

**EMBODIMENT AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**Oxford Brookes University, UK, 5-8 July 2005**

**ABSTRACTS**

**Megory Anderson (St Gregory Nyssa, San Francisco, USA): Sacred Dying/Body and Soul: A ritual response to death within spiritual community**

How can a community integrate rituals of body and soul-leaving into the dying process? Modeling the Sacred Dying philosophy within one liturgical community, St Gregory Nyssa Church in San Francisco, we examine use of ritual as death approaches, as the body is honored during vigil with the corpse, and as the shroud is carried away from the community. Combining the practices of innovative liturgy from the Christian tradition as well as the Buddhist practices of Zen Hospice of San Francisco, this narrative experience of a newly ordained priest's death combines elements of the Death Awareness Movement, of body theology, as well as liminal spirituality of death and afterlife. We see the convergence of ritual theology, praxis, use of sacred space, and pastoral care in a model that defines a transformative paradigm shift for death and dying.

[www.SacredDying.org](http://www.SacredDying.org)

**Daniel Armstrong (Deakin University, Australia): Abandoned Cubby Huts**

This project refers to a number of abandoned cubby huts located in a wild poplar forest, which is located in the rural landscape of central Victoria in Australia. The paper examines the relationship between these archetypal structure and the flora and fauna of their environment. For me the Cubby Hut is a powerful symbolic structure, an archetypal structure, a place of imagination, dreams, refuge and adventure. The Cubby is ephemeral and passes from our childhood exploration of the world and into the dreams and memories of adulthood. These cubby huts are primarily built from and located in the landscape and are intrinsically linked to this context; they are landscape as architecture and architecture as landscape and in construction they articulate a connection between the imagination and landscape and decay they return to the land and the psyche. I am also fascinated by the fundamental engineering principles present in their construction and have photographed many of these details. I have used a plastic toy camera to make these images. The toy camera presents a primitive image with soft focus, distortion and image fall off (darkening at the edges). For me these image qualities evoke the feelings and sense of memory and imagination located in these primitive and ephemeral structures." -

- This paper will be presented with a visual PowerPoint presentation.
- Time required is approximately 20 mins

- Please see a small gallery of images at ABC radio The Comfort Zone web site

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/czone/stories/s1145267.htm>

**Charlotte Baker (Nottingham University, UK): The Black African albino: The significance of context to the experience of albinism**

The fictional work of Williams Sassine, Patrick Grainville and Didier Destremau explores albino experience in a specifically African context; a context that aggravates an already difficult predicament. The manifestation of albinism in the whiteness of albino skin that makes it a condition loaded with symbolism and meaning in terms of racial difference in postcolonial francophone Africa. The African albino suffers overt discrimination that results not only from the misrepresentation of the albino body as 'white', but from a fundamental and recurrent misunderstanding of the condition. Apart from the real disability caused by albinism, the albino body is often attributed other inadequacies that are imagined or assumed, such as deafness and muteness. Furthermore, albino skin is frequently perceived as a sign of physical weakness that is often interpreted as indicative of mental inadequacy. The lack of pigmentation that marks the albino apart in Black Africa is also portrayed as symbolic of his or her links to the spirit world, or functions purely as a marker of difference and deviance. This paper will examine the way in which these factors render albino experience in the African context particularly problematic, raising questions as to the possibility of defining an identity when 'trapped' in a body so often considered to be lacking physically, racially and sexually.

**Jenny Blain (Sheffield Hallam University, UK): Linking environment and embodiment: consciousness 'performing' place**

Discourses of embodiment have formed, within feminist and other theories of resistance and change, a necessary reminder of the materiality of power. Within the anthropology of religion and consciousness an immense amount of work has focused on body decoration and modification, and other fields as diverse as performance theory, urban sociology and the sociology of education have theorised the body within place and space.

This paper attempts to bring together these strands, theorising developments of pagan spiritualities and rituals by focusing on consciousness, body, and space/place. It looks at the embodied performance of pagan identities, and on the materiality of physical environments in which these identities are 'performed', whether 'sacred sites' or back gardens and living rooms. It discusses issues of naming and definition within paganisms, and how the 'living landscape', itself embodied, becomes a component of contested human identities and social relations of power.

