

Society for the
Anthropology of Consciousness

*Expressions
of
Consciousness*

Program for the 25th
Annual Spring Conference

Amherst, Massachusetts
April 13-17, 2005

The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (SAC) is an interdisciplinary organization of academically-oriented professionals, students, and applied practitioners interested in consciousness research.

It seeks to provide a forum for the exploration of consciousness from cross-cultural, theoretical, and experiential perspectives. A section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), SAC issues the publication *Anthropology of Consciousness (AoC)*, holds an annual Spring Meeting, and hosts sessions at the Annual Meetings of the AAA.

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WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

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|-------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1:00 | EXPERIENTIAL EVENT – (Open to the Public)
RAM MEDITATION AND THE MOVEMENT OF
DANCE: VOICING THE LOVE OF PEACE | Rev. Iris Rivera-Diaz |
| 2:00 - 6:00 | Registration | |
| 7:00 - 9:00 | FILM: TBA | |

THURSDAY MORNING

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|---------------|--|----------------|
| 8:30 – 9:30 | Registration

EMOTIONAL CRISIS AS SPIRITUAL GROWTH:
PATHOLOGIES OR POSSIBILITIES?
SESSION CHAIR: MICHAEL WINKELMAN | |
| 9:30 - 9:55 | "MAYBE I'M CRAZY": WHY AND HOW "NEAR-DEATH
EXPERIENCE (NDE) SURVIVOR-" INFORMANTS
PROBLEMATIZE THE "CLINICAL NDE" LABEL | Suzanne Gordon |
| 9:55 - 10:20 | A PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE
EXPERIENCE OF COLLEGE-AGE WOMEN WITH
BULIMIA NERVOSA IN A MINDFULNESS-BASED
EATING DISORDER TREATMENT GROUP | Kathryn Proulx |
| 10:20 - 10:45 | SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY: TRANSIENT PSYCHOSIS AS
PERSONAL GROWTH | Sara Lewis |
| 10:45 - 11:10 | UNDERSTANDING THE SPLINTERED MIND | Ralph Allison |
| 11:10 - 11:30 | Discussion | |
| 11:30 – 1:30 | Lunch | |

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

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|-------------|--|-----------------|
| | INFORMATION, IMAGES AND ART IN THE
SYMBOLIC ARTICULATIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
SESSION CHAIR: TBA | |
| 1:30 - 1:55 | ARCHETYPAL ORIGINS OF SEMINAL RELIGIOUS
ART SYMBOLS, METAPHORS AND ICONS | Bud Hampton |
| 1:55 - 2:20 | RECURRING SYMBOLS IN CENTERS OF TRADE
AND TRADE SANCTUARIES | George Williams |

2:20 - 2:45	SPIRIT & INFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY HAUDENOSAUNEE ART	Neal Keating
2:45 - 3:00	Discussion	
3:00 - 3:10	Break	
3:10 - 3:35	INSCRIBING A 'COSMOLOGICAL RESPONSE' THROUGH THE MATERIAL ENCODING OF AN EGYPTIAN SACRED SCIENCE: Templar <i>Symbolique</i> in Medieval Southern France	Enoch Page and Quentin Lewis
3:35 - 4:35	A DEFINITION OF CONSCIOUSNESS: EXPLAINING THE SOURCE OF IMAGES, SYMBOLS, BELIEFS, AND ACTIVITIES IN DIVERSE CULTURES	Allan Wesler

THURSDAY EVENING

7:00 - 9:00	LIMINAL LECTURE: FORBIDDEN ARCHAEOLOGY: A THREE-BODY INTERACTION AMONG SCIENCE, HINDUISM, AND CHRISTIANITY (Open to the Public)	Michael Cremo Interlocutors: Michael Winkelman & Martin Wobst
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LIMINAL LECTURE SERIES

The Liminal Lecture Series is intended to provide a critical forum for ideas that lie outside of the current anthropological mainstream but which have received some degree of exposure, particularly to a public that has not been trained in the history, methodology, and theories of the discipline.

Because we hold a responsibility to communicate anthropological knowledge to the public, the Liminal Lectures will follow a format that will allow for the presentation of these ideas together with responses from interlocutors from within the field of anthropology. It is our intention that the resulting dialogue between the speaker and others will provide a better understanding of both the ideas presented and the reasons why they have been accorded their liminal status. We also recognize that the ideas that are generally accepted in anthropology today will inevitably give way to the new ideas of tomorrow, and that the ideas presented in a Liminal Lecture may provoke a reconsideration of our own ways of thinking.

In issuing an invitation for a Liminal Lecture, the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness does not imply that it is endorsing any of the ideas that may be presented. Rather, the Liminal Lecture Series is an expression of the Society's strong commitment to the free, open, and critical discussion of ideas.

