makes the most sense to me is of a safari guide... he doesn’t see the animals for you, but he may say, “You see that rhinoceros that’s running towards us? if I were you I would stand behind a tree.”*” (Miller, 2017 p. 63). In this sense, the role of a guide is represented by both guidance and emotional support. Guidance - in the sense of bringing awareness about the ‘rhinoceros’ that are charging towards them, and emotional support, in the sense that the tourist might find this encounter terrifying. Having someone in your corner, unconditionally, as you chart unexplored territory of the mind can be seen to be invaluable, because as the old saying goes; there might be dragons. In terms of the quadrants, the sitter can be placed within a few of them, and as they are intimately interconnected, some elaboration is required in regards to each of them. The *upper-left*

quadrant, concerned with the internal subjectivity of the individual, is to be considered from the standpoint of the subject undergoing the psychedelic journey, and in this sense, the guide can help provide a more secure and comfortable internal frame for that person. The guide can also help the subject in terms of suggesting certain behaviour that has been proved to be beneficial in a given situation (something which addresses the *upper-right quadrant*), and these will eventually influence the subjective experience (which is the focus of the upper-left quadrant). In terms of the *lower-left quadrant*, the guide might impart information that, on an intersubjective level, affects the experience, something which in turn affects both the *upper-left* subjectivity, and the *upper-right* behaviour. The guides themselves are most likely to have considerations in regards to setting, and so, in terms of the *lower-right quadrant*, they will have a certain amount of influence on the physical space (the guide itself being a “physical object” in the setting). The physical space and the technology or objects inhabiting it, will in turn affect the *upper-left* subjectivity and the *upper-right* behaviour of the subject. The way that a guide could potentially structure the physical space, might be influenced by the *lower-left* cultural considerations in terms of what they consider most beneficial, based on what they were taught, and thus this shared meaning is likely to leave an imprint on the subject as well.

The fourth variable is the substance itself. It should be no surprise that there is a vast wealth of different psychedelic substances (Psilocybin, LSD, Ayahuasca and so on), each of which will have a very different subjective effect on the individual consuming them. Not only is the experienced effect different, but there are also a vast amount of differences in regards to the duration of the psychedelic journey, as well as the dosage (Miller 2017, p. 63). In order for the psychedelic experience to be beneficial, it is important for the subject to take these aspects into consideration, and most importantly to ensure that the dosage is the optimal amount. In case of ingesting a rather low-dose, the desired effect might not arise; as well as in case of ingesting an amount larger than wanted might lead to an experience that is too overwhelming. In order to enforce this point, Fadiman further elaborates on two different kinds of “too much” in terms of dosage: “*One is you really won’t know where you are, and you can become disorganized and more frightened. Two - and for me this is equally important - you really won’t remember the useful or beneficial parts*” (Miller, 2017 p. 64). In order to achieve the most meaningful experience possible, it should come as no surprise that according to Fadiman, these two extremes are to be avoided at all

costs. It should be noted here that, within “correct” dosage amounts, there is also a great variety of possible experiences to be attained. Fadiman goes on to elaborate that *“one hundred to 200 micrograms is the dose people have used historically when they are working psychotherapeutically. If you’re working for spiritual experiences it’s double that (200 to 400 micrograms)”* (Miller, 2017 p. 64). This dosage example is particular to LSD, but it well-emphasizes the point: dosage matters. In this context, the subject should seriously consider these points. However, to someone who is new to psychedelics, this might prove to be a daunting task because of simply not being familiar with such experiences and/or not being sure of the desired purpose. This is something that an individual, ideally, must explore with a guide, or by themselves (Miller 2017, p. 64). However, Fadiman proposes that a guide can also prove beneficial in this situation, in the sense that *“giving dosage numbers over the air given how different people are, is simply not the correct service”* (Miller, 2017 p. 64). In this sense, the guide can help to explore the topic with the potential subject, trying to delineate exactly why they are interested in undergoing such experience and what their expectations are. Having clarity in this regard might help the subject to achieve the experience that they seek, and as Fadiman argues: *“psychotherapeutic inner work, where again, you need someone else with you. And if you’re going for the higher doses, a guide is an absolute necessity if you wish to discover what it is that the classical mystics are talking about”* (Miller, 2017 p. 64). In terms of the quadrants, the substance consumed has the most immediate effects in the *upper-left quadrant* (subjectivity) as well as the *upper-right quadrant* (behaviour). As already mentioned, the effects vary greatly, and at this point, combined with the correct dosage amount, should ideally be a primary concern of the subject undergoing a psychedelic experience. The role of the guide, in negotiating and determining this in cohesion with the subject, can be said to fall into the lower-left quadrant (signified by cultural and shared meaning). The individual guide would have its own considerations in terms of its own knowledge, or beliefs (a component of the *upper-left quadrant*), and the prior training and skills that they have acquired (something which would be represented by the *lower-left quadrant* and *upper-right quadrant*). It could be noted, that it would depend on the potential subject to use discernment in choosing a guide, as relating to their own personal wishes and expectations. In terms of the *lower-right quadrant*, we find, first of all, the substance which is to be consumed. Furthermore, the social system surrounding the context in which the subject consumes the substance in, could also be placed in the *lower-right quadrant*, whether it’s in a psychotherapeutic setting, or at a

retreat center. Both of these points will in turn be affected by the overarching legislation in regards to the psychedelic substances, as some (maybe all) might be illegal. The legislation surrounding psychedelic substances (*lower-right quadrant*) can have an effect on the cultural perceptions (*lower-left quadrant*), which will consecutively have an effect on the way that the subject interprets the experience (*upper-left quadrant*), as it can be seen in interview A as they proclaim “*when I crashed in 1984, I thought that it was something that caused damage to my brain because that was the myth in the 60’s, that LSD would damage your chromosomes*” (Appendix 1, p. 8). In this case, the interpretation of the experience was negatively affected by surrounding cultural attitudes, which are informed to some extent influenced by legislation (and vice-versa). The surrounding cultural attitudes can also affect the preconceptions of the individual before having the experience, as seen in Interview B when they state “*I myself, of course, also had this cultural preconception of it that it was something... Hippie.. Or something bad. You know, it’s a taboo in our society*” (Appendix 2, p.).

