

ISSRNC

International Society for the Study of
Religion, Nature, and Culture

2012 Conference

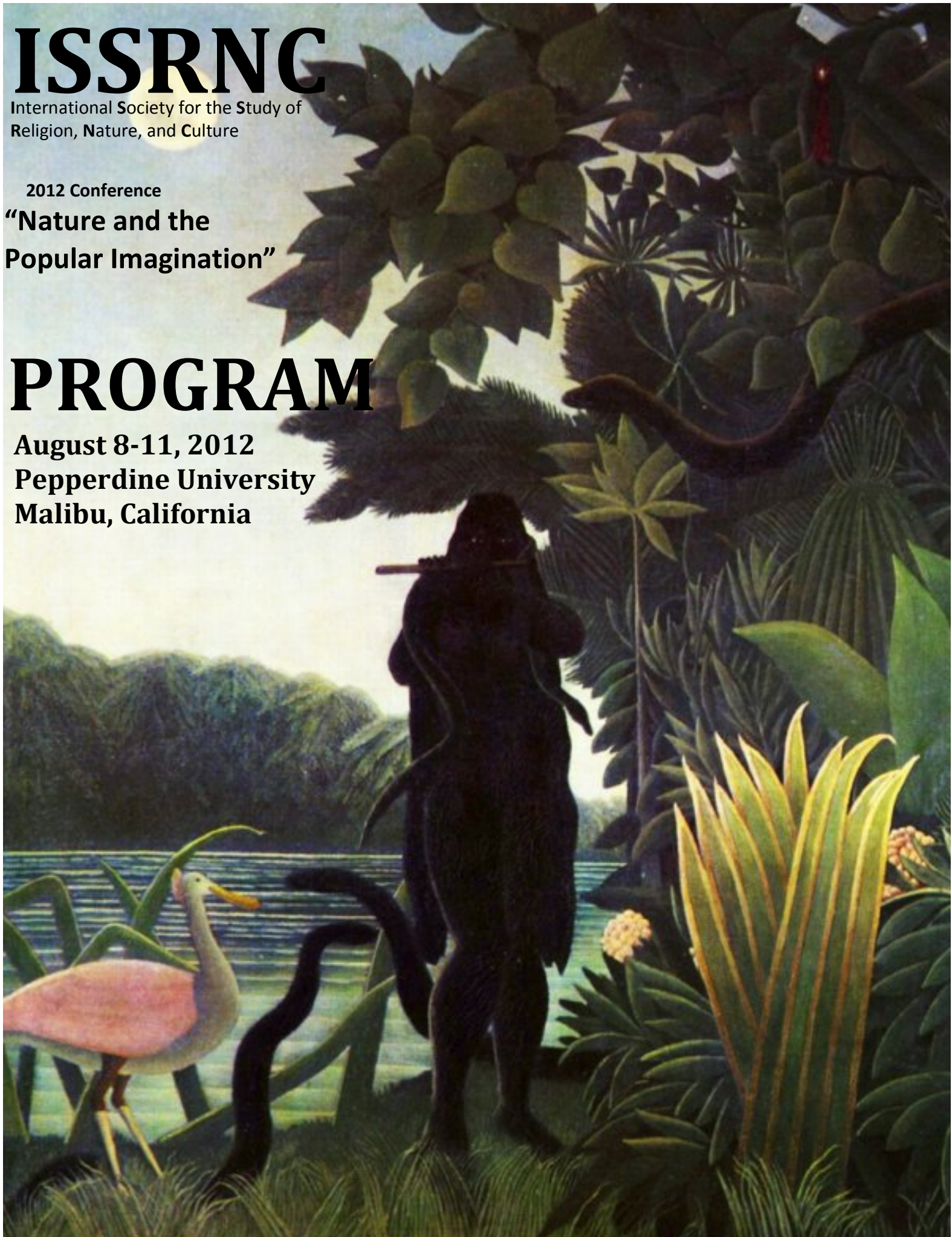
“Nature and the
Popular Imagination”


PROGRAM

August 8-11, 2012

Pepperdine University

Malibu, California





2012 Conference of the
International Society for the Study of
Religion, Nature and Culture

“Nature and the Popular Imagination”

Co-hosted by:
Pepperdine University,
Malibu, California

PROGRAM

August 8-11, 2012

ISSRNC (International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture)

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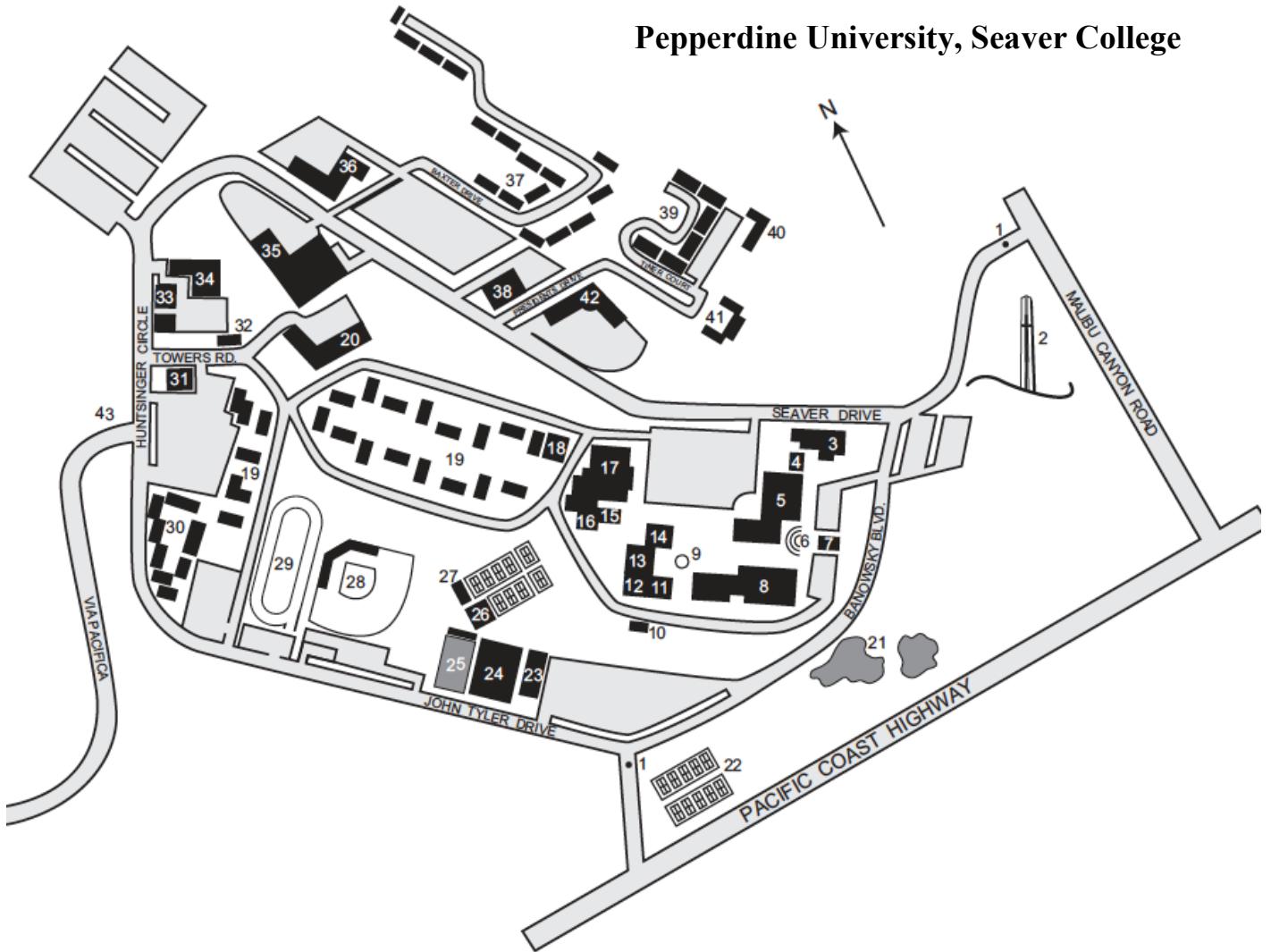
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- 1. Information Booth
- 2. Phillips Theme Tower
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- 6. Amphitheater
- 7. Stauffer Chapel
- 8. Tyler Campus Center
 - Beaman Plaza
 - Bookstore/Computer Store
 - The Oasis
 - Rockwell Dining Center
 - Sandbar Student Lounge
- 9. Adamson Plaza
 - Joslyn Plaza
 - Scaife Terrace and Bridge
- 10. Stauffer Greenhouse

- 11. Rockwell Academic Center
- 12. Keck Science Center
- 13. Appleby American Studies Center
- 14. George Elkins Auditorium
- 15. Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art
- 16. Cultural Arts Center
 - Lindhurst Theatre
 - Music Building
 - Raitt Recital Hall
 - Smothers Theatre
- 18. Howard A. White Center
- 19. Residence Halls
- 20. Rockwell Towers Residence Hall
- 21. Alumni Park
- 22. Crest Tennis Courts
- 23. Helen Field Heritage Hall
- 24. Firestone Fieldhouse
- 25. Raleigh Runnels Memorial Pool
- 26. Ralphs-Straus Tennis Center

- 27. Harilela International Tennis Stadium
- 28. Eddy D. Field Baseball Stadium
- 29. Stotsenberg Track
 - Tari Frahm Rokus Field
- 30. Lovernich Residential Complex
- 31. Student Health Center
- 32. Student Counseling and Testing Center
- 33. Sculpture Studio
- 34. Facilities Management and Planning
- 35. Odell McConnell Law Center
- 36. George C. Page Residential Complex
- 37. Faculty/Staff Homes
- 38. Academic Complex
- 39. Faculty/Staff Homes
- 40. Mallmann House
- 41. Brock House
- 42. Center for Communication and Business Public Safety
- 43. Entrance to Drescher Graduate Campus



Dear Conference Participants,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture's Fifth International Conference – "Nature and the Popular Imagination." In this fantastic natural setting along the Pacific Coast, and just down the road from one of the central generators of popular culture in the world – Hollywood, nature and the popular imagination are coming together in this place in many ways. We are confident that the beautiful space, stimulating conversations and ideas shared over the next several days will generate rich food for thought.

After a series of conversations among scholars interested in exploring the relationships between people, their religious beliefs and practices, environments, and cultures, the ISSRNC officially came into existence in late 2005. The Society has been very active since its inauguration, publishing a quarterly journal and sponsoring or co-sponsoring international conferences on an almost annual basis. The journal and the conferences have provided rich venues for discussing cutting edge research in the interdisciplinary fields that contribute to new understandings of religion, nature and culture.

As current President of the ISSRNC, I want to take this opportunity to thank our institutional host, Pepperdine University, as well as the conference co-coordinators, Sarah Pike and Chris Doran. They have put countless hours into organizing the event. Also, to the board of the ISSRNC, many of whom have also contributed significant time and energy to assist with this conference and with the previous conferences in Italy, Australia, the Netherlands, Mexico and the inaugural conference in the US.

