

***2007 Spring Meeting  
of the  
Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness***

***April 4-8, 2007***

***The Handlery Hotel & Resort  
San Diego, CA***

***Thresholds of Consciousness***



***Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness***  
***A section of the American Anthropological Association***



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*The Medusa is a symbol of transformation and the power, danger, and beauty, which change can imply. The artwork comes from the hand of Tina Fields. Please do not reproduce this illustration without the permission of the artist. You may contact her at: [tfields8@yahoo.com](mailto:tfields8@yahoo.com)*



# SAC Conference Program

Wednesday, April 4, 2007

<b>Morning</b>	<b>On-site registration and check-in</b>
<b>Afternoon</b>	<p><b>1:00-1:05pm Welcome</b>—John Baker, SAC’s president</p> <p><b>1:05-2:25pm Panel: Rethinking Assumptions About Altered States of Consciousness (Individual submissions)</b></p> <p>1:05-1:25 Adam J. Rock &amp; Stanley Krippner, <i>Altered States of Consciousness do Not Exist</i></p> <p>1:25-1:45 Rachel Cooper, <i>Science, Sheldrake and Shamans</i></p> <p>1:45-2:05 Robert Harper, <i>Telepathy and Clairvoyance: Success in the Ganzfeld</i></p> <p>2:05-2:25 Discussion</p> <p><b>2:25-2:40pm Break</b></p> <p><b>2:40-4:00pm Panel: Science, Faith, and Dreams (Individual submissions)</b></p> <p>2:40-3:00 Emmanuel J. Karavousanos, <i>How Science and Religious Faith are Inseparable in the Quest for the Solution to the Problem of Consciousness</i></p> <p>3:00-3:20 A. Muhammad Ma`ruf, <i>Strife and the “Imaginal Realms” of English Speaking Muslims</i></p> <p>3:20-3:40 Ryan Dungan Hurd <i>Rock Art and Dreams: Explorations into Process-Oriented Archaeology on Ometepe Island, Nicaragua.</i></p> <p>3:40-4:00 Discussion</p>
<b>Evening</b>	<p><b>4:00-7:30pm Dinner &amp; Free time</b></p> <p><b>7:30-8:30/9pm Experiential Workshop</b> John Lovern &amp; Brian Stokes, <i>The “PK Party” as a Teaching Tool in Consciousness Studies</i></p>

<p><b>Morning</b></p>	<p><b>9:00-9:05am Announcements</b>  <b>9:05-10:25am Panel: Therapy, Ambivalence, and Thresholds (Individual submissions)</b>            9:05-9:25 Sara Lewis, <i>Negotiating Thresholds in Clinical Work: Tolerating Ambivalence, Paradox and Uncertainty</i>            9:25-9:45 Richard Alvarado, <i>Cultural Construction of Menopause in Two Botánicas</i>            9:45-10:05 Andrea Blätter, <i>Beneath the Threshold of Consciousness: Hypnotherapeutic Communication with the Unconscious</i>            10:05-10:25 Discussion</p> <p><b>10:25-10:40am Break</b></p> <p><b>10:40-12:20pm Panel: The Self and the Quest for Threshold States (Individual submissions)</b>            10:40-11:00 Flore Singer Aaslid, <i>Facing the Dragon-Exploring a Conscious Phenomenology of Intoxication</i>            11:00-11:20 Evgenia Fotiou, <i>Reconfiguring the Self: The Western Pursuit of Shamanic Experience</i>            11:20-11:40 Marlene Dobkin de Rios, <i>Drug Tourism at the Gate: Boundaries Between Sacramental and Secular Use of Psychedelics in the Amazon</i>            11:40-12:00 Adam Rock (presenter); Gavin Abbott, GDip; Hatun Childargushi, GDip; and Melanie Kiehne, GDip: <i>The Effect of Shamanic Journeying and Schizotypy on Phenomenology: An Experimental Study of Threshold States</i>            12:00-12:20 Discussion</p> <p><b>12:20-1:30pm Lunch break</b></p>
<p><b>Afternoon</b></p>	<p><b>1:30-2:50pm Panel: The Role and Significance of Ritual and Chant in Inducing Threshold States (Panel organizer and chair: Dr. Elizabeth Newby-Frazier)</b>            1:30-1:50 Sharon Mijares, <i>The Sufi Experience</i>            1:50-2:10 Roger Cavanaugh, <i>Crossing the Threshold Into Sacred Space</i>            2:10-2:30 Elizabeth Newby Fraser <i>Hindu Kavadi</i>            2:30-2:50 Discussion</p> <p><b>2:50-3:05pm Break</b></p> <p><b>3:05-4:25pm Panel: Love, Death, and Threshold States (Individual submissions)</b>            3:05-3:25 Paul Hirini &amp; Adam Rock, <i>Indigenous Understandings of Suicide: The New Zealand Example</i>            3:25-3:45 M. Diane Hardgrave &amp; William Jankowiak, <i>Adultery and the Consciousness of Union</i>            3:45-4:05 Kurt Cline, <i>A Poetics of Liminality: The Shaman's Song in Epic Poetry</i></p>

	<p><b>Thursday</b>  4:05-4:25 Julie Beischel (presenter); Adam Rock; and Gary E. Schwartz: <i>Claimant Mediums, Threshold Consciousness, and Purported Communication With Discarnates: A Phenomenological Study</i>  4:25-4:45 Bryan Rill, <i>Bridging Representation and Experience</i>  4:45-5:05 Discussion</p> <p><b>5:05-7:30pm Dinner &amp; Free time</b></p>
<b>Evening</b>	<p><b>7:30-8:30/9pm Experiential Workshop</b>  Roger Cavanaugh, <i>Crossing the Threshold: Sacred Places in San Diego County, An Experiential Journey of Consciousness</i></p>