The fifth variable is the session itself, the mind altering experience. As mentioned earlier, the most optimal outcome is to have a beneficial learning experience, as Fadiman proclaims: “*The change is about learning - about worldview and changing the way you see things*” (Miller, 2017 p. 66). If taken under the correct circumstances, there is a significant possibility that the experience would have long lasting positive effects, even if one only takes the substance once (Griffiths et al., 2016, Doblin, 1991). The example Fadiman draws upon here is the John Hopkins psilocybin research study of healthy participants, performed by R. R. Griffiths et al. in 2011, in which it was found that fourteen months later the subjects of the study were still experiencing positive effects in terms of being “*...more open to the creative...*” and “*...more open to relationships...*” (Miller, 2017 p. 65).

In extension to this, Griffiths et al. conducted another psilocybin research study in 2017. The aimed purpose of this study was to determine if psilocybin-occasioned mystical experiences, in cooperation with meditation and other spiritual practices, could produce “*...enduring changes on well-validated trait measures such as disposition or personality...*”(Griffiths et al., 2017, p. 69) in healthy volunteers. The data revealed that the combined efforts of psilocybin doses and support, in the form of spiritual practices, such as meditation led to “*...robust interactive positive effects...after 6 months... including interpersonal closeness, gratitude, life meaning/purpose, forgiveness, death transcendence, daily spiritual experiences...*’ (Griffiths et al., 2017, p. 67). When the researchers of the John

Hopkins study analysed the findings they could determine that *“the determinants of these effects were the intensity of the psilocybin-occasioned mystical experience and the rates of engagement with meditation and other spiritual practices”* (Griffiths et al., 2017, p. 69).

The emphasis on integrating the experience is something argued by interviewee B, as they explain *“... in general I think it goes hand in hand with a form of spirituality or religious practices. But I don’t think that you absolutely should, or have to, practice yoga or meditation”* (Appendix 2, p.). The means, by which the subject that has a psychedelic experience integrates, is argued here to be up to their own personal inclinations. However, a good example could be a spiritual practice, but the point of emphasis remains: that the individual has to work with the experience. Interviewee A argues for a similarly open-ended approach to integrating the experience, in the sense that *“... that’s the way to integrate them (the experience), to be creative... That’s actually one of the best ways to integrate your experience - express them. Write a poem, or make sculptures or do something”* (Appendix 1, p. 15). Wilber argues that it is important to have a spiritual practice, as is seen emphasized in his “integral approach”. However this is on a more general level, as relating to integrating altered states of consciousness. Wilber argues that a spiritual practice is a key component in transforming a passing state of consciousness, into a new stage, at which point you will have permanent access to what was earlier a temporary state (Wilber, 2000). This is not to say that a psychedelic altered state will become permanent, but that some of the inherent attributes of the experience (increased openness, creativity, emotional capacity) will become more pervasive in a normal state of consciousness.

In terms of the quadrants themselves, the session is primarily concerned with the upper-left subjective experience, however, it could also be placed in the lower-right quadrant, as it has to take place somewhere in the physical world.

The sixth and final variable presented by Fadiman is concerned with the “Life Group: Supportive Community” (Miller, 2017). It should come as no surprise that the surrounding social atmosphere of the individual greatly influences the way they make sense of their own experience. This argument is particularly important in the context of a psychedelic experience, as if one has a good experience one would most likely want to share what was implicit in it. This is where the importance of the life group comes into play, as their attitudes are likely to affect what the individual does or says. Will the individual, that had a psychedelic experience, be met with a negative judgemental attitude or a curious open-minded attitude? Or perhaps with a hostile attitude?

If the individual is met with a hostile, or otherwise negative attitude, it could be argued that this kind of attitude will negatively affect the individual who had a psychedelic experience. In this context, the way that the individual interprets the experience can potentially be affected by surrounding attitudes, as argued earlier, with the emphasis on a guide, wherein the role of the guide is to help with positive interpretation. On the other hand, if the individual is met with an open-minded curious attitude by their life group, it might lend a hand in their own exploration of the experience by means of articulation. If we take the perspective of the quadrants, the interplay between them would quickly become apparent. The life group, and their attitudes, could be placed within the lower-left quadrant (cultural, shared meaning), and through their engagement with the individual they would potentially affect the upper-left quadrant (subjective reality) and the upper-right quadrant (behaviour) of that individual. As we are dealing with substances that are illegal (lower-right quadrant - legislation) that would affect the overarching cultural attitudes surrounding psychedelics. The effect that the life group asserts over the individual, in this context, can be equally positive or negative, depending on the dominant worldview of the life group. In the light of this, it could be argued that the individual, that had a psychedelic experience, should use discernment when engaging the outside world about their experience, as they might be met with various attitudes positive or otherwise. The individual also affects the cultural attitudes (lower-left) of the life group, and so, if the subject had a beneficial and positive psychedelic experience, that might change the way they engage that life group. This is something that can be seen in interview B, as the interviewee states *"I have shared my experiences with my circle of friends, which have led to a gradual increase in their ability to share their own feelings and experiences that was not possible before. Beforehand, people were afraid of talking about the inner world"* (Appendix 2, p. 1). It is possible that the change in attitude can, over time, change the implicit cultural attitudes of the life group. This is what interviewee B experienced, as they elaborate *"I'm completely convinced that my openness after my psychedelic experience have influenced and affected other people, to open them up and have increased interest in the inner world"* (Appendix 2, p. 1). If the change in cultural attitude becomes pervasive enough, that in turn might potentially alter the legislation (a component of the lower-right quadrant) surrounding psychedelics.