FRIDAY MORNING

8:30 – 9:30 **Registration**

SOME THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS SESSION CHAIR: TBA

9:30 - 9:55	EVOLUTION, CONSCIOUSNESS, EXPERIENCE, AND PLACE ATTACHMENT	Derek Brereton
9:55 - 10:20	THE DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENCE	James Clement van Pelt
10:20 - 10:45	SHAMANISM'S TABOOS, THE EASTER BUNNY, AND REALITY	Mark Schroll
10:45 - 11:10	PARADIGMS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS: A BIOGENETIC STRUCTURALIST AND NEUROPHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH	Michael Winkelman
11:10 - 11:30	Discussion	
11:30 – 1:30	Lunch	

SAC Executive Board Meeting

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

ENGAGING ETHNOGRAPHIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS SESSION CHAIR: DIANE HARDGRAVE

1:30 - 1:55	THE WITCH AS SELF IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND	Elwyn Lapoint
1:55 - 2:20	ANECDOTAL PORTRAYALS OF SELVES, VIRTUES AND VICE AMONG MUINANE PEOPLE OF THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON	Carlos David Londono Sulkin
2:20 - 2:45	KEYS TO THE KINGDOM: ECSTATIC RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND LANDSCAPE IN APPALACHIA	Samuel Avery-Quinn
2:45 - 3:00	Discussion	
3:00 - 3:10	Break	

3:10 - 3:35	THE BLOOD OF THE GODDESS: MENSTRUAL SECLUSION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTH ASIA	Julia Jean and Frédérique Apffel-Marglin
3:35 - 4:35	JINN POSSESSION IN THE SWAHILI THERAPEUTIC RITUAL AND ITS ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	Caleb Chul-Soo Kim

FRIDAY EVENING

7:00 - 9:00	KEYNOTE LECTURE	Jacques Mabit
	AYAHUASCA, MEMORY AND CONSCIOUSNESS: NEW APPLICATIONS OF AN INDIGENOUS ANCESTRAL PRACTICE	
	(Open to the Public)	

SATURDAY MORNING

8:30 - 9:30	Registration	
	SHAMANISM, BREATH, AND REVERIE: SEVERAL EMBODIED TECHNOLOGIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS SESSION CHAIR: LOURDES GIORDANI	
9:30 - 9:55	THE ADOPTION OF SHAMANIC HEALING INTO WESTERN MEDICINE	Lori Thayer
9:55 - 10:20	IN THE STATE OF THETA	Diane Hardgrave
10:20 - 10:45	IMP OF THE PERVERSE: CONTOURS OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION	James Preston
10:45 - 11:00	Discussion	
11:00 - 11:30	SAC BUSINESS MEETING All are invited to attend!	
11:30 - 1:30	Lunch	

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

CONSCIOUSNESS AS THE MANIPULATION OF REALITY SESSION CHAIR: TBA

1:30 - 1:55	THE TROPES OF WARD CHURCHILL AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS	Alexandra Witkin-New Holy
1:55 - 2:20	THE SEARCH IN THE FIELD FOR THE PHENOMENON OF CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS RESULTING BENEFITS	Edith Turner
2:20 - 2:45	BIODYNAMIC FARMING, ANIMISM, AND ECOLOGICAL PRACTICE TODAY	Lourdes Giordani and Tomoko Shibachi
2:45 - 2:55	Discussion	
2:55 - 3:05	Break	
3:05 - 3:30	THE KUHNEXUS PROJECT: COLLECTING, CLASSIFYING AND RATING PARADIGM-CHALLENGING EXPERIENCES	David Rousseau and Julie Rousseau
3:30 - 3:55	SHAPING CONSCIOUSNESS WITH ACOUSTIC VIBRATIONS BY WHIPPING THE WIND: THE BULLROARER AS A WAY OF KNOWING	Bethe Hagens
3:55 - 4:20	SENSING THE FIELD: THE(META)PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF BECOMING AN ARCHAEOLOGIST	Monika Bolino
4:20 - 4:30	Discussion	

SATURDAY EVENING

7:00 – 9:00

EXPERIENTIAL EVENT –

ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Science of the Breath

Admission Fees: \$10 for Registered Participants,
\$15 for non-registered participants, \$5 for Students

Note: You may not pay at the door. Please register by 4:30 pm.

Sudarshan Kriya® and its accompanying practices taught in the Art of Living Course are time-honored stress management/health promotion techniques whose claim of health benefits have been and continue to be validated by modern medical science. Independent research has shown that Sudarshan Kriya and its accompanying practices significantly:

- Reduce levels of stress (reduce Cortisol - the "stress" hormone)
- Reduce cholesterol
- Relieve anxiety and depression (mild, moderate and severe)
- Increase anti oxidant protection
- Enhanced brain function (increased mental focus and recovery from stressful stimuli)
- Enhance health and well-being

This 2 hour session will include presentation of some of the research on Sudarshan Kriya® and related breathing techniques, information about the Art of Living Course, and an experiential breathing-meditation session.