**Friday, April 6, 2007**

<b>Morning</b>	<p><b>9:00-9:05am Announcements</b>  <b>9:05-10:45am Panel: Anthropology's Role in Ecopsychology: Speculations on the Creation of a Coherent Culture</b>  <b>(Panel organizer and chair: Dr. Mark A. Schroll)</b>  9:05-9:25 Constantine Hriskos, <i>The Study of Consciousness and the Confusion of Theory(ries): Between 'Empiricism,' 'Experience,' and 'Relativity' (or anti-anti-relativism)?</i>  9:25-9:45 Mark A. Schroll, <i>Living on the Decaying Edges of the Industrial Age</i>  9:45-10:05 Sharon Mijares, <i>Women, Evolutionary Development and the Transformation of Consciousness</i>  10:05-10:25 Beth Hagens, <i>Bullroarer: Vesica and Vision for Ecopsychology</i>  10:25-10:45 Discussion (Stanley Krippner &amp; Valerie Mojeiko, with Don Eulert commenting on C. G. Jung as Ecopsychologist)</p> <p><b>10:45-11:00am Break</b></p> <p><b>11:00am-12noon SAC's Public Discussion (Members and guests invited to participate in a discussion about SAC)</b></p>
<b>Afternoon &amp; Evening</b>	<p><b>Free time so that participants may visit the Museum of Man, the Zoo, or even travel to Tijuana</b></p>

**Saturday, April 7, 2007**

<b>Morning</b>	<p><b>9:00-10:00am Meeting of SAC's Executive Board</b>  <b>10:00-10:05am Announcements</b></p> <p><b>10:05-11:30am Panel: Resonance Theory</b>  <b>(Panel organizer and chair: Mira Z. Amiras)</b>  10:05-10:25 Mira Z. Amiras, <i>Resonance Theory: the Art and Science of Mutual Impact</i>  10:25-10:45 Matthew C. Bronson, <i>The Rapport Report: Proven Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining the Human Connection</i>  10:45-11:05 Jeffrey L. MacDonald, <i>Threshold Literature for the New Age</i>  11:05-11:25 Discussion</p> <p><b>11:25-1:00pm Lunch break</b></p>
<b>Afternoon</b>	<p><b>1:00-2:20pm Panel: Threshold States and the Natural &amp; Human-Built Environment</b>  <b>(Individual submissions)</b>  1:00-1:20 C. Riley Augé, <i>Supernatural Sentinels: Managing Threshold Fears via Apotropaic Agents</i>  1:20-1:40 Gilah Yelin Hirsch, <i>The Inuit Have No Concept of 'Future': Should We?</i>  1:40-2:00 Adam Rock &amp; Stanley Krippner, <i>When do Visual Mental Images Constitute Shamanic Journeying Images?</i>  2:00-2:20 Discussion</p> <p><b>2:20-2:35pm Break</b></p> <p><b>2:35-3:55pm Panel: Threshold States via the Internet, Dance, and Sports</b>  <b>(Individual submissions)</b>  2:35-2:55 Katherine Bradford, <i>Architecture of the Internet: Thresholds, Space, and Perspective</i>  2:55-3:15 Jonathan S. Marion, <i>Dancing Across the Threshold: Some Interesting Scenarios from Ballroom Dance</i>  3:15-3:35 Jerome Lynn Hall, <i>Beyond the Blue Door: Surfing and the Transforming Self</i>  3:35-3:55 Discussion</p> <p><b>4:00-5:00pm SAC Business Meeting</b>  <b>5:00-7:30pm Dinner &amp; Free time</b></p>
<b>Evening</b>	<p><b>7:30-8:30/9pm Experiential Workshop</b>  Dolly Lai, <i>Crossing Thresholds with Yoga Nidra</i></p>

**Sunday, April 8, 2007**

<p><b>9:00-9:05am Announcements</b>  <b>9:05-10:05 Closing-Last words</b></p>
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## PAPER ABSTRACTS

(Abstracts appear in order of presentation. Any changes will be announced during the conference.)

WEDNESDAY-APRIL 4, 2007

AFTERNOON

### **1:05pm Panel (individual submissions): *Rethinking Assumptions About Altered States of Consciousness***

**Rock, Adam J. (Deakin University) & Stanley Krippner (Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center). *Altered States of Consciousness do not Exist***

Threshold experiences such as altered states of consciousness are of primary interest to scholars studying the anthropology of consciousness. We critically examine the key definitional elements of the term "altered state of consciousness" and argue that affixing the qualifiers "altered state" to consciousness results in a theoretical confusion of consciousness and its content, that is, consciousness is mistaken for the content of consciousness. We refer to this as the consciousness/content fallacy and argue that it may be avoided if one supplants "altered states of consciousness" with "altered pattern of phenomenal properties," an extrapolation of the term "phenomenal field." We conclude that altered states of consciousness do not exist and consider the implications of the consciousness/content fallacy for theory and research.

**Cooper, Rachel (Malaspina University College). *Science, Sheldrake and Shamans***

The assumption that consciousness cannot manifest itself as other than as an inert, local effect has been challenged so successfully by both field studies in cultural anthropology and experimental research in psychology that it is no longer tenable. In this regard, the degree of concordance is now high enough as to warrant a shift from the descriptive to the explanatory modes of inquiry. Rupert Sheldrake's concept of morphogenetic information fields represents a promising step in this direction. Rooted in Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and apparently influenced by the speculated existence of the Akashic Records, Sheldrake postulates that these fields play a critical role in the shaping of form, behavioral adaptations, and both inter- and intra-species communication. This paper constitutes an attempt to present those aspects of Sheldrake's work that bear directly on our interest in the 'ways of the shamans.'

**Harper, Robert (Professor Emeritus, Simon Fraser University). *Telepathy and Clairvoyance: Success in the Ganzfeld***

The Ganzfeld procedure calls for a sensorily reduced environment in which the subject is asked to identify a randomly selected target viewed by a percipient in a remote location. Statistical studies of samples drawn from the *general* population provide, as with Remote Viewing, the strongest evidence so far for the existence of telepathic and clairvoyant abilities. Unfortunately, apart from Targ and Puthoff's accounts of admittedly highly gifted sensitivities, little if any attention has been given to qualitative studies of individual protocols of high-scoring participants. The author, a subject in one of an experimental series conducted by Charles Honorton, who developed the Ganzfeld approach, kept detailed notes of his successful session. Three conclusions are drawn: first, the cognitive processes involved fall out with any theoretical framework to be found in mainstream psychology; second, the concept of mathematically derived "hits" and "misses" masks possibly valuable insights into the nature of information processing; and third, the results support the view that consciousness is not local.

