



AASC NEWSLETTER

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THE MYSTIC LIGHT

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While traveling the road to Damascus, on his way to deal with a rising new Jewish sect following a man named Jesus, Saul of Tarsus was suddenly blinded by a light of unimaginable brightness. The vision came without warning and made him a devoted follower of the very man he was previously convinced was an imposter. Such visions of the mystic light have occurred throughout man's existence. It occurs among the saintly and the secular, the religious and the non-religious, either spontaneously or developing over time. But despite great variations in its description, cross-culturally there is one common denominator. It always accompanies a profound change of being. Such literal perception of the mystic light may in fact be the source of the most ancient meaning of the word "enlightenment."

The experience of the mystic light often signals a rupture in the planes of consciousness. It has been variously interpreted as the radiance of one's own true Self, a greater reality, or the manifestation of a divinity. There are several ways in which this phenomenon can be described universally. The first deals with the temporal framework in which it appears. The second deals with the emotions and abilities that appear concurrently with the experience. Another has to do with the relative vs. absolute nature of the transcendence it indicates. Lastly, there are the conditions under which it falls and the differential abilities of individuals to perceive or display the mystic light.

Many testimonies from a variety of cultures around the world illustrate the often spontaneous nature of perception of the mystic light. The anthropologist and arctic explorer Knud Rasmussen, for example, relates the story of Uvavnuk, a Netsilik Eskimo woman, who received her power to cure people while singing. In a single dramatic moment, according to Rasmussen, "...a ball of fire came down from the sky and struck her senseless. When she regained consciousness, the spirit of light was within her... (Halifax 1979:13)." Here the host was literally struck by fire from heaven but the swiftness with which the light comes has been also metaphorically compared to lightning, particularly among the initiatory experiences of shamans.

The historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, who wrote extensively on the mystic light, gave the example of Dr. R.M. Bucke who, following an evening of poetry reading, suddenly and completely without warning found himself surrounded by a flame-colored cloud. When the light moved inside of him he immediately felt intense joy accompanied by a profound intellectual illumination. He relates that he learned more in that instant than all the years previously (Eliade 1962:67). Several other similar examples of

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sudden photisms can be found in William James' classic book, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902). Such threshold experiences are called Yehud or Unity by the Kabbalists and are consciously sought.

The reception of special powers and great intellectual illumination are common among spontaneous experiences of the mystic light. Physical healings are also frequently reported. Eliade, for example, told the story of A.J.S., a woman suffering from pain in her spine. Contemplating suicide, she fell asleep one night only to wake suddenly finding herself enveloped in light, accompanied by a feeling of calmness and an audible voice repeating the words "Peace, be still!" Not only did her health immediately improve, but she also discovered she had the power to heal others (1962:68-69).

In his book, John Sherrill related his personal experience of epiphany. The light that appeared in his hospital room was disembodied, yet he definitely sensed a center of awareness in it. When it disappeared, so had his cancer (1964:13-14).

Despite its convincing nature, however, experiences of the mystic light do not necessarily indicate a meeting with ultimate reality. It does signify a rupture of planes, but the relativity of such transcendence must be emphasized. It is for this reason that the experience can sometimes be anticipated. The light will still occur spontaneously, but in predictable stages of lesser intensity. In the various mystical disciplines, for example, the reaching of a higher level can be heralded not by an increase in intensity or brightness, but by a different colored light or any one of a variety of culturally relative luminous manifestations, such as smoke, jewels, or celestial objects.

In the practice of yoga, variously colored lights mark progressive stages of enlightenment. Buddhism also discusses luminous signs perceived during meditation. The Upanishads further list the preliminary forms of Brahman which appear as luminous visions of earthly and celestial phenomena. Thus we have the paradox that the experience of the light has universal aspects and at the same time has personal aspects that are relative to the perceiver's culture, religion, and ideology.

The mystic light may also take the form of fire or flame. This is typically a sign of the filling by "the Holy Ghost" as related in Acts 2:3 of the Christian Bible accompanied by the additional sign of speaking in tongues. In Hinduism the atman-brahman, which is centered in the heart chakra, manifests as light, and perception of it is accompanied by rising temperature in the body and mystical sounds. The Chinese sutra Rupaloka describes the success of contemplation as reaching samadhi,

translated "flash of fire", the same state the Buddhists call nirvanic consciousness.

Although perception of the light in religious examples occurs with the glimpsing of higher states of consciousness such as maithuna in Tantracism, it is also believed that every person perceives the Light at death. In fact, studies of near-death experiences in the West list the brilliant light which is not blinding, as the most common characteristic. It is also frequently reported in spontaneous out-of-body experiences. At the point of death in eastern religions, the deceased must choose between the Clear Light and dull lights, the choice being dependent on his karma. If he chooses the latter he must return for another incarnation.

These eastern religions agree that the Clear Light is representative of the Real Self or fundamental reality. Similarly, studies of psychedelic experience by Masters and Houston discovered that the inward mystical experience at the integral, or source level, of reality is almost always associated with a flood of preternatural light (1966:307). Yet the object is not merely to discern and perceive the Clear Light, but rather to let it incorporate into the body. The yogins, for example, attempt to put it into circulation within the body. To transform the being into fire is also the aim of alchemy. And likewise, in Taoism, perception of the Light does not mean deliverance, but rather existence perfectly integrated with the rhythms of the cosmos. Since this process has nothing to do with deliverance, the Taoists involve neither the aid or necessary presence of a divinity. This is because the Light inhabits the heart of a person in its natural state, and is always present waiting to be perceived and circulated.