The strong emphasis on set and setting is also something that is apparent in the findings of the interviews. In order to achieve the most beneficial psychedelic experience it is very important that considerations are given to set and setting, and if these

considerations are neglected great risk can ensue, as proclaimed by interviewee A: *“the experience... I was 17 years old at that moment. It was too powerful and I was not in the right setting. There was nobody there to support me, so I actually lost consciousness”* (Appendix 1, p. 2). In this particular case, the risk that came to pass is self-evident, which is not the most beneficial scenario. It took interviewee A several years to integrate and move past this experience. Ideally, a scenario such as this is to be avoided at all costs for subjects undergoing a psychedelic experience for the first time, as it does not seem to be advantageous for their future growth and development. Interviewee A goes on to elaborate *“when it is the right way, in a proper set and setting, with mattresses, landscape, blindfold and a sitter who knew how to deal with these things, then I started a really, really systematic and long journey”* (Appendix 1, p. 3). Interviewee A began a rather lengthy and comprehensive process of integration and growth once proper consideration was given to set and setting, and this process of integration is something they consider of paramount importance, as they proclaim *“... one of the most important things when you do psychedelics is really to integrate them and transform them (the experience) into your life”* (Appendix 1, p. 3). In their perspective, there is great transformative value in psychedelics, but only if proper thought goes into the set and setting, as he goes on to emphasize *“take these substances in the right set and setting and it activates what he (Stanislav Grof, author) called the inner healer. The inner healer knows what is best for you to experience ... to become the best whole version of yourself”* (Appendix 1, p. 5). The importance of set and setting is also something seen in interview B, especially the role of a guide, as interviewee B goes on to explain *“It is very, very important. I would even go as far to say that the set and setting is as much a part of the ritual as the psychedelic substance itself”* (Appendix 2, p. 3). It could be said that if proper contemplation goes into set and setting then it would also serve to mentally, and emotionally, prepare the individual seeking to experience a psychedelic journey. One way this could be done is to perceive it as a ritual, and whatever goes into that ritual is left up to the inclinations of the individual in question. In the perspective of interviewee B this is of significance, as they explain *“I see it as very important that you see it as a ritual, that you have a certain way of doing it. I think that the experience is not very beneficial at all, if you leave out the ritual”* (Appendix 2, p. 3). The importance of ritualistic forethought is also something advocated by interviewee A, as they express *“... I think it’s a really personal thing, the way you do it (the ritual). The important thing is that you do it. If it’s making yoga 30 minutes a day, then do that. If you work with your dreams, then do that”*

(Appendix 1, p. 13). What is important here is not what is implicit in the particular ritual, but that the sequence of actions implicit in it is meaningful to the individual in question, whether that be journaling, listening to classical music or going for a long walk in nature. The experience itself can be very intense, so mental and emotional preparation is paramount if one intends to have a positive result.

The Good Friday Experiment

Now, a short, but adequate, rundown of the original *Good Friday Experiment* will be presented. Followingly, the content and findings of the long-term follow-up study and methodological critique of the original *Good Friday Experiment*, as provided by Rick Doblin, will be presented (Doblin, 1991). By doing this, we seek to gain valuable insights and draw relevant parallels to the findings resulting from the three distinct interviews that we conducted.

The original *Good Friday Experiment*, also known as the *Marsh Chapel Experiment*, was an experiment designed and conducted by Walter N. Pahnke (a student of theology at Harvard Divinity School at the time) under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Timothy Leary and the Harvard Psilocybin Project (Pahnke, 1966). The experiment, which took place on the holiday 'Good Friday', 1962, sought to investigate the entheogenic properties of Psilocybin, the psychedelic compound found in Psilocybin Mushrooms (Magic Mushrooms) (Pahnke, 1996). The experiment was based on Pahnke's hypothesis that psychedelic substances, in this instance psilocybin, had the capacity to facilitate what is referred to as 'mystical' experiences in individuals, who had a pre-existing inclination towards religiosity, were the substance to be administered in a religious setting. On top of this, he also hypothesized that such an experience would lead to permanent positive changes in both attitudes and behavior (Doblin, 1991).

Twenty male graduate students of theology participated as volunteers in the original experiment. The volunteers were randomly divided into two distinct groups. As part of the process of the double-blind study, half of the groups had the active psychedelic compound Psilocybin administered in the form of a capsule containing 30mg of the substance, whereas the remaining half received an active placebo (Doblin, 1991, p. 3). The ingestion of the two distinct substances took place during a Christian church service at the Marsh Chapel in Boston. The groups were subdivided into five groups of four, wherein two research assistants were assigned to each group. These research assistants were present as to

provide emotional support to the volunteers during their psychedelic experiment (Doblin, 1991, p. 4). As a result of the experiment, Pahnke conclusively determined that “...*the persons who received psilocybin experienced to a greater extent than did the controls the phenomena described by our typology of mysticism*” (Pahnke, 1963, p. 220).

Pahnke explicitly developed and designed an eight-category typology of mystical experiences for the experiment. As mentioned in Doblin’s follow-up study, several methods were used to numerically rank the descriptions of the psychedelic experience in terms of this typology. Each of the subjects that participated in the experiment were interviewed on three separate occasions, one interview immediately after the service, one several days after and the last interview was conducted six month after the service (Doblin, 1991). In addition to this, two separate questionnaires were administered to the subjects, the first one being a 147-item questionnaire administered to the subjects a few days after the service and the last one being a 100-item questionnaire administered six months after the service. Consequently, each of the subjects’ responses were followingly transformed into three distinct numerical scores, a score that averaged the percentage of the highest score in each of the eight categories (Doblin, 1991, p. 3).