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## **2:40pm Panel (individual submissions): *Science, Faith, and Dreams***

### **Karavousanos, Emmanuel J. (Independent scholar). *How Science and Religious Faith are Inseparable in the Quest for the Solution to the Problem of Consciousness***

In his "Science in the Modern World," Alfred North Whitehead wrote, "Familiar things happen and mankind does not bother about them. It takes an unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious." With these words as a basis we can now describe the nexus between science and religion, why the mystical experience and ultimate reality occur, and why faith must be shifted from the skies above to a faith in the analysis of familiar, obvious things that we take for granted. The following furthers the reason for analysis of so many things we ignore:

*Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted.* Aldous Huxley  
*No question is so difficult to answer as that to which the answer is obvious.* George Bernard Shaw  
*The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it.* Kahlil Gibran  
*Nothing evades our attention as persistently as that which is taken for granted.* Gustav Ichheiser  
*I deal with the obvious ... because the obvious is what people need to be told.* Dale Carnegie  
*There is nothing as deceptive as an obvious fact.* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
*Because it's familiar, a thing remains unknown.* Hegel

### **Ma'ruf, Muhammad A. (Cordoba Institute). *Strife and the "Imaginal Realms" of English Speaking Muslims***

Mark Shekoyan (2003) contains a brief introduction to the idea of the "imaginal realm" and of its use in formulating questions about anthropological studies of human self-definition, consciousness, and its transformations. In this paper I will develop and critique the notion of the imaginal realm by discussing ideas and debates that inform the interpretation of dream encounters with personages of high rank and other sacred symbols in dreams reported by Muslims.

The paper is based on first-hand information derived from recent as well as earlier spells of field work, primarily in the US. The more recent field work has focused on discussions about dreams and dream interpretation among a group of Muslims in southern New Jersey. The research indicates that competing and conflicting interpretations of dreams and visions can exist. It also poses other questions, such as:

- When conflicts about the meaning of the sacred products of the sleeping imagination surface, what kinds of questions do they pose for the dreamers and the oneirocritic?
- How is the idea of the "imaginal realm" useful in seeking answers to such questions?

Shekoyan, Mark. *Magical Efficacy, Selfhood and the Imaginal in Golden Dawn Ceremonial Magick*. SAC Annual Meeting, 2003.

### **Hurd, Ryan Dungan (John F. Kennedy University). *Rock Art and Dreams: Explorations into Process-Oriented Archaeology on Ometepe Island, Nicaragua***

This presentation explores a researcher's dreams that occurred while investigating the prehistoric rock art of Ometepe Island, Nicaragua. The fieldwork for this project was undertaken in January 2006 as part of an archaeological survey, in cooperation with the Ometepe Petroglyph Project. A more integral approach to archaeology situates the researcher within the context of the study. Because expectation precedes perception, the imaginal realm of the researcher is crucial to the investigation of cognitive artifacts. In the field, lucid dreams were incubated to direct the dreamer/researcher towards the concept of "rock art." This phenomenological process reveals how the researcher structured the concept of prehistoric rock art on Ometepe Island, as well as how this process transformed his perception. This exploration is not meant to be a substitution for traditional ethno-archaeological inquiry, but instead a *complimentary* thread to deepen empirical observations and take responsibility for researcher bias and worldview. The presentation will also include a visual feast of some of the most intriguing- and unpublished-petroglyphs in the world.



## **EVENING**

### **7:30pm Experiential workshop (fee is charged): *The “PK Party” as a Teaching Tool in Consciousness Studies* with John Lovern (Allan Hancock College) and Brian Stokes (Allan Hancock College)**

In order to generate student interest and discussion, and empower our students in their academic and personal lives, we adapted a procedure originally developed by aeronautical and astronautical engineer Jack Houck as an outgrowth of his research on remote viewing (<http://www.jackhouck.com/pk.shtml>) which he dubbed the “PK Party,” and utilized it as a classroom activity in our college course, *States of Consciousness*. The initials PK stand for psychokinesis, or, popularly, “mind over matter.” In PK parties, Houck reported that high percentages of participants were able to bend pieces of silverware in ways not ordinarily possible, and our classroom experience has replicated his findings. Following a brief discussion of our experiences with PK parties in the classroom and the history of how PK parties originated, we will lead participants in an actual PK party, augmented by a brief hypnotic induction and ideomotor responses via Chevreuil pendula and finger-signaling.

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**THURSDAY-APRIL 5, 2007**

## **MORNING**

### **9:05am Panel (individual submissions): *Therapy, Ambivalence, and Thresholds* Lewis, Sara (The University of Chicago). *Negotiating Thresholds in Clinical Work: Tolerating Ambivalence, Paradox and Uncertainty***

Many people seek help during those difficult times we might call “thresholds.” An illness, itself, might signal a threshold which brings an opportunity or possibility for healing. In this paper I will discuss the anthropology of clinical work, looking specifically at psychotherapeutic technique that aims to help people make meaning of threshold situations. Anthropological theory on rites of passage and liminality suggests that thresholds mark a period of existing “betwixt and between.” In these moments we are neither here, nor there. We stand in the doorway, having not yet left our old way of being, and simultaneously not yet arrived at our new destination. This position is anxiety-provoking. Many patients and therapists, alike, attempt to alleviate this anxiety by sliding back into old patterns or by scrambling too quickly into “new” and “better” ways of being. I argue that it is more helpful and authentic for therapists to help their patients be more comfortable existing exactly where they are—wherever they are. This becomes exceedingly difficult in threshold situations. To simply “exist” in the threshold, one must be able to tolerate ambivalence, paradox and uncertainty. While much writing on thresholds aims to describe methods to cross them, here I will suggest how it is meaningful to remain *within* the threshold in order to promote deep transformation and healing.