**Beverley Clack (Oxford Brookes University, UK): The Estranged Body: Embodiment in Feminist Philosophy of Religion**

Recent developments in feminist approaches to the philosophy of religion have sought to resist the neglect and denigration of physical existence in western philosophy. In formulating the notion of natality in opposition to mortality as the paradigm for human being, feminists have sought to reclaim the beauty and goodness of the natural world. My intention is to offer a position that moves beyond the either/or mentality that characterises both positions: *either* human life is glorious *or* it is wretched. Instead, I want to suggest something of the complexity of human life: a complexity that requires us to take seriously the range of experiences open to human beings. In order to do this, I shall challenge the overwhelmingly positive account of embodied existence offered by some feminist philosophers of religion. While sharing the intention to engage more positively with the physical world than has traditionally been the case, my concern is that in attempting to redress the balance, the more troubling consequences of human embodiment have been overlooked. When such experiences are neglected, this new perspective can be as potentially distorting as that which is being rejected. My hope is that by considering some disturbing consequences of being embodied beings alongside more positive experiences of the body we might arrive at an understanding of human life that holds together joy *and* sorrow, birth *and* death. By accepting the very ambivalence of human life, it is possible to arrive at a more rounded and complex account of embodiment that does justice to the full range of human experience.

**Ornella Corazza (School of Oriental and African Studies, UK): 'Space and Embodiment': A Japanese Understanding of Human Beings**

My presentation makes essentially three points which can be summarized as follows: (a) the human body is not confined within the physical organism but it *extends* as incarnate form consciousness through out the *living* body and its surrounding environment; (b) the body is best understood as an articulate system of information, which develop in a context of 'betweenness' different levels (fields, *topos*) of consciousness ranging from full awareness to out-of-awareness; (c) the study of the 'body-space' is a useful category for a deeper understanding of our individual potentialities.

The human body is a *living* organism, which communicates on different levels with the external environment and with the others in the social, interpersonal world. From a phenomenological point of view it has no specific delimitation and it always varying. This theme, long central to Perennial philosophies, has been largely emphasized in Japanese philosophies of *Basho* (Japanese word for 'place'), which integrates under many aspects the notion of the lived body as a

mode of being-in-the-world presented by Western phenomenology. The human body is conceived here in terms of 'space', rather than 'time' (mainly considered an activity of mind). This makes a great difference with Western mainstream philosophical thinking ('Cartesian dualism') where the contrary is true. The concept is implicit in one of the three Japanese terms to indicate a human being (*ningen*), which literally means between a person and a person rather than individual person. Japanese philosopher Watsuji called the relationship between body (*ningen*) and space as a 'state of betweenness' (*aidagara*). Space becomes here not only a fundamental condition for our life on this planet, but also for our survival. Such an insight serves as a ground for a better understanding of both an (a) individual (b) universal aspect of human beings.

**Teresa Gibert (Catedrática de Universidad, Madrid, Spain): Issues of Embodiment in *The Handmaid's Tale***

In an interview held in 1985, the year in which *The Handmaid's Tale* was published, Margaret Atwood remarked: "The body as a concept has always been a concern of mine. [...]. I think that people very much experience themselves through their bodies and through concepts of the body which get applied to their bodies" (Meese 1990: 187). Taking into account that Atwood displays a pervasive tendency to frame her basic insights in metaphorical terms, it should not come as a surprise that the analysis of the metaphors used in this novel leads readers to a better understanding of how she explores various ways of conceptualizing the human body. Certain metaphorical representations of people in *The Handmaid's Tale* include animals and dolls—very much like the metaphors of ordinary language— but others have their source domain in objects which are not commonly mapped onto people in the target domain.

Offred, the protagonist of *The Handmaid's Tale*, resorts to a number of closely related unusual metaphors and similes to construct notions of her own embodiment in a hostile environment. The study of her self-representation reveals why she perceives her body in succession as a swamp, a cloud, an empty room, a blank, a woman of sand, and a shadow. The mental pictures evoked by these images show that she identifies with all these objects because her identity has been denied to her and she has become almost nothing. Furthermore, in a novel where colours convey essential symbolic meanings, when Offred links the white sheets to the perception of herself as snow, she emphasizes her willingness to associate herself with white. On the other hand, she rejects red, which is the colour imposed on her and which, in her mind, stands exclusively for blood and violence.

The metaphors used to conceptualize the human body in this masterpiece of dystopian fiction show Atwood as a satirist of contemporary culture at her best. *The Handmaid's Tale* calls into question manipulative and distorting uses of metaphor. More than any other of Atwood's works, this novel directs the readers'

attention to how metaphorical language is constructed and how it has the power to shape our perception of ourselves.