In other words, the Light resides naturally in a person and has nothing to do with coming in upon salvation, conditional deliverance by an external force, or acceptance of a particular ideology. Outside influences act as catalysts at best. This explains why many areligious persons spontaneously experience the Light. The stories of Uvavuk, Dr. Bucke, and A.J.S. related above are just three examples. Eliade's other examples include a man who, while on a crowded boat, suddenly found himself filled with light. Also in Eliade's The Two and the One, W.L. Wilmhurst described how a luminous blue haze changing into a brilliant golden light crept up on him and engulfed him. Warner Allen described the appearance of a silver circle transforming into a tunnel that drew him in to meet with golden light, all occurring in a single timeless moment (1962:20,70-72).

Nevertheless, the fact that the Light heralds a

From the Editor . . .

I have just returned from the AASC's third annual conference in Pacific Palisades, California. It was without a doubt our best to date. Many excellent papers were given and nearly sixty people attended and participated. Everything went without a hitch due to the superb planning of the conference organizers, Geri-Ann Galanti and Michael Winkelman. The Report on the AASC Conference follows below.

The AASC is beginning its third year with continued growth. In order to stimulate that growth outgoing President Schwartz suggests that 1987 is the year for outreach. This year members should do all they can to publicize our organization. Conferences with related interests are a good place to begin publicity. As part of our growth this year we have added several new board of director members and lost two board members who have guided us since our inception. Pris Lee and Kay Rawlings have been involved with the anthropology of consciousness for many years. In 1981 they helped found the Association for Transpersonal Anthropology. Again they were there to help us in the difficult transition in 1985 to the AASC. Their guidance will be missed on the board. To both we extend the very best and to Pris we extend congratulations on her new marriage. For details about the new board and new society officers see the AASC News below.

This issue we have a paper on the mystical and healing power of light by Steven G. Herbert. Next issue we will have a paper by outgoing AASC president, Stephan A. Schwartz, which reviews recent Mobius Society experiments on the healing properties of water as they relate to light.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this issue to the memory of C.W. Weiant (1892-1986), one of the fathers of the anthropology of consciousness. His obituary by Joe Long is printed below.

AASC News

AASC Annual Business Meeting

The AASC Board of Directors held the annual business meeting at the AASC annual conference in March. A new board of directors and society officers were elected at the meeting. The new officers are as follows: President: Michael Winkelman (University of California, Irvine), President-elect: Jeffery L. MacDonald (New School for Social Research), Secretary: Matthew Bronson (California Institute of Integral Studies); Treasurer: Geri-Ann Galanti (University of California Consortium). The new board of directors is as follows: Dan Hawkmoon Alford (Calif-

ornia Institute of Integral Studies), Matthew Bronson (California Institute of Integral Studies), Geri-Ann Galanti (University of California Consortium), Jack A. Kapchan (University of Miami), Jeffery L. MacDonald (New School for Social Research), William G. Roll (West Georgia College), Stephan A. Schwartz (Mobius Society), Cynthia Siegel (John F. Kennedy University), Sharon Solfvin (John F. Kennedy University), Michael Winkelman (University of California, Irvine).

Retiring as president is Stephan A. Schwartz (Mobius Society). Priscilla Lee (San Mateo College) resigned as treasurer and board member. Kay Rawlings (San Francisco) and Wayne Untereiner (California State University, Fullerton) declined reelection to the board.

The directors also appointed new board member Cynthia Siegel (John F. Kennedy University) the chair and organizer of next year's AASC conference. Preliminary details of the conference and a call for papers will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter. Ms. Siegel organized the 1983 Parapsychology and Near-Death Experience conferences in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Geri-Ann Galanti

AASC Newsletter Book Review Editor

Michael Winkelman has volunteered to act as book review editor for the Newsletter. Please send book reviews and books for review to him at:

AASC Newsletter
P.O. Box 4032
Irvine, CA 92716-4032

Back Issues of Volume 2 of the Newsletter are available from the editor for \$5.00 per issue.

Report on the Annual AASC Conference

The Association for the Anthropological Study of Consciousness held its Third Annual Meeting from March 5-8, 1987, at the Presbyterian Conference Center in Pacific Palisades, California. The conference grounds are located in scenic Temescal Canyon which provided conference attendees opportunities for nature walks when the rains ended on Friday. No papers were given the first night, but an informal gathering was held after dinner. The board of directors held the annual business meeting later that evening.

Three symposia were held on the first day of the conference, Friday, March 6. The morning session,

chaired by Geri-Ann Galanti, was devoted to "Applied Aspects of Consciousness Research." The first speaker, M. Steven Shackley (Arizona State University), spoke on "The Transpersonal Archaeologist: An Interchange of Science and Intuition." Shackley proposed a model for integrating the right and left hemispheres in archaeology. One technique he described was the use of a pendulum to find obsidian outcroppings and archeological sites. He also suggested meditation and trance states particularly experiential meditation at sacred places. He showed slides of sacred sites and noted that sacred places usually have no debris nor artifacts. He noted that most archaeologists even those without transpersonal interests are drawn to such places.