On behalf of the Board for the ISSRNC, I extend my thanks to all of you for taking time to add your contributions to these critical scholarly conversations.

Sincerely,

Laura Hobgood-Oster, President, ISSRNC
Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies
Southwestern University

Wednesday, August 8 2012

6:00 Welcome Banquet (Waves Café)

0-01 Plenary Address

The Hon. Mark Ridley-Thomas (Supervisor, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District)

Evening screening of “*Green Fire*” (Elkins Auditorium)

Thursday, August 9 2012

7:00-8:45 Breakfast (Waves Café)

8:45-10:30 Sessions:

1-01 *Eden & Apocalypse: The Strange and Contradictory Nature of Nature in*

Malibu (Appleby Center Room 286)

Presiding: Bron Taylor (University of Florida, USA)

Bron Taylor (University of Florida, USA)

Surfing Into Paradise and Catastrophe: Hollywood and Malibu in the Construction of Religious and Parareligious Surfing Imaginaries

Christof Mauch (Rachel Carson Center, LMU Munich, Germany)

Stranger than Paradise: Religion, Nature and Culture in Malibu, California

Jenny Price, (Writer, Los Angeles, USA)

Environmentalists in Paradise: Saving the Planet, Malibu-Style

1-02 *Communities & Case studies* (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Kristina Tiedje (University of Lyon 2, France)

Kyle Boggs (University of Arizona, USA)

‘A Thousand Different Mountains’ on the San Francisco Peaks: Privilege, Contested Space, and Clashing Imaginations

Olga Gorshunova (A.N. Kosygin Moscow State University, Russia)

Pray, howl and take my power: Sacred images and the cult of nature in Central Asian folk Islam

Asebe Regassa (Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies, Germany)

A Conceptualization of Nature-Culture Relations: a Study on Guji Oromo’s Cosmological Schemes in Southern Ethiopia

E. N. Anderson (University of California, Riverside, USA)
Nature and the Popular Imagination in Imperial China

1-03 Panel: “Teaching Religion, Nature, and Culture” (Plaza Classroom 189)

Panelists: Joseph Witt (Mississippi State University, USA), Bobbi Patterson (Emory University, USA), Lucas Johnston (Wake Forest University, USA), Richard Carp (St. Mary’s University, USA), Jana Carp (Appalachian State University, USA), Molly Jensen (Southwestern University, USA)

1-04 Modern literary and religious discourses of nature (Plaza Classroom 190)

Presiding: Mark C. E. Peterson (University of Wisconsin, Washington County, USA)

Evan Berry (American University, USA)
Desert Island Castaways and the Modern Environmental Imagination

Joe Krulder (University of Bristol, UK)
Robinson Crusoe: Cultural Reflections and the “Man in a State of Nature” Theme

Eric Robertson (University of Utah, USA)
The Queer Sublime: Volcanoes, Guts, and Sloppy Sounds in Shelley’s Frankenstein

Andrew B. Ross (University of Nevada, Reno, USA)
Illuminated with Wisdom”: Religion, Art, and Science in William Bartram’s Travels

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break (Joslyn Plaza)

11:00-12:00 Keynote (Elkins Auditorium)

1-05 Adrian Ivakhiv (University of Vermont, USA)
“The Age of the World Motion Picture: A Cinematic Earth, with Cameo Appearances by Charles Darwin, Rachel Carson, Martin Heidegger, C. S. Peirce, Gilles Deleuze, Lynn Margulis, James Cameron, Stanley Kubrick, Donna Haraway, and Koko the Gorilla”

Presiding: Sarah M. Pike (California State University, Chico, USA)

12:00-1:00 Lunch

ISSRNC Members Meeting (Fireside Room)
Presiding: Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University, USA)

1:00-2:30 Sessions:

1-06 Technoculture: Zombies, Psychedelics and Digital Nature (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Kristina Tiedje (University of Lyon 2, France)

Laura Reddick (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA)
Worldly Dimensions: Created Natures and Digital Art

Sarah McFarland Taylor (Northwestern University, USA)
Green Values Gaming: Sustainability Interactives, Stewardship SIMS, Eco-ARGs, and the Quest to Translate Environmental Ethics into Real World Action

Sam Mickey (University of San Francisco, USA)
Fear and Loathing in Psychedelic Nature Spirituality: A Trip to the Desert of the Real

1-07 ***Monotheism, Theology, Nature*** (Plaza Classroom 189)
Presiding: Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University)

Thomas Bremer (Rhodes College, USA)
National Parks in 19th century Evangelical Imagination

Bella Mukonyora (Western Kentucky University, USA)
Anthropocentrism versus Biocentrism: Re-telling Stories of Evolution

Aya Cockram (Kalamazoo College, USA)
Green Islam: The Color of Environmentalism in Senegal

Tess Varner (University of Georgia, USA)
For Women and For the Earth: The Power and Promise of Cornel West's Liberation Theology

1-08 ***A Forum on the "Greening of Religion Hypothesis"*** (Appleby Center 286)
Presiding: Christof Mauch (Rachel Carson Center, LMU Munich, Germany)

Co-Convenors and Discussants: Bron Taylor (University of Florida, USA) , Gretel Van Wieren (Michigan State University, USA) , Bernard Zaleha (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)

Additional Discussants: Lucas Johnston (Wake Forest University, USA) , Lisa Sideris (Indiana University, USA)

1-09 ***Contemporary Literary Discourses of Nature*** (Plaza Classroom 190)
Presiding: Rick Stepp (University of Florida, USA)

Carrie Duke (Ball State University, USA)
Figures in the Flood: Finding a Human Nature from Walden to Housekeeping

Joseph R. Wiebe (McMaster University, Canada)
The Spiritual Odyssey of Wendell Berry's Poetic Imagination

Kristin J. Jacobson (The Richard Stockton College of NJ, USA)
Spiritual Natures and the American Adrenaline Narrative

2:30-3:00 Coffee Break (Joslyn Plaza)
Sponsored by Equinox Publishing

3:00-4:15 Sessions:

1-10 *Visions and visual culture* (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Adrian Ivakhiv (University of Vermont, USA)

Laura Lapinskiene (Central European University, Hungary) and Adomas Lapinskas (Sodertorn University, Sweden)

Visual Anthropology of the Affective Landscapes and Spiritual Practices in the Post-socialist City

Nobuko Toyosawa (University of Southern California, USA)

Nature, Spiritual Places, and the Popular Imagination: Washū Yoshino yama shōkeizu (Illustrated View of the Scenic Yoshino Mountain in the Yamato Province, 1713)

Ester Ofearghail (New Mexico Highlands University, USA)

Georgia O'Keeffe Country: Art as Religion

1-11 *Urban nature and religion* (Plaza Classroom 189)

Presiding: Amanda Baugh (California State University, Northridge, USA)

Phillip Dwight Morgan (McMaster University, Canada)

"From the Earth's Core to the Heavens: Willowdale Baptist Church and the Negotiation of Air Rights in Toronto

Colin Fisher (University of San Diego, USA)

Nature and the Anarchist Imagination: May Day and Working-Class Environmental Thought in Gilded Age Chicago

Matthew Seaman (University of Queensland, Australia)

Space, Place and Grace: The Salvation Army, New Media and the 'Open Air'

1-12 *The Therapeutic Ecology of Rivers: The Promises and Perils of Watercourse Metaphors in the Face of Despair* (Appleby Center Room 286)

Presiding: Guy Jordan (Western Kentucky University, USA)

Guy Jordan (Western Kentucky University, USA)

Of Time, the River, and the Railroad: Cole, Turner, and the Aesthetics of Slowness

Jane Olmsted (Western Kentucky University, USA)

Rivers Spilling, Overflowing: Metaphors and the Realities of Healing

Galen Olmsted (University of Gainesville, USA)

A River of Mess: Abstracted Ruin and the Sublime

1-13 *Vegan Spirituality/National Museum of Animals & Society* (Plaza Classroom 190)

Presiding: Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University, USA)

Carolyn Mullin (National Museum of Animals & Society, USA)
and Lisa Levinson (National Museum of Animals & Society, USA)
Compassion: the True Human-Animal Bond

4:15-5:15 Keynote (Elkins Auditorium)

1-14 Candace Slater (University of California, Berkeley, USA)
"Imagining the Amazon: What Do Shifting Representations of Amazonia Tell Us About What Is Happening There and In the Rest of the World?"

Presiding: Sarah M. Pike (California State University, Chico, USA)

5:15-6:00 Early Dinner (Waves Café) followed by evening beach party at Leo Carillo State Park

Friday, August 10

7:00-9:30 Breakfast (Waves Café)

9:45-11:15 Sessions (early morning free for hiking, surfing etc)

2-01 *Nature, Religion, and Popular culture* (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Amanda Baugh (California State University, Northridge, USA)

Sarah E. Fredericks (University of North Texas, USA)
Online Confessions of Eco-Guilt

Seth M. Walker (University of Central Florida, USA)
Is Captain Planet Really Our Hero?: The "Clumsiness" of the Captain Planet Mythos

Rashmi Attri (AMU Aligarh, India)
The Vedic Perspective of Ecology in Shakuntala

Ali Çaksu (International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Atatürk's Silhouette as a Secular Epiphany

2-02 *Imagining the Land and Landscapes* (Plaza Classroom 189)

Presiding: Sabina Magliocco (California State University, Northridge)

Johannes Zechner (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)
Sylvan Nation: The 'German Forest' and the Patriotic Imagination 1800-1945'

Peter Jansen (Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University, The Netherlands)
Interconnection Between Religion and Nature in the Communication Regarding Dutch Nature

Gretel Van Wieren (Michigan State University, USA)
The Origins of Aesthetic and Spiritual Values in Children's Experience of Nature

Shuman Chen (Northwestern University, USA)
The Mutual Inclusion of Nature and Human Beings in Tiantai Buddhism

2-03 *Nature, Religion, and Critical Discourse Panel: A Collaborative Spiritual / Ecological Analysis of Richard Lewis's "A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis"* (Plaza Classroom 190)

Panelists: Samuel McBride (La Sierra University, Riverside, USA), Melissa Brotton (La Sierra University, Riverside, USA), and Lora Geriguis (La Sierra University, Riverside, USA)

2-04 **Workshop/performance** (Appleby Center 286)

Ann Buxie (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)
The Genius of the Elements

11:15-11:45 Coffee Break (Joslyn Plaza)

11:45-12:30 Plenary: ISSRNC Presidential Address (Elkins Auditorium)

2-05 **Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University, USA)**
"How did we get to 'One Nation Under Dog'?"