**Susan Greenwood (Independent Researcher, UK): Magical Consciousness: a space of creative possibilities**

We are linked to the world around us through consciousness, and it is through consciousness that our environment is felt and experienced. Magical consciousness, a dimension of consciousness that probably has its origins in shamanism, enables an expanded awareness of environment, one that can connect us in different ways to ourselves and other beings in nature. Inspired by the work of Gregory Bateson and Carl Jung, my aim in this paper is to take a monistic view that goes beyond the Cartesian legacy that has separated mind from body and spirit from matter to explore magical consciousness. As an alternative mode, magical consciousness can open up a place of creative possibilities that has largely been ignored or dismissed in Western societies.

**Mary Grey (Professorial Research Fellow at St Mary's Strawberry Hill, Twickenham UK): Mirabai: Symbol of Hope and Resistance for Women in Rural Rajasthan**

Women in rural Rajasthan sustain daily life threatened with a variety of problems, social, cultural and environmental. The region is a semi-arid zone and endures long periods of drought. Drought is cyclical, but recently drought periods have become more extended and people's coping capacity has been weakened. Along with responsibility for fetching water, (in a context where water sources have dried up and the weary search can take up most of the day), wood for cooking and heating, and care for the household and animals, they endure social oppression from many sources - child marriage, caste-based discrimination, lack of a voice in civil life, domestic violence and even female infanticide. Why would a distant figure from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, herself a child bride at 13 years and widowed soon after, offer inspiration or comfort?

Mirabai is a remarkable figure: poet, songwriter of *bhajans*, (which Gandhi wanted sung in his ashrams), she defied social conventions to become a source of hope and resistance for poor, low-caste rural women today. This paper is based on 18 years of involvement in India, cooperating with Gandhian partners in rural Rajasthan, as part of a small NGO, *Wells for India*. *Beginning with describing the lives of rural women*, It shows how Mirabai's life has steadily become a symbol of resistance and hope for both Dalit (=former Untouchable) women and women activists fighting many forms of discrimination.

**Melissa Harrington (King's College London, UK): Embodying the Divine in Wiccan Ritual**

The esoteric spirituality of Wicca fosters embodied knowledge in its initiates via its ritual form. It teaches the use of gender specific invocation to call "The God" and "The Goddess" into the bodies of its practitioners, who claim to thereby achieve a form of gnostic communion with the Divine. Although descriptions and explanations of the experience and its effect are varied they also show a marked level of coherence. Embodied knowledge of the Wiccan Gods is considered to be deeply transformative for women and men, and to cause long term positive change in consciousness. This paper reviews data gathered for a recently completed Ph.D. on conversion to Wicca, in which invocation and embodiment were discussed in depth in qualitative interviews with Wiccan initiates. Perceived effects of spiritual satisfaction, personal development, increased self-esteem, and increased empathy are discussed, along with the implications of these findings in terms of the development of contemporary Paganism.

**Adrian Harris (University College Winchester): Bodies of Faith: Embodied awareness as the wellspring of environmental spirituality**

Ten years ago, in an article on 'Sacred Ecology' (Harris, 1995), I proposed that we possess a 'somatic knowledge', held in our bones and muscles. I felt that this wisdom of the body was the key to healing the broken bond between humans and the natural world. In pursuing that idea I have unearthed a mass of evidence that such knowledge does exist. And it seems that 'body knowledge' is more fundamental than the cerebral form of understanding our culture holds in such high esteem. The implications are enormous, but for now I'm proposing this embodied awareness as the wellspring of environmental spirituality.

Harris, Adrian, 1995. 'Sacred Ecology' in *Paganism Today*, ed. Harman and Harvey, Thorsons.

**Graham Harvey (Open University, UK): Dialogues with other-than-human persons**

In an important essay discussing Ojibwe ontology, Irving Hallowell argued that to properly understand Ojibwe culture academics must respect their worldview. This includes understanding that humans are only one kind of 'person' among many. His examples of Ojibwe relational ontology include examples of human engagements with other-than-human persons: rocks, thunder-beings, plants, animals, stories, and more. Because traditionalist Ojibwe are far from alone in celebrating an animate world, Hallowell's examples and argument helpfully point to issues requiring further research and reflection.

In this presentation I initiate an argument that researchers need to consider the agency and role of other-than-human persons if they are to make sense of many indigenous cultures and/or contemporary Paganism. Because this is arguably true in relation to all religions and cultures, it demands care if researchers are to maintain some level of scholarly commitment.