SUNDAY MORNING

10:00

Experiential Event – (Open to the Public)
"GET A BUZZ ON..." JOIN THE CONSORT OF
SACRED SWINGERS, WITH ONE HUNDRED
REPLICA BULLROARERS

Bethe Hagens,
Leader

12:00

Conference Close

Ralph B. Allison
Retired Psychiatrist
ralfalison@charter.net

Understanding the Splintered Mind

In 1972 I met a patient who appeared to be a carbon copy of "The Three Faces of Eve". But, in addition to her alter-personalities, she introduced me to her "Inner Self-Helper", or ISH. This mentally healthy part of her mind led me on a search for the answer to the question: "What are the component parts of each human mind?" My conclusions agree with Plato's opinion that we each have two parts to our minds, which he called "the rational soul" and "the irrational soul". I have also identified a variety of "other selves" which are made by these two component parts, some by dissociation and some by emotional imagination. I shall describe who makes what and how to tell them apart.

Samuel Avery-Quinn
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
squinn@utk.edu

Keys to the Kingdom: Ecstatic Religious Experience, Social Identity, and Landscape in Appalachia

In 19th century Appalachia, Methodist camp meeting revivalism was one of the most dynamic aspects of social life and social identity. Part holy leisure and part ecstatic experience, camp meetings were landscapes of religious conversion in which Methodists sought to inaugurate an alternative subjectivity and reinforce a symbolic universe in which group ties were truly the keys to the kingdom. Through the landscape archaeology of two camp meeting sites in East Tennessee this presentation suggests the juncture of landform and built environment can provide an important perspective on the relationship of ecstatic religious experience and social identity.

Monika Bolino
Brown Medical School
Monika_Bolino@brown.edu

Sensing the Field: The (Meta)Physical Geography of Becoming an Archaeologist

In popular culture, archaeology is signified by excavation and its trappings including elaborate pits and exhumations, pith helmets and shovels, and the unearthed artifacts themselves. In reality, fieldwork encompasses not only excavation but also mapping, surveying, brush clearing, soil analysis, and other decidedly less glamorous tasks. More significantly, fieldwork represents only one component of archaeology; fieldwork is the precursor to months of lab analysis and report-writing, processes which can take at least double the time spent in the field. Nonetheless, the act and art of "fieldwork" as the "essence" of what it means to do archaeology -- to be an archaeologist -- remains a powerful image among the discipline's practitioners. Drawing upon the author's ethnographic research at a cultural resource management firm and popular imagery, this paper explores how the "cachet" of fieldwork permeates archaeologists' professional identity and self-identity. Specifically, the paper examines the emotional and sensory connections between archaeologists and the elements of their field sites including the meaning of dirt and "dirtiness," the engagement of natural objects and found artifacts, and the enduring mystique of working on the cusp of "the past."

Derek Brereton
Adrian College
dbrereton@comcast.net

Evolution, Consciousness, Experience, and Place Attachment

The evolutionary view of consciousness is that it is the sum of the psyche's capacities, including emotions, symbolization, and even the unconscious. Consciousness is the ability to devise and manipulate virtual models that, through human agency, influence outcomes intended to enhance the agents' adaptive odds. Consciousness is informed by two types of experience: the genetically internalized, and the behaviorally flexible. These are the respective provinces of structure and agency. John Dewey gave the soundest exposition of experience in his monumental *Experience and Nature*, a model not previously brought into ethnology, yet much needed by any phenomenology that would situate itself in due relation to the principles of evolution. Dewey showed that experience is embedded in nature, and that consciousness too is an entirely natural phenomenon. This paper uses Dewey's model of experience to illuminate actual, very different experiences of satori and self-transcendence as they occur in the lives of American campsteaders, owners of summer camps in rural New Hampshire. These rustic campsteads were constructed during the post-Civil War Colonial Revival, have been in the same families for up to seven generations, and serve as spiritual anchors for individuals and families due to the types of experience they foster.

Lourdes Giordani and Tomoko Shibachi
SUNY, New Paltz
giordanl@lan.newpaltz.edu

Biodynamic Farming, Animism, and Ecological Practice Today

This paper will explore an agricultural practice promoted by the late Rudolf Steiner, namely, biodynamic farming. The authors relate biodynamic farming's current popularity to the inroads made by the

environmental movement (with its concern over the industrialization of food production), and to the fact that the practice is based on a relational epistemology that attracts many individuals interested in New Age spirituality. Animism, often defined in anthropology as a kind of religion, is at the heart of this epistemology and of biodynamic farming.

Suzanne Gordon
University of Maryland, College Park
lsgordon@umd.edu

"Maybe I'm Crazy": Why and How "Near-Death Experience (NDE) Survivor-" Informants Problematicize the "Clinical NDE" Label

This presentation describes some key findings from an in-progress dissertation research study. Person-centered ethnographic method and an interest in culture and consciousness are both central to the project. The study is based on an extensive field study of the lives and life-history narratives of 10 main and 50 background informants in the U.S. who, as adults, have survived and reported experiences identifiable (using the Greyson NDE Scale) as "Clinical Near-Death Experiences" (NDES). It explores one of the most frequently-reported categories of characteristic NDE aftereffects—the profound shifts in how informants experience and construct identity and reality. The aim is to describe and account for these characteristic, post-NDE "identity alternations"—and the process by which they occur—as experiencers themselves do.