### **Alvarado, Richard (San Jose State University). *Cultural Construction of Menopause in Two Botánicas***

This research looks at the cultural construction of menopause in two botánicas in Northern California. The goals of the project are threefold. First, I seek to understand how, and if, menopause differs in its cross-cultural definition. Second, reviewed literature was used to research the existing information regarding menopause, its symptoms, and remedies, as it may pertain to the American medical model. Third, ethnographic methods such as participant observation and open-ended semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on cultural alternatives for dealing with menopause among botánica customers. The project focuses on these research questions: How do botánica women define menopause? Do all women experience menopause? If so, how? What menopausal symptoms do women experience? Furthermore, the project hopes to form the foundation for more in-depth research in the future.

**Blätter, Andrea (University of Hamburg, Germany). *Beneath the Threshold of Consciousness: Hypnotherapeutic Communication with the Unconscious***

Although hypnotic techniques are ancient ways to pass the threshold to the realm of the unconscious, they are often given little attention by anthropologists. These techniques make it possible to bring unconscious material to consciousness or to do fruitful work in the unconscious without the participation of the conscious self. Using examples from hypnotherapeutic practice, this presentation will illustrate some similarities with shamanic journeys and discuss some of the principles of communication with the unconscious. Explanations for therapeutic success of treatments are offered from a psychotherapeutic perspective.

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**10:40am Panel (individual submissions): The Self and the Quest for Threshold States**  
**Aaslid, Flore Singer (Norwegian University of Science and Technology). *Facing the Dragon- Exploring a Conscious Phenomenology of Intoxication***

The presentation is based on my PhD thesis, *Facing the Dragon- Exploring a conscious phenomenology of intoxication*, which seeks to introduce an alternative to the positivist paradigm currently dominating drug research. *Conscious* in that it includes and expands on the concept of intentionality when exploring user trajectories as perceived by the users themselves and among themselves and *phenomenology* in the sense that this focus also takes into account how these intentionalities are expressed through dynamic human experience. The “dragon” refers to the terra incognita or ‘inner terrain’ within us which is explored through the self-biographical narratives of recreational drug users.

By contextualizing the discussion historically and placing it within a contemporary framework, it examines how certain widespread contemporary trends are influential in terms of serving as a meta-template specifically related to the postmodern identity project and consumerism that in many ways epitomize our present epoch. The concept of “gates” is used to reflect different cycles in user narratives based on Ken Wilber’s concept of “fulcrums”- a dynamic cycle of opposites in motion resulting in four main phases of disidentification, identification, disintegration and transcendence, and Joseph Campbell’s mythical journey. Link to thesis: <http://www.diva-portal.org/ntnu/theses/abstract.xsql?dbid=1000>

**Fotiou, Evgenia (University of Wisconsin-Madison). *Reconfiguring the Self: The Western Pursuit of Shamanic Experience***

This paper is based on my dissertation fieldwork on shamanic tourism in Iquitos, Peru. My focus is the ritual use of the hallucinogen ayahuasca in a tourist setting. In my presentation, I will discuss the reasons westerners seek the threshold experience facilitated by the hallucinogen, the ways they conceptualize it, as well as the ways they attempt to integrate the experience in their daily lives. My discussion will include concepts of healing and spirituality as well as knowledge. Through examples that I will draw from extensive interviews with western users of ayahuasca, I will show the ways in which the experience facilitates a shift in ideas about selfhood and culture as well as the nature of knowledge itself. I will show that the expensive trip to Peru is rarely pursued merely to sample a potent hallucinogen, but that it also aims to a personal transformation aided by the removal from the world and one’s ordinary life. The ritual structure, the challenge of being in the jungle and receiving teaching in a non-verbal way seem to present the perfect context for reflection. This experience is then integrated in one’s life history in a variety of ways and more often than not, it occupies a pivotal position in it.

**Dobkin de Rios, Marlene (University of California-Irvine). *Drug Tourism at the Gate: Boundaries Between Sacramental and Secular Use of Psychedelics in the Amazon***

A recent US Supreme Court decision in 2005 permits adherents in the US of the Brazilian religion, Uniao do Vegetal to ingest the powerful plant psychedelic, ayahuasca, as a religious sacrament. Entering into altered states, individuals imbibing the admixture of 2 powerful psychedelics are provided entry into altered states that permit them to experience sacred space. The church rituals are formal, accompanied by music and sermons, and currently influence more than 9,000 members in Brazil, the US and Europe. In contrast to this phenomenon, a growing activity of drug tourism can be easily observed in South America, as New Age gurus with agents abroad, tour men and women to the Peruvian, Brazilian, Ecuadorian and Bolivian Amazon to partake of the ayahuasca drink. While

the UDV church is careful to screen individuals who wish to drink the ayahuasca, the tour guides are generally not part of any historic tradition and are unskilled in diagnosing and treating illnesses or spiritual crises that present with their clients. The commodification of these plant drugs precipitates a public health problem, given the power of the chemicals to interact with any number of other substances such as antibiotics and more than 200 common foods antipathetic to the MAOI chemicals in the psychedelic brew. This paper will examine these two distinctive uses of ayahuasca and point out the dangers of what Ortega y Gasset called “the democratization of the masses,” as this concept applies to the belief of Westerners of their right to enter these sacred thresholds without meaningful guidance.

**Rock, Adam (Presenter, Deakin University), Gavin Abbott, Hatun Childargushi, and Melanie Kiehne. *The Effect of Shamanic Journeying and Schizotypy on Phenomenology: An Experimental Study of Threshold States***

During shamanic journeying experiences the percipient’s soul purportedly navigates thresholds in order to access spirit worlds. Consequently, ‘journeying’ may be conceptualized as a threshold state. The purpose of this study was to investigate experimentally the effect of shamanic journeying, and a personality trait referred to as schizotypy, on phenomenology. Eighty-four naïve participants were administered the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire and then randomly assigned to one of three conditions: shamanic journeying to the “upper world” instructions coupled with either drumming at 8 beats-per-second for 15 minutes or exposure to a Ganzfeld for 15 minutes; and a control condition consisting of sitting quietly with eyes open for 15 minutes. Participants’ phenomenology was assessed using the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory (PCI). A significant difference between conditions was found for the PCI major dimensions of altered experience, visual imagery, altered state, and arousal, and the minor dimensions of fear, body image, perception, and imagery amount. Significant differences were found between schizotypy (high versus low) groups for the PCI major dimensions of altered experience, rationality, and volitional control, and the minor dimensions of body image, time sense, perception, and meaning. Findings are discussed in the context of threshold consciousness.