Stephan Schwartz and Rand de Mattei (Mobius Society) gave a joint presentation on the recent Mobius Society "Applied Parapsychological Research in Healing." They showed a video and slides of their research to illustrate their talk. Their findings and research design are described in a short paper in the next issue of the Newsletter. After lunch they gave an abbreviated slide presentation of the Caravel Project. This is an undersea archaeological project in which the Mobius Society participated. This project is trying to locate the Caravels, the lost ships of Columbus, in St. Anne's Bay on the north shore of Jamaica. Using map remote viewing and intuitives on location the Mobius Society found several previously unknown wrecks.

The last paper of the morning session was Michael Nanko's (United Western Medical Centers) "Cognitive Attributes and Belief in the Paranormal." Dr. Nanko explained that social psychologists have long held that those who believe in the paranormal are crazy, have impaired judgment, or have a cognitive deficit. To test this belief, Nanko used standard scalar methods to measure the critical thinking skills, dogmatism, and ambiguity tolerance of three types of people: believers in only psi, general believers in the paranormal, and skeptics. He found no significant differences between believers and skeptics on these three traits, except that believers of both types tended to score higher on critical thinking than skeptics. Personal experience was the most important factor contributing to beliefs. He also found no real difference between males and females in beliefs, even though traditionally we think that females have a greater belief in the paranormal. Perhaps females have reported experiences more often than males.

The first afternoon session, also chaired by Dr. Galanti, was on "Mediumship and Personality." The first presentation by Dan Hawkmoon Alford and Matthew C. Bronson (California Institute for Integral Studies) was entitled "The Medium is the Masseuse." Alford and Bronson took up the "fad" of

channelling from a linguistic perspective. They suggested an approach to the study of channelling which looks at the degree of difference between the speech style of ego and the channelled "entity." They look for special phrases and filled pauses in the entity's speech style. They noted the high proportion of British accents among Californian channellers. They argued that what the entities/channellers say tends to induce a trance in the listener. To illustrate and expand on their points Alford and Bronson showed a forty minute edited version of "Frank Talks about Channelling, Parts I and II." Using humor, Alford and Bronson and their guests on the video, Ray West and Tom Condon, discuss the differences between channelling and ancient forms of trance mediumship. They showed excerpts from a video of Ramtha and played excerpts from Seth, John, and Lazaris. West then illustrated the great potential for fraud by channelling "Comedian, The Ridiculous One" while Bronson channelled "Infinon, The Endless One" and "Offanon, The Intermittent One." As an illustration of the suggestive hypnotic power of such performances, many members of the audience showed signs of channelling "Hysterion, The Laughing One."

Bringing the audience back to a more serious note, Alice Saltzman described her research and experiences with a group of seven channellers, in "A Southern California Odyssey: Becoming a Modern Medium." Dr. Saltzman described the fears of becoming a channel, the messages given, and the effects of becoming a channel on the medium. The group is all female and originated as a support group. Although one woman, a Roman Catholic, could not overcome her fears over becoming a medium and eventually gave it up, most the developing members overcame their fears successfully. None do it for money. Rather they feel that they benefit both from the energy they channel and from the messages which give information about healing stones, meditation, and personal guidance.

In "Managing the Multiple Personality in Prison" Ralph Allison (M.D. Morrow Bay, CA) discussed his work with prisoners suffering from MPD and argued that the social treatment of criminals mirrors the psychological process that multiples go through, e.g. dissociation, repression, etc. He suggested that the prison serves as "the unconscious mind of society." The pathological operation of the mind of the multiple is replicated in prison society where there is no influence from the outside society which initially repressed these feared elements. He noted the gender behavior of the prisoners in which the outside world is "the man" and by analogy the prisoners are women. To the prisoner homosexual behavior is actually heterosexual since all other prisoners are "female." Dr. Allison questioned the

Transition

Clarence Wolsey Weiant (November 30, 1894 to October 29, 1986) has departed following a very full life as an anthropologist, chiropractor, archaeologist, and psychical researcher. His 1959 "Anthropology and Parapsychology" paper for the annual American Anthropological Association meeting in Mexico City assured his status as a Father of parapsychological anthropology and the anthropology of consciousness. Although "C.W." was in his 70's by the time of the first AAA symposium on parapsychology in Mexico City in 1974 and was unable to travel to AAA and AASC meetings, he maintained a lively interest, through correspondence, in the latter to the time of his death.

C.W. received the D.C. in 1921 and by 1944 (until 1965) was Dean of the Chiropractic Institute of New York. He received Columbia's first B.S. degree in anthropology in 1937 and completed his Ph.D. there in 1943. His dissertation, on the excavations at Tres Zapotes, was published as the complete Bulletin 139, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institute; such a use of a dissertation is rare if not totally unique for the BAE. Fluent in French, Portuguese, English, and Spanish, C.W. lectured in many of the cities of Europe. At 72 he retired from active academic life to practice chiropractic over the next fifteen years in Peekskill, N.Y; however, he became widely identified to new generations of chiropractors in the 1970s through his series of articles on parapsychology published in the Digest of Chiropractic Economics. C.W. is survived by Marian, his wife of 56 years, two children, and three grandchildren. A fuller discussion of Weiant's work appears as Chapter Seven of Stephan A. Schwartz's Secret Vaults of Time (Grosset & Dunlap, 1978).

