

SAC

SOCIETY FOR THE
ANTHROPOLOGY OF
CONSCIOUSNESS

SAC 32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
February 9-12, 2012

PLANTS
AND
CONSCIOUSNESS

Boulder, Colorado
Millennium Harvest House

www.sacaaa.org














CALL FOR PAPERS

SAC 32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012

PLANTS AND

CONSCIOUSNESS

The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness welcomes paper and panel proposals for its meeting on February 9-12, 2012 in Boulder, Colorado. Topics related to consciousness may include the following, although others topics are welcome:

-  Plants, food, herbs, and other natural substances used to enhance consciousness
-  Plant knowledge and use in cultural, social, religious, and psychological context
-  Plants and herbs in traditional medicine and alternative healing practices
-  Agriculture, cultivation and harvest in cultural and psychological perspective
-  Culinary, brewing, and fermentation arts
-  Nutritional Anthropology
-  Art and symbolism of plants in cultural, religious, and psychological context
-  Archaeological studies of the use and meaning of plants
-  Ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, psychopharmacology
-  Biology and pharmacology of plants used to enhance consciousness
-  Ecology and Anthropology, Eco-Psychology, Eco-Spirituality
-  Plant-Human relationships
-  Plant consciousness

PROPOSALS DUE DECEMBER 1, 2011

To download forms or register online, please visit SAC's website:

www.sacaaa.org

QUESTIONS? Please email Program Chair Amy Smith at
anthroamy@sbcglobal.net

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9		
3:00-4:20pm	EXPERIENCE AND THE LIMITS OF THE IMAGINABLE	
3:00-3:20	Unimaginable Life: Agency, Experience and the Exploitation of Child Soldiers	Levi Jacobs
3:20-3:40	Boiling Water on the Sun: Modern Magic(k) and the Articulation of the Extraordinary	Ben Joffe
3:40-4:00	Decolonizing Encounters of The Third Kind: Alternative Futuring in Native Science Fiction Films	Willi Lempert
4:00-4:10	Discussant	
4:10-4:20	DISCUSSION	
4:20-4:30	BREAK	
4:30-6:00	WORKSHOP:	
	Consider the Lilies: Harnessing the Power of the Environment to Embody Grace	Russ Pfeiffer
6:00-8:00	DINNER BREAK	
8:00-10:00	WORKSHOP:	
	Tales of Ayahuasca: An Open Forum on Sacred Plant Experiences	Bethe Hagens, Steve Lansky, Steve Beyer
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10		
7:00-8:45am	WORKSHOP (<i>limit of 6 participants</i>) - COST \$20:	
	Pu'er Tea: Transformation and Sublimation	Brian Kirbis
9:00-11:30	TEACHING CONSCIOUSNESS: STRATEGIES FROM THE FIELD AND CLASS	
9:00-9:20	(Re-)wording the World: Strategies for Teaching Linguistic Mindfulness	Matthew Bronson
9:20-9:40	Teaching Deeper: Integrating New Science and Systems Thinking in the Curriculum	Anne Z. Parker
9:40-10:00	Learning in the First Person Plural: Intervening on the Privatized Self in Higher Education	Karen Watson-Gegeo
10:00-10:10	Discussants: <i>Mira Amiras, Tina Fields</i>	
10:10-10:30	BREAK	
10:30-10:50	Non-Duality in the Training of Wilderness Therapists	Deb Piranian
10:50-11:10	Permaculture Gardens as a Path to Expanding Ethics and Raising Consciousness	Joan Stevens
11:10-11:20	Discussants: <i>Tina Fields, Mira Amiras</i>	
11:20-11:30	DISCUSSION	

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

<i>11:30-2:20</i>	<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>	
1:00-2:00	BROWN BAG MOVIE: "Sacred Psychedelics"	by Brigitte Mars
2:20-3:50	FERMENTING WISDOM: VISCERAL EXPERIENCES OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE	
2:20-2:40	Pu'er Tea: Transformation and Sublimation	Brian Kirbis
2:40-3:00	The Sensory Experience of Planting Corn: Embodying Ecological Heritage among the Belizean Maya	Kristina Baines
3:00-3:20	Craft Beer: A Modern Return to the Ancient Practice of Spiritual Brewing	Talia Watson
3:20-3:40	Ayahuasca: The Visionary Brew	Brigitte Mars
3:40-3:50	DISCUSSION	
<i>3:50-4:10</i>	<i>BREAK</i>	
4:10-5:40	BOTANICAL INFLUENCES ON CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS	
4:10-4:30	God's Own Anointing Oil: The Tree, the Olive, and the Olive Tree in Jewish Tradition	Mira Amiras
4:30-4:50	Chieftain, Peasant, Shrub, and Bramble: Indigenous Irish Relationship with Trees	Tina Fields
4:50-5:10	As the Mind, so the Food: The Brahma Kumaris and Sustainable Yogic Agriculture	Tamasin Ramsay
5:10-5:30	Human-Plant Relationships in the Ramkokamekra-Canela Indigenous Society of Maranhão Brazil	Theresa Miller
5:30-5:40	DISCUSSION	
<i>5:40-7:30</i>	<i>DINNER BREAK</i>	
7:30-9:30	WORKSHOP:	
	Chants Encounters for Altered States	John Lawrence, Susan Grimaldi
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11		
9:00-12:20	THE HEALING PLANT: CONTEXT IN MEDICINAL PLANT USE	
9:00-9:20	Coca: Recent Observations in Bolivia	Jim A. Bauml
9:20-9:40	Healing and its Discontents: Reflections on Identity and Altered States of Consciousness by People who Use Psychedelics as Medicine	Cameron Adams
9:40-10:00	Successful Psychedelic Treatment of Addiction: A Conversion Experience?	Tom Kingsley Brown
10:00-10:20	Amada's Blessings From the Peyote Gardens of South Texas	Stacy Schaefer
10:20-10:30	DISCUSSION	
<i>10:30-10:50</i>	<i>BREAK</i>	
10:50-11:10	Peyote as Medicine: An Examination of Therapeutic Factors that Contribute to Healing	Kevin Feeney

