

SOCIETY FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE MARCH 19-23, 2008

YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL
YALE UNIVERSITY

Conference Presentation Abstracts

alphabetically by last name of principal presenter

Marcus Abundis: A model of human consciousness: global cultural evolution

This paper presents a general model for human consciousness using Earth's geologic history of mass-extinction & recovery (evolutionary dynamics). Five Earthly dynamics trigger within humanity's adaptive psychology an "adverse relationship" with environment – a Paradox that sparks human consciousness with intellectual and spiritual questions of unity vs. diversity (Earth/Mother vs. humanity). Humanity adaptively mirrors Earth's five evolutionary dynamics with five gender-based archetypes (bio-cultural dynamic) that unfold in a mythologizing of natural adversity as foundation for all human knowledge.

The intellectual lineage used to develop this model includes: evolutionary biology and Earth systems science to establish an overarching context for this study; an answer to the "hard question" of consciousness; paleoanthropology defining the circumstance of humanity's emergence from Gaia; and psychology that monitors humanity's shift from animal-self to modern creative-self, using work of Hegel, Freud, Jung, Joseph Campbell, and Arnold & Amy Mindell as the foundation to for new structural psychology, Fractal geometry then offers a holographic/mathematical design for modeling consciousness, while memetics, finally, presents a tool for measurement of a person's conscious traits, in a variation of the Hall-Tonna inventory.

Frederique Apffel-Marglin: Re-entangling matter and spirit—a personal journey

This is my account of my own quest to locate the nexus between material and spiritual worlds, and what I learned and became in the process, based on my anthropological research and first-person exploration.

Julie Beischel:

Distinctive traits of those who 'speak with spirit': analysis of claimant mediums' unique personality characteristics using three standard questionnaires

Mediums are individuals who claim to experience regular communication arising from the deceased. The purpose of this study was 1) to examine the personality characteristics of mediums and compare them to published population norms where available and 2) to analyze any correlation between specific personality characteristics and the accuracy of the mediums' statements during controlled readings. Each of 27 American mediums completed three standard personality/psychological questionnaires: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R), and the Tellegen Absorption Scale (TAS). The results for each questionnaire will be discussed. In addition, the questionnaire results for a subset of mediums whose abilities were examined in the laboratory will be correlated to their accuracy scores. The questionnaire results from that subset of mediums will also be compared to the results from the general sample of claimant mediums. and spirit.

Julie Beischel and Adam J. Rock:

Quantitative phenomenological analysis of mediums' purported communication with discarnates

Mediums claim to be able to report accurate and specific information about the deceased loved ones (termed discarnates) of living people (termed sitters) even without any prior knowledge about the sitters or the discarnates and in the complete absence of any sensory feedback. Despite recent proof-focused experimental research investigating this phenomenon (e.g., Beischel & Schwartz, 2007), no studies have attempted to quantify the subjective experience of this variant of anomalistic information transfer. The aim of the present study was, thus, to investigate experimentally the

subjective effects of ostensible discarnate communication. Seven mediums were administered counter-balanced sequences of a treatment and control condition. The treatment condition consisted of a phone reading for a discarnate where only a blinded medium and a blinded experimenter were on the phone. The control condition consisted of a phone conversation between the medium and the same experimenter in which the medium was asked questions regarding a living person they knew. Mediums' subjective experience during each condition was retrospectively assessed using a questionnaire referred to as the *Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory*. We present this quantitative phenomenological data and extrapolate various tentative suggestions regarding the nature of the relationship between the medium's consciousness and spirit.

Paul Bernstein:

NDEs and their implications for understanding the nature of consciousness and spirit

Dr. Bernstein is as a former Board Member of the International Association of Near-Death Studies (IANDS), a past presenter at IANDS conferences, and the former editor of *Vital Signs* (the quarterly journal of IANDS). He has served on the faculties of Boston College and the University of California (Irvine). Along with identify categories of NDE data most promising for for future research, he will provide a philosophical and technical account of Near-Death Experiences (NDSs) in light of his own experience with Western and Eastern spiritual traditions and review the history of NDE research including some detailed individual cases. He will consider competing hypotheses offered to explain these data and the possible spiritual implications of such findings. His presentation includes a segment of the BBC documentary on the NDE phenomenon as an efficient way to outline the overall field and present both NDE experiences and research findings, including interview s with prominent NDE researchers such as Pim van Lommel, MD, and Bruce Greyson, MD.

David Blumenkrantz:

Coming of age and awakening to spiritual consciousness through rites of passage

The Chinese word for crisis has two parts, danger and opportunity. Coming of age presents danger from which opportunity may spring. Professionals interested in child development have focused on the period of puberty and onset of adolescence as a special time for growth and accelerated development. They have focused on the cognitive, physical, emotional, social and psychological aspects of this period in the life cycle. Only recently has attention been given to the nature and importance of the spiritual development of children and its relationship to being human. A child's coming of age opens pathways for awakening to spirit which, if not nurtured, creates life long roadblocks in human potential. At the onset of adolescence a window opens for the emerging adult to look out into a world of broader perceptions of self, expanded consciousness and exploration of their relationship to nature and the larger universe.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most cultures worldwide enacted elaborate initiation rituals to maximize opportunities for a youth's development of consciousness at this developmental milestone. Traditional "rites of passage" (von Gennep) have dwindled with Western contact, and go largely unrecognized in contemporary Western culture as a valuable ingredient for spiritual and healthy social awakening in children. This awakening, or "aha" experience shifts the child's perception of themselves, especially with regard to them becoming a "conscious self" with an increased ability for deeper ways of thinking about themselves and their relationship to the world outside of themselves. Coming of age brings with it the potential for the child to become a conscious self, thereby advancing their own sense of what it is like to be "them self."

The presenter speaks from more than 30 years of experience inviting people to shift the paradigm of youth development, hearing the echoes of our ancestors, and using rites of passage to attend to the spiritual, social, and psychological needs of children and youth. His presentation highlights the structure and process

of the Rite Of Passage Experience® (ROPE®,) how it serves as a pathway to spirituality along with the challenges and potential for mobilizing communities engage in this work.