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Conferences

The Third International Conference on Restricted Environmental Stimulation Research will be held over two days during the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (New York City, August 28-September 1, 1987). The sponsoring organization, the International REST Investigators Society (IRIS), invites the attendance and participation of anyone interested in the many aspects of restricted stimulation.

Papers are invited on any topic of the area, including (but not limited to) laboratory experiments in stimulus reduction; clinical and self-enhancement

uses of such environments in either formal or informal settings; the relationship of restricted physical and social stimulation to transcendental, religious, and transpersonal experiences; and work in isolated or remote sites. As in the previous conferences, we will consider empirical, theoretical, critical review, case study, personal experience and other papers. It is expected that the papers accepted for inclusion will be published in a proceedings volume, as has been the case previously.

For further information about the conference and about IRIS, please write to:

Mr. Thomas H. Fine
Medical College of Ohio
CS#10008, Toledo, Ohio 43699

(Editor's note: Please see pages 10-11 for a discussion of Peter Suedfeld's paper on the "sensed presence" in restricted environments)

Announcements

Felicitas Goodman will conduct a shamanic workshop, June 11-14, 1987, in Berkeley, California. Cost is \$120 (not including meals and accommodation). For information, please write:

Dr. Ruth-Inge Heinze
2321 Russell #3A
Berkeley, CA 94705
(415) 849-3791

Books & Articles

Parapsychology Review, Vol. 17, No. 5, September-October, 1986, has two articles of interest. The first by AASC member Patric Giesler is "Lucid OBEs: A Case Report," pp. 5-7. The second is "Shamanism and Parapsychology," by Sergio Bernardi, pp. 7-11.

Book review editor Michael Winkelman has received the following books for review:

Transformations of Consciousness. by Ken Wilbur, Jack Engler, and Daniel Brown. (Boston: New Science Library Shambala), 1986.

Waking Up: Overcoming the Obstacles to Human Potential. by Charles Tart, (Boston: New Science Library Shambala), 1986.

Stones, Bones, and Skin -- Ritual and Shamanic Art. (San Francisco: Society for Art Publications of the Americas), 200 pages, 318 b/w plates, 8 color plates, 2 centerfolds.

Continued from page 2:

change of being makes it easy to mistake for deliverance or salvation, especially when the Light manifests itself dressed in terms of the subject's belief systems. Thus it is common in conversion experiences for people to literally "see the light", as is indicated in several testimonies collected by the anthropologist Felicitas Goodman. One man, having been recently introduced to Pentecostalism, received his "baptism by the Holy Spirit" when he saw a light descend from heaven, felt great joy, and spoke in tongues all at the same time. For another woman, the light took the shape of a great hand, accompanied by a divine voice (1972:31,52). Such ecstatic experiences are common in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements which encourage and even require them. Personal revelation and absolute truth, however, are not often distinguished.

Pentecostals would label any parallels to baptism by the Holy Spirit occurring in a non-Christian context as the counterfeit of Satan. Nevertheless, numerous examples of the mystic light are found in the phenomenon of shamanism. The experience of Uvavruk related above who was struck by "fire from the sky" amounted to a shamanic initiation. A Yakout man was once similarly struck by lightning but not killed. He related his shamanic initiatory death and resurrection as God coming down from heaven, breaking his body to pieces, and restoring him to life.

The encounter with death and subsequent rebirth and illumination is a common theme in shamanic initiation worldwide. The Iglulik Eskimo shaman's career begins with a mysterious light which he suddenly feels in his body. His initiation may also include an operation which extracts the soul in a process of renewal and introduces the angákou or lightning of enlightenment. The ceremonial initiation of the Australian aboriginal medicine man involves quartz crystals, which are equated with solidified light. Shamanic initiation in many cultures includes a supernatural surgical operation where the initiate's organs are removed and replaced with quartz crystals. These crystals will serve the shaman as both a repository as well as transceiver of illumination. The basis for the crystal as a power object of solid light may derive from the fact that clairvoyants can perceive light emanating from crystals. Note also that the words "crystal" and "Christ" have similar etymologies. The dawning age of unity and the realization of ourselves as Christ has also been referred to as "The Age of Crystal."

With the experience of the mystic light commonly comes a simultaneous bestowal of special powers and abilities. These most often take the form of paranormal understanding and healing as in the gifts of the Holy Spirit among the Pentecostals and charismatics. Even more incredible feats have been

reported among the monks, yogins, and fakirs of the East but they are especially prevalent among shamans.

When the Iglulik Eskimo shaman receives the angákou, for example, this enables him to see in the dark, see hidden things, see into the future, see into the far distance, and see lost souls. The quartz crystals and sacred powerful water of the Australian medicine men, such as among the Wiradjeri, empower them to fly or to reveal events. The Jivaro shaman gains the ability to see through the darkness and through opaque materials. Beyond these abilities, shamans in general are able to go on spirit journeys for the benefit of others and to reconnect with the spirits of the natural world.