## **AFTERNOON**

### **1:30pm Panel: *The Role and Significance of Ritual and Chant in Inducing Threshold States***

**Panel organizer and chair: Elizabeth Newby Fraser (California Institute for Human Science)**

Sacred rituals that are associated with threshold states exist in most traditional societies and have been retained in many modern societies where some have been assimilated and become trans cultural. These may be associated with rites of passage, intended to be directed specifically towards psychospiritual or physical healing, or may be intended as a form of spiritual development or transformation. The panel will discuss aspects of three sacred rituals from different cultures: the Sufi Dhikr, shamanic sacred spaces and Hindu Kavadi. It will examine the ways in which these practices induce threshold states that influence human transformation.

**Mijares, Sharon (California Institute of Human Science & Chapman University). *The Sufi Experience***

Sufis have a deep understanding of the alchemical process of transformation. Breathing practices, turning, contemplation and the intoning of sacred phrases are used to invoke deep transformation. Dhikr is the primary practice of the Sufis. This “ritual of remembrance” opens the heart enabling the practitioner to know one’s unity with the Divine. This paper includes the experiential practice of the Sufis.

**Cavanaugh, Roger (California Institute for Human Science). *Crossing the Threshold Into Sacred Space***

Traditional peoples often see the world around them and their own participation in that world as sacred. For many shamanic as well as other mystical traditions walking in sacredness is to be aware that each is a center where one

has access to the greater spiritual reality. This part of the panel explores crossing the threshold into sacred space as a remembrance and acknowledgement of the heart facilitated by ritual and chant. This exploration compares two examples of chant, Zikir, the major ritual of the Sufis, in which repetitions of the divine name evoke remembrance, and that of the Ma Tah Saykee who are said to be the most ancient shamanic lineage associated with local indigenous peoples. Attendees will be able to experience how these chants resonate with the heart and other aspects of the body to facilitate a state of “remembrance” so that the sacred is an immediate felt presence evoking an expanded sense of self.

**Newby Fraser, Elizabeth (California Institute for Human Science). *Hindu Kavadi***

Pilgrimage and cultural rituals are considered thresholds for transformation, like the Kavadi festival found in several Indian Ocean rim countries: South India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, smaller islands, and South Africa. It is usually associated with Early Hinduism, but also occurs in some Buddhist festivals and is believed to have pre Aryan shamanic influences. The festival begins with a fasting period and culminates in a procession, often starting from the ocean or riverside where altered states of consciousness are induced with drumming and religious chants. Participants carry “Kavadi,” a heavy wooden or metal frame, which may also involve body piercing. The festival then proceeds to a temple where the event may end with fire walking.

The ritual is often undertaken with a specific healing intent; as a rite of passage, or for diverse spiritual reasons. This presentation will examine ways in which aspects of the ritual contribute to psychological effects that produce changes in consciousness, catharsis and mind, body or spiritual well being.

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**3:05pm Panel (individual submissions): *Love, Death, and Threshold States***

**Hirini, Paul (Deakin University & Eastern Health Adult Mental Health Program, Melbourne) & Adam Rock (Deakin University). *Indigenous Understandings of Suicide: The New Zealand Example***

Indigenous suicide is recognized as a significant public health concern for many Western countries. Akin to other modern indigenous populations with a history of British colonization, the New Zealand Maori is at an increased risk of suicide relative to their non-indigenous peers residing within their homeland. The vast majority of the suicide literature ignores indigenous wisdoms concerning explanations for the etiology and nature of the alarming rise in contemporary indigenous suicide rates. I proceed by elucidating the phenomenon of suicide as a threshold state whereby one passes from life to a literal (i.e., bodily) or figurative (i.e., spiritual) death. Subsequently, I offer various indigenous explanations for this threshold state by sharing insights from Maori experts. The notions of cultural transition, collective adjustment to rapid social change and immense socio-cultural upheaval in response to colonization feature prominently among the themes offered. It is argued that such indigenous wisdoms and sociological insights significantly advance our knowledge and understanding of modern indigenous suicide and, thus the plight of a people first referred to by Captain James Cook as “A fierce, war-like, warrior race.”

**Hardgrave, M. Diane (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) & Dr. William Jankowiak (University of Nevada, Las Vegas). *Adultery and the Consciousness of Union***

A cross-cultural investigation of responses to adultery revealed that within every culture, regardless of descent and social complexity, both men and women actively seek to control the sexual behavior of their mate. The pair bond hypothesis focuses on the dyadic nature of a couple and posits that a sense of mutual belonging exists which is rooted in an implicit often unspoken, idealization that promotes responsibility and intimacy. This paper focuses on that implicit and unspoken idealization of intimacy through the symbolism of sacred unions within several belief systems. It is suggested that a consciousness of union rooted in archetypes of the divine operate in relationships and contribute to methods of restraining infidelity.

**Cline, Kurt (National Taipei University of Technology). *A Poetics of Liminality: The Shaman's Song in Epic Poetry***

From time immemorial the shaman has been considered master of the threshold-of that liminal region between imagination and reality, between dreams and waking life. The song of the shaman, as it appears in myth, legend, shamanic narratives and ethnographic literature is both descriptive of the shaman's journey across the threshold and into the Otherworld to recover a lost soul and at the same time engenders such a journey. Songs recorded during shamanic séances show that the shaman employs some of the techniques of the epic singer; however, the shaman's

song is supposed to have the power to invoke spirits and is presumed to be a narrative of actual events and encounters which occur in a spiritual dimension invisible to spectators. The unique, invocatory power of the shaman's song arises out of a specialized poetics which includes onomatopoeia, imitation of animal noises, and the employment of nonsense words, considered by shamans to be a secret language. Traces of the bizarre dreamscape summoned up by the tribal shaman's song, as well as its engagement with linguistic paradox can be seen in ancient epical literature, particularly in the theme of the Otherworldly Journey. *The Kalevala*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *The Descent of Inanna* are examined as fragmented recuperations of the shaman's otherworldly voyage. I show, moreover, an historical continuity (however problematized) between the shaman's song and modern visionary, avant-garde and experimental verse.