Pradheep Chhallyll: Vedic Puranas and the eternal mystery of consciousness

Consciousness is not only the last surviving mystery for modern scientists but has been a mystery for every human being since the appearance of the humanity. Ancient Indian scientists—the Rishis—used the technology of yoga and meditation to transcend to the inner faculties of the mind, and thereby to solve the mystery of consciousness. What they found is difficult to articulate in words, so they used the language of symbolism as a powerful means to communicate it both to intellectuals and the common people.

At first appearance, the Puranic tales seem to be stories preaching moral lessons. Diving deeper into Indian mythology reveals a profound philosophical theme woven into these stories. The universal theme of all Indian mythology is about man's eternal inner quest into the mystery of his own existence. The core message of the theme helps unfold the mystery of consciousness by experiencing it as life on Earth. This unique theme is also the fundamental message of all rituals and customs in India. In this presentation, this unifying theme is discussed in the light of symbolism in the Vedic Puranas.

Jorge Conesa-Sevilla:

Willing and maintaining a lucid dream via sleep paralysis: correlates to shamanic practices

Work done during a two-year sabbatical leave in Switzerland (Inselspital, University Hospital, Berne) will be presented in connection with other ecopsychological or neurocognitive interests that intersect at least two of the topics included in the conference announcement: the anthropology of spirit possession; ethnography, etiology, implications; and neural correlates of spiritual experiences.

"...how is it possible that identical human-thought processes concerned with the same world produce divergent conceptions of that world...Is it not possible that the thought-processes which are involved here are not at all identical?" --Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*

Christopher Cott and Adam J. Rock:

Thematic analysis of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine-induced experiences

N,N-Dimethyltryptamine has been referred to as the "spirit molecule" (Strassman, 2001). Shamans ingest this psychoactive substance to produce ostensible shifts in consciousness (e.g., soul flight). While recent experimental research (e.g., Strassman et al., 1998) has quantified the subjective effects of DMT reported by recreational drug users, no systematic qualitative studies have been conducted. Consequently, the aim of the present study was to qualitatively assess the effect of DMT on subjective experience. Thirty-two non-shamans were administered an online questionnaire that included an open-ended question regarding the nature of DMT-induced experiences. A thematic analysis revealed eight comprehensive constituent themes that were used to formulate a fundamental structural definition that captured the essential aspects of DMT-induced experiences. We conclude by discussing the relationship between human consciousness and the "spirit molecule."

James Davies: The de-spiritualization of suffering

How a society perceives any emotional state (whether joy, sadness, aggression etc), radically affects how it will be experienced by those subject to that social perception. By applying this idea to the study of emotional pain, this paper will start by suggesting that modern society has largely embraced a 'negative' model of suffering, which is to be distinguished from a 'positive' model. The positive model holds that suffering can play a redemptive role in individual life; as if from affliction there can be derived some unexpected gain, new perspective or beneficial alteration. If positive suffering could have its motto, Thomas Hardy captured it well: 'If a way to the better then be', he said, 'it first exacts a full look at the worst'. Positive suffering, thus considered, is a kind of painful liminal region through which we can pass from a

worse to a better place. The 'negative' model, on the other hand, holds that nothing of value can come of suffering at all. There is no new vista or perspective to be gleaned at its end, nor any insight immured in its depths. It is thus something to be swiftly anesthetised or better still eliminated – an idea having its roots in the positivism of the late 1800s.

With these distinctions in place I shall then proceed to argue that in the 20th century the negative model of suffering largely replaced the 'positive' model that prevailed in the 18th and 19th centuries. I shall ground my argument in biographical examples (e.g. Leo Tolstoy's confessions of suffering), in which we clearly see the concept of 'spirit' being used to for palliative affect; a concept thus endowing discontent with some redemptive or positive worth. As powerful modern ideologies of individual progress, medical materialism and market competition really took root, suffering was increasingly demoted to the status of an economic inconvenience and/or biological affliction - in short, to an index of personal failure. This eroded the view that suffering had anything of value to add to human life.

Having suggested that the de-spiritualization of discontent led to the dominance of the negative model in the 20th century, I shall finally assess certain social consequences of this change. One possibility is that it has created an epoch in which suffering must be anesthetised at all costs, in which pills, television, frenetic activity, have become the principle palliatives for displeasure. This 'culture of anaesthetics', however, has in turn brought its own effects: partly by displacing the un-lived suffering to which many are sedated onto other receptacles – these might be future generations (who must suffer the environmental costs of our self-numbing behaviour), present associates or loved ones (who suffer our avoidances), or less robust countries and economies (who fund our escapist and consumerist lives). I close by reflecting upon how the anthropology of suffering must more directly investigate how the rise and fall of concepts affect the pragmatics of everyday life; how the demise or transfiguration of a guiding idea (in this case 'spirit') can radically influence how we define, experience and treat a phenomenon (in this case suffering) with which it was once very differently associated.

Malcolm Dean: **Extended and Collective Cognition in Cultural and Religious Systems**

Recent advances in computational culture and distributed cognition present a deep challenge to the overwhelmingly reductionist and pejorative assessments of religion found in the recent literature. Examining the question of cognitive systems from various approaches, including distributed cognition (Hutchins), transmission of affect (Brennan), semantic systems (Crutchfield), collective beings (Minati), and computational collective intelligence (Szuba), the work to be presented provides a new approach to modeling the structure and intelligence of cultural and religious systems, both personal and collective. The new paradigm is based on the thermodynamic nature of Information, and an enormous body of evidence for its role in cognition, social systems, and communication. Cognitive Thermodynamics provides a coherent and consistent approach to these problems by employing recent advances in computational mechanics, probability collectives, complexity science, and non-equilibrium thermodynamics.

Anirban Dey: **Digital simulation of spirituality in human consciousness**

One of the basic problems in the comprehensive study of spirit as a part of human consciousness is the unavailability of mathematical representation of 'spirit', meaning energy-with-no-tangible-matter. To make the computer simulation of spiritual consciousness or subconsciousness realistic and applicable, it is inevitable to put the representation of the spiritual level of consciousness under measurable means.

