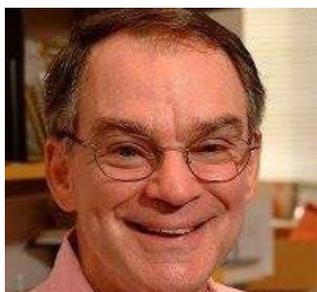




Feeling the Love of a Divinity in Bhakti Vaishnavism, Christianity, Sufism, Shia Islam, and Buddhism

Thursday, Oct 26th
4:00PM - 5:30 PM
Royce 306

The sudden intensification of 'love,' 'union,' or 'belonging' generates a distinct emotion to which we give the scientific name, *kama muta*. In vernacular language, depending on the context, moments of *kama muta* may be called being moved, touched, stirred, enraptured, mystical ecstasy, slain in the Spirit; être ému; bewegt sein or gerührt sein; 感动 (gǎn dòng / gam dong / kando), etcetera. This emotion is evoked by suddenly feeling 'close' to a person or animal (especially an infant), a team, a nation, nature, a deceased or former loved one, or a deity. Rituals involving synchronous rhythmic movement, chanting or singing together can produce the oneness that triggers *kama muta*; it is congruent with Durkheim's "collective effervescence." When *kama muta* is intense, people may have a warm or other pleasant feeling in the center of the chest, goosebumps or chills, shed tears, take a deep breath, place a hand on the chest, and then possibly feel buoyant and exhilarated. People avidly seek to experience *kama muta*, give it to others, and have it together with others. The spread and durability of Vaishnavism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sufism, and Shia Islam could be due in part to the affordances they provide for *kama muta*.



Alan Fiske, a psychological anthropologist, is Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles. He received his BA in Social Relations from Harvard and his PhD in Human Development from the University of Chicago. He studies how psychology, culture, natural selection, and neurobiology jointly enable humans to cooperate. Previously, he worked in tuberculosis control, smallpox eradication, and development in Malawi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bangladesh, and Burkina Faso. He then devoted two years to fieldwork in a small Moose village in Burkina Faso, working in the Moore language, studying patterns of social relations. He is the originator of relational models theory, which has now been tested, applied, and extended in over 300 publications by over 300 researchers. He is the author of *Structures of Social Life: The Four Elementary Forms of Human Relations*, and co-author of *Virtuous Violence: Hurting and Killing to Create, Sustain, End, and Honor Social Relationships*. His current research focuses on the causes, consequences, and cultural evocation of the emotion called being 'moved', 'touched,' having a 'heart-warming' experience, or feeling mystical 'rapture'.

Note: All public lectures are subject to change. Review our website for updates of all events. **Please RSVP on our website!**