Presiding: Bron Taylor (University of Florida, USA)

12:30-1:30 Lunch (Waves Café)

1:30-3:00 Sessions:

2-06 **"Avatar" Roundtable** (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Mark C. E. Peterson (University of Wisconsin, Washington County, USA)

Mark C. E. Peterson (University of Wisconsin, Washington County, USA)
James Cameron's Avatar and the alienation of nature

Jessica Kostosky (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA)
Reaching for Eden: Avatar as a Return to the Garden

Joy H. Greenberg (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)
Eywa and Momoy: Nature as Shamaness in Myth and Film

Robert Mason (California State University, Northridge, USA)
From Jurassic Park to Avatar: Construction of Sci-Fi mythologies of nature in response to Axial Age discourse

2-07 *Birds and culture* (Plaza Classroom 189)

Presiding: Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University, USA)

Paul Greenough (University of Iowa, USA)

The Indian House Crow: Notes on the Ritual and Environmental History of a Threatened Diasporic Species

Andrew Howe (La Sierra University, USA)

The Elusive "Lord God Bird": Science, Faith, and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Justin McDaniel (University of Pennsylvania, USA)

On Buddhist Birds: Affect, Nature, and Mytho-Zoology in the Study of Buddhism

2-08 *The Nature of (and in) Apocalypse* (Plaza Classroom 190)

Jan Boersema (Institute for Environmental Studies, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Why Nature is Better Off With Hope

Calvin Bernard (University of Guyana, Guyana)

Relating Environmental Attitudes to Perspectives On An Apocalypse and Life There After

Lydia Willsky (Vanderbilt University, USA)

'Build Therefore Your Own World': Emerson, Nature and the Apocalypse

2-09 **Panel: *The Legacy of Aldo Leopold: Confronting the Ethical and Spiritual Complexities of Leopold's Land Ethic*** (Appleby Center Room 290)

Presiding: Gavin Van Horn (Center for Humans and Nature, USA)

John Hausdoerffer (Western State Colorado University, USA)

"Recovering the Sacred": Aldo Leopold, Winona LaDuke, and the Spiritual Danger of Environmental Alienation

Gavin Van Horn (Center for Humans and Nature, USA)

An Evolutionary Cosmology, an Ecological Totem: Popular and Scientific Manifestations of Green Fire

2-10 **Arts/Performances: *Nature as Art in Practice*** (Appleby Center Room 286)

Maria Jaoudi (California State University, Sacramento, USA)

Spirit and Nature: The Paintings of Maria Jaoudi

Era Pope (University of North Carolina, Charlotte, USA)

So This Is What It Means To Become One With The Goddess: The Immanent Divine in Starhawk's The Fifth Sacred Thing

3:00-3:30 Coffee Break (Joslyn Plaza)

Sponsored by Baylor University Press

3:30-6:00 Sessions

2-11 *Cinematic representations of nature* (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: Adrian Ivakhiv (University of Vermont, USA)

Bernard Zaleha (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)
Hollywood's Religion of Choice: Does Hollywood Peddle Nature Worship to an Unsuspecting America?

Elizabeth Walden (Bryant University, USA) and
Carol Wayne White (Bucknell University, USA)
*"Big Miracle": Popular Fantasies of Nature Rescue and Religious Naturalism **

David Seamon (Kansas State University, USA)
The Place of Nature and the Nature of Place in American Independent Filmmaker John Sayles's Limbo and Sunshine State

Zarrin Monajati (Munich University, Germany)
Environmental Problems from the Perspective of Iranian Cinema

2-12 ***The cultural work of Animals*** (Plaza Classroom 189)
Presiding: Laura Hobgood-Oster (Southwestern University, USA)

Jakobina Arch (Harvard University, USA)
Whale Graves and Whale Spirits: Religious Responses to the Death of Whales in Early Modern Japan (1600-1868)

Priscilla Paton (St. Olaf College, USA)
Redeemed by the Least of These: Salvation Narratives and Animal Rescue

Natalie Corinne Hansen (University of California, Los Angeles, USA)
The Equine Sublime

Thomas Doran (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)
Global Zoopoetics, Animal Artists, and Interspecies Translation?

2-13 ***Communities/activism roundtable*** (Plaza Classroom 190)
Presiding: Whitney Sanford (University of Florida, USA)

Rachel Rosenbluth (McGill University, Canada)
Planting the Seeds of Change: The Jewish Framework for a Sustainable Food System

Whitney Sanford (University of Florida, USA)
Reflections of Gandhi: Non-violence, Self-sufficiency and Food Democracy in Contemporary Intentional Communities

Diana Seecharan (University of Guyana, Guyana)
Traditional Natural Resource Management in the North Rupununi Wetlands – Oma ponds

Mohammad Parvaiz (Zakir Husain Delhi College, India)
Enriching Islamic Theology with Environmental Consciousness

Sheri Kling (Claremont Lincoln University, USA)
We Are All Related: A Contemporary Eco-Process Hymn

2-14 *Re-Imagining Aldo Leopold in the Modern World: A Multi-Disciplinary Discussion about Sustainability* (Appleby Center Room 286)

Dan Shilling (Arizona State University, USA)
Leopold's Land Ethic and the City

Denise Holladay Damico (Saint Francis University, USA)
Albuquerque, the Rio Grande, and the "Land Ethic" in a Borderlands/Sunbelt Context

William Forbes (Stephen F. Austin State University, USA)
Revisiting International Sites in Aldo Leopold's Writings

Teresa Trusty (American Association for the Advancement of Science, USA)
Constructive Conversation: Leopold's "Land Ethic" in the Amazon

Kyle Whyte (Michigan State University, USA)
Indigenous North American Ethics and Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic": A Critical View of Comparison and Collaboration

Gesa E. Kirsch (Bentley University, USA)
Re-Imagining Aldo Leopold and Environmental Rhetoric

Joan McGregor (Arizona State University, USA)
Understanding Leopold's Land Ethic through Feminist Ethics

David Concepcion (Ball State University, USA)
Leopold's Significance in the Classroom: Grief and Service Learning

2-15 **Arts/Performances** (Appleby Center Room 290)

Gwendolyn Alley (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)
Theodosia Burr Shepherd "The Flower Wizard of California"

6:30-7:15 Dinner (Waves Café)

7:30 **Screening of "I Am" with Tom Shadyac** (Center for Communication and Business Room 100 or Elkins Auditorium)

Discussion with director Tom Shadyac (movie writer/director)
(<http://www.iamthedoc.com/toms-profile/>)

Saturday, August 11

7:00-9:00 Breakfast (Waves Café)

9:00-10:45 Sessions

3-01 *Southern California Dreaming* (Plaza Classroom 188)

Presiding: David L. Haberman (Indiana University, USA)

Janet Kübler and Randal Cummings (California State University, Northridge, USA)

Hollywood Visions, Malibu Realities: An exchange between the extra-terrestrial, Klaatu and the scientist, Helen, from the 2008 remake of The Day the Earth Stood Still

Spencer Orey (Duke University, USA)

City of Rose Quartz: Stones and Power in Los Angeles

Elsa Devienne (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France)

Beyond the Beach Party Movies: the Beaches of California in Twentieth-century Popular Culture

R. S. Deese (Boston University, USA)

An Island on the Land: Aldous Huxley and the Transformation of Postwar Los Angeles

3-02 *Ethical theory and nature* (Plaza Classroom 189)

Presiding: Mark C. E. Peterson (University of Wisconsin, Washington County, USA)

Robert C. Jones (California State University, Chico, USA)

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Green or Mean?

Mark Woods (University of San Diego, USA)

Whither Deep Ecology? A Mid-Life Crisis and Reappraisal

Marcello Di Paola (LUISS University, Rome, Italy)

Wittgenstein Gone Wild

Elizabeth McAnally (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA)

Pouring Water into Consciousness: Reinventing Human-Water Relations

10:45-11:15 Session:

3-03 *Journal of the Society of Religion, Nature and Culture meet the editors, facilitated by JSRNC editor Bron Taylor* (Plaza Classroom 190)

(Saturday lunch is not included in your conference fees, but will be available for purchase in the Waves Café)

Saturday afternoon:

Optional self-organized trips to local attractions, hiking and beaches.

1:00-4:00 “Secret beaches” field trip with Jenny Price

Panel/Forum Abstracts

1-03

Panel: “Teaching Religion, Nature, and Culture”

For over five years, the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture has provided a forum for some of the most groundbreaking research and theorizing in the interdisciplinary study of values and the environment. Beyond this groundbreaking research, however, it is important to remember that many of us are educators as well. Academic discussions about the relationships between religions, nature, and cultures need not only end up in scholarly publications, but may also help our students understand how these concepts remain critical for their own professional futures. It falls to educators to discern how best to introduce them to the subject.

Panelists: Joseph Witt (Mississippi State University, USA), Bobbi Patterson (Emory University, USA), Lucas Johnston (Wake Forest University, USA), Richard Carp (St. Mary’s University, USA), Jana Carp (Appalachian State University, USA), Molly Jensen (Southwestern University, USA)

1-08

A Forum on the “Greening of Religion Hypothesis”

Beginning in the early 1990s, a group of religionists and scholars of religion began to advance what could be called “The Greening of Religion Hypothesis,” namely, an assertion, whether implicit or explicit, that the ideas and practices of the historical global religious traditions were becoming significantly more environmentally aware and responsible. In this, they were suggesting that Lynn White Jr.’s prescription for a religious alternative to Christian anthropocentrism was beginning to come to pass. Not only did a steady stream of articles, books, and even new journals begin to appear, so did major scholarly initiatives that sought to ‘mine’ and promote the putatively beneficent enviro-cultural ‘resources’ of the world’s predominant religions. While assessments of the ecological state of and possibilities for the greening of faith traditions varied, from highly optimistic (e.g., Francis Schaeffer) to soberly hopeful (Thomas Berry), the general consensus among the Greening of Religion movement has been that (1) the religions could be environmentally reformed, (2) they were well on their way to such reform, and (3) the reform efforts and results were contributing positively and significantly to positive eco/ cultural change. While there is evidence that the Greening of the Religion movement has worked hard and made some inroads among the world’s predominant religious faith traditions during the past several decades, there has been little rigorous testing of key elements of the hypothesis. This session is based on the premise that an assessment of this hypothesis must move beyond anecdotal information and wishful thinking and develop a much more complex and robust, mixed methods social science to explore the religious dimensions of the quest for environmental sustainability and conservation. During this session, we will introduce a research project intended to explore with greater scholarly nuance than has heretofore been the case, and we invite all scholars interested in such a project to come to a session that will be designed to brainstorm about the project.