The paper establishes the idea of implementing digital simulation in the area of spirit and human consciousness. It establishes spirit as a form of energy embedded in human consciousness. The level of spiritual energy present and its variations in different humans can be measured through the process of recording different factors like the pattern of intensity of emotional expression, creativity, comprehension of symbolization, aesthetic intelligence, physical metabolism rate etc. In other words, the level of activated

spiritual energy in various humans is measurable and recordable to understand the evolution of the human body and consciousness, both in the individual and in the entire human species.

Hypothetically, the paper presents the idea of recording the ratio of body-oriented consciousness and spiritual consciousness. Thereby it establishes the evolution of spirit as coupled and decoupled to the human body. It concludes with the idea of using computer simulation to define, trace, and interpret the state of spirit even after the demise of the human body. The future development of this hypothesis and the computer simulation as well can be depicted as the mathematical measurement of the bodily consciousness and the spiritual (or subconscious) energy ratio of any living or non-living creature.

Angelina Diana: A Research Medium's perspective on consciousness and spirit

Ms. Diana is an experienced research medium with a full-time private practice, and a trustee of the Mediumship advisory board of the Forever Family Foundation. She lectures widely, teaches classes, and is currently involved in four research programs. Her presentation will include examples of spirit demonstration and the perspective of an actual and practicing medium. She has assisted in the formation of Afterlife discussion groups in Arizona, Florida, Connecticut, Manhattan, and elsewhere. Angelina speaks and writes about the ethics and metaphysics and of mediumship and is currently an Integrative Research Medium for the VERITAS Research Program at The University of Arizona. She has also conducted Mediumship afterlife tests and experiments with Dianne Archangel in Texas with the University of Virginia, for Dr. Emily Kelly, under the supervision of Dr Bruce Greyson, a principal organizer of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS). She will present her story, beginning with psychic manifestations in childhood, and including her work with the Forever Family Foundation.

Diane Donovan-Vaughn: Destiny—finding the way home

This paper documents the personal and spiritual journey of a marriage and family therapist. A series of mystical experiences during her life, evolves into the development of transformational methods involving altered consciousness. Using techniques found in various traditions, i.e. ecstatic breathing, drumming and chanting, the author transcends her own consciousness. Incorporating these methods into her practice, she and her clients awaken the ability to feel in contact with the divine.

Diane Donovan-Vaughn and Diane Hardgrave: Ecstasy in Breath experiential workshop

Participants in this workshop will have the chance to experience a profound practice of the sequential combination of several consciousness expanding methods said to produce a levitation effect on the soul and with practice of the physical body. Prostrations are used by several religions, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and the Catholic Church. Sun Salutations are also a form of prostration. Participants will use intentional focus of union with the Divine, the breath, relaxation, prostrations, chanting the ancient name of God (I am that I am), and Kundalini yoga. The goal is for the levitation of the soul, in connection with the divine or a state of nirvana. The ecstatic state of union with the Divine is verbally indescribable bliss. It is not uncommon to have visions or dreams with this process. *Wear comfortable clothing for movement.*

Evgenia Fotiou: Transcendental experiences with ayahuasca among Western users

When I discuss my research, I am often asked whether I think visionary experiences with hallucinogens are culturally constructed or universal across cultures. In my paper, based on fieldwork with westerners participating in ayahuasca ceremonies, I will discuss the ways that transcendental experiences are perceived by them. I will particularly focus on the example of sorcery to illustrate the differences in the ways it is perceived by westerners and Peruvians. I argue that even though it is quite possible that Peruvians and westerners have the same or very similar experiences with ayahuasca, their interpretations of them are quite different due to the very different cultural backgrounds of the users. As Peruvian culture is more socially oriented, Peruvian users tend to interpret any negative or dark experiences as attacks from

other members of the community or malevolent shamans. The more individualistic western cultural framework causes westerners to interpret similar experiences as their own psychic processes. I will discuss cases of western apprentices who have come to accept the concept of sorcery as well as shamanic warfare and will show that in many ways a shamanic apprenticeship for a westerner involves a very radical shift in their interpretations of shamanic experience.

Morris Freilich

We are grateful for the participation of Prof. Freilich as a Discussant in Friday's Symposium on Transcendence. Among many academic accomplishments, he is the editor of a number of works on general anthropology and culture and has been a professor of sociology and anthropology at Northeastern University. He is known as a leading authority in the field of cultural ecology.

Maria Glowacka:

Potentiality or 'spirit': an ethno-linguistic interpretation of Hopi ontology

This study focuses on analyzing the ontological category of potentiality represented in the Hopi language by the term hikwsi, translated in English as 'breath,' 'life-giving force' or 'spirit.' The assumption here is that the concept of potentiality is central to Hopi thought and action, and that the Hopi perceive more potential than actualized 'items' and more unfolding processes than fixed or sedimented structures existing in a material dimension (non-actualistic paradigm of interpretation of being).

In Western philosophy potentiality lacks the priority given by the Hopi philosophy and is considered to stand in a subordinate position to categories of actualization, action, and production. The Western understanding of being as actualization disturbs the ontic balance between a human being and the ontological concept of Being as a wholeness, a human being and nature, a human being and other human beings, and nature as a whole. This disturbance of ontic balance inhibits caring about those human values, which to the Hopi depend more on potentiality than actualization.

Mai Lan Gustafsson: **The Curse**

In 1952, the Nguyen family rented a house from wealthy landlords in a small hamlet in South Vietnam. Shortly after, two of the Nguyen children – Hien and Thao - began exhibiting strange behavior and were diagnosed as suffering from possession illness. Both were exorcised, to no avail.

In 1985, an American girl named Ly complained to her mother that she'd heard voices in the night. Her mother, Thao Nguyen, admitted she had experienced the same thing as a child, and that the voices and other symptoms still returned from time to time. By 1987, regular visits from "the ghost" were causing Ly to do badly in school. In 2003, Ly and her mother returned to Vietnam in an attempt to discover the source of their ongoing ghost troubles. Their motivation lay in finding a cure for Ly's daughter, who was terrorized by nightmares and self-mutilating behavior.

"The Curse" tells the tale of three generations of Vietnamese women and their suffering at the hands of an angry ghost. What they experienced, how they learned the truth about their ailments, and the various treatments they sought will all be discussed in light of Vietnamese beliefs about and interactions with the supernatural.