A key finding of my preliminary, two-year, M.A. study was that informants, in describing and interpreting their experiences, avoided using—and often explicitly rejected—the "Clinical Near-Death Experience" model and label, and substituted their own alternative ones. In this presentation, the focus will be, first, on presenting some of the different explanations and labels informants have offered for their experiences, and for their rejection of the clinical NDE label. "Chris" for instance, does not use the label, and isn't sure whether she had an NDE or

suffered brain damage, as her description demonstrates: "Maybe I'm crazy," she has said several times, sounding exasperated, "but dead people talk to me, and they give me accurate medical information." Second, based on commonalities among informants' own expressions of the meaning of their NDE-related consciousness-shifts, I will propose, for discussion, an alternative, social model for assessing the cultural significance and potential of these spiritually transformative experiences.

Bethe Hagens
Union Institute & University
bethehagens@adelphia.net

Shaping Consciousness with Acoustic Vibrations by Whipping the Wind: The Bullroarer As A Way Of Knowing

A thin slat whirled on a string to create a buzzing sound, the humble bullroarer and its companion, the magic wheel or buzzer, have been found worldwide since the Paleolithic. Bullroarers (and buzzers) signal the crossing of thresholds and the presence of liminal boundary conditions—initiation into adulthood, ecstasy, gender bending, obscenity, terror, deprivation, body modification, drought, disease, death, the invisible. Their call both creates and permits the recognition of magico-religious sonopoietic space in which individuation and group bonding (as events of consciousness) can occur simultaneously. Yet bullroarers have been shrouded in secrecy, and anthropology's most romanticized artifact is rarely depicted in the thousands of pages devoted to its study!

As I simultaneously carve, perform with, and research bullroarers and magic wheels, these instruments themselves are opening me to a sonopoietic research and play space composed of anthropology, world history, philology, mythology and religion that continues to yield significant data on diffusion and independent invention in world history.

Bud Hampton
University of Colorado Museum, Boulder
csmiester@hotmail.com

Archetypal Origins of Seminal Religious Art Symbols, Metaphors and Icons

Much has been written without relevant ethnography about Stone Age shamans and their hallucinogen promoted, internally-produced transcendental journeys into the Other World to see and be with god-power spirits and spirit helpers who reside there. Then, at later times, back in the world of the seen, the transposition of the shamans' visual impressions from the Other World into Stone Age religious art compositions that were painted, pecked, and carved onto rock surfaces.

This paper presents the author's direct observations of a shaman's Stone Age transcendental journey into the world of supernatural beings to see and commune with his peoples' god-power spirit deities, spirit helpers and other spirits.

The author has combined: 1) his ethnographic work (1982-1997) in the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya (now Papua), Indonesia; 2) records of his own internal visual experiences during opthamalic migraine seizures since 1975; 3) longitudinal research with personal eye-pressing induced phosphenes since 1979 and 4) both open- and closed-eye styles of concentration/meditation with literature reviews to identify Stone Age origins of seminal religious signs that were created by both the Phosphene Eye-Pressing Technique and opthamalic migraines. Key religious signs with origins in the Stone Age have been used in religious art, cross-culturally through time since origins.

Diane Hardgrave
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
StargateDN@aol.com

In the State of Theta

Experiences and accounts of altered states of consciousness (ASC) evolve as individuals continue a meditative practice over time. Cellular Theta Breathing (CTB), a contemporary meditative practice, is associated with ASC. In this informal study, individuals who have regularly practiced CTB for more than 3 years discuss the specific characteristics of their experiences. Of significance is an increase of sequential experiences linked over time and parallel experiences between individuals practicing CTB simultaneously.

Julia Jean and Frédérique Apffel-Marglin

The Blood of the Goddess: Menstrual Seclusion and the Transformation of Consciousness in South Asia

In this paper, we offer a description and analysis of the consciousness amplifying aspects of menstrual seclusion for some peasant women and some Shakta women in contemporary South Asia, specifically Kathmandu, Orissa, and Assam. We compare these practices with traditional male ascetic ritual practices and austerities, arguing that menstrual seclusion for these women brings a similar consciousness transformation and amplification. These menstruating women and the ascetic men may become immersed in nondual realities that amplify or transform spiritual consciousness (either permanently or momentarily). Much of the cross-cultural anthropological literature portrays menstrual seclusion as a negative or degrading experience for women that reinforces gendered inequalities in the material world based on bodily processes. Based on our extensive ethnographic research in northern and northeastern parts of South Asia, as well as our experiences as initiates and practitioners in Goddess worshipping Shakta

lineages in South Asia, we nuance these understandings of women's menstruation and menstrual seclusion and demonstrate that menstruation can also be a potent time of embodied feminine (energetic) practice that encourages merging with the nondual oneness that is understood as the Goddess, shakti, or the more-than-human-realm.