Presider: Christof Mauch (Rachel Carson Center, LMU Munich, Germany)

Co-Convenors and Discussants: Bron Taylor (University of Florida, USA), Gretel Van Wieren (Michigan State University, USA), Bernard Zaleha (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)

Additional Discussants: Lucas Johnston (Wake Forest University, USA), Lisa Sideris (Indiana University, USA)

1-12

The Therapeutic Ecology of Rivers: The Promises and Perils of Watercourse Metaphors in the Face of Despair

This panel consists of three perspectives on the ways in which art and poetry respond to notions of domination, destruction, and trauma, by examining the promise and betrayal of metaphor against the realities of environmental disconnection, cultural “kitsch,” and the physiologically inflected threat of the technological sublime. The first presenter, an art historian and professor, examines 19th Century landscape paintings to understand better the relationship between aesthetics, domination, drunkenness, and free will. The second presenter, an installation artist, shares his response to personal loss in his work “Angel Shit,” which examines the relationship between degraded material and exalted form and puts into tension that which we love and that which we destroy. The final presenter, a poet and professor, presents a meditation on poetry and metaphor as a means of responding to violent death and of re-connecting with a sense of place and self. Together, the presentations offer a forum to discuss a range of issues surrounding cultural representation, Nature, and destruction.

Presiding: Guy Jordan (Western Kentucky University, USA)

Additional Discussants: Jane Olmsted (Western Kentucky University, USA) and Galen Olmsted (University of Gainesville, USA)

2-03

PANEL: Nature, Religion, and Critical Discourse: A Collaborative Spiritual / Ecological Analysis of Richard Lewis’s “A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis”

Richard Lewis’s little-known 1730 poem “A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis” has been praised by literary critics for two aspects: its description of nature and its poetic representation of spiritual crisis. Most critical articles, however, have selected one of those two aspects for examination, only mentioning the other. Carlson, for example, examines Lewis’s depiction of flora and fauna, mentioning the crisis of faith as part of the author’s “sensitive and religious cast of mind” (307). Johnson, in contrast, views the poem’s natural description primarily as evidence of the author’s deistic orientation. We argue that Lewis’s poem requires an interpretation that combines spiritual insight with ecological awareness. The poem does not simply combine natural description with spiritual crisis. Instead, detailed observation of nature functions as a model for the poem’s angst over spiritual uncertainty; conversely, the narrator’s crisis of faith requires the context of extended natural

description to achieve its power. Our collaborative panel presentation will examine the poem's natural and spiritual themes, along with the discourse that has arisen around the poem since its first publication. Rather than creating three separate papers, our panel will merge our individual efforts into one seamless, hour-long, self-reflexive critical and meta-critical analysis, with each of us speaking multiple times.

Panelists: Samuel McBride (La Sierra University, USA), Melissa Brotton (La Sierra University, USA), and Lora Geriguis (La Sierra University, USA)

2-09

Panel: The Legacy of Aldo Leopold: Confronting the Ethical and Spiritual Complexities of Leopold's Land Ethic

While many of his contemporaries have faded into obscurity, the writings of ecologist Aldo Leopold continue to inspire scholars and conservation practitioners to think of social and ecological systems as necessarily integrated. Our panel probes why this is so by focusing on the ethical, religious, and spiritual reach of Leopold's environmental philosophy. We will explore various facets of Leopold's body of work, those persons who most critically influenced him, and his ongoing legacy, while suggesting that his work continues to endure—and receive growing scholarly and popular attention—because he subtly traversed the realm of metaphysics in his writing. In doing so, he created a challenging dialogue between the sciences and the humanities. The four presenters will investigate spiritual and ethical influences on Leopold, highlight spiritual elements of Leopold's philosophy (e.g., his conceptions of integrity, beauty, stability, evolutionary drama, spiritual “dangers,” place and noumenon of place, etc.), and also discuss the ways in which Leopold's work touches subsequent ecological philosophies and spiritualities. The session papers include discussions relevant to ecofeminism, religion and animals, pop cultural studies, environmental justice, and genetic engineering and biotechnology.

Presiding: Gavin Van Horn (Center for Humans and Nature, USA)

Panelists: John Hausdoerffer (Western State Colorado University, USA) and Gavin Van Horn (Center for Humans and Nature, USA)

2-14

Re-Imagining Aldo Leopold in the Modern World: A Multi-Disciplinary Discussion about Sustainability

Aldo Leopold is one of the most renowned figures in conservation, wildlife ecology, and environmental ethics. He provided perhaps the first explicitly written land ethic in his conservation classic *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), which still serves as both an inspiration and a model for ecologists and conservationists. However, Leopold wrote from a set of personal experiences of land degradation, species loss, and personal transformation that took place primarily in North America before, during, and immediately after World War II. Today's globalized, multi-cultural world is a much different place. *Are Leopold's ideas still relevant, and if so, how?* The participants in this session will discuss this question from the perspective of diverse disciplines ranging from anthropology to philosophy. To begin, each participant will provide a brief statement responding to this question. A moderated panel discussion will follow, in which audience participation is encouraged.

Discussants: Dan Shilling (Arizona State University, USA) Denise Holladay Damico (Saint Francis University, USA) Denise Holladay Damico (Saint Francis University, USA) William Forbes (Stephen F. Austin State University, USA) Teressa Trusty (American Association for the Advancement of Science, USA), Kyle Whyte (Michigan State University, USA) Gesa E. Kirsch (Bentley University in Waltham, MA, USA) Joan McGregor (Arizona State University, USA) David Concepcion (Ball State University, USA)

Paper Abstracts

Anderson, Eugene N. (University of California, Riverside)
[eugene.anderson@ucr.edu]

Nature and the Popular Imagination in Imperial China

Probably the richest record of popular conceptions and constructions of the nonhuman world in premodern times is that of China in imperial times. The Chinese, from very early, were intensely involved culturally and spiritually with “mountains and water” (i.e. landscape in general), trees and plants, animals and rocks. All these possessed spirits, or (in a more analytic, elite view) had their special flows of qi, life force or vital energy. This broad worldview transcended religion and underlay a great deal of religious practice, song, and art. There is no concept of “nature” as a realm separate from and opposed to humans; the nearest equivalent is between “nature” as inborn qualities and principles, as opposed to learning or culture. Our record is heavily biased toward elite forms, but there is more than enough folk and popular material extant to show that the view was quite general across social categories. It was intimately associated with conservation, and its constantly shifting accommodations with immediate economic needs explains the unique pattern of successes and failures in premodern resource management—from beautifully conserved temple groves, rice landscapes, and local fisheries to devastated moonscapes. This paper stays within a finite limit by confining itself to constant themes and patterns in the 2000-year history of imperial China.

Arch, Jakobina (Harvard University, USA)
[jarch@fas.harvard.edu]

Whale Graves and Whale Spirits: Religious Responses to the Death of Whales in Early Modern Japan (1600-1868)

In early modern Japan, coastal whaling was practiced on a large scale, with hundreds to thousands of people per whaling group. This was also a period during which Buddhism had a strong influence on society and culture, most especially during the rule of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709), who instituted the Laws of Compassion forbidding mistreatment of many animal species and vulnerable people such as babies and the elderly. The Buddhist yearly memorial services and graves for the spirits of whales killed by whalers, found in many regions where whaling was practiced, might be seen as an extension of the attitudes promoted by the Laws of Compassion. However, these Laws provided exemptions for professional hunters and fishermen, including whalers, and moreover were only implemented for a few decades before Tsunayoshi's successor revoked them. The compassion shown to dead whales in the construction of graves and memorials for their spirits was not restricted to Tsunayoshi's time, so why were these graves built after the Laws of Compassion were revoked? This paper examines the religious responses to whale death during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) to demonstrate the ways whales fit into the religious imagination of the period. The use of whales as a natural resource and source of useful products was counterbalanced by an awareness of whales as beings with spirits at least sometimes equivalent to human ones, as shown by religious rites such as the provision of posthumous Buddhist names to whales. By analyzing the differences between areas in which whales were only opportunistically hunted and those where whaling was an organized profession, this paper will also show how responses to animals such as

whales were highly contingent upon specific local circumstances, and not simply an expression of general reverence for the natural world often imputed to idealized Japanese culture.

Attri, Rashmi (AMU Aligarh, India)
[rashsngh@yahoo.com]

A Vedic Perspective of Ecology in Shakuntala

If we accept the eco-centric view that humans are both part of, and partner with nature, we can say without hesitation that the play *Shakuntala* by Kalidas is intrinsically eco-centric which elaborates the Vedic concept of 'vasudhaivaakutumbum' meaning entire universe is one family. This is the main premise of Indian metaphysics, Hindu thought, which includes both animate and inanimate objects, wherein mother Earth is celebrated for all her natural bounties. In Vedas everything is divine, 'Aham Brahmasmi' [I am the God] say the Vedas. The cosmic reality in Vedas is like the ocean, with no separation between the divine and the world of nature. The Vedas compare creation to a spider's web that the spider creates and then lies within. God is both the container of the universe and what is contained in it. We need to protect nature not as inferior to us but as an expression of the same divinity. This Vedic vision of interconnectedness of all life forms finds beautiful expression in *Shakuntala*. It is surprising that inspired by the Vedic vision Kalidas in the 5th century realized that man being an inseparable part of the evolution, is only one of the species living in this universe along with other species. Nature exists here as a distinct personality integrated with the world of humanity. Kalidas here has personified nature by equating it with divinity. Its heroine *Shakuntala* and other characters live in perfect harmony with the external world wherein trees, animals and birds are like comrades, living as member of one big family. His beautiful descriptions of nature are unparalleled. *Shakuntala* highlights the Vedic vision of life which promotes the belief that all that exists is essential and important part of cosmic order. The paper is a modest attempt to investigate how *Shakuntala* depicts this Vedic view of ecology. I have taken English translation of *Shakuntala* by Arthur Ryder.

Bernard, Calvin (University of Guyana, Guyana)
[calvin.bernard@uog.edu.gy]

Co-Authors - Seecharran, Diana; Thomas, Troy, and; Maharaj, Gyanpriya

Relating Environmental Attitudes to Perspectives On An Apocalypse and Life There After

The history of environmentalism may be dated back to the 7th century but, Rachel Carson is most widely credited as the originator of the modern environmental movement through the 1962 publication of 'Silent Spring'. Despite much history, there has not been another time like present when positive environmental attitudes (taken in the broadest sense to include behavior) are being required for something as fundamental as the survival of human life. Since 1962, a global environmental action movement has emerged and has been active in awareness, advocacy and even militancy. However, our current global crisis which many have described as apocalyptic, is evidence of a lack of sufficient mobilization of human and other resources in favor of nature. There are various perspectives on the predictions of a pending apocalypse and the fate of humans there after. Perspectives on the apocalypse range from a non-catastrophic renewal of the earth, to a catastrophic end with eventual renewal, to a catastrophic end with no thought of renewal. When human life is perceived to continue beyond the apocalypse, it is seen as occurring either in a place far removed from earth or on a renewed earth. Much of this thinking is influenced by religious doctrines. We hypothesize that there is a predictable relationship between perspectives on an apocalypse and life there after and environmental attitudes to the extent that persons who anticipate an apocalypse and a life there after in a place other than earth will be least likely to have positive environmental attitudes. We have set out to test this hypothesis with a study of a sample of the highly religious Guyanese population. This paper will report of the findings of this study and make recommendations for future actions in influencing positive environmental attitudes.