Bethe Hagens:

The geometric bridge across global consciousness: 2012, the Milky Way, and the Hyper Cube

In this presentation, I explore the consciousness phenomenon of 2012—"End of the Calendar/End of the World" thinking and emotion that is arising as sacred mythology in popular and empirical cultures across the globe. I propose geometric visualization as a largely unacknowledged psychic epistemology, drawing examples from Celtic and Etruscan archaeological sites; Plato's Timaeus; graphic and mythological

representations of the sky made by Greek, Egyptian, and pre-Columbian American cultures; the Book of Revelation; Lakota star knowledge; and contemporary scientific speculation on galactic cannibalism. In all of these systems of imagery, two symbols serve as anchor points: the “bridge” of the Milky Way which divides the sphere of the night sky; and the so-called Hyper Cube, a classic representation of divine/astrophysical wisdom descending to Earth, “as above, so below.”

Earth’s axis of rotation has reached an extreme in its 26,000 year cycle of precession, which coincidentally can be observed with the naked eye as the winter and summer solstice sun appearing to rise and set “in” the Milky Way. Approximately 13,000 years ago, when this same unique dual solstice phenomenon could be observed, a disastrous cosmic event—a near-pass or collision of a comet or meteor with North America—drastically upset life across the planet. I propose that geometric consciousness exploded across human cultures in attempts to explain and give meaning to this event in terms of the division of the sphere of the sky into quadrants, octagons, hoops, the upper and lower world, and a heavenly Cubic shape “holding” a future point in Time that would determine the fate of Earth.

Diane Hardgrave: The Divine Feminine

The relationship between spiritual and healing arts is explored through the eyes of contemporary female healers who report a specific event or events in their lives that led them to seek a spiritual path. The interpretation and understanding of these events have led these women to the study and personal identification with female mystics that cut across culture and belief systems.

Also: the **Ecstasy in Breath** experiential workshop (with Diane Donovan-Vaughn).

Gilah Yelin Hirsch: Artist as medium: spirit into form

Creation is the reason for existence, the state of divinity in humanity. Creation is the streamlining of transcendence into the deficiencies of our rough, turbulent world. The initial step of the creative role is fulfilled by understanding the nature of these deficiencies. The second is filling these gaps with wisdom, so that the real world will conform to the ideal. The artist, acting as a medium between spirit and matter, defines the interface while creating material metaphors of ethereal states.

Choice determines the outcome of creation, whether it be behavioral or aesthetic. Any creative act must be undertaken with a profound understanding of the relation of causality to repercussive events in the short and long run. While the creative process is inherently non-judgmental, imagery can positively and negatively affect both artist and viewer. Working through layers of form that conjure emotional and physical metaphor, the responsible artist chooses to allow the existence of imagery that reframes vision toward healing and the greater good.

By presenting a sequence of my paintings from the 70s to the present, I hope to conjure an experience evoking change in both mind and body that will contribute towards a more integrated state of consciousness and spirit.

Constantine Hriskos & Hong Zhang

Reflections on Taoist views of “other minds”: toward a theory of anti-culture

Taoists texts contain many asides on the problems of relativity and certainty in our perceptions and judgments of the world. A kind of dialectical view of consciousness is presented: a non-alienated consciousness that, while not being at odds with any particular culture, tends to diffuse into the world at large. Diffusions of the cycles of nature—the wonders of the endless transformations of one thing into another—stand as a critique of the arbitrary boundary lines that represent the individual self, the other, and their pretensions—i.e., aspects of “cultural discourse” for the anthropologist. For contemporary anthropologists all this is SIMPLY the province of culture. They eschew the Taoist notion of a non-objectifiable nature revolving kaleidoscopically on the axis of endless possibilities of which humans,

culture, and consciousness themselves are fleeting patterns. Anthropologists balk at the premise that the world is anything but a particular cultural concept or discursive practice or set of practices—or simply the ORDER-ing of THINGS, as per Foucault.

This denial that Nature stands within and without humans, that it can be known, or that it might itself be aware leads to radical separations of subject and object, or the call for the DEATH of the subject itself. A theory of Anti-culture is developed to be placed alongside cultural explanations; one that QUESTIONS the ground of Anthropology proper and calls on it to go beyond its facile acceptance of a rather Eurocentric cultural relativity that seals off one mind from another and the individual from itself. In this sense, relativity is nothing new.

Ryan Hurd:

Nature observation as a field technique: the relevancy of the ecological self for anthropologists

This paper will present the practice of nature observation as a field technique for anthropologists. A blend of the work of naturalist John Young, archeologist Paul Devereux, and psychologist Eugene Genlin, this field technique helps researchers heighten awareness, emotional intelligence, and the sense modalities that are usually suppressed by the default techno-rationalist worldview of Western culture.

Ecopsychologists discuss nature observation as crucial to the development of the ecological self, naturalists call it arriving at baseline consciousness. As a second-person (or intersubjective) data collection technique, nature observation can highlight the role of psychological projection in perception, as well as offer research potential for novel observations, inter-species communication, and perhaps a little experiential gnosis of the interface between mind and body, self and other, and spirit and matter. And, besides all that, it just feels good.

Emmanuel J. Karavousanos: Unity of consciousness and spirit

Can consciousness and spirit be united so they can be seen as one? That we humans think became known early in our lives. It was quickly taken for granted and, as a result, the great majority of us never bother to investigate thinking further. Psychologist Gustav Ichheiser wrote that nothing evades our attention as persistently as that which is taken for granted. Fittingly, we must include Hegel's words: "Because it's familiar, a thing remains unknown." The mystical state remains unknown because the act of thinking is so, so familiar, is taken for granted, is being used continuously, is essentially uninterrupted and is seldom if ever wondered about as-it-is-taking-place. Insight can and will be triggered once analysis of thoughts is undertaken and the right questions are asked of one's self. The great majority may wonder about the content of their thoughts, but seldom if ever will they question what all incoming thoughts are, or what they have in common. Philosopher Whitehead (and a number of others) provides a basis and good reason to analyze those familiar, obvious and known things -- our thoughts! Given the basis and "the right questions" to ask of one's self, we can now gain the gift of mystical insight. All this will be given in the presentation.