**Beischel, Julie (Presenter, The University of Arizona), Adam Rock, and Gary E. Schwartz.**  
***Claimant Mediums, Threshold Consciousness, and Purported Communication with Discarnates: A Phenomenological Study***

The medium's conscious awareness arguably traverses a threshold that facilitates communication with discarnates. Despite recent experimental research investigating this phenomenon (e.g., Beischel & Schwartz, 2007), no qualitative studies have been conducted. Consequently, we asked forty-three claimant mediums to describe in as much detail as possible, how they personally experience receiving communication from a discarnate. Phenomenological analysis revealed nine comprehensive constituent themes that were used to formulate a fundamental structural definition. Implications of the findings for thresholds of consciousness are discussed.

**Rill, Bryan (Florida State University). *Bridging Representation and Experience***

This paper addresses the failure of representation to adequately capture the human experience. While many anthropologists have attempted to move beyond the crisis of representation by embracing theories of embodiment and the intersubjective experience, I argue that the phenomenological and symbolic approaches can be integrated into a seamless model to not only represent but give access to the indeterminacy of experience. The model uses Piercian semiotics, redefining the sign as a process rather than a thing. This process begins with the indeterminate pre-objective experience and ends with mental representation. Such a framework has the potential to not only solve an age old conflict within anthropology, but also offers a new methodology by which culture can be interpreted.

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## **EVENING**

**7:30pm Experiential workshop (free): *Crossing the Threshold: Sacred Places in San Diego County, An Experiential Journey of Consciousness with Roger Cavanaugh (California Institute for Human Science)***

Crossing the threshold into sacred space and more open states of consciousness is often thought of as something we do to make ourselves more available to the sacred. For traditional peoples their experience is often being drawn to a place in nature that offers a more complete and unified experience of self as part of the natural order. San Diego County is rich in places of sacredness and spiritual power, places where it is possible to more easily enter into states of consciousness that serve distinct purposes in supporting the human community. This workshop will provide some introductory information about these sacred sites and will offer a series of guided shamanic journeys to experience them. Among the sacred spaces that will be explored are Madre Grande, the mountain associated with the Great Mother where one goes for healing, community and celebration; and Mount Cuchama, "the sacred high place" a vision quest site for Native Americans. In addition, directions will be provided to several nearby places where conference attendees can easily explore some of the more available local sacred spaces.

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**9:05am Panel: Anthropology's Role in Ecopsychology: Speculations on the Creation of a Coherent Culture**

**Panel organizer and chair: Mark A. Schroll (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)**

**Discussants: Stanley Krippner (Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center) & Valerie Mojeiko (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies & California Institute of Integral Studies), with Don Eulert (Center for Integrative Studies) commenting on C. G. Jung as**

**Ecopsychologist**

Challenging anthropology's purely descriptive view of culture, this prescriptively oriented symposium speculates on how anthropologists and transpersonal psychologists can contribute to the discussion of ecopsychology. This prescriptive orientation is an extension of an ethnographic orientation that suggests the need to include a personal biography of growth and transcendence. Specifically, what are the central issues facing us preventing the creation of a coherent culture? Based on our understanding of indigenous cultures and spiritual traditions, what wisdom can we bring to the discussion of ecopsychology?

**Hrisko, Constantine (Colby College). *The Study of Consciousness and the Confusion of Theory(ries): Between 'Empiricism,' 'Experience,' and 'Relativity' (or anti-anti-relativism)?***

Empiricists are still operating under a data-restrictive paradigm oblivious of how 'dreamlike' every day reality really is. Replicable, real, objective? What are those things in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when history changes everything from day to day? Experience? Ah, whose experience will it be: riddled with identity politics; what experience? Yours, mine, some shamanic group, some alternative sexual enclave, hallucinogens and their effects, world mystical traditions, eco-feminism? Will anyone actually speak to anyone else in the end? Finally how about the Real Anthropologists for whom Clifford Geertz, though dead, is still GOD. Mr. ABSOLUTE relativism "anti-anti relativism." The man who gave us our late 20th century tower of cultural BABEL. Yeah, we can't know what anyone else thinks or believes or feels, because, they don't even have a Western interiority that is an analogue to ours. All we can do is collect texts and read between the lines, write down the publicly performed symbolic culture which is where indigenous peoples get their ideas, beliefs, etc. And each one is UNIQUE and DIFFERENT, at least until the late 20th century when 'here' becomes 'there' and 'there' 'here,' and we can't bind anything anymore, so we don't know who anyone is in any case. We're all relatively relative in each and every moment of our lives these days. 21st century Heracliteans? So my question is, does the study of consciousness even exist? And if it does just what might that be?

**Schroll, Mark A. (University of Nebraska-Lincoln). *Living on the Decaying Edges of the Industrial Age***

Nebraska is currently in the grip of a 5-year drought as the Ogallala Aquifer continues to be used up. Meanwhile too many center pivots are wasting water as this precious resource splashes onto car windows as they drive past "amber waves of grain" on interstate 80 in the 90 degree plus summer. Add to this crime against reason—let alone experience—Con Agra (based in Omaha) controls much of the world's food distribution with DuPont—so now Agra Business is united with a leading corporate power that is engaged in the genetic manipulation of food production. This corporate colossus even has a somewhat secret new name: DuCon (it's on their freight trucks in small print). And yet the OM Center for Spirituality is just two blocks from Con Agra's corporate headquarters in Omaha—smack dab in the middle of a 4-square block "Soho-like" artsy neighborhood. Stanley Krippner gave a dream workshop at the OM Center in 2004, plus two other lectures.

The irony too is that Council Bluffs, Iowa (so-named because it is where indigenous peoples journeyed in pilgrimage in order to gain visionary inspiration) is just across the Missouri river, where these bluffs tower above the Omaha skyline seemingly watching these con-men with timeless reverence, waiting for a spiritual Renaissance. Hence my thesis "all of us are living on the decaying edges of the Industrial Age, "whereby we have arrived at a threshold of crucial importance that demands our ability to act.