Berry, Evan (American University, USA)
[berry@american.edu]

Desert Island Castaways and the Modern Environmental Imagination

The genre of fictionalized castaway accounts has been a prominent feature of western literature at least since Ibn Tufail's mid-twelfth century work *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*, which predated *Robinson Crusoe* by nearly 600 years. This genre, called "robinsonade," is of central importance to scholars of religion and nature because it imagines the relationship between human beings and the natural world unencumbered by social pressures: stories typically tell of the heroics and tragedies of sailors and explorers forced by accident or providence to fend for themselves in undeveloped environments. Throughout its history, writers have bent the genre in utopian or dystopian directions. Broadly speaking, utopian robinsonades either celebrate power of human ingenuity to overcome nature (Dafoe's *Robinson Crusoe*) or describe nature's capacity to redeem human corruption (Stacpoole's *The Blue Lagoon*). Dystopian robinsonades generally either mourn the inevitability of human domination over nature (Garland's *The Beach*) or lament the moral collapse inherent in a return to nature (Golding's *Lord of the Flies*). The proposed paper argues that this fourfold typology is a reflection of the possible relationships between humans and nature engendered by western theological tradition and that this genre is of critical importance for scholars of religion and nature because of the way it articulates normative views about the place of human beings within the natural order. Further, this paper provides a textual account of the literary genesis for each of these four possibilities and to outlines the significance of robinsonades as markers of the limits to the modern environmental imagination. Given the extent to which the castaway motif continues to flourish in popular culture, this paper concludes by considering the continuities and discontinuities between contemporary images of the desert island (e.g. *Lost*, *Survivor*, *Castaway*) and the genre's foundational works.

Boersema, Jan J. (Institute for Environmental Studies, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
[j.j.boersema@vu.nl]

Why Nature is Better Off with Hope

Two types of apocalyptic views on this world are currently discernible. The first type, religious views with a long history, stresses the apocalyptic end of the world as we know it. This end is seen as purification and a transition to a better world to come. One of the most powerful evocations of these views can be found in the last book of the Christian bible, Revelations. Whilst cruel and full of destruction, the end of the world is somehow perceived to be a longed-for blessing, guaranteeing a new world free of suffering and pain. Generally speaking, belief in such an apocalypse impedes efforts to improve the present situation. The second type of apocalyptic views originates from gloomy assessments of the state of our planet. According to some of its influential advocates, a collapse of the world as we know it, is imminent if the present over-exploitation and maltreatment of our natural world doesn't stop. Rises in sea level will cause flooding, and droughts will diminish our food production. Hunger and starvation will follow, and perpetual warfare over scarce resources might be the future of our planet. At times the description is pretty akin to the biblical picture and in both cases, Man lies at the root of the problem. Somehow it is the consequence of our own misconduct as inhabitants of this world. This outcome is close at hand (five minutes to twelve) and seems almost unavoidable, but the prophets of doom are calling for 'conversion' and a fundamental turn-around concerning the continuing maltreatment of our planet. Psychologists, however, have cast doubt on the effectiveness of doom-mongering as an agent of change. In my talk I will ask the question: Could these two types be aligned? Does religious thinking offer views that could do justice to the serious nature of our environmental problems without resorting to paralyzing collapse prophecies? Under what conditions could hope be a sensible alternative?

Boggs, Kyle (University of Arizona, USA)

[kyleboggs@email.arizona.edu]

'A Thousand Different Mountains' on the San Francisco Peaks: Privilege, Contested Space, and Clashing Imaginations

There can be no doubt that mountains inspire imagination and wonder. Through their majesty, mountains draw people in; they become symbols of place and home. Mountains also represent the sacred, a holy place where deities reside and keep watch. The natural integrity of mountains are often linked with cultural and spiritual survival. Mountains, as this presentation aptly demonstrates, can simultaneously function as a social space where identity narratives clash, revealing often-asymmetrical relations of power. The San Francisco Peaks, in northern Arizona, is one of these places. When, in 1978, former Hopi Tribal Chairman, Peter McDonald said of the Peaks, "A thousand men could look at the mountain, and see a thousand different mountains," he could not have been more right. Since the early 1970's, a ski resort, which operates through a special use permit on the San Francisco Peaks has faced mass resistance from at least 13 regional tribal nations as they have expanded the resort, adding new lifts, runs, trails, facilities, and most recently, embarking on plans to use municipal reclaimed wastewater to make snow artificially. While many spatial rhetoricians and cultural theorists, from Michel Foucault to Edward Soja, focus on the "lived spaces" of urban communities, and built landscapes, The San Francisco Peaks pose a curious example because, though it is a space that is both "real" and "imagined," it is largely uninhabited space. However, land use policies that dictate what activities can and can't take place on the mountain are the result of discursive formations situated historically, politically, and economically, resulting in one imagination of the mountain privileged above all others. The result is that the mountain has become a space upon which western epistemologies are written. In highlighting rhetorics of exclusion built into western imaginations of the mountain, this presentation highlights the necessity of building new epistemologies, of reimagining land use policy to account for issues of cultural sustainability.

Bremer, Thomas S. (Rhodes College, USA)

[BREMERT@rhodes.edu]

National Parks in Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Imagination

Many advocates of national parks believe that "America's Best Idea," as filmmaker Ken Burns has characterized them, originated in an Emersonian religio-aesthetic of preserving sacred parcels of nature. In actuality, the national parks, particularly Yellowstone, are more a product of a post-Civil War Protestant evangelical initiative to expand industrialized civilization westward across the American continent. This paper examines the connection between the popular imagination of nineteenth-century American evangelical Protestants and the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872. The key link in this tale is Jay Cooke, the powerful Philadelphia banker who provided financing for the Union cause that allowed Abraham Lincoln to continue prosecuting his war to its successful conclusion. In the years following the war, Cooke articulated a peculiarly evangelical interpretation of Manifest Destiny in the northern victory and its implications for expanding American civilization across the continent. His most notable contribution to westward expansion was his acquisition of the Northern Pacific Railroad and the subsequent promotion of settlement in the northwest. This included Cooke's role in the 1872 legislation that made Yellowstone the world's first national park. These efforts were consistent with his evangelical commitments that understood the vast resources of western lands as assets to be developed, exploited, but also appreciated. In this light, the grand scenery, bountiful lands teeming with game and fish, and the remarkable thermal features of the Yellowstone region all indicated the glory of the evangelical god, an aesthetic reminder to devout Christians of God's majesty. In short, preserving Yellowstone was consistent in the evangelical imagination of nineteenth-century Protestants like Jay Cooke with the more destructive aspects of settling and civilizing the American west.

Çaksu, Ali (International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

[acaksu@ius.edu.ba]

Atatürk's Silhouette as a Secular Epiphany

In my article I will discuss how a specific natural event (in fact, just a shadow) is perceived and celebrated as a manifestation of the sacred by popular imagination.

Every year during the period between 15th June and 15th July in the small town of Damal, in Ardahan, a city in northeastern Turkey, allegedly the founder of the modern Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's (1881-1938) silhouette appears as a shadow on a hill. Thus every year in that period a festival is organized and curious visitors come to see the silhouette. Perhaps in order to make the festival more serious and attractive, some people even applied for establishing an association called the Association for Protecting and Promoting Atatürk's Silhouette. However, the Ministry of Interior asked for an expert report about the silhouette. Then upon request, the History Department of the Atatürk University in Erzurum, a city in eastern Turkey, examined the silhouette and wrote a report confirming its resemblance to Atatürk's profile to a great extent. Mayor of Damal celebrated this and stated that they would work to develop the social and cultural values of this natural event. I should note that this is not a mere touristic attraction but is deeply related to some Turkish people's deep reverence to and sort of sacralization of Atatürk. In brief, this natural event is perceived by many as a sort of secular epiphany.

Chen, Shuman (Northwestern University, USA)

[shumanchen2012@u.northwestern.edu]

The Mutual Inclusion of Nature and Human Beings in Tiantai Buddhism

Do mountains, rivers, and plants have the capability of thinking and awakening? How do we perceive their existence and their relationship with the rest of the world, especially human beings? Chinese Tiantai Buddhism, I argue, can help us contemplate the complex self-world-nature matrix so as to provide us with theoretical and practical alternatives for solving environmental issues. Specifically, Tiantai thinkers hold that insentient things, like any sentient being, have Buddha-nature, a necessity for final liberation. I contend that embracing this Tiantai doctrine may result in three ideological shifts: First, since the natural world has Buddha-nature, it deserves our loving-kind care and respect with regard to its sacredness. Second, according to mutual inclusion, human beings are included in nature, and vice versa; therefore, man and nature are not separate and should coexist in harmony. Third, the identity between sentience and insentience breaks the boundary between the subject and the object, indicating a two-way relationship of equality between mankind and nature. The use of Tiantai philosophy as a platform to discuss environmental ethics accordingly challenges the anthropocentric view that human beings alone are the worthy ones and have the authority to control nature. This paper, with a hermeneutic, analytical approach, thus brings Tiantai in conversation with environmentalist discourses that argue that because the earth has nurtured us, we should be grateful and further preserve/protect her.

Cockram, Aya (Kalamazoo College, USA)

[acockram@gmail.com]

Green Islam: The Color of Environmentalism in Senegal

For some, environmental degradation is a pressing matter. For others, it is trivial. But for many, it is an inaccessible issue. The problem we see here is not that people do not care about sustainable issues, but that the importance of these issues is not conveyed through a comprehensible and culturally sensitive medium. This paper seeks explore the relationship between religion and environmentalism in order to gain insight into the potential of religious activism. The paper focuses on the West African nation of Senegal, a country where the influence of Islam is powerful and respect for the environment is lacking. The premise is to evaluate the extent to which Islam - its teachings, scripture and the influence of religious leaders - can be used to propagate environmental ethics and serve as a catalyst for environmentalism in religious communities in Senegal. This concept is explored through case studies of existing Islamic environmental organizations, which focus their message on environmental concepts obtained from the Qur'an Hadiths and shari'a, as well as policies of countries such as Iran and Egypt. For

the Senegalese component, the country's environmental code was examined, as well as other local studies and documents. This paper also gives unique insight into the topic through on-site research conducted in Senegal itself, consisting of interviews with religious leaders, environmental NGOs, a government employee, and an examination of religious and environmental material culture in Senegal.

Concepcion, David (Ball State University, USA)

[dwconcepcion@bsu.edu]

Leopold's Significance in the Classroom: Grief and Service Learning

If you're interested in ideas to help you offer students experiences that enable them to identify and critique some of their fundamental ways of framing environmental experiences, this talk is for you. Through reflective and analytic writing about service they provide to a local environmental agency many students come to question their deeply held beliefs. Many strengthen, some come anew to, and others reject what Leopold called 'The Ecological Conscience.' In this paper, I provide an introduction to part of the course content - grievability - using many of Leopold's remarks regarding grief. I then describe and reflect upon the pedagogy and student experience of the pedagogy through which students learn about grief and environmental destruction. We will see one example of how experiential pedagogies generate evaluative learning to move students toward affective learning objectives.