We have often heard that there are many paths to God. If God can be characterized as that unique, attainable mystical state of mind, then these paths -- "the right questions" -- can now be identified and followed to a fruition that is the union of consciousness, spirit, mind and soul. Indeed it is where we experience oneness with all these things and with the universe. Alex Shalom Kohav: **'Spirituality' as retrieval and rediscovery of a trans-conscious self**

Robert G. Krause: Psychosis: consciousness and spirituality

The artist, the prophet, the shaman each have intense personal experiences that take them out of the cultural center and allow them to offer new truths for their respective audiences. This paper will present an integrated approach toward understanding "psychosis" as a phenomenon that has taken on different meanings and valuations cross culturally and through history. Foucauldian historical analysis and

references to contemporary art and literature will be used to examine the valuation of signs and symptoms now seen as indicative of "psychosis". The paper will then move to integrate some current neurobiological discourses with psychoanalytic discussions of how the brain meaningfully integrates information and how specific conditions lead to alterations in the ways meaning is made. Using art and music to render for the audience specific aspects of the experience of psychosis the paper will argue for an understanding of consciousness that involves consonance/ dissonance- center/fringe as of central importance to meaning making in psychosis and spiritual revelation.

The person who is psychotic for various reasons I can explain is in a prelinguistic relationship with the Real. That is the unnamable is the eternally real, what keeps us from conceiving and speaking about it is the constraints of language, naming, that keep us at a distance from it (like Magritte's Ceci n'est pas une Pipe). The person who is psychotic has "the doors of their perception cleansed" and perceives but cannot speak well of it because as soon as they try to they reduce the complexity to symbolic relation which is never sufficient. There are specific biologic factors that I can discuss that are related to this. The scientific method and biologic reduction draws as it is currently practiced treats all knowledge as episteme or techne but there is also poesis the truth that is revealed through the arts the truth that we know when we see it.

Stanley Krippner & Adam Rock: Realism and the shaman's cosmos

Previous research concerning the relationship between the shaman's consciousness and the spirit world suggests that shamans are realists in the sense that they conceptualize their multi-layered universe (e.g., upper, middle and lower world) as real, objective, and independent of the perceiver. However, these studies have neglected to analyze the logical coherence of a realist interpretation of the shaman's cosmos. We address this lacuna by first considering the key definitional elements of the term "mental image." Next we determine which variant of realism is most commensurate with the shaman's views regarding the ontological status of the referents of journeying imagery. Finally we formulate a critical assessment of its logical coherence. We conclude that if shamanic journeying images constitute mental images, then this does not necessarily preclude the shaman's cosmos from existing independently of the percipient's mind-body complex.

We are grateful for the participation of Prof. Krippner as a Discussant in Friday's Symposium on Transcendence.

Sara Lewis: Divine madness: a critical exploration of links between psychosis and spirituality

There has historically been a drive in anthropology, as well as in clinical fields, to link madness with religious experience or spirituality. Sentiments such as, "a schizophrenic in the West would be a shaman or mystic in another culture," are expressed regularly. In this presentation I aim to engage critically with this suggestion, as well as seeking to explore the perhaps inherent desire to find spiritual meaning in madness. While it is seductive to do so, inherent in this presentation is the assertion that psychosis should not be romanticized. At the same time, I attempt to explore the spiritual meaning often embedded, and perhaps inextricably linked with psychological crises. Case examples from my psychotherapy practice will be presented and analyzed in terms of their topical and theoretical relevance for the anthropology of consciousness.

Letty Lincoln: Beyond the body: escapades of the human spirit

This paper is based on my own unique highly personal experience of three related events during my teens and then an unrelated incident reported by two participants in the esoteric mystery school where I conducted my dissertation ethnography in the late 1980s. These events touch on the nexus between the material, temporal and spiritual aspects of human existence. They each involve a person, existing, somehow, in two places at the same time. They challenge the scientific assertion that out of body experiences, bi-location and contact with someone after they have died are mind-generated perceptions, with no physical or temporal aspect beyond one individual's experience. They provide evidence that some people's spirits carry out their own separate intentions without bothering to bring the body along, and

possibly without the waking awareness of their person. Hence one might infer that perception, mind and intention are not necessarily contained within the body.

What is the role of consciousness here? A systems approach to mind, such as that proposed by Gregory Bateson (1977) and a systems approach to consciousness (Michael Winkleman, 2000, citing Baars 1997 and Ellis 1995), may apply.

Gustavo Andrés Ludueña: Spirits and spirit's consciousness in a Latin American religion

After Catholicism, Spiritism is historically one of the most extended religions in Latin America. In this paper, I will explore and analyze the notions of spirit and spirit's consciousness in a singular group of Argentinean origin: the Escuela Científica Basilio (Basilio Scientific School). In particular, the work will be focused on the composition of the spirit (i.e., liberty, fluid, and consciousness) and its differences with the human mind. In order to do this, and more broadly, I will explain the idea of spirit according to this institution, and its classification (i.e., kinds of spirits and spiritual particles) and relation with human biology. We will see that consciousness holds a spiritual character more than psychological one. Finally, I will introduce two of the consequences about this global conception of spirit and spirit's consciousness. On the one hand, the BSS assumes a sociability with "real" entities and not exclusively numinous (i.e., spiritual) ontologies. On the other hand, the social reality—as it is understood by phenomenology—is an epiphenomenon of the spiritual—and, therefore, invisible—world; this point shows, specifically, the most esoteric sense of Spiritism.