In particular, I am interested in the implications of speaking of other-than-human persons in ways that do not push them into the background as 'environment' to human actions and interests. I am intrigued by the possibilities raised by recognising the material and cultural continuities between human and other-than-human bodies and relationships. I am less interested, here, in illustrating *how* we (humans or researchers) might engage with other-than-humans, than in the implications of various 'animist' enactments of respect.

**Lynn Carol Henderson (EnigmaArt Studio, St Peterburg, Florida): Voices from the Circle: Women's Ritual Art**

This symbol-rich installation is an art exhibit, a setting for a sample ritual and performance, and a workshop combining mythology, storytelling, feminist concepts of love, and creative art-making in the context of the Women's Spirituality Movement. Introductory remarks weave lecture with storytelling in an exploration of the origins and growth of earth-based rituals as they intersect religion, theater and social movements. The experiential ritual segment combines performance, movement, meditation and expressive arts designed to empower and inspire the participants toward personal and societal change. The physical structure includes 13, 3' (w) x 7'(h) panels with reproductions of acrylic paintings in an expressionistic/naïve style mounted on freestanding lightweight stands. The panels are designed to be set up in a circle with workshop participants sitting inside the ritual space. Workbooks, a video, and an altar accompany the installation. For images: [EnigmaArtStudio.com](http://EnigmaArtStudio.com)

**Celestina Omoso Isiramem (Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria): The African: An Embodiment of Spirituality**

Many writings of scholars over the years have tended towards the distinction between religion and morality or the secular state from the religious. This article looks at the experiences of the African as a person or a group of persons who in all ramifications is basically spiritual. The dividing line between the spiritual and the physical is very slim if at all present. The article explores the consciousness, development and behaviour of the African and asserts that the African existence *in toto* is a spiritual existence.

**Kjell Ivar Overgard (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Psychology, University of Oslo, Norway): Fitting Technological Environments to Embodied Opportunistic Minds: Creating Liveable and Safe Environments for Humans**

Technological applications are becoming more frequent in the environments in which humans live. Technology helps and eases human work, but also creates new problems related to the efficiency of work and the safety of humans and the natural environment. These problems cannot be solved by technology, as technology itself is part of the problem. Hence, the nature of the human mind must be considered during the design of technological environments. Recent theoretical and empirical developments within psychology and related fields have presented doubts about the human mind as a rational problem solver (see e.g. R. F. Port & T. Van Gelder, 1995, *Mind as Motion*, The MIT Press). Instead, the human mind is described as an embodied and opportunistic coordination of activity across time and space, whose bodily synthesis also includes the environment as an 'equal partner'. Implications for this perspective on the design of technological environments are presented.

**Prudence Jones (Independent Researcher, UK): Ensouling the Stars - Is celestial religion embodied religion?**

This paper will examine the creation of a celestial pantheon of planetary and stellar deities during the last years of the Roman republic, in particular the formation of a triple Moon goddess out of the ancient Latin goddess Diana. To what degree were these heavenly deities transcendent? In what way did their epiphany as celestial bodies relate to their existing cult as images? By investigating the historical process by which the state deities of Rome were transformed into universal deities, a more centralized process than that of Greece, we may gain a clearer understanding of dichotomies such as earth/heaven, transcendent/immanent, iconic/aniconic, which are easily taken for granted in religious discourse.

**David Kronlid (University of Uppsala, Sweden): Embodied Environmental Injustice: A Reflection on Environmental Justice from the Perspective of the Body of the Swedish Railway Worker Eric Jönsson**

Eric Jönsson was one among many employees at the time Swedish State Railways (SJ) who during the 1950s and 1960:s was exposed to a pesticide that the company used in order to control the vegetation on the railway. In 1967 he (as did many of his co-workers) got sick and later they sued the railway company for being responsible for their illness - they lost in court 1980.

The main aim of this paper is to explore the meaning of environmental justice in terms of bodily harm in the case of Eric Jönssons life and death. I address the question of environmental justice not as a matter of distributive or participatory justice but as a matter of structural environmental justice drawing on the work of Iris Marion Young and Martha C. Nussbaum.

I explore the way that the environmental ethical dilemmas of Jönsson's case are intimately connected to how the ecological, economic, and social values of that time collapsed in his sick body - leaving it truly unsustainable.