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

11:10-11:30	Plant Fetishes, Witchcraft, and the Ambiguity of Traditional Healing in Cameroon	Brian Arturo Bartelt
11:30-11:50	Iu-Mien Refugee Ethnobotanical Healing Practices	Jeffery MacDonald
11:50-12:10	Research, Ethnomedicine, and Applied Medical Anthropology	M. Diane Hardgrave
12:10-12:20	DISCUSSION	
12:20-2:20	LUNCH BREAK	
12:45-2:15	SAC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	
2:20-4:30	ECOLOGY, MEANING, AND BEING	
2:20-2:40	Plant Sensitivity to Human Interaction	Ben Bendig
2:40-3:00	Moieties of Consciousness: Conceivable and Inconceivable	Peter Grossenbacher
3:00-3:10	DISCUSSION	
3:10-3:20	BREAK	
3:20-3:40	Prophetic Dreams: A Mexican-American View	Peter Wogan
3:40-4:00	The Discontented Grass Plant: Consciousness and Plants on Alaska's Northwest Coast	Brenden and Julie Raymond-Yakoubian
4:00-4:20	The Eco-Psychology of Japanese Mountain Asceticism	Bryan Rill
4:20-4:30	DISCUSSION	
4:30-5:00	BREAK	
5:00-6:00	SAC INVITED LECTURE: STEWART GUTHRIE	
5:00-5:30	Anthropomorphism and Consciousness	Stewart Guthrie
5:30-5:40	Discussant: <i>Steve Glazier</i>	
5:40-6:00	DISCUSSION	
6:00-8:00	DINNER BREAK	
8:00-10:00	WORKSHOP - COST \$5:	
	The Corn Game: Prepare Yourself for Planting	Kristina Baines
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12		
9:30-12:00	WORKSHOP - offsite	
	Sacred Hunting and Gathering: Consciousness of Place	Mary Sweeney
12:30-2:00	BRUNCH RECEPTION & SAC BUSINESS MEETING: The University of Colorado Museum of Natural History	



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

2:45 pm

REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

3:00 pm

CONFERENCE BEGINS

3:00-4:20

EXPERIENCE AND THE LIMITS OF THE IMAGINABLE

(Panel Organizer: Levi Jacobs; Chair: Julie Raymond-Yakoubian)

Organized Panel abstract: Ever since Malinowski asked that we 'imagine ourselves set down surrounded by all our gear', cultural anthropology and the ethnographic enterprise has been marked by a desire to draw others and their worlds nearer, whether these be those of the 'native informant' or anthropologists themselves. For all the ongoing debates surrounding verifiability, empirical data, theory, and the scientific calibre of contemporary cultural anthropology, ethnographies of any stripe are unique and united as a genre for their capacity to allow us to imagine and commiserate with often radical alterity. Writing 'experience' has come to define the work of ethnographers wary of overly etic and scientific representations, and appeals to experience the compelling bedrock of argument. What lies, however, at the limits of the imaginable, and experiences on those edges? How do we, as ethnographers of human experience, understand and write about these experiences—to what ends, and with what consequences?

3:00-3:20

Unimaginable Life: Agency, Experience and the Exploitation of Child Soldiers

Levi Jacobs (University of Colorado, Boulder)

The experience of children abducted and forced to kill friends or family is for many beyond imaginability, an otherness reinforced by the 'savage-victim-savior' narrative in human rights that slots combatants into polarized subjectivities. How do we as anthropologists theorize and represent experiences such as these, at the limits of the imaginable? Following Kant, I argue agency has become a cipher for humanity in contemporary discourse; thinking with Agamben, I suggest the unimaginability and dehumanization witnessed in much work on child soldiers are symptoms of a deeper uncertainty regarding agency. In positions of extreme structural constraint what agency, if any, is possible—is humanity so easily stripped? Can bare life have agency? Based in fieldwork and the autobiographies of former child soldiers in northern Uganda, I grapple here with agency in such unimaginable experiences, toward an anthropology beyond dehumanizing narratives and representational violence.

3:20-3:40

Boiling Water on the Sun:

Modern Magic(k) and the Articulation of the Extraordinary

Ben Joffe (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Recent studies of contemporary magical practice, moving away from earlier prioritizing of questions of rationality, have emphasized the intimate and embodied experience of magic and 'magical consciousness'. The centrality of inner and subjective experience, and the bewildering syncretism and individualism of magic, however, pose challenges for the inter-subjective communication and

validation of magical experience. A focus on the sheer phenomenology of magic, while necessary, risks downplaying the subtleties of magicians' own experimental theories of magic - typified by a kind of pragmatic utilitarianism and instrumental approach to belief, magic becomes a means of engaging with and transforming mechanisms of consciousness and reality. Drawing parallels between anthropological research and magical practice via the example of the 'magical diary', I reflect upon how magicians have made sense of their 'extraordinary' experiences and how anthropologists have sought to describe them in turn.

3:40-4:00

**Decolonizing Encounters of The Third Kind:
Alternative Futuring in Native Science Fiction Films**
Willi Lempert (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Over the last 20 years there has been a sharp increase in the quantity and diversity of indigenous produced films, as well as a corresponding anthropological literature on the importance of such media in relation to ethnographic film, the negotiation of native identities, and community rights. In the last few years, some native filmmakers have begun to draw heavily on the genre of science fiction. Engaging Jeff Burnaby's dystopic short, *File Under Miscellaneous*, and others, I argue that native science fiction films represent a valuable and distinct—though not homogeneous—mode of representation that uniquely positions indigenous filmmakers to vividly imagine a multiplicity of futures for their communities while critically addressing vital contemporary issues. Drawing on scholarship in visual anthropology, feminist and afro futurism, and critical indigenous methodologies, I attempt to develop an appropriate analytical framework that emphasizes the paradoxically practical relevance of these films for present native communities.

4:00-4:10

Discussant: *TBA (University of Colorado, Boulder)*

4:10-4:20

DISCUSSION

4:20-4:30

BREAK

4:30-6:00

WORKSHOP:
Consider the Lilies: Harnessing the Power of the Environment to Embody Grace
Russ Pfeiffer

In this workshop, I propose a modern, neurological interpretation of what it means to "consider the lilies". How the individual processes information determines how that individual moves and interacts in the world. We will examine the dynamic of uniting the power of self (organism) with the power of other (environment) through use of our perceptual systems as they relate to states of consciousness.