Christopher Dana Lynn:

"The wrong Holy Ghost": the importance of emic when divining etic in mapping the physiology of Pentecostal dissociation

The Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues, wherein God speaks through initiates, has long been considered a form of dissociation among consciousness scholars. Dissociation is the partitioning of conscious awareness, a psychic function that humans (and likely many other animals) utilize regularly in many forms, such as daydreaming, to alleviate cognitive tension. Using data derived from neuroscientific, psychiatric, and ethnographic sources, scholars have supposed that the stress-reducing health benefits of this partitioning are what make ritual practice of dissociative behaviors nigh universal. Even dissociative identities, though clinically-defined as disorder, are a valuable recourse for victims of child abuse or other severe developmental trauma, despite consequent social problems. But can someone do it wrong? Is dissociation always stress-reducing? Informants in a biocultural study of dissociative tongue-speaking among Apostolic Pentecostals in New York's mid-Hudson Valley indicate the devil knows more tongues than all humans combined and that even a sincere, well-intentioned person can have "the wrong Holy Ghost." An incidence of this was observed, which, far from reducing stress, instigated tension in the congregation. This incident is examined to illustrate the critical importance of emic data when making etic analyses of processes affecting consciousness.

Kevin D. Pittle:

Expanded consciousness through imagistic contemplation in mystical Judaism: metaphor, holography, and spiritual maps of the Infinite

The ten nodes and twenty-two lines of the Kabbalistic Etz Chayyim (Tree of Life) image may be ascribed values from any number of domains. Alternate Tree versions are spiritual maps modeled on various more or less material worlds: the interrelated appendages of the human body (or its major organs); categories of plant or animal life; celestial bodies; classes of angels; vowels and consonants of the Hebrew language; days, times, and seasons; etc. All of these created domains are, in turn, both iconic and indexical of the attributes of the otherwise humanly inconceivable Ein Saf (Infinite Creator). Each of the items in any given domain is a trope—they are interrelated metaphors, metonyms, and synecdoches—and all of the domains

of reality ultimately model one another. Thus, like fern leaves, coastlines, and Mandelbrot figures, Kabbalistic spiritual maps fractally exhibit scaled self-similarity. Not only do the tropes mapped onto any given instantiation of the Tree obviate one another; each analogic version of the Tree obviates all the others. Taken together, all of the different maps begin to make us consciously aware of what none of them are: we begin to image holographically the immaterial spiritual pattern that their patterns are patterned after.

Dana Raphael: Ritual abuse, spiritual dissociation, and levels of consciousness

A profound way of contemplating consciousness is by recognizing it in its aberrant form of dissociation of identity—what used to be called multiple personality. This practice usually results in the sufferers' adopting one or many alternative personalities, called Alters. In cases of ritual abuse and cult torture, the victims are 'trained' from infancy in the process of dissociation, which they use as a method of surviving terrifying physical and mental distress imposed by their 'captors.' One of the functions of this distortion of the mental processes of the victim is to achieve total control over that person's actions. The small cluster of persons who perform such brutal acts in Western cultures claim they practice these tortures to honor (among others) Lucifer, Satan, or the Devil.

Since I am not a victim but an advocate, I want to use my time depicting consciousness changes in the voice of a survivor of ritual abuse and torture to give the viewer an idea of some of the various levels of consciousness that can be perpetrated on human beings.

This talk was documented at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2007.

Ron Reminick: Program for positive psychocultural evolution

Evidence from the ethnographic record and data from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, gerontology, philosophy, and evolutionary theory, suggest a way of life that creates new possibilities for the human condition and the environment we inhabit. That environment is one of a **grounded environment** that respects the laws and principles of evolution and survival in community.

In contrast to the ideal characteristics of people and environment it is useful to contrast this on a theoretical level with those conditions that have created unhappiness, conflict, and violence at all levels of social and cultural complexity.

Specifically, we find that the universal personal qualities of spirituality, the ideal characteristics of the healer, recent research findings on happiness, and the conditions of longevity, here labeled orthogeriatrics, all dovetail and reinforce each other creating a synergy of high human potential. An evolutionary perspective on these various qualities suggests an orientation and direction for citizens of the human species to consider in their contributions to a new world order.

Diana Riboli:

Tigers, flowers, halak and jampi: Interchanges and permeability between human, animal and plant spirits in Semang-Negrto (Peninsular Malaysia) shamanism

This paper presents a particular aspect of the shamanism practised by the Semang-Negrto (Batek and Jahai especially) groups in Peninsular Malaysia. In these ancient cultures there is no clear distinction between human, animal and vegetal worlds and the three spheres are believed to be interpenetrative and continuously interchanging. The shamanism practised by these groups, still intimately tied to the world of the rainforest and probably one of the oldest forms in the world, appears to be under threat from the dominant Islamic culture in the country. Despite this, many shamanic beliefs and practises still survive to date. The form practised by sedentary Jahai and nomadic hunter gatherer Batek is fairly poor in terms of ceremonies and is in fact based on the inseparable connection between human, animal and plant spirits. In the course of altered states of consciousness, which they believe are similar to dreams, religious experts (*halak* in Batek and *jampi* in Jahai) can 'transform themselves' into animals and plants and experience what

they believe to be the world of emotions and experiences of beings from the flora and fauna of the surrounding jungle.

Bryan Rill:

Intersections between Reiki and neuro-phenomenological models of consciousness and spirit

East Asian medical systems operate within an ontology fundamentally different from that of Western biomedicine. In many traditions, commonly referred to as spiritual healing practices, specific energies play integral roles in illness and health. Given this, methods of perceiving and manipulating energies have developed in multiple East Asian countries. Reiki, a Japanese method of spiritual healing, understands such energies to be integrative elements in different modes of consciousness. This paper examines the intersections between Reiki and neurophenomenological perspectives of consciousness and spirit. I argue that the similarities between Reiki and Antonio Damasio's theory of consciousness support his model of a core and extended consciousness. Furthermore, I advance a neurophenomenological examination of Reiki as a plausible answer to questions of transpersonal consciousness. In doing so, I suggest that definitions that restrict consciousness to the corporeal body need reexamination.

Adam J. Rock and Julie Beischel:

Quantitative phenomenological analysis of mediums' purported communication with discarnates

Adam J. Rock and Christopher Cott:

Thematic analysis of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine-induced experiences

Adam J. Rock and Stanley Krippner: **Realism and the shaman's cosmos**

See abstracts for these presentations under their respective collaborators' names.