Pahnke designed the questionnaire that was utilized in order to measure the instance of a mystical experience based on eight distinct categories. These categories, as mentioned in the Doblin’s paper, consisted of (Doblin, 1991, p. 3):

Sense of Unity (Internal and External)
Transcendence of Time and Space
Sense of Sacredness
Sense of Objective Reality
Deeply Felt Positive Mood
Ineffability
Paradoxicality
Transiency

Now, to move on to the discussions and findings present in the follow-up study conducted by Rick Doblin in 1991. As part of his long-term follow up study and

methodological critique of Pahnke's Good Friday Experiment, twenty-four to twenty-seven years after the original experiment, Doblin managed to establish contact to seventeen out of the twenty volunteers. The aim of this contact was to conduct long-term follow-up interviews, based on the Pahnke's original interviews and questionnaires. The findings of the long-term follow up interviews and questionnaires were combined with the original findings and followingly transformed into and presented as a cohesive numerical table, as can be seen here (Doblin, 1991, p. 11):

TABLE I
"GOOD FRIDAY EXPERIMENT" EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS
AT Six-MONTH AND LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP,
SHOWN AS PERCENTAGES OF MAXIMUM POSSIBLE SCORES

CATEGORY	EXPERIMENTALS		CONTROLS	
	Six-Month	Long-Term	Six-Month	Long-Term
1. Unity A. Internal	60	(77)	5	(5)
B. External	39	(51)	1	(6)
2. Transcendence of Time and Space	78	(73)	7	(9)
3. Deeply Felt Positive Mood	54	(56)	23	(21)
4. Sacredness	58	(68)	25	(29)
5. Objectivity and Reality	71	(82)	18	(24)
6. Paradoxicality	34	(48)	3	(4)
7. Alleged Ineffability	77	(71)	15	(3)
8. Transiency	76	(75)	9	(9)
Average for the Categories	60.8	(66.8)	11.8	(12.2)
9. Persisting Positive Changes in Attitude and Behavior	48	(50)	15	(15)
10. Persisting Negative Changes in Attitude and Behavior	6	(6)	2	(4)

At Six-Month Follow-up, Exper. N=10, Control = 10
Long-Term Follow-Up (In Parenthesis) Exper, N=7, Control N=9
p<.05 for all category comparisons at both six-months and long-term

Pahnke's "Good Friday Experiment" 11

This table is immensely interesting in relation to our research question as it shows a clear correlation between what can be described as a ritualization of the psychedelic session and what, based on the data, appear to be virtually permanent positive changes in behavior and attitude. Followingly, it appear to be in agreement with the recommendations made by both Interviewee A and Interviewee B. That is, that psychedelic substances (at least psilocybin) in combination with positive suggestion and supportive environment (what we refer to as *Set and Setting*) is capable, and perhaps necessary, in order to maximize the likelihood of a successful psychedelic experience.

Using the terminology of both these studies, a successful psychedelic experience can be categorized as a psychedelic session, wherein the substance in combination with positive

suggestion (*Set and Setting*) facilitated what is referred to as a 'mystical' experience. This is based on the findings of both this specific study, but also other studies such as John Hopkins' Psilocybin research study (Griffiths et al., 2016), wherein it was determined that the occurrence of a 'mystical' experience during the psychedelic session was paramount in order to successfully predict "...long-term positive changes in attitudes, mood, behavior and spirituality." (Griffiths et al., 2016, p. 1195). What this suggests is that one does not only just have to consume the psychedelic substance(s), and undergo the experience of the related specific altered state of consciousness, in order to enjoy the long-term benefits. In fact, it appears that in order to predict or ensure a functional outcome (a long-term valuable experience), one has to have a certain kind of experience, that is, a mystical experience. Of course, the question that is of particular interest to us is how does one maximize the likelihood of a 'mystical' experience?

It is to be noted that as part of his methodological critique of the design of the original experiment, several shortcomings were identified such as an imprecision of several of the questionnaires' questions, and the failure of the double-blind aspect of the experiment itself (Doblin, 1991, p. 23). However, as part of his discussion on the totality of the design and findings of the original experiment he notes: "*Despite the methodological shortcomings of the unavoidable failure of the double-blind and the use of several imprecise questions in the questionnaire...the experiment's fascinating and provocative conclusions strongly support...that psychedelic drugs can help facilitate mystical experiences when used by religiously inclined people in a religious setting.*"(Doblin, 1991, p. 23). Moreover, as Doblin also mentions "*(the original experiment) also supports the hypothesis that those psilocybin subjects who experienced a full or a partial mystical experience would, after six months, report a substantial amount of positive, and virtually no negative, persisting changes in attitude and behavior*"(Doblin, 1991. p. 23).

The findings of the *Good Friday Experiment* is very telling and informative, however, it naturally has its limits. As the premise of the experiment is to investigate the effects of psychedelic substances on religiously inclined people in a religious setting, it arguably only says something general about those exact circumstances. The experiment confirmed its hypothesis, but it did not show us whether it was possible to have that same positive and impactful experience, were the subjects to not be religiously inclined, or were the psychedelic session to take place irregardless of preparation and context. As mentioned by Doblin: "*Pahnke did not set out to investigate whether psilocybin was able to produce*

mystical experiences irrespective of preparation and context.”(Doblin, 1991, p. 7). However, evidence gathered as part of the long-term follow up study did provide some anecdotal evidence for the possibility of the occurrence of a mystical experience in a non-suggestive environment. This is evident in the description of one of Rick Doblin’s interview with one of the original Good Friday experiment participants. Here Placebo Subject L. G describes, after having participated in a separate experiment conducted by Pahnke, his experience after he was administered psilocybin in a hospital setting: *“It was rather removed from the religious context. Certainly the environment we were in had no particular religious symbols.(...)there was no context really to suggest a particular experience like there might have been with the Good Friday experiment.(...)I think that you can certainly have a religious experience without the religious symbols. Certainly the religious symbols can lead you to a mystical experience. Unfortunately, they can also be divisive.”*(Doblin, 1991, p. 20). This is evidence, albeit minor, that perhaps it is not absolutely necessary for the environment to be highly supportive and suggestive, but rather it is massively preferable.