**Andy Letcher (Independent Researcher, UK): Flesh of the Gods: Transcendence and Immanence in Contemporary Myco-Spirituality**

Until very recently the only region with a long tradition of using psilocybin-containing 'magic mushrooms' was Mesoamerica: the Aztecs, for instance, called them 'teonanacatl', or 'flesh of the Gods'. Now, owing to legal loopholes and commercial large-scale production, magic mushrooms are being widely used in Britain, mainly for recreation but also for spiritual ends. This descriptive paper traces the emergence of 'myco-spirituality', giving examples of the sorts of spiritual contexts in which mushrooms are being used. It argues that there has been a change in the way in which mushroomed experiences are discursively framed, immanence having replaced transcendence. Though mushroom enthusiasts are rarely Pagan initiates, myco-spirituality may therefore be situated in the trend towards nature-based spirituality and the wider turn towards 'the natural'.

**Ruth Mantin (University College Chichester, UK): Embodying the sacred: feminist theologies and re-sacralising the world**

Goddess feminisms have contributed significantly to the process of challenging the dualistic assumptions which have legitimised patterns of oppression and brought the planet to the brink of ecological catastrophe. In such a worldview, the material world, along with non-hegemonic identities, is perceived as Other. Feminist theologies have effectively identified the associations between the exclusive use of male imagery for the Divine, the denigration of female embodiment and the violation of the environment. They generate opportunities to express the re-sacralisation of materiality, a biophilic sense of connection with all forms of life and the embodiment of spirituality.

In this paper, I wish to explore further the capacity of 'Goddess-talk' to frame post-metaphysical expressions of the sacred which reflect an acceptance of plurality and ambiguity. Drawing on the work of Braidotti, Keller and Butler, I intend to demonstrate the connections between the use of goddesses as feminist figurations and interrogations of identity, subjectivity and the nature of the sacred.

I am arguing that theologies' power of renaming the sacred has the potential to communicate post-realist narratives of a performative sacrality, expressed through spirituality as process. I am suggesting that such a re-visioning of the

divine imaginary can offer positive responses to difference and articulate the interconnectedness of biodiversity on which our survival depends.

**Gregory Mengel (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA): The Incarnation of Lived Time: Embodied Action and Memory**

Memory is one of the primary mysteries of existence. Is it simply a capacity of the brain for storing images and ideas for later retrieval? Or is it something more pervasive, perhaps a general feature of the living world? Is each living form an embodied memory of one particular strand of the evolutionary process? This paper will explore the possibilities and implications of expanding our conception of memory to include this much larger context.

After a brief review and critique of the computer model of memory, which has long dominated cognitive science and the popular imagination, I argue for an alternative in which we recognize memory as one of the defining characteristics of life. This alternative draws on the insights of an emerging paradigm in cognitive science, sometimes called the enactive approach to cognition. This approach holds that learning and acting are inseparable aspects of living. Knowing is not the passive recovery of a pre-existent environment, but the development of embodied patterns of relationship within a living community, and memories are simply the continuation of these patterns through time. The enactive approach thus supports a more embodied account of knowledge and memory, while underscoring the continuity between the human and natural worlds.

**Tessie Moyna Bevers (Independent Researcher, Netherlands): Performance and ecological awareness, from responsiveness to responsibility**

Performance, modern-day ritual and the sensuous body are presented as the core elements of a strategy for bettering mankind's relation with their natural environments. Methods, modes of being and ways of analysing sourced from performance can be used to enhance people's connecting with and experiencing, understanding and respecting of the ecological system they are subjected to. The embodied nature of performance makes it primarily suitable for relating to one's surroundings and to access (forgotten) qualities. The more public the environmental debate goes, the more a performative approach becomes suitable. Emphasising (re)development of sensual perception / awareness and the development of modern day rituals as specific approaches, the presentation centres around being – meeting – activating, from responsiveness to responsibility. Considering past and present performance practices in such context, and interconnecting them with new insights results in recommendations for future manifestations and interventions in the dynamic field of environmentalism and society.