Adam J. Rock, Gavin R. Abbott, Nicolas Kambouropoulos:

Correlates of mood disturbance during shamanic-like journeying with drumming

Studies have found that shamanic practitioners engaged in journeying with drumming reported statistically significant reductions in mood disturbance relative to baseline. However, contrary results were obtained for non-shamans exposed to shamanic-like journeying techniques. These inconsistent results may be partially due to a personality trait referred to as schizotypy, which has been demonstrated to influence susceptibility to shamanic-like techniques. Furthermore, given that an integral feature of shamanism is the production of alterations in subjective experience, and that shamanism is associated with health benefits, perhaps the production of such alterations affects health benefits. Consequently, the present study aimed to investigate whether altered experience contributes to the association between schizotypy and mood disturbance during exposure to shamanic-like drumming. Sixty-nine non-shamans were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: Drumming or Sitting Quietly with Eyes Open. Schizotypy was quantified using the *Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire*. The *Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory* quantified altered experience. The *Profile of Mood States Questionnaire – Short Form* measured mood disturbance. Altered experience significantly contributed to the association between schizotypy and mood disturbance during exposure to drumming. Fluctuations in mood disturbance are discussed in the context of the relationship between participants' consciousness and the spirit world that is ostensibly accessed during journeying.

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Mark A.-Schroll: Toward a new kind of science and its methods of inquiry

This presentation begins with a critique of Euro-American science's limitations and humanistic anthropology and humanistic psychology's contributions to what Daniel Halperin and Edith Turner refer to as a "delicate science," that I call an integral/essential science. Second, this essay reflects on Euro-American sciences' paradigmatic parameters that define and limit its methodological inquiry, specifically the emic/etic, subject/object, ideographic/nomothetic, qualitative/quantitative problem. This encouraged me to champion participant observation, ethnomethodology, and ethnography as methods that could balance etic methodologies by providing emic narratives. I continue to support these emic methodologies, yet also examine their limitations, expressing the need for a synthesis as well as a transcendence of these views. Third, this essay discusses the difficult task ahead and various obstacles that we will need to overcome in our quest to create a new kind of science that can include within it the study of psi/spirit.

Cyndi Smith: A personal testimony of post-NDE long-term spiritual transformation

Ms. Smith's life was transformed by a near-fatal highway accident over 25 years ago that left her permanently disabled, and the NDE she experienced weeks afterward. During her NDE she had an experience characterized by specifically Christian content that continues to exert an ever-growing transformative influence on her life and the lives of those she works with. She hosts an Internet radio program inspired by her experience and is producing a film version.

Ruth E. Toulson:

Vampire children and unsettled spirits: ethnographic notes from contemporary Singapore

In Chinese mythology, vampires are spirits who do not leave their corpses and whose poverty at the point of death necessitates that they reanimate their stiffened bodies. The bodies of the poor were returned to their ancestral land for burial strapped to flexible bamboo struts, carried upright on the backs of hired carriers. As the bodies bounced as the bamboo flexed, it appeared from a distance as if they too walked with every step home.

Among Hokkien-speaking Chinese families in Singapore, tethering a child's spirit to her body is all-consuming ritual work. Throughout life the spirit becomes more firmly attached, necessitating its forceful detachment through the death ritual. Indeed, one of the central purposes of funeral ritual is to separate the spirit from the body, and in the same actions to break the relationships that gave that person life. To speak of the tethering of the spirit to the body is to describe the attachment of an individual to her community. In some ways the vampire and the child are opposed – dried bones are the opposite in substance from flesh newly formed of menstrual blood – yet they share in the same process: that of attaching and detaching spirits to bodies, and bodies to societies; and they experience the same liminality. This paper, based on eighteen months of field work, focuses on stories of children who become vampires.

Transcendence Symposium Group Abstract:

Mark A. Schroll, organizer and Chair, participants Constantine Hriskos, Evgenia Fotiou, Ryan Hurd, Adam Rock, Bethe Hagens. Discussant: Stanley Krippner

Transcendence: is it culturally shaped or is “their something” universal?

Anthropology’s predominant view concludes reality (or human experience) is shaped by our cultural constructs; consequently the meaning of reality is relative to the generis loci within each social group. Still some anthropologists continue to wonder: are their experiences (states of consciousness) that transcend a culture’s symbolic limitations that could be considered universal? Conclusive evidence has yet to prove either of these views, although cultural relativism is the dominant paradigm. Perhaps both perspectives are somehow true, like the paradox of particle and wave. Working out the limitations of these theses and the variety of alternative explanations is the theme of this symposium.

This too is where the controversies of particulars/archetypes, subjectivity/objectivity, and the emic/etic divide comes’ into play, because it continues to be impossible to know with certainty the cognitive awareness of another person in normal consciousness. But in cases where an anthropologist is investigating shamanism, is the shaman I am observing and engaged in during a participatory act of altered experiential consciousness having the same experience I am? Or is whatever this experience of being always shaped by our expectations, cultural symbolism and language? Anthropologists tend to avoid these big paradigm questions. Avoiding these questions does not make them go away. The first step toward trying to answer these questions conclusively is to have a methodology or methodologies that are better adapted to investigating these kind of experiences.

James Clement van Pelt: Passages to the Spirit World

Even before the appearance of our species, the paleontological evidence indicates an intense interest in locating the passage to the spirit world. Even in cases in which humans are said to have perceived spirits in a monistic setting, a high premium was put on establishing a reliable way to establish some harmony between the ordinary and spiritual dimensions of reality. Arguably this is one of the sources of religion. The Hebrew Bible presents case after case of the human struggle to find such a passage, in particular the story of the Tower of Babel, which is fruitfully analogous to our own global project of generating the means “to be as gods”, and the encounter with the burning bush—a precise metaphorical description of the continual emergence of existence from the roots of being. The Greeks told of Persephone passing to and fro to cause the cycle of seasons, and stationed a prophetess over vents in the earth thought to be passages to the afterlife realm. The torii gates erected throughout Japan represent the Gateless Gate—the secret passage. Mystics such as Rumi and Eckhart have spoken of it in what seem to be riddles to the uninitiated.

One can take any of several positions: to deny such a passage, and a spirit world in general, in the first place; to understand it as a metaphor referring to deep psychology; or to simply ignore it as incomprehensible. But what if one entertains the possibility that the sacred stories and mystical poetry designate something as real, even more real, than the sensory-phenomenal world in which we are immersed?

