

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS
Spring 2008 Annual Meeting and Conference
March 19-23, 2008 • Yale University

CALL FOR PAPERS

Theme: Consciousness and Spirit

For all its material correlates and consequences, the anthropology of consciousness incorrigibly connotes an aspect or dimension that is immaterial, yet somehow integral to that which is at the most intimate core of the personal—that which bursts forth in life and vanishes in death, leaving behind a useless husk. Cultures in every age and place have called it *spirit*, placed it at the center of their worldviews and religions, and sought to grasp its ephemeral essence. Even our materially oriented culture reaches out for the *spiritual*, however defined.

How does something/someone called *spirit* impinge on consciousness, lifting it from myriad electrochemical processes into the richness and depth we experience in the world, in others, in ourselves? What is it: will o' the wisp or Pentecostal flame? A metaphor standing in for a bundle of meanings, a component of obsolete dualism, or an emergent property of material processes? A divine presence mixed into physicality—the indestructible *élan vital* that incarnates (and perhaps reincarnates) to transform dead matter into beings who experience joy, suffering, desire, and mortality? How has it been understood across time and cultures, and how can it be understood in the new century?

The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, a section of the American Anthropology Association, welcomes proposals for papers and panels related to this crucial theme for its Annual Meeting, to be held March 19-23, 2008 at the Yale Divinity School in New Haven. The event is open to many kinds of academic disciplines and theoretical orientations, and will serve as a forum for the presentation of ideas that may overstep the strict bounds of one's own discipline. Possible topics include, among many others:

- Spirit as metaphor: changing uses and significance in the new century
- Defining the Interface Between Spirit and Matter
- Crossroads: the quest to locate the nexus between material and spiritual worlds
- Computer simulation as a way to simulate/induce spiritual experiences
- Neural correlates of spiritual experiences
- Spirit after life: spiritual phenomena in medical crises
- The anthropology of spirit possession: ethnography, etiology, implications
- Spirit manifestation via the I Ching and other oracular systems
- Other topics germane to an understanding of the anthropology of consciousness

Scholars, practitioners, educators, and students are invited to join in this intellectual adventure designed to expand our understanding of human capabilities and experiences. The conference will include academic presentations, experiential sessions, and invited panels. Please email your proposals by January 10, 2007 to:

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2008 SAC CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS:

John Baker, President, Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness

James Clement van Pelt, Program Coordinator, Yale Initiative in Religion, Science & Technology

For more information and to download the proposal and registration forms:

www.sacaaa.org