**Michael Northcott (University of Edinburgh, UK): Embodying Climate Change: An Incarnational Approach to the Morality of Energy Consumption**

Social scientists and philosophers who discuss the implications of climate change focus on equity and intergenerational issues within a largely utilitarian moral frame. However individuals formed by utilitarian assumptions and discourses have a poor appreciation of traditional ideas about the future such as legacy and posterity and hence moral arguments about future consequences of anthropogenic climate change are not persuasive. This is because utilitarian arguments foreshorten time, which reflects the fact that utilitarianism has no account of the place of particular bodies in time and space. This lacuna reflects the disembodied epistemological assumptions of Enlightenment rationalism which inform utilitarian discourse. Against conventional utilitarian approaches this paper will present an embodied and Incarnational narration of climate change which focuses less on the future consequences of climate change and more on the moral and ecological effects of profligate energy production and consumption on the bodies and characters of presently existing persons, and communities both human and nonhuman.

**Sally Palmer Thomason (Independent Researcher, USA): The Embodiment of Ageing: Into the Body of the Crone**

Within the body of the crone lies an astounding spark that Western culture through nearly 3 millennia has done its best to extinguish. Anti-ageing messages, script women to abhor the natural changes that occur in their body and appearance as they grow older. How does our culture's view of aging as pathology shape an older woman's attitude about herself? How does a woman's perception of her body affects the quality of her old age?

Through non-structured interviews older women, aged 65 to 92 were asked to talk about their bodies. They responded by telling their life stories. Embodied in their stories are their values and beliefs. Though asked about their bodies, these women did not focus primarily on the physical aspects of aging, but talked about relationships and spiritual matters and presented a more holistic understanding of what it means to grow old.

**Val Plumwood (Australian National University, Australia): Towards an Ecological Materialism**

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report issued in April 2005 shows how severely modern civilisation is degrading and overstressing the natural systems

that support human life and all other lives on earth. Somewhere along the road to becoming modern humans, we seem to have lost the basic animal intelligence to see something dangerous coming and get out of its way. Multiple factors are involved in this potentially disastrous lack of correctiveness, which include failures of ecological awareness combined with failures of democracy. Poor ecological awareness is linked to remoteness from ecological impacts through urbanisation, globalisation, commodity culture, and remoteness of governing elites from political and ecological consequences of environmental degradation. But in addition to these there is also a serious failure in dominant cultural frameworks to recognise, represent, and value the health and services of nature. Dematerialisation, the long-standing failure of the dominant culture to recognise its ecological embodiment and materiality, is ultimately the key to its ecological irrationality. I look at the way dematerialisation is expressed in the dominant culture, focussing on issues concerned with animality, place and human identity, and sketch ways to rethink concepts of respect, sacrality, food, and death to articulate an ecological materialism.

**Paul Reid-Bowen (Bath Spa University, UK): Subversive Bodies and the Feminist Physique: women's bodybuilding as a counter-patriarchal body praxis**

This is a sustained reflection on the possible subversiveness and feminist value of women's bodybuilding, an activity that is viewed as problematic (and repugnant) by the cultural mainstream. The practice is particularly revealing with regard to the manner by which institutional patriarchal frameworks have attempted make this body practice patriarchally safe by imposing double standards (such as a demand for sexiness/eroticism) upon those who pursue it. The analysis offered is feminist, cultural (Foucauldian) and religious (drawing upon a research project that is under construction).

**Kathryn Rountree (Massey University, New Zealand) : Goddess Pilgrimages and Embodiment at Sacred Sites**

The first premise of this paper is that the lived body is our primary text and starting point for knowledge. Through making journeys to sacred sites and performing rituals there, women Goddess pilgrims actively engage in a radical re-inscription of the female body; in Butlerian terms, they perform gender differently. Through pilgrims' embodied experiences at sacred sites, common binaries dissolve and reveal themselves as continuities: the human body and the earth's body, the past and the present, inner and outer worlds, self and other, human and deity. Inner and outer landscapes co-create and flow into one another. Through somatic modes of attention – by attending to and with one's body in surroundings that frequently include the embodied presence of others – pilgrims

experience themselves not as isolated subjectivities but as sharing an intersubjective milieu with other pilgrims and with the earth herself.

**Anne C. Spalding (University of Manchester, UK): Embodying Personal and Political Engagement with the Environment**

Both experience of one's body and engagement with the environment can be distinctly individual and personal. Valuable as this may be, it is not sufficient for actual embodied people to participate in the Western body politic (Moira Gatens) and political action in the context of threats to the environment is easily exhausted (Sharon Welch; cf. Zygmunt Bauman). In *Women and Human Development*, Martha Nussbaum proposes ten basic human capabilities including 'bodily health', 'bodily integrity', 'other species' and one's political and material environment. Beginning with Nussbaum's thinking on realising at least a threshold level of all ten capabilities, I will argue that on-going personal and political engagement with the environment requires embodying our humanity *together*, and that such embodiment must be specifically located in the physical environment.