Damico, Denise Holladay (Saint Francis University, USA)

Albuquerque, the Rio Grande, and the "Land Ethic" in a Borderlands/Sunbelt context

Scholars have become increasingly aware of how our very ideas about what "wilderness" means have been shaped by the particular social and historical context of American history. William Cronon has exhorted environmental historians and environmentalists to pay attention to all types of environments, including the farm, the suburbs, and cities. My paper heeds this admonishment, asking whether and how Leopold's land ethic might be applied in a multicultural urban context. In particular, I study two issues at the intersection of society and the environment, issues with which Leopold himself grappled during the brief time he served as Secretary for Albuquerque's Chamber of Commerce (1918-1919). These issues both dealt with the desert city's relationship with the Rio Grande, which runs through the heart of the city. They were the establishment of a public park alongside the Rio and a centralized system of drainage for the Rio Grande Valley. The ways in which Leopold grappled with these issues, together with how those issues continued to evolve over the course of the twentieth century, reveal that, while certain components of the land ethic could be and were applied to Albuquerque's urban environment, there were also significant obstacles to the implementation of such an ethic. My paper posits that, while the land ethic is a form of spirituality for some today, it may not be entirely apt in a multicultural context.

Debelo, Asebe Regassa (Bayreath International Graduate School of African Studies)

[aseberegassa@yahoo.com]

A Conceptualization of Nature-Culture Relations: a Study on Guji Oromo's Cosmological Schemes in Southern Ethiopia

The debates on nature-culture relations have become common discourses in the academia for decades. From the western perspective that is rooted in the ontological notions of wilderness, nature is presumed as separate from culture. In contrast, among non-western, non-industrialized societies, the biophysical, the human and supernatural worlds are inseparably constituted as integral components defining nature-culture relations. In the latter contexts, perceptions of nature are shaped by iterative engagements and experiences of people. This entails two way interactions and engagements between nature and culture in which belief, norms, values, ethics and cosmological views are important elements in maintaining the triad or harmony.

Devienne, Elsa (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France)

[elsadevienne@gmail.com]

Beyond the Beach party movies: the Beaches of California in Twentieth-century Popular Culture

According to the many scholars who analyzed the Beach Party genre, these popular movies—from *Gidget* (1959) to *It's a Bikini World* (1967)—constructed the beach as a key locus of the emerging teen consumer culture and as the most cinematic symbol of California. Scholars also contend that these movies portrayed the beach as a safe heaven of carefree fun for the white middle-class youth where threats of nuclear war, sexual revolution, and racial struggles could be kept at bay.¹ While such affirmations are true, the attention given to the genre tends to hide the complex ways in which beaches in general, and those of California in particular, have been depicted in 20th-century popular culture. First, the Beach Party pictures were not merely the product of Cold War fears; they should be replaced within a larger history of Hollywood-produced movies filmed at the beach, starting in the 1910s with the Mack Sennett comedies which introduced the "Bathing Beauties" as a publicity tool. Second, scholars analyzing the beach movie genre rarely take into account the opposite representation of California's beaches: that of the film noir. In many novels and movies of the period, starlets' Hollywood dreams were crushed precisely on the sands. Suicides, murders and dangerous encounters found their natural setting on the beach.² Finally, while scholars include the larger social and international context in their analysis of the 1960s beach movies, the local context of the beach as a specific environment and public space within California is forgotten. A closer look at this context would show that it is precisely when activities like having a bonfire, sleeping, putting up a tent or playing drums on the beach were forbidden that the beach party movies glorified them. Based on a large body of popular novels and movies released from the 1910s until the late 1960s, this paper will provide an in-depth account of the representation of the beaches in popular culture, thereby complicating the traditional interpretation based on the 1960s beach movies.

Duke, Carrie (Ball State University, USA)

[capence@bsu.edu]

Figures in the Flood: Finding a Human Nature from Walden to Housekeeping

While referring to nineteenth-century writers, Marilynne Robinson has remarked that "[t]here's been a rupture in the conversation of this culture. . . things that were brought up in the early conversation have been dropped without being resolved" (Gardner 45). Robinson continues this conversation with writers like Thoreau and Emerson through a dialogue about the natural world. Robinson revisits the nineteenth-century attempt to find meaning in nature but demands that the representation of nature in her novel *Housekeeping* avoids the aesthetic trends of the Transcendental writers because portraying nature as beautiful can create nature as an "other" that overlooks the interconnectedness between the environment and humans that exists everywhere—not just in "beautiful" spaces. In *Housekeeping*, Robinson's characters find meaning in the natural world that differs from Thoreau and Emerson's vision of nature. Both Emerson and Thoreau agree that one of the essential elements of perceiving nature is the presence of beauty. Although Robinson's character Ruth often finds connections between the natural world and her knowledge of biblical stories, and even imagines ascension to be a "natural law" when she "watch[es] gulls fly like sparks up the face of clouds," ultimately nature is not a space of beauty (92). The practice of imagining nature as beautiful creates a problematic relationship between people and the environment. Valuing the beautiful places in the environment does not lead to an ecological awareness and often contributes to the commodification of nature. Robinson refuses to objectify nature as beautiful and at the same time realizes the ways in which the natural world is "coextensive" with being. For the character Ruth, the dark elements of the nature cannot be simply objectified as beautiful because every wild place is "clearly human."

Di Paola, Marcello (LUISS University, Rome, Italy)
[marcellodipaola80@gmail.com]

Wittgenstein Gone Wild

Ludwig Wittgenstein once wrote: “It is very remarkable that we should be inclined to think of civilization – houses, trees, cars, etc. – as separating man from his origins, from what is lofty and eternal, etc. Our civilized environment, along with its trees and plants, strikes us then as if it were cheaply wrapped in cellophane and isolated from anything great, from God, as it were. That is a remarkable picture that intrudes on us” (1984: 50). Wittgenstein was voicing a deep dissociative tendency, particularly diffused in the West, one important dimension of which has historically been a dualism between man and nature and the way that dualism has been played out in the theory of nature’s value. Many philosophers have held naturalness to be the only, ultimate or at least primary source of that value: the nature that is most valuable, then, is “wild” nature, and “wild” is that which is unmodified by human activity. Such perspectives have traditionally dominated environmental philosophy, which has inherited the Transcendentalist view of nature as “God’s Second Book” (a view held by Emerson and Thoreau, among others). In this paper, I relate these matters to a second Wittgensteinian quote – “Ethics and Aesthetics are one and the same” (1921: § 6.421) – in order to explain the first – that “remarkable picture that intrudes on us”. I elucidate that second quote in reference to the Transcendentalist’s idealization of “wild” nature: my aim is to show that in the “wild”, ethics and aesthetics do coincide in enveloping man in pure contemplation of everything that is the case and cannot be made any better: for how can there be improvement on “God’s work”? The overall objective of the paper is to show that Wittgenstein’s mysterious identification of ethics and aesthetics can be elucidated by reflecting on our perceptions of “wild” nature and, conversely, that our perceptions of “wild” nature can be elucidated by reflecting on that identification.

Deese, Richard Samuel (Boston University, USA)
[rsdeese@bu.edu]

An Island on the Land: Aldous Huxley and the Transformation of Postwar Los Angeles

This paper will explore how Aldous Huxley’s 1962 novel *Island* reflects the author’s experience with a number of eclectic utopian projects in Southern California, and his personal reflections on the rapid transformation of that region by the culture and economy of the Cold War decades. Just as Thomas More’s *Utopia* used imagery from recent narratives of maritime exploration to construct an imaginative critique of 16th century England, Aldous Huxley’s utopian novel *Island* employed the setting of contemporary Southeast Asia to cloak an incisive parable of postwar Los Angeles. This paper will trace the origins of *Island* in Huxley’s travels across Asia and long study of eastern religions, but it will place a special focus on his twenty-five year residence in Los Angeles and its surrounding desert landscapes. As he wrote his final novel depicting the destruction of a small Southeast Asian utopia by an alliance of militarists, oil companies, media moguls and religious fanatics, Aldous Huxley’s essays and correspondence reveal his trenchant observations on the desecration of the American Southwest by what he saw as a similar constellation of forces during the Cold War decades. Considering the pivotal role that religion plays in *Island*, this paper will survey Aldous Huxley’s reflections on the diverse religious communities of Los Angeles and its environs in the twentieth century, from Vedanta and the Theosophical Society to the informal community that emerged around the discourses of Jiddu Krishnamurti. Placing *Island* within the broader context of utopian narratives and popular culture, this paper will also explore the conflict between utopian stasis and unbridled resource extraction in the seminal works of Thomas More and Francis Bacon and also in Hollywood movies from Huxley’s time and our own, including Frank Capra’s *Lost Horizon* (1937) and James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009).

Doran, Thomas (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)
[thomasdoran@umail.ucsb.edu]

Global Zoopoetics, Animal Artists, and Interspecies Translation?

Through a multimedia exploration of the possibilities of interspecies art and translation, my project attempts to engage more inclusively with questions of nonhuman culture. I first explore what I see as the contexts for a possible practice of interspecies translation by asking how we can make sense of what we call human art and media when it is created by or for nonhuman animals? I discuss various examples, such as snake charming, Mewvies (movies for cats), the Thai Elephant Orchestra, and the Asian Elephant Art and Conservation Project. Each of these examples suggest cross-species possibilities, and all have been criticized for their limits, superficialities, and exploitations, but I am also interested in the transnational dimension of these cross-species engagements. I offer the concept of global zoopoetics as a bridge between the theory and practice of interspecies translation, translation already being fundamentally transnational in both its purpose and practice and embodying many of the problems and contradictory consequences of the global. I discuss how the examples of interspecies translation I offer provide a rare glimpse into the speculative possibilities for transnational cultural studies and the potential for a coherent theory of cosmopolitan animal studies. I claim that the animal worldview—as deeply and inescapably transnational—offers an alternative to the extremely conflicted and anthropocentric concept of cosmopolitanism. I then offer some examples of the practice of interspecies translation, suggesting that animal studies needs to embody the mixture and complexity it often theoretically embraces; therefore, I actually conduct experiments in translation and present my work through hybrid forms of digital writing.

Fisher, Colin (University of San Diego, USA)
[colinf@sandiego.edu]

Nature and the Anarchist Imagination: May Day and Working-Class Environmental Thought in Gilded Age Chicago

As part of the broader project by environmental historians and others to better understand subaltern environmentalism, this paper looks at how nineteenth-century Chicago radicals viewed nature. I argue that starting in the 1870s, the radical community in Chicago (comprised principally of German workers, but also Americans, Irish, and Bohemian men and women) routinely used natural spaces in and around Chicago to imagine an international proletarian community that extended well beyond the limits of the United States. In some cases, anarchists used parks in “nature’s nation” to wave the black flag, which signified the negation of all nations. I also explore the invention of May Day, and how radicals in Chicago explicitly connected the efflorescence of nature in the spring with the emergence of class consciousness and collective action. While most Chicago anarchists were utopian and none had an explicit awareness of the human place within a given ecological system, some adopted “anarcho-primitivist” positions that anticipate some variants of contemporary green anarchism.