Neal Keating
Hamilton College
nkeating@hamilton.edu

Spirit & Information in Contemporary Haudenosaunee Art

The idea of spirit is central to a critical understanding of contemporary Indigenous art. In conventional anthropology, cultural authenticity is generally treated in a rather materialist fashion. Cultural information and traditions are thought to be physically passed down through generations, and any interruption in this 'down the line' horizontal chain of transmission inevitably results in a permanent loss of information and thus identity. Because the Indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere have experienced repeated episodes of such interruptions, contemporary Indigenous representations are frequently challenged as inauthentic. The result is often a persistence of ethnocide. A solution to this problem is found in seriously considering the Native perspective on culture, consciousness, and representation, which generally insists on the reality of a spirit saturated cosmos, as well as the reality of contemporary Indigenous land titles. A multi-channeled model of information transmission is presented that incorporates the conventional 'down the line' channel, but also includes a spirit channel. **This provides an alternative vertical passage for the transmission of cultural information, and may help explain how and why cultural recovery is possible.** Several contemporary works by Haudenosaunee artists are shown and discussed as engagements with this multi-channelled dynamic.

Caleb Chul-Soo Kim
Nairobi Evangelical Graduate
School of Theology
caleb.kim@negst.edu

**Jinn Possession in the Swahili
Therapeutic Ritual and its
Anthropological Implications
(CD-ROM Presentation)**

In this presentation of my research CD-ROMs, I will attempt to explore two important cultural dimensions of the therapeutic ritual of jinn possession, which is commonly practiced among Waswahili (the Swahili Muslims). First, the ritual of jinn possession demonstrates a shamanistic dimension of Swahili Islam, in which "healing (uganga)" is the paramount motif, thus being central in the therapeutic exercise. This uganga motif is practically predominant in the mind of those Waswahili attending the rituals due to their experiences of jinn as "real" as one of the hostile environments in their society. Importantly, such "realness" in local experiences of embodiment of spirits and their explanations should receive more attention than usual in the discussion of spirit possession. Secondly, most ordinary Waswahili view the activities of jinn and their possession of people to be a religio-cultural normalcy based upon the Islamic tradition that has significantly dictated and preconditioned their perception and experiences of the spirit world. Consequently, the jinn's possessive activity in Swahili societies is perceived not as an aberrant phenomenon but as a prognostic, normal occurrence.

Elwyn Lapoint
Eastern Washington University
elapoint@mail.ewu.edu

**The Witch as Self in Early
Modern England**

In the cultural psychology of sixteenth-and seventeenth-century England, the witch represented a morally distorted mode of selfhood. Although early modern

elites and commoners entertained different theories concerning the operation of witchcraft itself, they shared a stereotypic view of the witch that was gendered and also categorized by age and economic standing. Moreover, unlike the cultural ideal of the dutiful Christian, the witch was seen as defying all legitimate authority, both spiritual and secular, in her enmity toward her fellow humans. This stereotype of the rebellious witch in turn reflected prevailing assumptions about the self. An examination of the witch figure therefore promises to shed light on current ethnopsychological notions as well as on the larger intellectual and cultural milieu in which English witchcraft beliefs flourished.

Sara Lewis
University of Chicago
Sara3@uchicago.edu

**Spiritual Emergency: Transient Psychosis
as Personal Growth**

Most mental health professionals consider psychosis undesirable, harmful or even dangerous. Patients who present with psychotic symptoms—regardless of etiology—are usually treated as severely ill. There are certain contexts, however, in which patients experience a transient psychosis as part of a learning process and personal growth period. These contexts are usually associated with a powerful, transformative religious or spiritual experience. The American Psychiatric Association, in its 1994 revision of the DSM-IV, included a new diagnostic category, Religious or Spiritual Problem (Code V62.89). Despite this inclusion, many psychotherapists are either unaware of it, or their own metaphysics and worldviews prevent them from understanding fully their patients' spiritual crises.

In this presentation, I argue that transient psychosis as a result of a spiritual emergency can often lead to personal growth. I briefly review relevant literature and present findings from a series of interviews of individuals who have experienced spiritual emergencies. I also discuss the importance of cultural considerations in diagnosis and treatment.

Spiritual emergencies include a loss of faith, near-death experiences, mystical experiences, kundalini, shamanic initiatory crisis, psychic opening, experience of past lives, possession, meditation-related experiences, separating from a spiritual teacher, religious conversion, joining or leaving a religious movement or cult, psychedelic experiences, and terminal illness. Individuals in spiritual emergency who present with psychotic (often manic) symptoms need professional help. Quite often, they need hospitalization. Clinicians treating these patients, however, should as their main goal, strive to help the individual integrate and learn from the powerful and potentially transformative experience

Enoch Page and Quentin Lewis
University of Massachusetts
hepage@anthro.umass.edu
quentin@anthro.umass.edu

**Toward an Archaeological Analysis of
Cosmology in The Material Encoding of
Egyptian Sacred Science:
Anthropology's Neglect of Templar
Symbology in Medieval Southern France**

