

Announcing the first Spring Seminar of the Religion, Cognition and Culture (RCC) research group

Date: March 11, 2008

Place: Faculty of Theology, building 1443, room 240

Time: 13.15-16.00

Registration: free of charge, but please let us know if you will be attending

Contact Marlene Jessen (maj@teo.au.dk)

ART AND ANXIETY

Ellen Dissanayake, PhD, Affiliate Professor, School of Music, University of Washington

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The wide variety of uses of the arts suggests that sexual selection is not the only plausible adaptive explanation. In small-scale societies, the arts are typically found in ceremonies that are *multimedia* (several arts are used at once) and *participative* (individuals perform together). Ceremonies primarily address biologically-important yet uncertain circumstances—e.g., food, safety, prosperity, healing. Although the altered and excessive (“artified”) behaviours in ceremonies are *proximately* motivated by the wish to affect uncertain outcomes, they may have had *ultimate* adaptive effects as well—relieving individual stress, promoting attention to common problems, coordinating group effort, and reinforcing group concord.

SURVIVAL VALUE: AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND ART

Jace Weaver, PhD, Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Adjunct Professor of Law, and Director of the Institute of Native American Studies, University of Georgia, Athens

<http://www.uga.edu/~religion/weaver.htm>

This paper will examine the “value added” of Native religious traditions, particularly creation and eschatological myths (which are, after homologues), in terms of both individual and group survival and psychological cohesion and coherence. Within the context of religious traditions and practices, the role of art and the value it too adds will also be examined.