Forbes, William (Stephen F. Austin State University, USA)
[forbesw@sfasu.edu]

Revisiting International Sites in Aldo Leopold’s Writings

This presentation provides updates on international sites important in framing Aldo Leopold’s concepts of the land ethic, land health, and global wilderness. Three Latin American sites are especially highlighted: the Colorado River Delta in Mexico, which represents the most degraded conditions due to water withdrawals in the US; the Rio Gavilan, located on the continental divide in northern Chihuahua, Mexico, in moderate condition after post-WWII logging and grazing; and the River of the Mother of God (Rio Madre de Dios), within the Amazon Basin in southeastern Peru, in relatively pristine condition due to subsequent biodiversity research and national park establishment. Other sites in Africa and Asia are addressed, although they have less prominence in Leopold’s writings and more indirect connections with Leopold’s career and family legacy. The paper is based on field visits and literature review. Issues addressed include: influence of these sites on Leopold’s thinking; accuracy of predictions for each site made by Leopold in the first half of the 20th century, and how Leopold’s sense of deep time and these case studies offer a potentially popular narrative to illustrate the current rate and scale of evolutionary changes.

Fredericks, Sarah E. (University of North Texas, USA)
[sfrederi@unt.edu]

Online Confessions of Eco-Guilt

“This blog has a couple of purposes”; one is “to confess my many eco-sins” (Gwen, 2009). Here Gwen describes her motivation for blogging and names a trend in blogs and online commentaries about newspaper and magazine articles with environmental themes. In these spaces, unaffiliated with traditional religions, many people reveal their feelings of regret, guilt, or shame about their contributions to environmental degradation. Their laments usually involve common actions in the industrialized world such as forgetting one’s reusable shopping bags or using fossil-fueled transportation (e.g. Crislip, 2012; Helmer, 2005; HeyAllie, 2011; Howe, 2005; Streater, 2008; Tass, 2008). The tone of these revelations and the responses they receive indicate that this communication is not only, or maybe not even primarily, about practical advice to overcome such limitations (e.g. leaving reusable bags in the car). Rather these online conversations are ritualized activities that help participants make sense of their world and provide participants with reassurance and forms of forgiveness or absolution. Naming such phenomenon as religious extends religion and nature scholarship beyond organized communities that are explicitly environmental or outdoor-focused (e.g. Snyder, 2007; Taylor, 1994) to the often amorphous groups of blog readers or respondents to a newspaper article. It also directs attention to the moral crises that may occur after participation in environmental degradation. This work also extends scholarship on eco-sin or guilt which generally either defines eco-sin within a particular longstanding religion (McFague, 2000; Rosenberg, 2002) or studies the role of guilt in eco-consumerism (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2010; Gans & Groves, 2012; Kotchen, 2009) or as a rhetorical strategy (Plevin, 1997). Connecting and extending all of this literature, I will chronicle the nature and function of online discussions of eco-guilt, drawing attention to an understudied question in religion and nature: How do environmentalists cope with their failure to live up to their environmental standards?

Gorshunova, Olga (A.N. Kosygin Moscow State University, Russia)
[ogorshunova@gmail.com]

Pray, howl and take my power: Sacred images and nature cult in Central Asian folk Islam

This paper, based on empirical material obtained during my field work in Central Asia (especially in the Fergana Valley), focuses on a set of rituals that are performed by Muslim pilgrims at holy places where the major sacred objects contrary to custom are not the graves of saints, but trees. Another common feature of these sites is the fact that they exclusively or mainly are available to women. While praying and performing the rites under the Islamic tradition when visiting the shrines, is a mandatory part of the pilgrimage, the culmination of whole ritual and ceremonial cycle are actions that are of magic nature, and aimed at taking possession of the sacred power of the trees. Exploring the structure of the shrines, mythology and ritual complexes associated with them, I attempted to examine the nature of this tradition and to determine the ideological "foundation" on which it was formed and developed. I argue that the roots of this kind of dendrolatry go back to a pre-Islamic tradition. In addition to the pilgrims’ ritual behavior that is not inherent in "classical" Islam, there is some evidence to support this hypothesis, for example, the strange names of the sacred sites, such as Lady Destroyer of Difficulties, Lady Wednesday, Pregnant Elm, Forty-Spirits, Virgins’ Shrine, etc., as well as the absence of life stories of the saints associated with the sites. A comparative analysis of the ethnographic materials in conjunction with archaeological data leads me to the conclusion that initially the holy trees in the local cultures were considered as the embodiment of a particular female deity, to whom the observable magic rituals were dedicated. This original image has been transformed over time and evolved into different images of local Muslim saints.

Greenberg, Joy (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)
[joyhornergreenberg@hotmail.com]

Eywa and Momoy: Nature as Shamaness in Myth and Film

The concepts of Mother Earth and Mother Nature are so commonplace as to have become virtual clichés. Yet, reverence for a feminized earth has endured for thousands of years among many cultures. Nature as the Divine Feminine may be seen in contemporary stories as well, including the film *Avatar*. Such staying power in the collective imagination speaks to atavistic impulses that have long been expressed by indigenous cultures in their mythologies. In *Avatar*, Eywa was the Na’vi “Earth Mother,” who was considered their holiest deity. The California Chumash equivalent to Eywa was Momoy, who represented variously an Old Woman, the moon, and jimsonweed. The choice of female spiritual leaders indicates their importance to both Na’vi and Chumash cultures and suggests a feminized perspective toward nature that contrasts with the typically masculinist, monotheistic ethos demonstrated by the Sky People in *Avatar*. Although much has been said about the correlation between *Avatar* and Native American environmental ethics, the ecopsychological aspect of their relationship has not been examined. In contrast to Jungian psychology, which posits a “collective unconscious,” ecopsychology roots psyche within **the neoplatonic concept of the anima mundi** (Roszak 1995; Hillman 1995, 2006). By viewing Momoy and Eywa ecopsychologically, Chumash and Na’vi belief systems are revealed as “dark green religions” (Taylor 2010) exemplifying “religious environmentalism” (Gottlieb 2006): narratives that cohere with an ecoethical worldview and inspire people to care for the environment because they believe it’s the right thing to do.

Greenough, Paul (University of Iowa, USA)
[paul-greenough@uiowa.edu]

The Indian House Crow — Notes on the Ritual and Environmental History of a Threatened Diasporic Species

The Indian house crow (*Corvus splendens*) is a species of South Asian origin that has co-evolved with humans and has no habitat other than human settlements. At an unknown time in the past the house crow was incorporated into Hindu death rituals as a representative of the soul or spirit of the deceased. The two essential elements of a high-caste Hindu death ceremony are the cremation of the body of the deceased and a post-cremation ritual (sradha) that is attended by close relatives who keep themselves apart from others in an uncomfortable state of restricted consumption, social impurity and physical austerity. The sradha begins with the gathering of mourners by a river or pond distant from the cremation ground, accompanied by one or more funerary priests. After the mourners bathe, the priests tend a sacrificial fire, recite lines of scripture in Sanskrit, and quietly instruct the chief mourner, usually the eldest son of the deceased or another close male relative, in numerous acts of gesture and speech. For many Hindus the efficacy of the ritual hinges on random wild crows’ willingness to eat prepared food offerings; the crow’s eating offered food is considered a moment of dialog between the living and the deceased. At present house crows are under environmental pressure in Indian cities, because radiant energy from ubiquitous cellphone towers disrupts their equanimity. House crows are thus seriously threatened in their homeland, and a scarcity of crows for funerary ritual purposes has already been noticed.

Hansen, Natalie Corinne (University of California, Los Angeles, USA)

[natcorhans@gmail.com]

The Equine Sublime

While horses have long functioned as metaphors for freedom, raw power, and spirit, there is a new (or, perhaps, resurgent) focus in the twenty-first century on the spiritual connections between horses and humans. Such interest is demonstrated in recent popular movies such as *War Horse*, *Spirit*, and *Buck*, each of which argues for a unique healing connection between human and horse. These movies represent horses as magnetic spiritual creatures whose contributions to our lives move beyond their ability to participate with us in sport and leisure activities. Interest in the spiritual dimension of horse-human relationships has emerged as a growing experiential field broadly defined as equine facilitated therapies. These therapies utilize horses’ exceptional abilities to read, mirror, and respond to body language to explore human psychological states, communications, and group dynamics. How do horses touch the human heart? This is how one horse lover describes the

human-horse relationship: “Mystical, paranormal, otherworldly – whatever you call it – there is no doubt that this bond exists and that it is powerful and even life changing. When you and a horse bond, it is a gift like no other: irreplaceable, irrepressible, and inexplicable” (A. Bronwyn Llewellyn in *Horse Dreams*). This paper explores visual and written expressions of the spiritual bond between humans and horses, demonstrating various ways that human-horse relationships elicit emotional responses that change people’s lives. The paper concludes by asking how this particular cross-species relationship might help humans achieve a better understanding of ourselves, other species, and the environments we share.

Hausdoerffer, John (Western State Colorado University, USA)
[jhausdoerffer@western.edu]

“Recovering the Sacred”: Aldo Leopold, Winona LaDuke, and the Spiritual Danger of Environmental Alienation

In a now famous essay in *Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold muses, “There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace” (*Sand County* 6). Based on a comparison with Winona LaDuke’s book *Recovering the Sacred*, this paper will examine Leopold’s construction of the “spiritual” and evaluate its potential relevance to 21st Century environmental justice struggles. Rather than referring to a religious view of the sacred; rather than rooting the sacred in some neo-pantheistic, God-as-Nature; Leopold’s view of “spiritual danger” instead embodies his concern that 20th century industrial life transformed humans into little more than bodies consuming bodies. His land ethic is rooted in his hope that environmental choices will reawaken our evolutionary potential as moral, intellectual, and thus spiritual beings. For LaDuke, land ethics is founded in a cultural recovery of the sacred, in her case the recovery of wild rice harvests necessary to Ojibwe being Ojibwe. This recovery is specifically tied to a people’s environmental basis of identity, what I will call a “keystone livelihood ecology”—cultural identity adapted to what has worked on a particular piece of land for thousands of years. Both Leopold and LaDuke locate the value of environmental ethics in a deeper human fulfillment, and this paper seeks to evaluate how that land-based, spiritual-humanist side of environmental ethics might influence contemporary environmental justice movements—suggesting an unexpected contemporary and social significance for Leopold’s land ethic.