Understanding and interpreting these findings from the perspective of the Quadrant model, it is clear that, as we have argued for throughout the paper, taking into account aspects of all of the four quadrants (as suggestion appear to include aspects of every quadrant) is paramount to a transformative psychedelic session. The study supports the emphasis, which is also shared by our interviewees, that the set and setting (which essentially includes all of the four quadrants, as we have argued for) is immensely important. The experiment and the follow-up study themselves are based, as mentioned earlier, on volunteers who were religiously inclined. Therefore, the explicit results are limited in their applicability to individuals who themselves are religiously inclined. However, the research data, in the form of the analysis of the three interviews presented earlier, present an argument that supports a more general applicability. As mentioned by Interviewee B *“...I think that these things affect you whether you’re religious, spiritual or not. I think that this positive environment... these rituals, whether your religious or not, I don’t think you can be unaffected by the ritual.”*(Appendix 2, p. 7). Interestingly, this appears to be a general notion in the psychedelic research community, which is evident in the way that psychedelic research studies tend to be designed. In a large majority of the recent studies on psychedelic substances, the general scientific procedure or study design has been to administer the psychedelic substance to people, healthy or otherwise, in

positive, safe and comfortable setting. As reported in one of Roland R. Griffiths Psilocybin studies conducted in 2011: *"During the session, participants were encouraged to lie down on a couch, use an eye mask to block external visual distraction, wear headphones through which a music program was played, and focus their attention on their inner experiences."*(Griffiths et al., 2011). Building on the evidence and arguments present in the analysis of both the three interviews, as well as the two distinct pieces of literature, this appear to be a sensible approach.

On another note, the study also shows, that despite the essentiality of the inclusion of aspects of each of the four quadrants to a successful outcome, some aspects are more inconsequential than others. In the analysis of the interviews, we argued that, based on the research data, negative cultural perceptions in regards to psychedelic substances and drug-induced experiences (lower-left) appear to have a noticeable effect on the subjects' own perception of such (upper-left). This, as expressed by interviewee A and C, is due to the status of psychedelic substances as illegal drugs and, in addition, a social taboo limits the individual's ability to properly integrate the experience, as a result of an inability to openly express and discuss the experience.

However, findings from Doblin's long-term follow up study cast doubt on this assumption. Doblin remarks: *"The overwhelmingly positive nature of the reports of the psilocybin subjects are even more remarkable because this long-term follow-up took place during a period of time in the United States when drug abuse was becoming the public's number-one social concern, with all the attendant social pressure to deny the value of drug-induced experiences."*(Doblin, 1991, p. 23). Now, several things could account for this discrepancy. The study does not inform us about the specifics of the subjects' immediate life group. And as mentioned by James Fadiman, the immediate life group is of significant importance in successfully integrating the experience (Miller, 2017). The life group of the Good Friday experiment participants, and in particular of those who had the actual psilocybin-occasioned experience, is unknown to us, and might possibly have been non-judgmental and open to freely talk about the subjects' experiences. One can even speculate and argue that this is quite likely, as the act of participation in such a, at that time, controversial experiment, reflects an acceptance of the immediate life group of the subjects themselves. Of course, the opposite might also indeed be the case. Nevertheless, it showcases the immense personal value that a psychedelic-occasioned mystical experience

can have to the individual, despite of its external environment. However, equally so, one can also suspect and argue that a positive external environment would greatly enhance the integration process.

Conclusion of the analysis

The following concluding notes are intended to give a brief summary and critique of the findings of the research. Taken together, the results of this study suggest the relevance of numerous factors that are advised to take into consideration when undertaking a psychedelic journey. The evidence from the three subjects indicates multiple identical approaches when aiming for a beneficial outcome. One of these aspects - that was mentioned by all interviewees - is the importance of creating the optimal *set and setting* in accordance to the subjective preferences of each subject.

Looking at the qualitative evidence of this project from the perspective of Ken Wilber's Integral Theory supports the suggestion that psychedelic substances have a tendency to contribute to emotional changes, such as deepened and improved personal relationships. The intercorrelation amongst the results obtained from Interview A, B and C, indicates an overall openness to previously unknown perspectives and awareness of social constraints. The cases of this project support the idea that the current legal status of psychedelic substances has an effect on the psychedelic experience itself. Furthermore, the data from the three interviews indicates that the legal status influenced the social stigma, which therefore impacted the integration process of the experience.

The analysis of the evidence undertaken throughout the research has extended our knowledge of the optimal ways of inducing psychedelic substances in the purpose of self-development.

Limitations

A number of important limitations need to be addressed, as the findings presented in this project are subject to at least three limitations. First, the scope of the research has mostly been restricted to limited comparisons of the findings, derived from three qualitative interviews. Even though these interviews provide a valuable insight into positive transformational patterns that have been instigated by a psychedelic experience, they do not incorporate enough contradicting and overlapping evidence to reveal a definite conclusion. In addition, the limited number of interviews demonstrates cases with similar qualities in regards to the positionality of the subjects to psychedelic substances. The choice of the type of subjects was made in such ways, due to the limited focal point of the research, which is exclusively centered around the topic of using psychedelic substances for self-development purposes. An additional factor affecting this decision was the will to thoroughly delve into each case with the intention of better revealing its complexities. It has to be noted that due to practical constraints, it is beyond the scope of this study to present a full discussion on the recreational or medicinal use of psychedelic substances.

