

On Memory, Spirits and Selves
9-10 March 2018, in Derby, UK

The belief that we continue to exist after our bodily death is found in all our human societies, and ideas about the possible nature(s) of such existence has been contemplated for countless generations. Further to this, the significance of how to memorialise and continue to orientate to our kith, kin and ancestors has similarly been of concern. In the 21st century such an interest has neither lessened nor been pushed to the boundaries of social space, just as our concepts of posthumous existence can be literal, figurative and/or metaphorical. From science to theology to literature, we find ideas about life after death surfacing time and time again.

Of all the possibilities proposed, one of the most popular concerns the existence of spirits (or ghosts, etc.); generally being non-corporeal entities who may be able to communicate with, or reveal themselves to, the living, whether directly or via specialised practitioners more sensitive to their presence. This conference aims to explore these beliefs, and the experiences spirits inspire or create, and in turn what this might mean for our experience and understandings of being mortal. It seeks to contemplate the role that memory plays in relation to this, and in relation to our own and collective welfare. Rather than debating the ontological issues surrounding postmortem survival (which is amply done elsewhere), this conference will focus on what it is people believe, what these beliefs and experiences mean for our own, and others', concept of self, and how they may, or may not, contribute to our wellbeing.

Topics could include: spirit identities; religious communities and belief in/experience of spirits; spirit mediumship; shamanism; spirit possession; spirits and spiritual healing; negotiating belief in spirits in the therapeutic space; bereavement and concepts of self; the experience of non-corporeal presence; hauntings and selfhood; hauntology; memory and *memento mori*; spirit experience.

We are currently seeking submissions for presentations of 20-30 minutes. To submit please send a 300-500 word abstract and biography to Hannah via compassion_well@hotmail.co.uk. Closing date for submissions is **1st September 2017**.