We recognize that knowledge transmission in subaltern communities is never just a discursive practice as many contemporary anthropologists now claim, but this process also entails a material practice. The problem of how to interrogate material practices typically is too often ignored in the study of consciousness for such practices often hide "in plain sight" some of the more fundamental concepts that empower human groups with an ability to decode their own messages. Such practices are "multivalent"—that is, they prominently display identity and facilitate a shared conception of group membership in ways that only certain individuals who have learned to speak a similar material "cant" would be able to decode. Using archaeological analogies from data on the transmission of African cosmological knowledge in the 18th and 19th century United States, we theorize a materiality of sacred knowledge transmission in the Middle Ages. Drawing on the esoteric author Vincent

Bridges, and others who are more familiar than anthropologists with regional esoteric European traditions, we focus our study on the Languedoc in southern France. This is where dissident communities actively perpetuated an alternate understanding of Christianity that challenged the hegemonic religious conception ratified by the Church in the High Middle Ages. Using primary documents, architectural information, and the symbolic understandings of modern scholars, we show how so-called "heretical" groups of the 12th, 13th, and 14th century strove to perpetuate, through material practices, an understanding of 'sacred science' drawn originally from Egyptian cosmological philosophy.

James Preston
SUNY College at Oneonta
prestojj@oneonta.edu

**Imp of the Perverse:
Contours of the Religious Imagination**

Anthropologists have struggled with a variety of approaches for accessing subjective experience. A new methodology is proposed using techniques derived from the works of Ira Progoff, Carl Jung and Gaston Bachelard. The results of several years of research using these techniques among Native American, Hindu and Quaker populations yields rich data on the river of imagery embedded at the core of religious experience. Sixteen properties of the human imagination are identified and explored as means for enhancing and deepening access to various types of reported "cosmic consciousness." This research suggests that aspects of human reverie are primarily accessed in different religious traditions through the imagination rather than through cognitive domains. Questions are raised about the borderlands between feeling, cognition, imagination and other dimensions of consciousness, particularly with reference to religious experience.

Kathryn Proulx
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
kproulx55@comcast.net

A Phenomenological Description of the Experience of College-Age Women with Bulimia Nervosa in a Mindfulness-Based Eating Disorder Treatment Group

Conservative estimates indicate that following puberty, five to ten million females in the United States struggle with eating disorders. Up to four percent of college age women experience symptoms of bulimia nervosa, a potentially progressive and chronic disorder characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating followed by inappropriate compensatory behaviors. The purpose of this study was to understand how college-age women with bulimia nervosa experienced participation in a Mindfulness-Based Eating Disorder Treatment (M-BED) Group.

A phenomenological, interpretive hermeneutic approach was used to describe how the women in this study experienced the M-BED Group. The data, which included self-portraits, was analyzed using van Manen's method for identifying themes and Drew's method of creating a synthesis of intentionality to highlight the parallel process of consciousness between the researcher and study participants.

The essence of the experience of the participants' in the M-BED Group was that a transformational journey had taken place. The six women who embarked on this journey had departed from a lonely place of disconnection and disembodiment. They traveled along a path of interpersonal connection, acceptance, and nonjudgment, cultivating a deeper, transcendent self-awareness and understanding through meditation, in order to arrive at the more authentic, sacred space within.

David Rousseau and Julie Rousseau
Centre for Fundamental and
Anomalies Research
david@c-far.org

The Kuhnexus Project: Collecting, Classifying And Rating Paradigm-Challenging Experiences

Many have argued that certain anomalous experiences indicate functions of consciousness that cannot be explained in neurophysiological terms. To evaluate this issue properly, we need to fully characterise those functions, while having a clear view of the quality of the evidence for the entire range of such experiences.

This paper introduces a new project that is creating an online database of the best evidence for those anomalous experiences that significantly challenge orthodox explanations of how the world works. Groundwork for the project required development of a suitable classification system for anomalies, quality criteria for rating cases, and clear definitions of the concepts involved. We will present an overview of these results and describe the ongoing process of collecting and evaluating case narratives. We will appeal for assistance from members of the anthropological community, who have particularly valuable skills in this regard. We will also outline some of the ways in which the completed database will contribute towards research in the anthropology of consciousness.

Mark Schroll
rockphd4@yahoo.com

Shamanism's Taboos, the Easter Bunny, and Reality

What is reality? What are legitimate scientific phenomena? What are the appropriate methods of inquiry to investigate these phenomena? These, and related questions led Joseph Long and other early founders to form the group that became the SAC. Long summed up his quest to answer to these problems of methodological inquiry by referring to the work of Charles Tart in Extrasensory Ecology. "Altered states not only could lead one personally into different reality fields but that these new realities could actually be studied by the behavioral scientist who dared to enter these same other reality boundaries." This expresses the problem of subjective Vs objective methods of inquiry. Unlike Long, SAC's political compromise to become a AAA division in 1990 declared its support for mainstream science; the objective analysis of phenomena, i.e., social facts or belief systems that facilitate social cohesion, cultural identity, conformity to the mores, customs and laws that provide us with meaning and organization. Adhering to objectivity protects mainstream science from infiltrations by "new age" shamans like Lynn Andrews. Nevertheless, strict objectivity prohibits us from investigating the source of religion, our subjective encounters with shamanic journeys to other states of consciousness and seeing and feeling the energy fields associated with psychic healing, but what about the Easter Bunny? This and other mysteries wait to be revealed in this presentation.