**Donald Schell (St Gregory Nyssa, San Francisco, USA): Ritual-Making, Community, and the Generative Process**

What is the process by which a vibrant community encounters tradition and life to make rituals and praxis new? Conventional rituals tend to be blueprints, completed designs awaiting accurate implementation, usually dictated by external authorities.

Conversely, "Generative Process," defined by architect Christopher Alexander, provides a vastly more useful, honest, and promising model. He observes, both historically and cross-culturally, a process of generation in the dialogue of site (sacred space), architect, builders, and community.

Biologists confirm a generative process in nature as DNA shapes organisms through iterative responses to change. Alexander sees like process in the chaotic repetition of forces that produce waves, mountains, and evolution itself. That same openness in our ordinary lives, working together in relationship, is a better and truer beginning.

This paper explores the generative process as it appears in the experience and theology of one community - St. Gregory Nyssa Episcopal (Anglican) Church, San Francisco. By doing, noticing, learning, and doing again, we discover the sacramental quality of gathering together, of being born into community, of dying, and of creating true relationship.

This paper is presented in tandem with Megory Anderson's "Sacred Dying/Body and Soul: A ritual response to death within spiritual community" Both presenters are a part of the community of St Gregory Nyssa, San Francisco, and offer, first, a wider lens through which community is created and fostered, and secondly, a specific narrative of ritual use on the occasion of the death of a member.

**Akasa Tseng (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA): The Ecstasy of Singing in Tongues- A Technology of the Sacred**

This presentation is a re-vision of ceremonial performance. Ceremonial performance is another form of education. The ceremonial shaman is the original master of performing arts who opens the realm of spirit and connects the community to the Cosmos, Earth and Self. Archaic chanting/vocalization is an essential shamanic technique of ecstasy. What I call Singing in Tongues integrates ceremonial performance with Thomas Berry's Four Wisdom Traditions - indigenous people, women, classical civilizations, and science. It draws inspiration from the archetypal symbolism and new thoughts from contemporary mystics and thinkers. This alternative mode of inquiry aims to induce shamanic state of consciousness and approach the knowledge of the Cosmos and Self through the laws of vibration. Creative sound ceremony offers a doorway into our common ancient roots. It invites the Ten Cosmological Powers (Eakins & Swimme) to be embodied and harmonized with our life forces for both individual and planetary healing, transformation and evolution.

**Thom Van Dooren (Australian National University, Australia): Entangled with seeds: networks and the politics of food**

This presentation is concerned with the work I am currently doing for the first section of my doctoral thesis which works with food — particularly agriculture (through the vehicle of the seed) — to break down the dualism between nature and culture in such a way as to expose the interesting philosophical and political consequences for agriculture that this dualism creates. Here I am working with seeds as the 'collective heritage of human kind', the 'possibility of food, and thus sustenance', the 'product of genetic engineering' and the subjects of all sorts of regimes of ownership and control in the modern world. Within this context I am interested in how the human — in its role as planter, harvester, engineer, and ultimately, eater — transgresses the nature culture divide, and what this transgression can, and should, teach us about how to approach environmental issues. (I am mainly using work from Donna Haraway and other feminist theorists of science, and some ecofeminists, mainly Val Plumwood).

**Gavin Van Horn (University of Florida, USA): Spirituality with a Bite: The Use of Wild Animal Symbols in Radical Environmentalism**

By drawing on articles, graphics, speeches, and advertisements that have been used in radical environmental publications, this paper will explore the linkages between wild animals (especially "charismatic" predatory megafauna, e.g., wolves, bears, and mountain lions) and movement spirituality. Such animals are frequently glorified as symbols of freedom, autonomy, authenticity, and restorative hope (in opposition to domesticated human and nonhuman animals). Thus, in movement circles, a howling wolf can represent a fierce, wild resistance that survives as a rallying cry against the growing pathological sickness of industrial encroachment. While asserting that human beings should reconnect to their "animal" and/or "wild selves," activists deploy these symbols to empower them in their efforts to defend and restore wilderness and oppose social injustices, using them as icons of untamable wildness, and as a means of invoking empathy for and interconnection with nonhuman animals (as well as the ecosystems that they inhabit) that suffer (and resist) the impacts of human hubris.