How we answer the essential questions of "Where am I" and "Am I safe" is processed cortically, subcortically, and reflexively. Our responses can range from willing (doing) to allowing (being). Through experiential inquiries, we will

observe how we relate to the concepts of time and space by the way we process information from our eyes, feet, ankles, and vestibular system. Exploring that space between willing and allowing, we access the body of light – the spacious body – grace.

6:00-8:00

DINNER BREAK

8:00-10:00

WORKSHOP:

Tales of Ayahuasca: An Open Forum on Sacred Plant Experiences

Bethe Hagens, Steve Lansky, Steve Beyer

Issues of ayahuasca practice such as community, initiation, spiritual intent, appropriation, research, and dissemination are left somewhat ambiguous in the 2008 resolution of the Peruvian National Institute of Culture (PNIC), which declares ayahuasca rituals to be “one of the fundamental pillars of the identity of Amazonian peoples” in need of protection to ensure their cultural continuity. The resolution distinguishes the traditional use and sacred character of indigenous ayahuasca rituals from “decontextualized, consumerist, and commercial western uses” more aligned with hallucinogens. “Part of this difference consists in the ritual which accompanies its consumption, which leads to a variety of effects that are always within culturally defined limits, and with religious, therapeutic, and culturally affirmative intentions.”

Does the resolution invite an expansion of culturally defined limits and affirmative intentions outside the indigenous Peruvian tradition? Have anthropologists worldwide established a professional relationship with the PNIC? That body is charged by statute with recording, publishing, and protecting the Peruvian national cultural heritage, yet may have no legal power to enforce. It is also unsure whether support is available for additional research and publication on ayahuasca rituals ... even whether the resolution is intended to encourage or discourage ayahuasca tourism and/or wider adoption of ayahuasca as an entheogen.

We'll gather together in a traditional circle, with talking stick, and accompanying ceremony.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

7:00-8:45am

WORKSHOP (limit of 6 participants) – COST \$20:

Pu'er Tea: Transformation and Sublimation

Brian Kirbis

Chinese tea, chádao, can be understood through ‘three teachings become one’ (sanjiaoheyi), which describes the syncretism of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. This harmony of environmental, humanistic, and transcendental finds sublime expression in the practice of tea.

Pu'er is unique among Chinese tea varieties because it undergoes an elaborate fermentation process capable of lasting several decades. Through this process, these compressed teas transform into highly-refined substances. At its base expression, pu'er is a health tonic with numerous reported nutritional and curative benefits. Beyond that, it is a vehicle for cultivation of moral and spiritual virtues corresponding to classical Chinese ideals of harmony between heaven, earth, human (tian, di, ren). (Cost includes all teas and materials.)

8:45am

REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

9:00-11:30am

TEACHING CONSCIOUSNESS: STRATEGIES FROM THE FIELD AND CLASSROOM (*Panel Organizer and Chair: Matthew Bronson*)

Organized Panel abstract: SAC has always emphasized the intersection of theory and practice as a generative space for new insight. Many of our members are trans-disciplinary scholars who also work full-time as college instructors. They are challenged each day not only to prepare the next generation of scholars in the tools of the trade, but to cultivate in their students the shifts in consciousness that are necessary for a more artful and collective response to a world in crisis. This panel brings together educators who have taken on this challenge as a matter of personal commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning in the area of consciousness studies and wilderness education. We will share syllabi and practical strategies for embodied and experiential learning that have been forged in the crucible of practice for decades, strategies that have been adapted for use in areas as disparate as linguistics, literacy, environmental and ecological awareness, and systemic thinking. We will identify best practices for the enactment of transformative and integral education in mainstream and other settings and explore the theoretical underpinnings of our work in such areas as learning theory, emancipatory pedagogy, and critical/post-colonial anthropology.

9:00-9:20

(Re-)wording the World: Strategies for Teaching Linguistic Mindfulness
Matthew Bronson (California Institute of Integral Studies, and U.C. Davis)

Most introductory linguistics courses cover the basic structural features of language, including sounds, morphemes, sentences, and discourse; they are not typically known as sites for the transformation of consciousness. I report here on thirty years of teaching courses that explore how language is employed to create such seemingly fixed categories as "reality" and "identity" so that students will learn to approach their every-day lives and work as scholars/professionals with greater "linguistic mindfulness" and respond more artfully to linguistic and cultural diversity. The benefits are extraordinary: students report breakthroughs and improvements in their health, relationships, self-esteem, and ability to communicate in writing and in speech. Strategies that have been found effective include: dialogue, journaling, transcription of everyday conversation, role-play, cyber-field trips, hypnotic induction, visualization, dance and movement.



9:20-9:40

**Teaching Deeper:
Integrating New Science and Systems Thinking in the Curriculum**
Anne Z. Parker (Naropa University)

Integrating new cultural paradigms requires expanding beyond current methods of teaching. Ensuring that students not only intellectually absorb, but also actually embody new science and systems thinking entails new approaches in which it is necessary to access other parts of our being and deeper learning processes. Such transformation is both personal and collective/cultural in order to shift consciousness in ways that allow us to create a substantially different future.

9:40-10:00

**Learning in the First Person Plural:
Intervening on the Privatized Self in Higher Education**
Karen Watson-Gegeo (U.C. Davis)

Higher education, broadly construed, is notoriously alienating in its structures and norms, reducing students and teachers to isolated, individual subjects who must struggle against other subjects for access to resources and social capital. Universities routinely fall short in their mission of forging new thinking and a new, more equitable social order, owing to their implicit acceptance of the status quo in which "I" must compete with "you" to be successful and one of us will lose. An alternative model has emerged in a co-curricular experiment at U.C. Davis School of Education. In a series of unofficial and official courses collaboratively designed and run by faculty and students, they produce public performances that challenge the sexism, racism, and entrenched power structures of the academy and job market. Such collaborative efforts that transcend the usual gulf between teacher and learner can embody a model of mutual and reciprocal transformation of self and society that is sorely needed under the conditions of late capitalism. This will be a DVD presentation with Skype discussion.