Another potential limitation that can influence the outcome of the research paper, can be rooted in our own researcher biases. We all believe that psychedelic substances carry such potentials that mankind can vastly benefit from, on both cultural and personal levels. Even though we intended to maintain an impartial position throughout the research paper, the subjects of the interviews had prior knowledge of our positionality on the given topic. Therefore, we are aware of the possible degree of research bias that might affect the result of the interviews. However, we intend to minimize the chance of respondent bias by considering several factors. First is by formulating interview questions in such manner that they do not imply a specific answer, as well as ensuring a comfortable space to share opinions without constraints. It also has to be noted that we lack experience in conducting interviews, therefore we chose research subjects that we know, in order to prevent the influence of respondent biases on the outcome of the interview.

Despite the previously mentioned reasons and the fact that the project does not aim to offer a universal truth, nor intends to solidify the knowledge as being valid for all individuals, we believe that it demonstrates valuable subjective experiences placed in a

theoretical framework, that can contribute to a better understanding of the optimal ways of undergoing a psychedelic experience for the aimed purpose of self-development.

Discussion of the research findings

This chapter will feature a discussion of the overall findings of the project in relation to our research question. First of all, an attempt to interpret the findings of the analysis, by delineating the different elements that became apparent through interview A, B and C, as well as the two supplementing literary texts, will be presented. Following this, an elaboration, as to why these findings should be considered relevant, and moreover, important in the contemporary society, will be discussed. After the presentation of the relevant and significant implications of the findings of the paper, the focus will be put on the limitations that are implicit in the paper. As a conclusion to the discussion, several recommendations, as to what relevant practical actions or research studies should follow, will be presented and elaborated on.

Now, what sort of solution or answer can one gain from interpreting the results of the qualitative research data? What, in fact, do the results mean?

For the purpose of the analysis, the spiral model presented in Spiral Dynamics was utilized in order to assist in the outlining of the values implicit and found in the world view of each of the interviewees. This was done in order to allow for a characterization of the different elements contained in each of the interviewee's world view followed by a personal elaboration on how these views had changed over time. This would allow for the establishment of relatively clear process of growth. The mediating factor in this process of personal growth was, as shown, a psychedelic experience and the associated lasting effects it had on the subjects.

After having explored how a successful psychedelic experience can provide the individual with adequate and sufficient personal meaning to instigate persisting positive changes in mood, values, attitude and behavior, or in other words, personal growth, via the analysis of the qualitative research data, several interesting and valuable insights were gained.

The individual interviews and, in addition to this, the supplementary literary texts provide several significant insightful elements concerning the nature of the process of personal growth. To speak to this, a significant amount of evidence found as a result of the analysis suggests that a successful psychedelic experience can increase mental and emotional awareness of implicit attitudes present in the individual, which can in turn increase the individual's ability to self-reflect. As a clear example of this, Interviewee A, as a results of an improved ability to self-reflect, was led to critically review their own view on the world. This was followed by the unfolding of a relatively clear process of mental expansion. What this suggests is a clear advancement or development of the individual's personal values, which were consequently delineated using the model of developmental stages offered by Spiral Dynamics.

Integral Theory, and The Quadrant Model specifically, was utilized as to provide and add an extra layer of depth to the analysis in order to to further explore and define the process of growth experienced by the interviewees. What resulted from this investigation was an affirmation of the deep-seated interconnection and interdependence present between each of the four quadrants contained in The Quadrant Model. This should be understood in the sense that change in one quadrant creates a ripple effect that eventually leads to change in each of the other quadrants. This way, a change occurring on the level of the *individual interior*, in the form of emotional or perceptual changes, eventually leads to change on the level of the *individual exterior*. This behavioural change in turn leads to an alteration of the individual's approach to the external world. It is argued that this change in the approach to the external world, followingly, can change the cultural attitudes existent in the life group of the individual, possibly resulting in an alteration or shift in the *individual interior* of the people that constitute this life group. Each of these people themselves exist in different life groups, and so, a kind of butterfly-effect is achieved, permeating change in larger and larger groups of people. It is thus argued that, if the initial change on the level of the *individual interior* is pervasive enough, it contains the potential to change even social systems present in society at large, and of course, all this works vice-versa.

To elaborate, more specifically, on the significant insights gained as a result of the analysis, this paper identifies several essential elements to how psychedelic substances instigate personal growth.

The first element, also mentioned earlier, is the capacity of psychedelic substances to produce beneficial, but temporary, altered states of consciousness. They are beneficial, in

the sense that they enable the individual to undertake a process of profound self-reflection, normally not available under ordinary states of consciousness. The impactfulness of this experience is what potentially results in an attitude of increased self-reflectivity in regards to one's personal beliefs, something that is essential to the entire process of personal development. To further elaborate on this, evidence found in the analysis suggests that a certain type of experience or state of consciousness is required in order to determine the lasting changes in personal attitude, behaviour and values. This experience or state of consciousness is referred to as a *peak experience* or using the terminology present in a majority of psychedelic studies: a *mystical* experience (Griffiths et al., 2016). This is the type of subjective experience comprised of significant and substantial personal meaning, and often characterized by, but not limited to, an all-encompassing sense of self, a transcendence of time and space, a sense of ineffability and a sense of divine revelation. It is the occurrence of this type of experience that appears to determine what we refer to as personal growth or development.

The second essential element identified in the paper is the significance of *set and setting* on the successful and positive outcome of a psychedelic session. As elaborated on in the analysis of the James Fadiman text and in other sections of the paper, *Set and Setting* is essentially a term used to refer to the many-faceted contexts, wherein a psychedelic session takes place. What was discovered, as a result of the analysis, was that thorough preparation and careful curation in regards to an appropriate *Set and Setting* plays a paramount role in determining a positive and personally valuable psychedelic session. As shown in the analysis, this is naturally due to how each quadrant of The Quadrant Model is interdependent and how they influence each other, and is something that should be emphasized, as it provides the ground for what kind of considerations one should make when engaging in a psychedelic session. As a result of the analysis of the interviews and the supplementary literature, six determining variables were identified as constituents of an appropriate *Set and Setting*.