Carlos David Londono Sulkin
University of Regina
Carlos.Londono@uregina.ca

Anecdotal portrayals of selves, virtues and vice among Muinane people of the Colombian Amazon

Muinane people produce frequent anecdotes concerning individual's virtues and vices and the biographical details whereby they came to acquire them. Male speakers in particular tend to stress their own capacity to act aggressively against evil beings through powerful spells or Speeches, their goodness vis-à-vis kin and the desirable character of some aspect of how they were brought up, among other salient personal and biographical features. I call these anecdotes 'moral self-portrayals'. In this paper, I focus on the narrative frames of the anecdotes, the contexts in which they are used, and their thematic content. My purpose is to highlight some of the ways in which Muinane people articulate their understanding of what is virtuous, admirable, wicked or despicable, and what they achieve, performatively, through their articulations. I also use this material to address current debates in Amazonianist ethnography concerning perspectivism and native Amazonian understandings of alterity and sociality, and finally to reiterate a call for ethnography that attends to individuals' self-understandings and morality.

Lori Thayer
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Thayer@anthro.umass.edu

The Adoption of Shamanic Healing into Western Medicine

The presentation will include a brief historical review of differing anthropological theories of analysis of shamanism, as well as the issues to be investigated regarding the present-day syncretic use of shamanic healing in western medicine in the United States. Contrary to the biomedical model,

Shamanism, a religio-spiritual practice, includes the spirit world in its process of diagnosis and healing, and seeks to achieve a balance between the individual, his or her community, and the environment. The presenter will discuss the varying differences between these two disparate approaches to healing, suggest some hypotheses as to why a growing populace in the United States is seeking out alternative forms of healing, such as shamanic healing, and outline the methodology to be used to investigate the cultural implications of this growing phenomenon in the field of modern health care.

Edith Turner
University of Virginia
elt9w@virginia.edu

The Search in the Field for the Phenomenon of Change of Consciousness and its Resulting Benefits.

The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness has satisfied itself during the last decades that consciousness does indeed exist, and most of us have seen how its vagaries and extensions have been taking us into realms hitherto not recognized by mainstream anthropology. So, like good ethnographers, we have been following its multiform expressions throughout humanity. Not a few of us have dared to trace universals among these expressions. Gone is the time when tracing universals was wellnigh taboo. Relativism used to reign supreme: "To be human is to be Javanese," said Geertz, standing back with an ironic pose and informing us that each society and subsection of society had great differences from every other one—even that they were as extreme in their individualism as the argumentative American individualistic personality itself. Nothing would do but "My way." An old tune. But our age has done some work since then. I cite, for instance, the enormously important discovery of the principles of global human rights, and no amount of talk about "freedom" for business can ultimately

succeed in contravening these. Similarly, in our liberal academic discipline, we are beginning to trace highly important common features that run through societies that experience and practice other forms of consciousness. This is exploration, finding out what is, not laying down any laws about how an extended consciousness "should" work, but looking at the natural tendencies that we see, the common features in healing and in the coming of inspiration, in concern for the dead and awareness of them at other levels of consciousness, in bodily wisdom that the mind cannot reach, in the sense of the soul. The paper sets out the ethnography of two brilliant young anthropologists who entered the spiritual practice of the different people they were studying and found themselves in that common realm where healing takes place.

James Clement van Pelt
Yale Divinity School
james.vanpelt@yale.edu

The Dimensions of Experience

When the concept of consciousness is unpacked, the constituent that presents itself most immediately seems to be pure experience (i.e. the experiencing of appearances), which can be regarded as discrete from that which is experienced, i.e. existence (including the appearances themselves).

Each of these two domains is structured by its own characteristic dimensionality. Dimensions of existence, defined in reference to a universal POV, can be distinguished from dimensions of experience, defined in reference to a POV projected from the point in space-time that anchors each dimension's point of reference to the individualized self.

Based on this distinction, the properties of the several experiential dimensions can be derived by means of a Flatland-like perspectival "stepping back", which can be compared and contrasted with how other types of dimensions (e.g. physical, mathematical) are defined.

A question guiding the exploration is whether defining the experiential dimensions in this way contributes to establishing a more co-equal ontological priority for experience in relation to existence, which seems to be a vital step toward progress in consciousness studies.

Allan B. Wesler

**A Definition of Consciousness:
Explaining the Source of Images,
Symbols, Beliefs, and Activities in
Diverse Cultures**

In the diverse and unconnected cultures of the world, are the striking similarities of images, symbols, beliefs, and activities merely coincidental? Or do they help define consciousness and culture?

This paper proposes that a specific cluster of repetitive generic images and symbols pervading every ancient culture and continuing to the present is integrated within a concisely figured paradigm. Its form of logic may well be the human consciousness that began and sustains culture.

This paradigm evolved during my many years of fieldwork, empirical investigation, and concurrent development of an extensive multidimensional database. The database draws from anthropology and related sciences and, with its unique coding system, reveals the cluster's pervasiveness.