10:00-10:10

**Discussants: *Mira Amiras (San Jose State University)*
*Tina Fields (Naropa University)***

10:10-10:30

BREAK

10:30-10:50

Non-Duality in the Training of Wilderness Therapists
Deb Piranian (Naropa University)

The concept of non-duality is central within the fields of Transpersonal Psychology and Ecopsychology, both of which have an interest in defining and describing the concept as well as cultivating actual experiences of non-duality. Multiple issues related to non-duality arise in training students to become psychotherapists with an emphasis on "wilderness therapy." These include artificial black-and-white divisions between the following: wilderness / urban; nature / humans; self / others (e.g. self as nature lover / others as nature-destroyers self). These divisions create challenges to these students effectiveness in

working with future clients, increase environmental despair, and limit the students' consciousness. There are a number of experiential exercises that can be used within the coursework that help to cultivate students' experience and understanding of non-duality and that impact how the students engage with both the non-human natural world and other human beings.

10:50-11:10 **Permaculture Gardens as a Path to Expanding Ethics and Raising Consciousness**
Joan Stevens (Los Angeles Permaculture Guild, Arcadia High School)

In my years as a permaculture educator I've witnessed first-hand the power that exploring natural systems and recreating these systems in a human scale has on expanding consciousness. In permaculture design courses students eyes light up when they learn the principles of permaculture design because it is our human nature to understand these principles. Well-designed permaculture gardens mimic the appearance and the processes of natural landscape. Cultivating a food forest garden on my high school campus has made a tremendous difference in my ability to transform my students' willingness to care about environmental issues. In removing my lawn and installing an intercropping garden in my front yard, I've experienced a deeper level of conversation and connection with my neighbors. Shamanic plant explorations are not for everyone but food is. I propose that natural systems education and tending permaculture gardens, particularly in an urban setting, is a simple, accessible, and delicious way to encourage an expanded sense of ethical responsibility and activism. I will also share how my own experiences with shamanic plant traditions lead me to a greater sense of connectedness with the plant world and a desire to make a difference in that area through permaculture activism.

11:10-11:20 **Discussants:** *Tina Fields (Naropa University)*
Mira Amiras (San Jose State University)

11:20-11:30 DISCUSSION

11:30-2:20 **LUNCH BREAK**

1:00-2:00 **BROWN BAG MOVIE: "Sacred Psychedelics"** by Brigitte Mars

2:20-3:50 **FERMENTING WISDOM: VISCERAL EXPERIENCES OF TRADITIONAL
ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE** (*Chair: Steve Glazier*)

2:20-2:40 **Pu'er Tea: Transformation and Sublimation**
Brian Kirbis

The contiguous uplands of southwest China, northern Burma, and northeast India are considered the original botanical distribution of tea, *Camellia sinensis*. Old-growth tea gardens surrounding upland villages on mid-elevation slopes of Yunnan Province's Xishuangbanna are the source of the much sought after raw material for pu'er tea. Pu'er is unique among Chinese tea varieties because it

undergoes an elaborate fermentation process capable of lasting several decades. Through this process, these compressed teas transform into highly-refined substances that can be likened to alchemical elixirs.

Daoist natural science provides a unique indigenous language through which to understand the transformation of pu'er tea and its sublimation into the body through consumption. The three treasures of essence, energy, spirit (jing, qi, shen), fundamental components of Daoist internal cultivation, can be deployed to understand how raw tea leaf undergoes gradual refinement. 'Nature as ingestible power' bespeaks the Daoistic transparency between human and cosmos that pu'er tea so capably expresses.

At its base expression, pu'er is a health tonic with numerous reported nutritional and curative benefits. Beyond that, it is a vehicle for cultivation of moral and spiritual virtues corresponding to classical Chinese ideals of harmony between heaven, earth, human (tian, di, ren). The contemporary revival, elaboration, and proliferation of pu'er tea constitutes both a living legacy of Chinese culture and the cultivation of consciousness in a universal present.

2:40-3:00

**The Sensory Experience of Planting Corn:
Embodying Ecological Heritage among the Belizean Maya**
Kristina Baines (University of South Florida)

Planting corn, for Mopan Maya communities in southern Belize, is the most critical activity of the year. This paper explores how the preparation of the body before taking part in the planting is not explicit but occurs through a ritualized sensory experience. Corn seed is blessed as men take part in a traditional game and women prepared the late night meal for them, to provide nourishment for the early morning planting. The activation of multiple senses during this process, this paper argues, serves to prepare the body in multiple ways, nourishing it physically and connecting it with fellow workers. In this sense, ecological heritage, or traditional planting methods, become embodied through sensory experience reinforced by practice. Traditional ecological knowledge, then, is not simply taught or recorded but must be experienced or practiced.

3:00-3:20

Craft Beer: A Modern Return to the Ancient Practice of Spiritual Brewing
Talia Watson

In the United States, the production and consumption patterns of beer have been radically altered by industrialization and globalization from a once localized practice. Traditional societies practicing fermentation express a cosmological and spiritual connection to brewing that reflects an ontological solidity, which is in stark contrast to the existential questioning of institutionalized, modern culture. American sensibility suggests that alcoholic beverages are a cause for unsociable actions, whereas traditional brewing world-wide attests to the strengthening and uplifting qualities of fermentation. Mass-produced beers are now experiencing a reversal in market technology and value placed on traditional fermentation practices; challenged by home and craft brewers, macro-breweries are declining in beer sales while the demand for locally crafted beers has increased. The current international revitalization of brewing culture emphasizes again the social and

spiritual potential of beer as a shared phenomenon and rescinds beer as a proponent of social destruction. In my own participation as a home brewer, my experience points me in the same direction: Beer is a spiritual staple as well as a dietary staple and again is increasingly revered as a representation of identity, both for brewers and brew drinkers. The modern loyalty expressed to a local brewery's product reflects a similar allegiance to place, ethnicity, or purpose that defined individual and social identity in traditional brewing practices before industrialized alienation from production and consumption.