The first variable is defined as the *Mental Set* (another name for the individual's mindset). This refers to the mental attitude, the underlying motivations and expectations of the individuals, and thus also naturally includes the related mental and emotional preparation for the experience.

The second variable is the *Physical Setting*. Implicit in this variable are considerations concerning whether the physical surroundings are serene, safe, supportive and comfortable.

Included in the physical setting are things, such as provisions, music and any other external inputs that might conceivably affect the experience.

The third variable is defined as the *Guide*. What is referred to here is the recommended and preferred presence of a person, who adopts the role of the guide. That is, a person who is solely there to offer experiential guidance and emotional support. Preferably, this person maintains a passive role during the session and only provides the direct support if deemed necessary. Usually, the presence of a trusted and supportive guide is sufficient to allow for a successful and positive experience.

The fourth variable is the substance itself. In relation to this, the results from the analysis suggests that choosing the appropriate and fitting substance is important, as the effects induced by different psychedelic substances vary greatly. Moreover, figuring out the desired dosage is also massively important as too small of a dose can result in the intensity and profundity of the experience being too inadequate to lead to lasting change. On the other hand, too large of a dose can destabilize the experience as the sensory and mental input can be overwhelming and too much to handle during the session, and thus, the otherwise beneficiary personal insights become too diluted, making the post-experience integration troublesome.

The fifth variable is defined as the *Session* itself. This is to be understood as the entirety of the psychedelic session. One is to consider what the session consists of, that is, what is one going to be doing during the duration of the trip? Will there be a change of scenery? Will certain practices be performed? These are more or less considerations related to the practical planning of the psychedelic session. However, this is equally important and non-trivial as whatever you do throughout the trip has a tremendous effect on the experience itself.

The sixth, and final, variable identified, as a result of the analysis, is the notion of the life group. Present in this concept is the immediate and relevant social group(s) that the individual in question is actively engaged with and participates in on a general basis. This includes the individual's family, friends, co-workers and other social groups that one is quite actively participating in, and followingly influences and/or is influenced by. The findings of the analysis showcased the importance of having a positive and supportive life group, and corresponded an acceptant and supportive life group with the highest probability for a successful integration process. The argument here is that a supportive and acceptant life group allows the individual to express, discuss and interpret his or her psychedelic

experience the most freely, and thus, the valuable insights themselves are accepted and more easily implemented rather than denied, dismissed or repressed.

The third essential element is the notion of *Integration*. Integration is a term used to encompass all aspects related to the implementation of the valuable insights facilitated by the psychedelic experience into one's sense of self and identity. This process of transition is expanded upon by Ken Wilber in his explanation of the difference between states of consciousness and stages of development. Here, one is to understand psychedelic substances as temporarily inducing altered states of consciousness that can facilitate a key transformative experience (also referred to as a '*mystical*' experience). Due to the limited duration of these states of consciousness, and in turn, the transformative experience, one has to integrate it in order to move from a temporary state of consciousness to a permanent stage of development. In extension to this, the findings of the analysis offered several insights as to how one should approach this process of integration. For example, Interviewee A and B both recommended and promoted the notion of adopting some sort of spiritual practice or discipline, be it meditation, yoga or mindfulness, as being essential. This recommendation is also expressed by Ken Wilber, in his description of the transformative power of higher-state training. The argument here is that by utilizing various so-called state practices, that is, practices or disciplines that allow one to enter higher *states of consciousness*, such as meditation, one is able to accelerate the process of growth through *stages of development* (Wilber, 2006). Most importantly, the significant determining factor of this relationship was also suggested by one of the scientific studies referred to in part of the analysis (Griffiths et al., 2018). The recognition and understanding of just how interdependent the four essential aspects of any given phenomena are, and in the context of this paper; the psychedelic experience, is the key to addressing and providing an adequate answer to the research question.

The analysis of Rick Doblin's long-term follow-up study and methodological critique of the original *Good Friday Experiment* was presented as to draw parallels and put the findings of the interviews into perspective. The focus of the original study, at least in many of its aspects, is deeply relevant to the stated aim of this paper. The study discussed the correlation between the combined efforts of psychedelic substances (psilocybin) and positive suggestion, and sustained and persisting positive changes to mood, attitude and behaviour. As thus, several informative and worthwhile insights were gained by the analysis

of the findings of this study. The most relevant and significant findings were that positive suggestion (*Set and Setting* that promotes a certain type of experience), in this case - a religious setting - played a huge role in the facilitation of a religious experience (mystical experience) in people who were religiously inclined, or in other words, people who were susceptible to religious symbolism or feelings.

This is of particular interest, first of all, as it provides evidence that suggests that a psychedelic session that managed to facilitate a mystical experience in individuals, provided said individuals with persisting positive changes in various aspects such as mood, behaviour and attitude, up to over 25 years after the *Good Friday Experiment*.

Second of all, it provides evidence to suggest that positive suggestion, in the form of careful considerations in regards to the six variables of *Set and Setting* mentioned earlier, can reliably facilitate mystical experiences in susceptible individuals. To create a parallel to the aim of the project, one can perhaps successfully argue that the *Set and Setting* can be changed to accommodate the specifics of any desired goal. The findings of Interview B suggest that one does not have to be spiritually or religiously inclined in order to enjoy the benefits of a ritualized session. The term ritualization is used to avoid religious connotations and imagery, and in this context, is used to refer to a form of *Set and Setting* that promotes self-exploration, and helps prepare the individual for experiences of profound personal meaning. This is as opposed to a recreational *Set and Setting*.