The presentation begins with a consideration of ways to gain a fresh perspective on the unfolding of reality and one’s experience of it by cutting loose from the predominant metaphor of the stream of consciousness and its existential corollary, the similarly sequential arrow of time. Having hopefully established a sufficient context, the common mystical idea of the one in/behind the many is evoked and correlated with the point or state that links the physical and experiential domains. Both existence and experience, as we know them, emerge from this point/state, which is manifestly the source and center of reality yet which does not actually exist in the sense we usually mean, since it is prior to spacetime and since both existence and experience emerge from it. Even lacking first-hand experience traversing the spirit world, one can employ first-person inquiry together with modest inference to identify the experiential singularity, which contains all possible experience in a potential state governed by probability and subject to a kind of randomness

through which meaning in an absolute sense emerges. This has interesting implications regarding the problem of causal overdetermination in the interaction of mind and body.

Having identified such a point, a proposal is made concerning how spiritual and otherwise inexplicable experiential phenomena could be located and understood, and what a literal passage to the spirit world would logically entail.

Megan Vrolijk: Brazil, Africa, and Native America: androgyny and access to spiritual contact

In this presentation, I will examine the ways in which sexual and gender androgyny have acted as an avenue to the spiritual in the Native American berdache and current spirit possession cults in Brazil and Africa. My findings support in general Peter Fry's assertion that the prominence of homosexual members is due to the outsider status required for the role of secular counselors. While this correlation is visible in Brazilian possession cults and arguably in Native American practices, I will argue the relationship between the feminine and spiritual contact is emphasized more than androgyny as expressed in homosexuality. I have found that the prominence of feminized male mediums is due to traditions originating in Africa where members demonstrate their ability to bridge the two sexes and at the same time the material and the spiritual realms.

Marianne M. Vysma:

Living with ghosts: the pathology and potential of the inter-generational effects of surviving collective violence

This paper explores how spirit interacts with consciousness, both on a personal and social/collective level, in the process of the intergenerational transfer of the effects of trauma. These effects can be either pathogenic (i.e. producing illness) or generative (being the source of new and unexpected ways of 'being-in-the-world', capable of enriching both the individual identity and the culture), and are often, though not always, both.

Specifically, the paper will compare spirit possession, especially after war and other forms of collective violence, to the dissociative effects of second-generation trauma, as seen in children of survivors of the ravages of World War II. The first will use ethnographic reports from cultures where the ghost is a metaphysical entity. In the (Western culture) literature of second-generation trauma, the ghosts can be conceived of as metaphorical, 'as-if' entities, as a way of describing unconscious motivations and processes. In both cases, the ghosts will be considered a meta-psychological fact, allowing a phenomenological comparison. The argument will be that it is the conscious attitude towards the spiritual manifestations that mediates the potential for pathology or transformation. In that context, I will use the concepts of intersubjectivity and transitional space.

These theoretical considerations will be explored through a comparison of one ethnographic case-study of spirit possession in post-war Mozambique with a case study of a second-generation trauma (a patient whose mother spent three years of her youth in a Japanese internment camp in what is now Indonesia) from my own psychoanalytic practice.

Hillary Webb: Schrödinger's Cat is/is not dead: Adventures in Andean complementary dualism

In the spring of 2007, I traveled to highland Peru in order to study the concept of yanantin ("complementary opposites") and its importance to indigenous Andean thought. I was determined to understand the psycho-spiritual experience of a people whose model of consciousness is based on the complementarity of opposites, rather than the antagonism so pervasive within the Western worldview. I arrived with tape recorder in hand and my rational, linear mind ready to interview, code, analyze, and make my research professors proud.

My primary informant, a young man trained in Andean shamanic practices since childhood, responded to my request for an interview with amusement. "Sí, Mami," he said, "You can interview me. But may I suggest that you download the information from the cosmos instead?" I nodded vigorously, although in truth, I had

no clue what he meant. This paper tells the story of this eventual “download” and my journey into chawpi—the nexus of opposites as conceived of in indigenous Andean philosophy. It considers the “hard problem” of the opposites created by Western dualism and how adopting a complementary worldview can lead to greater psycho-spiritual health.

Gino Yu: "Meaningful Media": communicating inner experience with New Media

Meaningful Media - Communicating Inner Experience with New Media

Emerging digital entertainment technologies represent the latest and most compelling form of media to communicate inner experience, including one's emotions, feelings, and ineffable experiences. Their interactive and multi-modal nature, combined with their ability to rapidly and inexpensively distribute content, add to their potential power to shape understanding.

Since the dawn of humanity, religion, science, and culture have worked towards developing a common language for communicating experience and deepening each individual's understanding of existence. Unlike the “hard” sciences, which leverage objectivity and repeatability to provide a common semantic basis, accounts of inner experiences are not subject to being quantified. Yet advances in neuroscience such as discovery of “mirror neurons” have laid the groundwork for a physiological understanding of empathy and emotion, while recent studies in positive psychology reveal that inner experience, thought, and physiology are intimately coupled.

The objective of Meaningful Media is to recreate experiences that communicate inner experience in ways that facilitate the cultivation of a personal understanding of “inner peace”. Action from such an understanding contributes to the greater harmony of the culture as well, as harmony of civilization and environment. Interactive media combined with affective computing and biofeedback can be applied to evoke meaningful first-person experiences that can play an important role in helping individuals explore and develop an appreciation and understanding of how the “inner landscape” and social conditioning contend with each other to affect behavior.

Emotional intelligence is cultivated through the development of self-awareness (e.g., how one feels, tension in the body, breathing patterns, etc.) and by developing a personal understanding of attachments to the ideas/beliefs that lead to destructive emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, and depression. As this kind of intelligence develops, inner demands such as fears and desires are diminished, thereby enabling a more balanced ways of living to emerge naturally. Psychological investigations into happiness across cultures suggest a strong correlation between happiness and “gratitude as attitude.” While advances in technologies such as energy, transportation, and medicine may prolong human existence, an understanding of the processes of personal transformation seem essential to the emergence of a peaceful and sustainable world.