3:20-3:40

Ayahuasca: The Visionary Brew

Brigitte Mars (Herbalist, Author, and University Professor)

The word Ayahuasca is from the Quechua Indian word, meaning "vine of the soul" or "visionary vine." South American mythology places ayahuasca at the beginning of time, first appearing in human form, soon after the masculine Sun fertilized the feminine Earth and the drops of semen became the original people. The Indians claim that the plants taught them how to make the brew. Peruvians usually abstain from salt, lard, sweets, and sometimes sex for ten days before using. In Columbia, Indians have an ayahuasca yuropari initiation ceremony to admit young men into manhood. During the ceremony, icaros, or power songs, are sung. It is said to "return one to the beginning of things."

Ayahuasca is made from *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *B. inebrians* in conjunction with *Psychotria viridis*. There are over 100 species of the *Banisteriopsis* vine, which contain beta carboline alkaloids (harmine, harmaline, harmalol, harman, and tetrahydroharmaline). These have a basic indole structure, similar to serotonin, and at least one harmala alkaloid is present in the pineal gland. *Psychotria viridis* contains DMT (dimethyl tryptamine), which occurs not only in many plants, but also in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid. Harmaline inhibits monoamine oxidase, thus allowing DMT to interface with the brain synapses. Harmala also slows down the rate at which DMT is metabolized by the brain.

3:40-3:50

DISCUSSION

3:50-4:10

BREAK

4:10-5:40

BOTANICAL INFLUENCES ON CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS

(Chair: M. Diane Hardgrave)

4:10-4:30

God's Own Anointing Oil:

The Tree, the Olive, and the Olive Tree in Jewish Tradition

Mira Amiras (San Jose State University)

The Jewish calendar recognizes not one or two but four New Years to celebrate. One for plants, one for animals, one for humans, and one for Creation itself. The Tree, and in particular the olive tree, holds a special place in the pantheon of beings held sacred, to be honored and protected. More than this, however, God

himself employed the oil of the olive in the making of the greatest elixir of all: God's own anointing oil. This paper will examine the Tree, the olive and the uses of anointing oil. God's own recipe included.

4:30-4:50

Chieftain, Peasant, Shrub, and Bramble: Indigenous Irish Relationship with Trees
Tina Fields (Naropa University)

In contrast to the contemporary industrial growth society's view of plants as non-sentient beings to be used or killed at will for our own benefit, the complex indigenous legal system known in Ireland as the Brehon Law, used from pre-history up until the 17th century, delineated penalties for mistreating trees and shrubs that were not dissimilar from the penalties for mistreating other humans. This paper describes these and discusses some environmental ramifications of animistic vs. inanimistic cultural consciousness.

4:50-5:10

**As the Mind, so the Food:
The Brahma Kumaris and Sustainable Yogic Agriculture**
Tamasin Ramsay (Monash University)

Ascetics typically maintain distinct existential and social boundaries between themselves and others, determining choices on the basis of higher principles and a relationship with the transcendent. The ascetic practice of members of the Brahma Kumaris is born from a rich history of spiritual revolution and social rebellion in pre-partition India. I explore the way in which BK ascetic practice has, 75 years after its establishment, become socialized and integrated into BKs 'worldly' lives of family and work through the example of Sustainable Yogic Agriculture. By incorporating meditative practices into their farming techniques, BK farmers are witnessing positive results in their farming which is impacting upon their livelihoods and social worlds, while affirming the power of their ascetic practice. Through this unique yogic farming, BKs can also legitimately educate people on the effects of ascetic meditative practices in ways that are commensurate with global concerns regarding climate change and environmental care. Rather than ascetic practices forcing BKs to live segregated lives, their practice has become a tool to socialize with the world 'outside' and respond meaningfully to broad global issues.

5:10-5:30

**Human-Plant Relationships in the Ramkokamekra-Canela
Indigenous Society of Maranhão Brazil**
Theresa Miller (University of Oxford)

Human relationships with nonhumans are a central component of indigenous Amazonian societies. Animals, plants, objects, and supernatural beings are usually seen to have inner vitalities or "souls" similar to those of human beings. This shared intentionality often enables intimate, communicative encounters between humans and conceptually significant nonhumans. This paper will explore human engagements with cultivated plants in the Ramkokamekra-Canela indigenous society of Maranhão, Brazil. In particular, the paper will examine human-plant relationships as seen in gardening practices, ritual activities, and mythical

storytelling. It will be shown how a re-thinking of human-plant relationships as a series of multi-sensory communicative encounters leads to new ways of understanding Ramkokamekra-Canela sociology, ethnobotany, cosmology, and physiology as an integrated whole. Additionally, the paper will examine the indigenous conceptualization of plant intentionality or "consciousness." Whether the notion of cultivated plants as "alive" and "aware" beings is related to their capacity for self-growth will be a major theme of this paper. Finally, the paper will explore how human-plant encounters in the Ramkokamekra-Canela community relate to wider theories of plant intentionality in indigenous Amazonia and other indigenous societies throughout the world.

5:30-5:40 DISCUSSION

5:40-7:30 DINNER BREAK

7:30-9:30pm WORKSHOP:
Chants Encounters for Altered States
John Lawrence, Susan Grimaldi

Shamans around the world use chants as a way of achieving altered states of consciousness. John and Susan recently traveled to a remote region in northern Mongolia, searching for nomadic reindeer herders where they filmed a Tsaatan shaman chanting and playing her drum during a healing ceremony. They also were able to film a shaman of the highest order among the Daur ethnicity of Inner Mongolia, China. Come see their new films, then, after being witness to these ancient traditions, you will be given the opportunity to obtain a shamanic state of consciousness by listening to a CD recording of Daur shaman chants.