**Mijares, Sharon (California Institute of Human Science & Chapman University). *Women, Evolutionary Development and the Transformation of Consciousness***

An ecopsychological perspective includes gender equality—within the individual and within the world. Irregardless of its religious ideals and accomplishments, patriarchy has failed to make the world a better place due to gender imbalance. There was a time when stories were told of the splitting of heaven and earth, a foretelling of the domination of masculine values and suppression of the feminine. This separation has created a great wound in the human psyche. The dreamtime is changing and the new story will be one of gender equality. Patriarchy's final grasp for power is but the last throes of a dying era. It is time for women to take their place—and add the balance that transforms the world.

**Hagens, Bethe (Goddard College). *Bullroarer: Vesica and Vision for Ecopsychology***

The *bullroarer* is a simple spinning tool, a sound-generating device, a knife, a toy—a consciousness-altering instrument humans have continued to make for at least the last 30,000 years. Universally, bullroarers are regarded as the voice of creation, the call to initiate action in “threshold rituals” such as funerals, vision quests, vigilante raids, healing ceremonies, marriages, fertility and rain dances, gender segregation, and other practices to mediate changes in society and environment. The physiological impact of bullroarers on the human brain is to simultaneously experience these changes as *personal* transcendence and oneness with processes of nature. If the bullroarer “vocalizes” change, its companion the *magic wheel* “breathes” life into new being. Bullroarers and magic wheels are symbolically alive today in religion, myth, philosophy, and ritual practice in all parts of the world, but their meanings are disconnected and fragmented. How can we reconnect this panhuman ecological vision, re-experience being “swallowed” and “excreted” by the great cosmic snake, Ouroboros?

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**SATURDAY-APRIL 7, 2007**

**MORNING**

**10:05 am Panel: Resonance Theory**

**Panel organizer and chair: Mira Z. Amiras**

**Amiras, Mira Z. (San Jose State University). *Resonance Theory: The Art and Science of Mutual Impact***

In this paper I will explore the physical nature of ‘resonance’ as it applies to human experience. In physics, by matching the natural frequency of an object, the two will begin to vibrate. Adding energy can reinforce the resonant frequency and increase the oscillation between two objects. In human experience, resonance implies a profound magnetic link to place, beings, entities, and spirits, as well as a persuasive and persistent sense of ‘rightness,’ telepathic bond, and what can only be called a profound and undeniable connectedness. Resonance is not about ‘love’ or ‘desire,’ but rather about mutual impact. In the human experience, when two objects resonate, there is a synapse between them that quivers with a kind of magnetic delight. They are driven together not by desire or grasping, but by what is experienced as compelling transpersonal forces. In the martial arts, this can manifest as ‘ki’ or ‘chi,’ in tantra as kundalini, and in music as harmony. In S/M fetish ritual resonance is manifest quite literally through the crack of the whip, while in diplomacy, ‘resonance’ has the potential to confer a symbiosis that can bring conflicting parties beyond win/lose or even compromise scenarios. ‘Resonance’ is not about the ‘self,’ but about the synapses between elements. Two quite different examples will be offered.

**Bronson, Matthew C. (California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco). *The Rapport Report: Proven Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining the Human Connection***

Ever wonder why you seem to really connect with some people, and end up “making beautiful conversational music” together whereas with others you might as well be “two ships passing in the night” despite your best efforts? Anthropologists of consciousness have a special interest in the underpinnings of human communication—

what is it about consciousness that makes the sharing of meanings across organisms and contexts possible and indeed such a compelling aspect of being human? This presentation explores some key findings of linguists, neuroscientists and others who have been studying rapport, or communicative resonance between individuals in the past thirty years. I will draw from the work of linguists like Deborah Tannen and George Lakoff, principles of neurolinguistic programming and current work in the area of intercultural and interpersonal communication to explore how and why people connect—or not. Some examples of everyday miscommunication and unestablished rapport in educational settings will be presented for analysis within these frames. Finally, I will share practical strategies for knowing when you have lost or failed to establish rapport and what to do about it.

**MacDonald, Jeffrey L. (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization). *Threshold Literature for the New Age***

Over the past 30 years the so-called New Age movement has been propelled by the publication of a wide variety of literature often purported to be based in the discovery of new or rediscovery of occult, lost, and/or ancient knowledge or traditions of Western and non-Western cultures. Scholarship varies in rigor and technique. Examples include the explosive growth of literature on topics such as cosmology, earth energies, divination, healing, reincarnation, shamanism, Gnosticism, Wicca, astrology, alchemy, evolution, cabala and so forth. While many of these areas remain on the fringe of mainstream science and popular culture, there have been a number of seminal works that might be called threshold literature because they have presented a case that resonated with a sufficient portion of the mainstream to produce an overall effect on people's thinking and worldview. These include for example, 1) Carlos Castaneda's *Teachings of Don Juan*, and the growth of popular shamanism, 2) John Michel's *View over Atlantis*, and the notion of earth energies and feng shui, 3) Elaine Pagels' *Gnostic Gospels* and the development of neo-gnosticism, and 4) most recently, Baigent, Lee, and Lincoln's, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which led to the bestselling *Da Vinci Code* novel and motion picture as well as an enormous alternative history literature on Mary Magdalene, Gnosticism, the Knights Templar, and the Masons. In this paper I examine current potential threshold literature closely related to these works that ties together the archaeology of the Middle East and Egypt, evolution, alchemy, biblical historiography, metallurgy, and modern physics, to allegedly rediscover the Philosopher's Stone and produce it for mass consumption.

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## AFTERNOON

### **1pm Panel (individual submissions): Threshold States and the Natural & Human-Built Environment**

**Augé, C. Riley (Flathead Valley Community College). *Supernatural Sentinels: Managing Threshold Fears via Apotropaic Agents***

The thresholds of the human built environment, whether sacred, political, or vernacular, have always been understood as a paradox: a point which, while providing safe entry or life sustaining air and light, also represents the most vulnerable and likely access for danger. Cultures around the world and throughout history share psychological fears associated with their buildings' thresholds: door and windowsills, gates, hearths, chimneys, and corners, yet little scholarship has been focused on this aspect of architecture or human psychology. This paper will explore the various fears associated with architectural thresholds and the apotropaic agents devised to repel, disarm, or capture the frightful supernatural perpetrators. It is through the form, design, and application of these apotropaic devices that people negotiate with the fearful, unpredictable, and unknown aspects of life in an attempt to wield a measure of personal power. Finally, the import of this paper lies in its call for further interdisciplinary dialogue and research into this area of human expression.