Most examples related so far have been more of a subjective type, that is, where the mystic light is experienced personally and internally. There exist also, however, accounts of a more objective nature by those who witnessed the Light emanating from other beings. Very commonly people in all places through all time have seen their deities in such a manner. A classic example comes from the Bible (Exodus 3:2, Luke 20:37, Acts 7:30) where God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush which did not consume.

Universally the Light is believed to be the inherent nature and essence of divinity and mystical perfection. The Sun as a celestial body is not only used as a symbol of the effulgent Creator, but is also commonly worshipped itself as a paternal deity. Zarathustra claimed the ability to perceive the Sun as more than a mere shining star, but as a cosmic spirit, a supercorporeal radiant being. The Egyptian initiates perceived the sun as Ra whose forces reached down to them through his rays. Osiris was believed to be Ra's representative on Earth, as Christ was understood by Zarathustra to be the sun on Earth.

Similar to the gods, the great prophets are also described as giving off light. Not only did Gautama experience illumination subjectively under the tree, but Chinese traditions relate that five lights shine at the birth of every Buddha (from the orifices of the body), and a flame springs out of his corpse. In the Denkart it is written that Zarathustra's radiance lit the entire village while he was yet inside his mother's womb for three days before his birth. Muhammad was shown the brightness of day by Allah in the middle of the night as a sign of his prophethood. A similar sign appeared for all to see in announcing the birth of Jesus in the form of the supernatural star of Bethlehem. Both Jewish scripture and Persian myth not only predicted Light as the sign of his birth but also state that Light is his true nature. The Bible relates in Exodus 33:29-35 that when Moses descended from Mt. Sinai

"the skin on his face shone", so much so that Aaron and all the rulers were afraid. There is also a story describing a similar manifestation in connection to Jesus. Abgar V, king of the Syrian city of Edessa once sent his messenger Anaias to paint the portrait of Christ in Jerusalem, but the blinding Light emanating from His face made the task impossible.

Neither is the giving off of Light limited to the great prophets. Several Indo-Tibetan beliefs tell of certain yogins who have attained immortality. They do not die, but instead disappear into heaven clothed in a body of pure Light. Light shining from the body was evident in Aua, the Iglulik Eskimo shaman, who tells his story: "I had gained my gaumanEq, my enlightenment, the shaman-light of brain and body, and this in such a manner that it was not only I who could see through the darkness of life, but the same Light also shone out from me, imperceptible to human beings, but visible to all of the spirits of earth and sky and sea, and these now came to me and became my helping spirits" (Harner 1980:22-23). Michael Harner further relates, "the perception of the shaman as one who is giving off Light, particularly in a 'crown', an aura from the head is also true of the Jivaro. The halo, which is multicolored, forms only when the shaman is in an ayahuasca-induced altered state of consciousness. It can only be seen by another shaman in a similar state of consciousness" (1980:23).

This last statement alludes to the fact that it is not just certain highly evolved individuals who can manifest the Light. All people possess the Light to some degree, but only a rare few have the greater ability at present to shine it forth or see it in others. That this is possible for the ordinary mortal, however, is shown by the arbitrary dispersal of the Holy Spirit with the sign of fire upon all those gathered together with the apostles on the day of Pentecost, related in Acts 2. A breakthrough of some kind will still be required, though, either by grace as on Pentecost or through training.

For those who cannot perceive the Light that surrounds humans and all living things unaided, such perception may be accomplished through the aid of Kirlian photography or devices such as chemical screens. What will be seen is called an "aura", which derives from the Greek word, avra, meaning "breeze". The breeze-like nature comes from the fact that the aura results from the constant streaming of vital life force out from the body. Both the Melanesians and Polynesians knew of this impersonal and amoral force which they called mana. These people conceived this to be a ubiquitous energy, yet one which was concentrated in certain people and things. Other cultures have recognized it also. To the Chinese it was known as ch'i, among the White Knife Shoshoni it was called buha, to the

Azande it was mangu, the Algonquin-speaking Indians of the Northeast referred to it as manitou, the Iroquoian tribes called it orenda, the Siouan Indians knew it as wakan or wakanda, it was maxpe to the Crow Indians, to the ancient Japanese it was kami, the Yarlalde tribe of Australia called it miwi, the Mexican Huichol shaman knew it as kupuri, and the !Kung of South Africa called it N/um.

This flux of vital force will manifest itself in a profusion of colors, but the human aura can also be described structurally. The layering of the aura will correspond both to the various chakras and to the etheric, astral, and causal bodies. Highly evolved individuals will shine with particular brilliance in the area of the seventh or most spiritual chakra, located at the top of the head. For those just beginning to develop auric sight, this is also the first area to become visible. It is for these reasons that the stereotypic religious depictions of the nimbus around the heads of avatars and saints evolved as they did.

The nimbus or halo composed of an infinite number of perfectly straight lines radiating from the head is the look of a very healthy aura. Many cultures have represented this in costume. The Indian chief's headdress originates in this way. The chief is believed to be especially endowed with vital force and the feathers symbolize the emanating rays. In the Bible the metaphorical source of Samson's strength is his hair.