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

8:45am REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

9:00-12:20 THE HEALING PLANT: CONTEXT IN MEDICINAL PLANT USE
(Chair: *Bethe Hagens*)

9:00-9:20 Coca: Recent Observations in Bolivia
Jim A. Bauml

The leaves of coca (*Erythroxylum* spp.), which contain the alkaloid cocaine, have been a key cultural element in the South American Andes since ancient times. As

a medicine and sacred and magical plant, it has no rivals in the altiplano regions of the Andean Zone. Recently, it has been possible to study coca production in the Yungas and the Chapare, the two major growing regions of Bolivia, the only country where coca is legal. This paper is an opportunity to revisit the prolific writings of the legendary ethnobotanist, Timothy Plowman, who devoted fifteen years of research to coca. This field work on coca in Bolivia supplements Plowman's extensive research in other areas of South America. It has created the opportunity to determine the identities of these different coca forms as well as to better understand the cultivation, ethnobotany, and marketing of this sacred plant.

9:20-9:40

Healing and its Discontents: Reflections on Identity and Altered States of Consciousness by People who Use Psychedelics as Medicine
Cameron Adams (University of Kent)

In this paper I consider how the experience of medicinal/therapeutic benefits from psychedelic states of consciousness underlies a sense of shared identity among regular users of these drugs that is distinct from (and often in conflict with) the rest of society.

Preliminary findings suggest that benefits of the regular use of psychedelic drugs are associated with broad, holistic definitions of health and healing. Although regular users may initially experiment with psychedelic drugs due to a hedonistic desire to "get high," persistent use seems to be sustained by the development of more mindful and/or spiritual motivations for altering consciousness to maximize wellbeing.

Altered states of consciousness induced by psychedelic drugs are often characterized in mainstream media as varieties of intoxication, users themselves may interpret them very differently. Denial of the healing benefits of being high may be part of the reason why social prohibitions against such conscious states seems to do more harm than good. This creates a schizomogenic force that not only subverts the healing potential of these substances but also creates a counter-cultural community in direct opposition with the mainstream.

9:40-10:00

Successful Psychedelic Treatment of Addiction: a Conversion Experience?
Tom Kingsley Brown (University of California, San Diego)

This paper discusses an alternative method for the treatment of opiate drug dependence and compares the process of recovery from addiction with the process of religious conversion. Though it is still a largely unknown medicine in the United States, the Schedule I tryptamine psychedelic called ibogaine (derived from the West African medicinal plant, *Tabernanthe iboga*) has been used with rapidly increasing frequency over the past few decades to treat dependence on highly addictive substances such as heroin. Currently, MAPS (the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) is conducting an observational study of outcomes for opiate-dependent individuals receiving ibogaine-assisted treatment at clinics in Baja California, Mexico. This paper presents an overview of the research study along with preliminary results; explores the importance of the altered state and accompanying visions produced by

ibogaine; and considers addiction recovery as a conversion-like transformation of the patient's beliefs and self-image.

10:00-10:20

Amađa's Blessings from the Peyote Gardens of South Texas
Stacy Schaefer (California State University, Chico)

This paper honors Mrs. Amađa Cardenas and explores her life as the first federally-licensed peyote dealer in South Texas selling this sacred cactus to members of the Native American Church. Following over 12 years of fieldwork, I examine the dynamics that enabled Mrs. Cardenas to provide a place where Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Anglo Americans from many walks of life were welcomed to her house in the "peyote gardens" of South Texas. There, Mrs. Cardenas created a place where people were able to appreciate differences and find common ground. I place this discussion within the theoretical orientations that address religious revitalization movements (Wallace 1956), pilgrimage and rites of passage (Van Gennep 1909 and Turner 1967, 1969), and psychointegrator plants (Winkleman 1995). This discussion is followed by a brief report on the status of Mrs. Cardenas' home and property since she passed away in 2005, just one month shy of her 101st birthday.

10:20-10:30

DISCUSSION

10:30-10:50

BREAK

10:50-11:10

**Peyote as Medicine:
An Examination of Therapeutic Factors that Contribute to Healing**
Kevin Feeney

For thousands of years indigenous communities throughout the globe have recognized the therapeutic value of particular hallucinogenic plants. Peyote, a psychoactive cactus, is considered a medicine by many American Indians, and has been hailed as a cure for alcoholism despite having no "scientifically" accepted medical use. The notion that hallucinogenic compounds may have therapeutic applications, however, is increasingly supported by scientific research. Despite the heavy focus of allopathic medicine on pharmacology, the therapeutic value of peyote must be understood in holistic terms. By uniting Gordon Claridge's work on the "total drug effect" with the work of Moerman and Jonas on "the meaning response" and with Toksoz Karasu's "agents of therapeutic change," a therapeutic model emerges that can explain how the symbolic, ritual, and community components of the peyote ceremony combine with peyote's distinctive pharmacological properties to produce a unique and efficacious healing experience.



11:10-11:30

**Plant Fetishes, Witchcraft, and the Ambiguity of
Traditional Healing in Cameroon**

Brian Arturo Bartelt (Los Angeles City College)

The connection between healing and witchcraft is most clearly defined through the use of diverse objects of medicine (fetishes) that are ritually sanctified and activated against the 'enemy,' usually witches, thieves, and other offenders. Once activated, the fetishes emit a force that mercilessly pursues and punishes the offender with illness or even death. The only treatment is to have the 'curse' lifted by the healer or society from which the bad medicine originated. Thereafter the fetish must be 'pacified,' or it will continue to target not only attack the offender, but members of his or her family as well as any weak persons who venture into its proximity. With the increase in crime and paranoia associated with new riches and the breakdown of traditional institutions, the use of fetishes is on the rise, despite the public's concern over the potential for abuse. Thus the healer who uses mossrock is situated at the very heart of the moral dilemma in Africa concerning the role of witchcraft in society: although a healer can use witchcraft in a positive way, does the potential for it to go wrong outweigh its usefulness? By engaging in such practice, is the healer indeed the witch that causes so many afflictions? This paper addresses the ambiguity of traditional healing while arguing that the close but contradictory relationship between healers and witches is one of the driving forces behind the continued efficacy of the witchcraft phenomenon occurring in Cameroon today.

11:30-11:50

Iu-Mien Refugee Ethnobotanical Healing Practices

Jeffery MacDonald (Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization)

The Iu-Mien refugees in Portland, Oregon employ several types of healing techniques that can be divided up into spiritual, manual, thermic, and herbal healing. Usually herbal and manual treatments are employed first against disease, but if the disease does not respond to such normal treatments then the spirit is said to be behind the disease and spiritual healing rituals must be conducted. This paper explores herbal medicine as still practiced in the United States, mainly by Iu-Mien women, who grow many of their healing plants in the backyard garden. The paper describes the ethnobotany of several medicinal plants and their use in different healing modalities including plitices, soups, infusions, baths, and thermic treatments for specific diseases.