**Yelin Hirsch, Gilah (California State University, Dominguez Hills). *The Inuit Have No Concept of 'Future': Should We?***

In the last few years I have had the privilege of being invited to various remote communities and countries. I will give a slide presentation on 3 of these: the tiny country of Bhutan, the Western Plateau of Tibet and Mount Kailash, and the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut (Canadian Arctic). In each of these cases, the 21<sup>st</sup> C has suddenly blasted through ancient cultures, demonstrating dramatic clashes between East and West, North and South—



dramatically changing ecology, spirituality, and behavior in very short order. While Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit, has never had a word or concept for “future,” can those cultures who do, assign meaningful substance to the word? In considering the threshold of cultural futures we may be looking at a planet of sameness—globalized, secularized, consumerized. However, as sacred sites and spiritual practices disappear, we must instead sanctify relationships as we identify, maintain and preserve best practices of medicine, family and community, as well as ritual in all cultures as practiced in situ and in Diaspora.

**Rock, Adam (Deakin University) & Stanley Krippner (Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center).** *When do Visual Mental Images Constitute Shamanic Journeying Images?*

Despite renewed interest in shamanism and threshold states such as shamanic journeying experiences, journeying imagery remains neither well defined nor sufficiently understood. As a result, ostensibly shamanic journeying images may be accidentally assigned authentic shamanic journeying imagery status on the grounds that they may be co-mapped with the relevant ethnographic data in a relatively imprecise manner. Consequently, we propose six necessary conditions for a visual mental image to qualify as an authentic shamanic journeying image. It is suggested that the conjunction of all six necessary conditions constitutes a sufficient condition. The implications of these conditions for Walsh’s (1995) phenomenological mapping technique are also discussed.

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**2:35pm Panel (individual submissions): Threshold States via the Internet, Dance, and Sports**

**Bradford, Katherine (University of California, Santa Barbara).** *Architecture of the Internet: Thresholds, Space, and Perspective*

Throughout time, changing modes of perception have held the possibility of shifting consciousness and action. The analysis of the perception and use of space through art and architecture provides a foundation for explorations of how the virtual world is created and experienced. This study focuses on the idea of the threshold, or border, through which perception and identity may expand and shift, or become entrenched.

**Marion, Jonathan S. (California State University, San Marcos/University of California, San Diego).** *Dancing Across the Threshold: Some Interesting Scenarios from Ballroom Dance*

Starting with a brief exploration of how music, movement, and touch are all implicated in shifting dancers’ consciousness, this paper explores various threshold moments—including some of the dynamics that allow for and facilitate threshold experiences and states for practitioners—within the context of competitive ballroom dance. Focusing on the competitive experience in particular, this paper explores the interrelated topics of what it is like to learn, practice, perform and compete within the parameters of a highly stylized athletic, artistic, and expressive medium.

Dancers’ experiences with movement, partnering, and music will be discussed, especially as these pertain to the dancers’ perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Breakthroughs in lessons, dancing in a competition, and then waiting for their marks are all typical situations for ballroom competitors. Common or not, however, each often exist as threshold moments and experiences for ballroom competitors. Grounded in specific scenarios from ballroom lessons and competitions, this paper thus examines some of the scenarios where, when, how, and why dancers experience shifts in consciousness, and what, in turn, these shifts mean to the dancers within the context of their own ongoing commitments and participation within the ballroom world.

**Hall, Jerome Lynn (University of San Diego).** *Beyond the Blue Door: Surfing and the Transforming Self*

Play has often been described as little more than a series of physical movements. But in his seminal volume, *Homo ludens*, or “Man the Player,” preeminent Dutch historian and cultural theorist Johan Huizinga (b. 1872, d. 1945) explored the many social, psychological, and spiritual components of playful activity, likening it, on occasion, to the deeply expressive acts of, among other things, dance and religious ceremony. Because play necessarily occurs outside of “ordinary life,” it is shrouded in mystery and ritual. In play we encounter transformational moments—thresholds through which our physical and psychological selves pass. Nowhere are these events better manifested

than in the act of surfing, or “wave sliding” (*he’e nalu*) as it was known by the ancient Hawaiians. Whereas most recreational activities are delimited by the artificial boundaries of gaming boards, courts, or fields, surfing is bounded only by nature; it is a threshold activity, realized on a narrow margin of water where land and sea intersect—a blue door through which those who pass are challenged physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.



## **EVENING**

### **7:30pm Experiential workshop (fee is charged): *Crossing Thresholds with Yoga Nidra, with Dolly Lai (Bihar School of Yoga, India)***

The Indian school of yoga talks about several dimensions of Consciousness—the Conscious, the emotional Subconscious, cultural memories in the form of Archetypes, the Psychic Consciousness, the Witnessing Consciousness, the mystical Superconscious, and the Beyond, which is indescribable but experiential. Each of these levels has a threshold. It needs courage to cross a threshold since our own shadows and fears become obstacles along the way. We are attached to the known, the predictable and are afraid to let go and face the unknown, the unpredictable, the seemingly dangerous world beyond our thresholds.

The 5000-year-old Indian technique of Nyasa was a preparation to cross these thresholds. Swami Satyananda Saraswati of the Bihar School of Yoga has modified this system into Yoga Nidra. According to him, it is a state of dynamic sleep, where the body is relaxed as in sleep but the mind is completely alert and aware, where you have the capacity to simultaneously sleep and dream consciously.

This workshop will be an experiential journey to a threshold between sleep and wakefulness—the hypnagogic state. As with all thresholds, it provides the ability to be aware of two seemingly opposite states at the same time, being in neither. In many homes in India, the practice of placing an oil lamp at the threshold of the house at dusk describes this meditation perfectly.

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