The nimbus is also nearly universally compared with the sun. In ancient Egypt, for example, the sun-disk and horns are often depicted above the heads of the gods. An aboriginal Australian rock painting portrays a man's head being replaced by a sun disk. This is a process called "solarization", where one enters the Sun Door, and internalizes the sun through surrender. Domesticated fire on Earth often symbolizes the sun and also the heat and friction of initiatory suffering which leads to enlightenment. In this way the shaman lets the sun consume him, and the mastery of fire, most notably the walking on and handling of burning coals, is one ability gained through successful internalization of the sun.

The nimbus resulting from solarization is also sometimes represented as two streams of vital force, one streaming from each side of the head. This is done partially in recognition of the division of the brain into two halves. The antlers of the shaman's costume are a common motif symbolizing the dual font. In addition, the antlers symbolize pairs of opposites, regeneration and rebirth, and the Sacred Tree, as well as receptors of energy. It is certainly no accident the Father Christmas, the Nordic fairy Lord of Misrule, chose reindeer to fly his sleigh. Take the stylization one step further and the antlers become horns. The Egyptians have

several horned fertility gods. The Hopi Sky God is a horned and plumed serpent. Many other cultures have horned gods as well. Among witches the secondary deity is the Father, a Horned God. Thus the confusion with the Devil. The Devil's own horns, in fact, may more likely represent a divine aspect rather than an evil one.

In summary then, we can now outline the common characteristics of the Light. The mystic light can be experienced in predictable steps, usually anticipated coincident with mystical instruction and spiritual study. More commonly, however, it is experienced suddenly and unexpectedly. But even here it occurs as the climax or threshold experience after a long process of inner transformation. It signals the rupture of planes, radically changing the receiver, and indicates a spiritual rebirth. The intensity with which it occurs varies, St. Paul being an extreme example. It will not only be seen, but felt throughout the body, and especially in the head. First time experiences commonly include a feeling of assurance, triumph, peace, or salvation. The experience can be very revelatory, bringing on special powers of perception, clairvoyance, and understanding. The transcendence which it indicates, however, is relative. Visions will present themselves in terms of the subject's pre-existing theology or ideology, and typically are perceived as coming from without until the subjective nature is understood. Divinity is most adequately revealed in the form of Light, though the Light may also take a non-personified form. All living things possess an aura indicating the flux of vital force. In avatars, prophets, saints, and highly evolved individuals this may shine forth with rare brilliance, though it may also take a psychically attuned individual to perceive it.

Light and Effulgence are indicative of our realizing and remembering our true state of perfection. The perfect state of Consciousness is the true nature of heaven where our bodies are made of Light. Like Samson, letting the fountain of Light free can bring spiritual power and strength. The determination of the 60's generation to let its hair grow long represented a willingness to do exactly that. That era is now gone, but the ideal was planted as the seeds of the coming Age of Crystal.

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Continued from page 4:

present system of prisons as dysfunctional and antiquated.

Kelly Anne MacDonald (Simon Fraser University) spoke on "The Use of Anthropological Theory to Treat a

Case of Multiple Personality." She described the case of a female anthropology student who after several years of unsuccessful therapy sought the help of an anthropologist to integrate her several personalities. After discovering how many personalities existed the anthropologist integrated the personalities around the social/political structure of a band society and used shamanic symbolism to give the personalities a common goal and ideology. Eventually the personalities fused into a "committee" which regulated the activities of the various personalities until full integration was achieved. Since 1981 this integration has been successful.

The final paper of this session was given by D. Scott Rogo (John F. Kennedy University) on "Psychic Healing: Mental Illness--The Shamanic Paradigm Revisited." Rogo, noting that the shamanic paradigm explains mental illness or "psychosis" as the result of "soul loss" or "spirit possession," discussed the work of several psychiatrists and psychologists since the turn of the century who experimented with recurring cases of psychosis, dissociative behavior, and multiple personality by "exorcising" the patients with the help of psychics and trance channels. He described the research of Hysslop and gave a case history of a transexual/transvestite who changed gender identification after undergoing an exorcism. In such cases, Rogo argues, what we call mental illness looks more like spirit possession.

The final session, a "Symbols and Consciousness Workshop," was chaired by Michael Winkelman. The first speaker, Jordan Weiss (M.D. Fountain Valley, CA) spoke on "Psychofeedback through Symbolic Logic." The last speaker was Linda Grof (California State University--Dominguez Hills) who spoke on "Ancient Egypt: Wisdom for Today." Dr. Grof likened the Nile to a spinal column. She noted that the Nile temples which were dedicated to various gods and goddesses represent different types of initiation. She discussed the key Egyptian archetypal symbols and hieroglyphs which speak to different levels of one's consciousness. Grof suggested that the metaphysical/spiritual principles embedded in ancient Egypt are still relevant today, if we are willing to tap into them not only from an academic/cognitive perspective, but also in a direct experiential way.

In the evening Leslie Conton (Fairhaven College, Western Washington University) presented "The Way of the Shaman--An Experiential Exploration." Dr. Conton introduced the group, through the experience of ceremonial chanting, drumming, and dancing, to shamanic journeying. She utilizes the techniques of "core shamanism" as developed by Michael Harner.