11:50-12:10

Research, Ethnomedicine, and Applied Medical Anthropology

M. Diane Hardgrave (Southern Methodist University)

Traditional medicine is used in more than 75% of African populations. Research and analysis of medicinal plants in Africa is disproportionately low in comparison with its rich biodiversity and diverse cultural dynamics. Presented here are findings from studies conducted within the past 2 years that focus on medicinal plants associated with Malaria, AIDS, and Tuberculosis. Current research trends demonstrate the efficacy of ethnomedical remedies. While encouraging, the overall approach in current research is biologically oriented, economically driven,

and centers essentially on the production of phytomedicines. The assumptions and epistemologies inherent in biomedical methods potentially undermine the holistic nature of medicinal plants used in traditional healing and the central role of the traditional healer. Clinical medical anthropology approaches to the investigation of medicinal plants can extend our understanding of their healing efficacy and offer applied strategies of disease control.

12:10-12:20 DISCUSSION

12:20-2:20 LUNCH BREAK

12:45-2:15 SAC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

WHAT'S THE "SAC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING" YOU SAY?
Well...The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness is an all-volunteer organization, run by the Executive Board (President, Past-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and 8 Members-At-Large). If you are interested in SAC's inner workings, curious about who is on the Board, and/or considering a SAC leadership position yourself, PLEASE JOIN US!

2:20-4:30 ECOLOGY, MEANING, AND BEING (*Chair: John Baker*)

2:20-2:40 **Plant Sensitivity to Human Interaction**
Ben Bendig (University of California, Los Angeles)

The question of plant consciousness made waves in the 1960s and '70s with the publication of research by lie detector expert Cleve Backster (1968) and the popularization of his work in "The Secret Life of Plants" by Tompkins and Bird (1973). Measuring electrical resistance in the leaves of plants, Backster was able to establish that plants were sensitive to events in the environment, including threats to the plant, death of nearby organisms, and human interaction, particularly human emotions. The current research sought to replicate Backster's findings, focusing on human interaction. Plant electrical activity was recorded using a GSR device during spontaneous conversations involving the experimenter and acquaintances. Comparisons were made of activity during four-second intervals of time with the presence of emotions (e.g., anger, surprise, embarrassment) versus times of no activity in the room containing the plant, revealing a highly significant difference ($p < .0001$). Controls employed indicate that these differences are not due to temperature, sound, or movement. Implications are that plants are sensitive to human interaction, particularly to emotion. The importance of genuine emotion in evoking these responses points to the necessity of ecologically valid and spontaneous situations for a proper scientific study of plant perceptual responses.

2:40-3:00

Moieties of Consciousness: Conceivable and Inconceivable
Peter Grossenbacher (Naropa University Consciousness Lab)

In humans, consciousness can be discerned when a person's mind is about something. This property of aboutness, called "intentionality" by philosophers of mind, cleaves into two halves, or moieties of consciousness. One way of being conscious of something is conceptual (conceiving), the other way is nonconceptual (inconceivable). Each moiety of consciousness affords its own mode of subjective experience, distinguishable from both first-person and third-person perspectives. The conceivable can be more easily described in language, while the inconceivable moiety is intrinsically ineffable, and characterized by a wakeful, energetic quality. Though the two modes may manifest together concurrently, one may predominate over the other. Grounded in Buddhist psychology, this presentation delineates the conceivable and that which lies beyond conception, and explains how each moiety affords its own mode of cognizance about the other moiety.

3:00-3:10

DISCUSSION

3:10-3:20

BREAK

3:20-3:40

Prophetic Dreams: A Mexican-American View
Peter Wogan (Willamette University)

In rural Mexico, why are dreams about excrement interpreted to mean that the dreamer will lose or gain money in the near future? I take up this question within the context of the life, culture, and dreams of a man who emigrated from rural Mexico to Oregon 20 years ago and now owns a convenience store. Based on six years of fieldwork with this man and his family, I offer four explanations for the excrement-money equation in his dream interpretations: 1) secrecy in dream discourse and wealth accumulation; 2) isomorphism between cycles of production and consumption within his body and workplace; 3) notions of an anti-sacrifice based on the use of animal waste as fertilizer; and 4) integration of rejected aspects of his personality.

3:40-4:00

**The Discontented Grass Plant:
Consciousness and Plants on Alaska's Northwest Coast**
Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian (University of Chicago)
Julie Raymond-Yakoubian (University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Kawerak Inc.)

This paper, drawing on a number of data sources - including Eskimo mythology, dancing music, and traditional environmental knowledge - will examine the topic of plants and consciousness as it relates to the native peoples of Alaska's northwest coast. Through an examination of both plant consciousness as well as consciousness about plants in light of this empirical material, the authors seek to trace the complexities of the intersection of identity, ecology, and consciousness in this region, and to develop an analysis of the sociohistorical life of theorizing

(human) nature. This paper aims to interrogate and problematize understandings of plants, consciousness, ecology, identity, and nature.

4:00-4:20

The Eco-Psychology of Japanese Mountain Asceticism
Bryan Rill (Florida State University)

Shugendo is a 1200 year old Japanese religious complex centered on arduous mountain asceticism and esoteric ritual practices. Through immersion in symbolically impregnated "natural" landscapes, practitioners attain and enhance spiritual power for soteriological and pragmatic purposes. Experience is the means for practitioners to enter into new symbolic realities wherein one achieves harmony or communication with a sacred landscape and its divine powers. Through experience in austerities, participants first dissolve and then reconstitute their symbolic constructs of reality. In doing so, they facilitate a mode of symbolic "embedding" where sacred modes of perception are experienced as real and immediate. The symbolic structure of these modes of perception rests upon an animistic and animatistic eco-psychology wherein nature itself has divine and deeply powerful qualities. By internalizing this symbolic reality, practitioners not only redefine the natural world but their relationship to all organic and inorganic matter. Drawing from two years of ethnographic fieldwork and immersive participation, this presentation elucidates the natural symbolism of Shugendo and the implications this has in the lives of its contemporary adherents. I suggest that the particular form of eco-psychology cultivated through Shugendo has profound implications for individual and collective notions of health and meaningful being in Japan.