Moreover, the study also had provided evidence that contrasted some of the findings in the analysis of the interviews. For example, the findings of the interviews suggested that a supportive life group, and a general positive cultural perception of psychedelic substances, are essential to a successful integration process. However, this suggestion should be met with relative skepticism, as the overwhelmingly positive results of the *Good Friday Experiment*, that was conducted during a time of extreme cultural division in regards to the value of psychedelic substances, show with some certainty, that this is not necessarily the case.

Additionally, the study also provided limited evidence to suggest that a person who is religiously inclined can have a religious experience (mystical experience) without the physical setting actively suggesting and promoting a certain type of experience. This is interesting to the extent that it offers a more nuanced understanding of the subject at hand, in that appropriate preparation, positive and supportive *Set and Setting* and a supportive life

group is massively preferable, but not definitively and absolutely necessary to the process of using psychedelic substances as tools for personal development.

Thus, what the results of the analysis of the interviews and the supplementing literary texts in general showcase, is the significant impact that different aspects of each quadrant can have on the psychedelic experience itself. Thus, these results make up the foundation for ability of the paper to offer a comprehensive and unifying framework as to how one may best engage in the consumption of psychedelic substances for the purpose of personal growth. In light of this, what then are the implications of the results, and why do they matter?

General Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to explore from the perspective of Integral Theory and the Quadrant Model, through means of analysis of qualitative research data, such as individual interviews and relevant literary texts - how one might most optimally utilize psychedelic substances as tools for personal development, psychological development or otherwise. This was achieved, to a certain extent, by merit of a thorough analysis of several individual interviews supplemented by two pieces of relevant literary texts.

The premise of this paper has been that literature, related to the usage of psychedelic substances for the purpose of personal development, offers no fully comprehensive framework that unites the many seemingly separate and disconnected perspectives present in this specific field of study. What the findings and results of this paper offer is a broader and more cohesive understanding of these otherwise separate perspectives. By understanding the multitude of different perspectives, and angles presented in the literature, scientific papers or otherwise, through the lenses offered by Ken Wilber's Quadrant Model, a more nuanced and comprehensive image starts to form. Implicit in this new image is an emphasis on the interdependence and interrelatedness of seemingly disconnected perspectives.

It has become clear that one cannot confidently confine and limit one's considerations and understandings to a single perspective or a single quadrant. By

understanding the phenomenon in question as composed of four essential complementary perspectives, rather than as several conflicting perspectives, one is optimally equipped to maximize the likelihood of a successful and beneficial psychedelic experience. In essence, this paper expands on the relatively confined and rigid notion of *Set and Setting*. By applying The Quadrant Model, this paper offers a deepened understanding of the considerations underlying the importance of *Set and Setting*. It does this by providing a detailed integral overview as to why each variable of *Set and Setting* is significant and how they interact internally. Moreover, the paper also provides a framework that positions the process of integration of the psychedelic experience as essential to personal development, and offers several reasons as to why, as well as recommendations as to how this is best achieved.

The more significant findings to emerge from this research project are the following:

- 1) an acknowledgement of the interrelatedness and interdependence of each of the four quadrants (all of the quadrants greatly influence each other). This acknowledgement leads to:

- 2) the paramount importance of a ritualized *Set and Setting*, that is, a set and setting that takes each of the six variables presented in the analysis, as well as the considerations underlying these variables into account (the interplay between quadrants and how that affects the subjective experience).

- 3) The importance of the integration process. Implicit in this are three essential things. The first one features the adequate knowledge of the relevant literature (as to offer interpretative frameworks). Second is the adoption of a form of state-practice, in order to accelerate and ease the transitional process from temporary states of consciousness to a permanent stage of development. Third, and functioning as a huge advantage, is a supportive and accepting life group.

The present study confirms previous findings and contributes with additional evidence that suggests positive potentials of psychedelic substances. Although, the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the analysis of the evidences undertaken throughout the research has extended our knowledge of the optimal ways of inducing psychedelic substances. Thus, this work contributes to the existing knowledge about psychedelics by providing an integral framework on the possible optimal ways of inducing the substance with the purpose to achieve a degree of personal development.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this chapter, an overview of various possible avenues for further research is presented. As the scope of the project is limited, we are able to propose several areas in which it would be beneficial to explore the topic further.

Firstly, future studies that dive deeper into how the ritualization of the psychedelic session might still prove to be beneficial for people who are not religiously or spiritually inclined, are recommended. Our interviewees had some amount of spiritual interests prior to, or resulting from, the psychedelic experience, and the subjects of the study we drew upon all had religious inclinations. And thus, studies that showcase the effect of a ritualized psychedelic session on people who are not already susceptible to that kind of setting would be immensely interesting. The purpose of these studies would be to figure out if a ritualized psychedelic session has the same effect on people regardless of their inclinations, something that the interviews and supplementary literature could not definitively show.

Another possible avenue for research is how people that have had a negative psychedelic experience deal with, and possibly overcome, this negative or troublesome outcome. This would provide contrast to our project, as the implicit assumption of the project is that a positive experience can provide the subject with meaningful personal growth.

As the context of our project only covers psychedelics in relation to self-development, therefore, further research could go into how to best apply them for contexts that are not related to personal growth. One possible area here could be the usage of psychedelic substances in medical or recreational contexts. This could expand the integral framework, through which one engages psychedelics.

Lastly, studies similar in nature to this project, albeit with larger sample of interviews and sources, could improve and widen the scope of the framework offered in this project. Such studies could form a more reliable framework in its accuracy, through which to explore the topic across cultural attitudes, and other demographics, in order to provide a more comprehensive overview.

This research done as part of this project has triggered many questions in need of further investigation. It has shed light upon the mere fact that more research is needed to better understand optimal ways of applying psychedelic substances in accordance to subjective preferences. Further experimental investigations are recommended to be undertaken in order to estimate this optimal approach in a more nuanced manner.

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