Saturday, March 7, began with the session, "Approaches to the Study of Consciousness," chaired

by Michael Winkelman. The first paper, "The World View of the Dowser," was given by Jeff MacDonald (New School for Social Research). MacDonald described the different types of dowsing practiced today and the influence of the American Society of Dowsers in formalizing a dowsing world view. Dowsers explain the mechanics of dowsing using both physical and consciousness theories. Physical theories center on recent research on geomagnetic sensors in humans. Consciousness theories utilize a holographic model of the universe. MacDonald stated that dowsers see psychics as "deviceless dowsers", i.e. as dowsers who do not use dowsing instruments.

In "A Holistic Multidimensional Model of Consciousness for Interpreting Shamanistic and Other Dissociative Experience States" Willard Johnson (San Diego State University) presented a model of shamanism utilizing the levels of consciousness which function in human experience. Dr. Johnson outlined four levels, the bodily-sensory at the surface, the personality, the psychic, and deep consciousness in touch with spirit(s). He explained that this heuristic model allows for interpretation and clarity concerning the nature of shamanic ecstasy and spirit communication, energy manipulation and healing, trance, vision and dream, by distinguishing these from pathological dissociative states such as multiple personality and possession disorders. His levels are not meant to be linear, rather the shaman can function in an integrated, complementary way at several conscious levels at the same time.

The next speaker, René Lawson, (Otterbein College) discussed "Current Scientific Terminology in the Emerging Consciousness of Wholeness" by noting such terms as aperspectival, holomovement, becoming, global consciousness, holographic paradigm, and self-organization. Dr. Lawson argued that this terminology seeks to simultaneously liberate and to encompass a universal consciousness implying a new world view. She noted that the terminology is paradoxical in that it implies transition within a pattern. Because it is in transition, this pattern is self-evolving and self-organizing.

The final morning paper, "Role of Fiction in Teaching Consciousness Expansion," was given by Felicia Campbell (University of Nevada). Dr. Campbell noted that psychics and psychic researchers have found the novel a superior vehicle for conveying information on consciousness expansion, not only because it utilizes the willing suspension of disbelief thus allowing the reader to fully explore ideas presented, but also because the fictional context allows the reader to identify with the characters, and, through them, the ideas being presented. She gave examples of this process from the works of Dion Fortune, Alexandra David-Neel, and Colin Wilson.

Two sessions filled Saturday afternoon. The first, chaired by Geri-Ann Galanti, was "Psychodynamic Aspects of Healing." This session featured Jack Kapchan (University of Miami) who spoke on "Clinical Adaptations of Parapsychological Techniques for Coping with Death Anxieties." Dr. Kapchan described his use of techniques based primarily on neurolinguistic programming (NLP) and Ericksonian hypnosis to treat the anxieties and emotional states relating to terminal illness and the anticipation of death. Kapchan also showed an interesting video tape in which he hypnotically regressed a female client to past lives in a technique he calls reincarnative role playing. He seldom obtains objectively verifiable evidence of a past life, even though, as was illustrated in the video tape, he asks specific questions concerning dates and places in the life of the "past" personality. He suggested that such reincarnational memories are just role playing to explain or rationalize a present counterproductive emotional state.

The second afternoon session, "Cross-Cultural and Clinical Issues in Parapsychology," was chaired by Gail Kawanami-Allen (University of Southern California) and featured five papers. The first, "The Need for Hermeneutic Methodology in Clinical Parapsychology," by Oscar Miro-Quesada (West Georgia College) was read by William Roll. Dr. Miro-Quesada suggested that the clinical parapsychologist must be able to enter into and sustain an unbiased, unadulterated mode of communication with the psi system revealed by the client's disturbance. This requires that the therapist be open-minded, ideologically flexible, empathetic, and ready to participate in the client's world view. The therapist must help the client reveal the salient pattern and unmanifest meaning behind the disturbing and unbalanced release of the client's once dormant psi faculties.

William Roll (West Georgia College) in his paper focused on "Clinical Parapsychology as a Profession." Dr. Roll noted that clinical parapsychologists often encounter psychical household disturbances such as recurrent spontaneous psi (RSPK) (i.e., "poltergeists"), and localized psi effects (i.e., "hauntings"). Other problems dealt with through counseling include intrusive personality disorders (i.e., "possession"), hypersensitivity to psychic impressions from the social and physical environments, disturbing precognitive impressions of future traumatic events, and other parapsychological experiences which people have trouble integrating into their lives.

Sharon Solfvin (John F. Kennedy University) continued the theme of integrating disturbing psychical experiences into people's lives in her paper "From Crisis to Sacred Space." Solfvin stated that the John F. Kennedy University Parapsychology Program

receives hundreds of unsolicited calls or letters per year from individuals who are curious or distressed about a paranormal event. Because there is little or no Western cultural context for these experiences, the experiences exist in a phenomenological vacuum. She suggested four ways (cognitive, psychological, mythic/ancestral, and spiritual) of reordering a chaotic, unexplained, culturally non-existent event into existential meaning, sacred space, and human mastery of consciousness. She suggested that the shamanic descent offers the most hopeful technique for people with thought control, obsession, and possession problems.

The next paper, "Western and Non-Western Approaches to Crisis Intervention with Individuals Reporting Spontaneous Psi Experiences," was given by Cynthia Siegel (John F. Kennedy University). Siegel argued that although Western crisis intervention strategies can be effective in stabilizing a client at the time of a crisis involving spontaneous psi, Western clinicians could benefit from considering and applying non-Western therapeutic strategies since cross-cultural traditions extend beyond merely treating pathology. She suggested that non-Western rituals involve practices and belief systems which facilitate empowering oneself. Such rituals can integrate spontaneous psi experiences into one's life to emotionally and mentally restabilize oneself.