4:20-4:30

DISCUSSION

4:30-5:00

BREAK

5:00-6:00

SAC INVITED LECTURER: STEWART GUTHRIE

5:00-5:30

Anthropomorphism and Consciousness
Stewart Guthrie (Fordham University)

5:30-5:40

Discussant: *Steve Glazier (University of Nebraska)*

5:40-6:00

DISCUSSION

6:00-8:00

DINNER BREAK



8:00-10:00

WORKSHOP – COST \$5:

The Corn Game: Prepare Yourself for Planting

Kristina Baines (University of South Florida)

Learn and participate in the traditional Mopan Maya spring planting ritual and prepare your body, mind and corn seed for sowing. During this active, but fast dwindling tradition, the men who will participate in the next morning's cooperative planting come and play "the corn game" into the night while their wives prepare tortillas for a late night meal. Smells of roasting corn and burning incense mingle with sounds of rhythmic counting in unison, shouts of victory and ensuing laughter. Only a candle illuminates the scene. Preparing the body through this multi-sensory experience connects directly to the success of the year's most important crop of "mother" corn. In this workshop, we will recreate the scene and perpetuate the knowledge of this Maya ritual, handed down from the ancestors through our own sensory experience. This workshop has been sanctioned by the village elders, who express concern that a growing number of young people do not understand the importance of continuing this important practice. Cost includes a light snack.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

9:30-12:00

WORKSHOP – offsite

Sacred Hunting and Gathering: Consciousness of Place

Mary Sweeney (Way of Nature Mentoring Programs)

Until recently in our evolution humans were hunter and gatherers rather than agriculturalists. Agriculturalist culture has modified our relationship with natural environments. Deep knowing and conscious interventions that strengthened what naturally evolved to sustain us, was replaced by a culture of disturbance and control radically, modifying our environment. Intimate, renewable and sustainable relationships that many hunter gatherers had with the earth created a sense of identity that respected individual choice within a community that included all inhabitants of the land as well as the unseen forces. Relationship was universal and required people develop their own relationships with everything. Human's experienced themselves as part of something larger that recognized and provided for them. Hunting and gathering involved complex relationships with the environment through knowledge of land, relationships with the unseen and mental and physical consciousness. "Sacred" is a concept would apply to explain a way of being that was ingrained in life. This workshop explores hunting and gathering as a path to reawakening these relationships with the world and shifting consciousness about our relationships to the universe. These practices can shift our communication process as we enter into a world of vastly greater awareness than most people experience. This experiential workshop will take place outdoors. In this experiential outdoor workshop expect to engage in activities that help us experience land as animals and plants might. Some activities will be contemplative and some more active.

Sunday, February 12, 12:30pm-2:00pm
University of Colorado Museum of Natural History

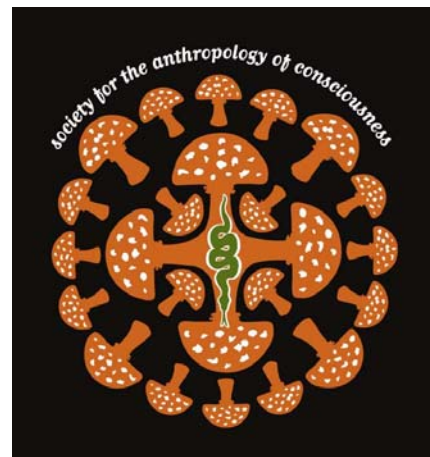
PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE SOCIETY FOR THE
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BUSINESS MEETING AND
BRUNCH RECEPTION!

Hear about new developments in the organization, weigh in on future conference venues, exchange ideas on how to make SAC and its conferences better, network, and so much more!





The SAC Business Meeting will be held in conjunction with a brunch reception of light fare, an optional tour of the museum, and final opportunities for conversation and exchanging good-byes.

Co-hosted by the University of Colorado,
Museum of Natural History
1030 Broadway Street, Boulder CO

DON'T FORGET YOUR
SAC T-SHIRT!
AVAILABLE IN SAGE
OR BLACK,
MEN'S AND
WOMEN'S, SHORT
AND LONG SLEEVED,
SIZES S-XXXL!



The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness is dedicated to the study of consciousness and its practical application to contemporary issues.

-  SAC publishes the peer-reviewed journal *Anthropology of Consciousness*; convenes an Annual Spring Conference that consists of individual papers, panel discussions, and experiential sessions; and hosts sessions at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association.
-  SAC supports rigorous and empirically-based inquiries into consciousness that utilize diverse methodologies – including ethnographic, scientific, experiential, historical, and alternative ways of knowing.
-  SAC reflects on how consciousness and human transformation can be made relevant to the challenges of our age, with the aim of a praxis to catalyze a shift toward a more just world.
-  SAC values interdisciplinary perspectives, respects diverse traditions, and prioritizes inclusiveness and open dialogue in the study of consciousness.

Some Areas of Interest of the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness:

States of Consciousness and Consciousness Studies: Dreams, possession, trance, dissociation, theories of mind and cognition, epistemology, methodology, evolution of consciousness, biosocial approaches, psychophysiology, psychotherapy, cultural psychology.

Shamanic, Religious, and Spiritual Traditions: Ethnographic studies of shamanism; modern and core shamanism; Eastern, Western, and indigenous religions; healing practices; ritual; mediumistic, mystical, and transpersonal experiences; magic and witchcraft; music and dance.

Botanical and Psychoactive Substances: Studies of plant use in traditional and contemporary settings, ethnopharmacology, psychopharmacology, healing, addiction and recovery.

Philosophical, Symbolic, and Linguistic Studies: Myth, oral traditions, language, archetypes, body and mind, comparative studies, visual anthropology.

Anomalous Experiences: Psychic phenomenon, reincarnation, near-death experiences, mediumistic communication, divination.



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