The paper, a small part of a much larger project, demonstrates with illustrations the remarkable similarities evident in the remains of vastly disparate cultures, for example, the Terminal Ice Age ritual caves (starting c. 35,000 B.C.) of Western Europe and pre-Columbian cultures.

The prevalence of the repetitive cluster of images, symbols, beliefs, and activities in such divergent cultures, all of which arose during intense environmental chaos, contributes to an ancient form of logic created to assure human survival during life-threatening crises in nature. This logic, configured in the database-derived paradigm representing seasonal regenerations of the

sun, is, I suggest, transmitted from generation to generation as the human consciousness.

George Williams
Federal Communications Commission
george.williams@fcc.gov

**Recurring Symbols in Centers of Trade
and Trade Sanctuaries**

Problems of trust and risks of hostility between rival groups prevented trade in earlier times. In this paper, we will explore how symbols and religious beliefs helped overcome these barriers to trade. Specifically, we will focus on the use of symbols and religious objects were used in gift exchange ceremonies, to create trade sanctuaries, and early markets. Our purpose is to understand the symbols and religious objects that facilitated and promoted trade in early markets and trade sanctuaries. The purpose is to understand how religious beliefs and practices facilitated the development of early trade.

Michael Winkelman
Arizona State University
michael.winkelman@asu.edu

**Paradigms in the
Anthropology of Consciousness:
A Biogenetic Structuralist and
Neurophenomenological Approach**

There have been a number of paradigms in the anthropology of consciousness, generally reflecting the broader academic and social currents that have impacted the discipline. An exception to this reactive approach has been in the development of the biogenetic structuralist and neurophenomenological approaches which have resisted anthropology's relativizing trends in establishing a novel methodological approach that make explicit efforts to link biology and culture in developing new theoretical frameworks and research traditions. This paper outlines the developments of the neurophenomenological

approaches that have addressed mystical and shamanistic traditions within an explicit effort to link the experiences of spiritual traditions to the underlying manipulations of the biological substrate. This integrative perspective sidesteps the traditional problems of the dualistic approaches in providing an understanding of the complementary relationships of biology and experience. This approach can be characterized as a new paradigm that is anticipated in the recent development of neurotheological perspectives on religion and spirituality.

Alexandra Witkin-New Holy
Stone2Stone Enterprises
anewholy@imt.net

The Tropes of Ward Churchill and the Geography of American Consciousness

American Indians haunt many of us, whether we are Indian or not. Whether they are contemporary Indians who in all their misunderstood complexity run multi-million dollar casinos and keep their broken cars and refrigerators in the front yard, or the Anasazi cliff dwellers who lived in the American southwest 1000 years before Jesus walked the Middle East, or the High Plains warriors of Dances with Wolves fame, or the American Indian Movement radicals of the 70's, many of us have puzzled over the nature of who they are and who we are in relation to them. Native people are no different in this respect; indigenous cultures are widely understood to contemplate the meaning of their ancestors' words, lives, and deeds. Indigenous tribalism inherently looks into the future through the past.

As a nation of displaced immigrants and dispossessed Native peoples the fascination may grow from the land itself; and from the struggle over the land. The dispossession of Native Americans by a colonizing nation is not a glorious story no matter what dominant ideology asserts. The glory of manifest destiny contains the shadow of genocide, oppression, and forced assimilation. How does this legacy inform our collective American consciousness? How does the legacy as it is embodied in the

American landscape, the earth that our food grows in and the foundations of our houses rest upon, the soil where the blood of the colonizer and the colonized intermingles – does this soil, Native/American earth, dialectically interact with our individual, ethnic, and collective consciousnesses?

Ward Churchill and his "Little Eichman's" trope are a flashpoint that can help illuminate the tangled web of consciousness built on the legacy of Native American colonization and genocide. His unsubstantiated claim to Indian identity, radical politics, identification with Native American issues, the leftist embrace of him, and the passionate voices of Native America seeking to distance themselves from him and his work – all speak to the convoluted nature of American consciousness in regard to our common past, the representation of that past, and its current legacy.

Considering that aspects of consciousness are connected to geography, that the human self interacts with geography and place, history, memory, and fantasy of place – how does the American non-Indian mind construct itself around the legacy of Native American dispossession and genocide? Why do so many non-Indians seek to identify, biologically, politically, or culturally, with aspects of Native American cultures? Why would the liberal left adore Churchill when his ethnicity has consistently been under attack by Native Americans? Why does Churchill vigorously claim Indian identity when it can not be substantiated?

FUTURE SAC MEETING INFORMATION

American Anthropological Association 2005 Annual Meeting

November 30 - December 4, 2005

*Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Washington D. C.*

SAC Distinguished Lecturer:
Anthony F. C. Wallace
"The Consciousness of Time"

SAC 2006 Spring Meeting

April 12 - 16, 2006

*Asilomar Retreat Center
Located along the shoreline of the
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, California*

SAC 2007 Spring Meeting

April 4 - 7, 2007

*San Diego, California
(location to be announced)*