The final paper of the day was Gail Kawanami-Allen's "Perspectives on Assessment and Treatment of Individuals Reporting Disturbing Psychic Experiences." Kawanami-Allen noted that traditionally psychic experiences have been overlooked if not ridiculed by mental health professionals. Because of limiting paradigms both clinicians and parapsychologists frequently are unable to deal with an individual reporting spontaneous psychic experiences. She suggested diagnostic criteria for delineating pathology from psychic experiences occurring in otherwise functioning individuals. She argued that psychosocial stressors and disruptive psi are frequently locked into a vicious circle, in which the disruptive psi originally caused by a stressor creates further stress.

Saturday evening two experiential workshops were held. The first by Native American Cathy Wolf was entitled "Song of Creation Gathering." The second by psychic healer Amy Wiggins (Healing Light Center) focused on teaching participants healing techniques.

The final symposium, "Altered State Realities," chaired by Michael Winkelman was held Sunday, March 8. The first speaker was Peter Suedfeld (University of British Columbia) who spoke on "The 'Sensed Presence' in Unusual Environments." Dr. Suedfeld described the occasional experience by people coping

in extreme and unusual environments of another entity which appears and offers help or advice, even when no such entity was in fact present. He gave several examples from spirit quests, solitary sailors, polar and mountain explorers, and the traumatic experiences of shipwreck and air-crash survivors in remote and hostile environments. He suggests that such experiences should not be treated as psychiatric symptomology but as an adaptive reaction.

In "Shamanism in the Twentieth Century" Ruth-Inge Heinze (University of California, Berkeley) briefly discussed her research with shamans in Southeast Asia and led a discussion of shamanism. She suggested a two-dimensional axis to describe conscious states. At the top of the vertical axis she placed "mind expansion" while at the bottom she put "dissociation." On the left of the horizontal axis she put "decreased control" and on the right "increased control". The average person is in the center at the intersection of the two axes. The shaman or the yogi would be placed in the upper right quadrant in the direction of mind expansion and increased control.

The final paper of the conference "Black Elk's View of the American Culture," by William S. Lyon (University of California, Berkeley) described the life and world view of Wallace Black Elk, a pipe-bearing descendant of Nick Black Elk famed in Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe. Wallace Black Elk, a Lakota visionary for over fifty years, divides American culture at large into four, meta-linguistic groups, legal, scientific, religious, and psychological (including medical), all based on a fundamental trust in the worth of currency. Black Elk argues that English, because of its many hedge words teaches the child to speak with a "forked tongue." Lakota does not allow this. The traditional Lakota world view is based on a fundamental trust in spirits, where religion per se dissipates into a way of life. Dr. Lyon also showed a videotape of Black Elk.

Jeffery L. MacDonald and Geri-Ann Galanti

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Organizations

Parapsychological Services Institute, Inc. (PSI) is an independent, non-profit institute specializing in putting parapsychological knowledge to practical use. PSI was formed as "a counseling, educational, and research center for those undergoing uncertainties or disturbances related to apparent psychical and spiritual experiences or who wish to explore the meaning and transformative value such experiences may have for their lives. PSI sponsors

workshops, conferences, and publications related to the practical application of parapsychological knowledge." For more information about membership and services, contact:

Parapsychological Services Institute, Inc
1502 Maple Street
Carrollton, GA 30117

Requests

Writer seeks information on shared dream space for book research. (Other related information/experiences welcomed). Send to:

C.J. Stuart
418-C W. Valencia Drive
Fullerton, CA 92632

Funding

The Holmes Center for Research in Holistic Healing supports scientific research into areas of healing not ordinarily included in the practice of traditional medicine. The Center has a comprehensive library on healing and alternative medicine, funds research grants, and gives awards for outstanding contributions to our knowledge of holistic healing. For more information and grant guidelines contact:

The Holmes Center
1715 Steward Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Resources

Pacific Rim Video offers Reality, Mind, and Language talk shows. Topics include American Indians, artistic consciousness, computer I Ching, computers, consciousness, ESP and reincarnation, healing, hypnosis, language, physics and consciousness, psychology, shamanism, and women. Hosts are AASC members Dan Hawkmoon Alford and Matthew Bronson. AASC members who attended last year's and this year's conferences will remember Alford and Bronson's innovative format. This year's conference video was on channelling. For more information write:

Dan Hawkmoon Alford	or	Mathew Bronson
31318 Carroll Avenue		367 Church #6
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The Newsletter of the AASC publishes articles, book reviews, news items, conference notices, and bibliographic materials in the general area of the anthropology of consciousness. This includes altered states of consciousness, ethnographic and analytical material on shamanism, initiation, magic, mediumistic communication, and transpersonal experiences. Reports on indigenous healing practices, non-Western psychotherapies, and divination as well as linguistic, philosophical, and symbolic studies of myth and consciousness are also printed. Finally, the Newsletter publishes articles on psychic archaeology, applied parapsychology, and anomalous human abilities. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced, and up to ten pages for articles and three pages in length for reviews.

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