Howe, Andrew (La Sierra University, USA)
[ahowe@lasierra.edu]

The Elusive “Lord God Bird”: Science, Faith, and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

On April 28, 2005, the Department of the Interior partnered with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in the stunning announcement that an Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been documented in Arkansas. Formerly widespread in old growth hardwood forests across the bottomlands of the American south, the woodpecker had declined precipitously throughout the 19th century, a period during which it acquired the nickname “Lord God Bird.” The last verified sighting, in 1944, was from the Singer Tract of Louisiana, a forest that was soon after cut down. Almost immediately, noted ornithologists began to question both the evidence that had been compiled. Within a year of the announcement, a war was being waged among ornithologists across North America. Bolstering the claims made by the detractors, who decried the practice of “faith-based science,” was the fact that searches in the Cache and White River regions of Arkansas involving tens of thousands of observer hours failed to produce anything more than brief site observations. However, most Americans continue to believe that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was unequivocally rediscovered in 2004. This project will explore the relationship between federal, state, and local interests in relation to the announced rediscovery, along with the tensions between science and faith that currently exist across the spectrum of individuals and institutions with investment in this species’ status. The nickname “Lord God Bird” perfectly fits this species, as in many ways the drama surrounding its existence exhibits parallels to the core structural features of organized religion. Lacking clear and

convincing evidence, birders, conservationists, and even scientists alike turn to faith in an attempt to interpret the meager signs at their disposal. Still others focus upon the bird’s likely extinction, framing the species’ destruction at the hands of human greed as a symbolic crucifixion upon the altar of conservation.

Jacobson, Kristin J. (The Richard Stockton College of NJ, USA)
[Kristin.Jacobson@stockton.edu]

Spiritual Natures and the American Adrenaline Narrative

The attempt to understand the desires related to risky acts like climbing to 29,028 feet lies at the heart of popular adventure stories and my paper, which examines this extreme edge of nature writing. Specifically, my paper juxtaposes various spiritual representations of nature to consider how perilous outdoor adventure tales, what I have termed “adrenaline narratives,” promote and hinder ecological sustainability. The paper focuses on bestselling nonfiction adventure stories—such as Aron Ralston’s *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* and Jon Krakauer’s *Into Thin Air*—published after the first Earth Day. 1970 was a watershed for the contemporary American environmental movement and the next forty years mark a rise in the popularity of all things extreme—including sports, makeovers, and laundry detergent. The wildly popular (auto)biographical writing about extreme adventures is part of this trend. Texts such as Bron Taylor’s *Dark Green Religion*, Carol Adams’s *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, and Paul Shepard’s *Nature and Madness* provide the theoretical framework for understanding sacred representations of nature within the context of a largely bankrupt ecology. My reading will demonstrate that these extreme spiritual odysseys often objectify nature in ecologically suspect ways. Adventurers, for example, sometimes eschew, if not altogether eliminate, disposable consumer culture and use their narratives to promote awareness of environmental destruction and its consequences. These contradictions suggest adrenaline narratives represent America’s schizophrenic relationship with the natural world: they articulate a desire to conquer and to protect the natural environment. The analysis of these wildly popular stories, thus, offers a chance to take the racing pulse of America’s environmental imagination, which will, in turn, offer insight into the environmental movement and spirituality’s place within it.

Jansen, Peter (Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University, The Netherlands)
[pjansen@che.nl]

Interconnection between religion and nature in the communication regarding Dutch nature

For more than a thousand years, the Dutch have reclaimed land from the sea. They transformed their country from a swampy river delta into an ordered land with a big agricultural image. But since the implementation of a National Ecological Network, approved in 1990, the Dutch Government has bought a lot of land to give it back to nature. A lot of farmland reclaimed a century ago is to be flooded again to create ‘original’ nature. Words like real, pure and authentic are used in the communication about this new nature policy and we can read that this new nature presents the wilderness we have missed. The general purpose of my PhD research is to investigate what role religious elements or notions of meaning play in the communication regarding the Dutch nature (policy) and how these notions or narratives change over time in communication between people. This research will provide more insight in the way views of nature functions and the role of (public) communication in this process. I approach views of nature are myths or narratives that allow people to attribute meaning to reality. During the conference I would like to present my work-in-progress concerning the implicit meanings or religious elements in the communication about nature. The character of my presentation is ‘problem-focused’ rather than ‘conclusive’.

Jones, Robert (California State University, Chico, USA)
[rcjones@mail.csuchico.edu]

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Green or Mean?

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is based on a tradition in China stretching back over 2,000 years. According to the American Medical Association, interest in TCM in the United States has risen dramatically,

gaining the attention not only of the media and the public, but the health care industry as well. Correspondingly, the number of patients using integrative East-West Medicine paradigms concurrently is growing. In the largest nationally representative survey of prevalence, costs, and patterns of use of complementary and alternative medicine in the US, Eisenberg et al., found that there was an almost 50% increase in total visits to alternative medicine practitioners from 1990 to 1997, exceeding total visits to all US primary care physicians. Some of these traditional practices include acupuncture, massage, exercise, and dietary therapies, as well as various forms of herbal medicines and preparations made from animal parts. However, for use in some TCM preparations, rhinos, tigers, bears, and other species are routinely killed. The numbers are so high that for some species, their very existence is threatened. For example, just a century ago, there were an estimated one million black rhinos in Africa. Today, there are about 2,500. Most of these animals are killed for medicinal purposes. However, most people associate Traditional Chinese Medicine with “green medicine”. In this talk, I will discuss the impact of Traditional Chinese Medicine on endangered species and argue that not only is Traditional Chinese Medicine not “green”, but that it is, in fact, severely damaging to some species and to the environment.

Jordan, Guy (Western Kentucky University, USA)
[guy.jordan@wku.edu]

Of Time, the River, and the Railroad: Cole, Turner, and the Aesthetics of Slowness

This paper investigates the role played by the winding courses of rivers and streams in the landscape paintings of Thomas Cole and J.M.W. Turner. Cole and Turner often paired slow undulating watercourses with railroads in ways that called attention to the unrelenting domination of natural and healthy lifecycles by irresistible mechanical forces that threatened to subvert and dominate the free will of their passengers. In their oil paintings *Rain, Steam and Speed* (1842) and *River in the Catskills* (1841), Turner and Cole respectively consider these operations as a function of the irresistible acceleration of society brought about by this new technological convenience. These patterns closely align with the artificial metabolic stimulation and enervation of the human body thought to be brought on by alcohol consumption by period reform physiologists such as Charles Caldwell and Sylvester Graham. Moreover, the symbolic appropriation of the railroad in such paintings is more clearly understood when considered alongside period drawings and prints that explicitly engage the locomotive as a cipher for the terrible momentum of pathological alcohol consumption. The most famous of these, the *Black Valley Railroad* (1865), foregrounds the final opportunity for passengers to disembark from a one-way express train that will carry its unfortunate lot through towns such as “Riotville” and “Idiot Flats,” before ultimately (and literally) terminating their trip at “Destruction.” Another drawing by the artist David Claypool Johnston entitled *Slavery (Voluntary)* (c. 1850) depicts a drunkard who has passed out on a railroad as a train ominously approaches in the distance. The ever-advancing speed and momentum of the railroad and the profound degree to which it standardized time and quickened the pace of social and economic change in the nineteenth century provided artists on both sides of the Atlantic with an apt metaphor that further elaborated the dangers of over-stimulated nations of drunkards that many feared were destined to fly off the rails.

Kirsch, Gesa E. (Bentley University, USA)
[gkirsch2001@yahoo.com]

Re-Imagining Aldo Leopold and Environmental Rhetoric

Leopold’s work is only now gaining recognition in environmental rhetoric—the study of how words, metaphors, and language shape our perceptions of places in everyday life. Those perceptions are critically important because they shape our interaction with places, and ultimately, our decisions to preserve and protect some places and ignore or exploit others. I argue that Aldo Leopold’s work is important to environmental rhetoric because his land ethic—evolving, collaborative, and community-based—resonates with rhetorical principles of evolving, collaborative, and community-based discourse that is key to understanding social activism and civic engagement. Leopold’s work

also illuminates three cornerstones of rhetoric—logos, pathos, and ethos. Leopold anchors his work in all three by calling not only for appeals to reason but also to aesthetics and beauty (and the emotions they can evoke) and ethics (appeals to both an ethical self and evolving community standards). I will illustrate the importance of Leopold’s work for environmental rhetoric with reference to two Boston examples: the Longfellow Bridge Restoration Project and Esplanade 2020 Vision Study.

Kling, Sheri (Claremont Lincoln University, USA)
[sheri.kling@cst.edu]

“We All Are Related”: A Contemporary Eco-Process Hymn

The power of music is undeniable. What we hear and sing through music seems to sink more deeply into our being than what we merely read in text or hear from a speaker. This is as true in faith communities as it is in popular culture; if our hymns remain restricted to expressing traditional theology then our church members will continue to believe and express traditional theology as well. It is no wonder that while contemporary theological movements that are more ecologically friendly, including eco-feminist and process theology, have been flourishing for decades, most people in Christian pews seem to be relatively unaware of the way such ideas as the present goodness of creation, the relationality and inherent value of all beings, and the radical incarnation of God in creation have shaped current theology since the early 20th century. This presentation will introduce a new process-relational hymn, “We All Are Related,” and its major assertions: We all are related; the world is becoming; God is embodied; all things have value; and, we need liberation by affirming the world we see.

Kostosky, Jessica (University of Southern California, USA)
[jessie.kostosky@gmail.com]

Reaching for Eden: Avatar as a Return to the Garden

What is it about the film *Avatar* that touched the American public so deeply? In this presentation, I will suggest that *Avatar* represents a return to Eden that we as a culture have been expelled from since the Biblical expulsion from the Garden. *Avatar* takes audiences through the trajectory of expulsion from the Garden to deep reconnection, with Jake Sully symbolizing the modern human who is lost in a fog of self-concern and who rediscovers a deeper meaning embedded in a landscape of place. The landscape of Pandora is first experienced by Sully as a threat, a hostile environment that posits man against world. Rescued by a Na’vi princess, Sully learns the ways of the land and gradually experiences the interconnection between the non-human and human (or Na’vi) world. The “bond” that links the Na’vi to the animal and plant world represents a communion of the physical and emotional. This provides a new way for the American public to understand the traditional self-nature divide; as David Abram says, “to touch the coarse skin of a tree is thus, at the same time, to experience one’s own tactility, to feel oneself touched by the tree.” *Avatar* provides a window into the world of empathic relationship with the non-human, a relationship that our culture longs for even while struggling to believe that it exists. Drawing on depth psychology, Joseph Campbell, and eco-philosophy, this presentation will uncover the roots of our separation, the cultural displays that point to our longing for reconnection, and offer an interpretation of the identification with the film *Avatar* that shows our capacity for re-envisioning our place in the natural world.

Krulder, Joe (University of Bristol, UK)
[jkrulder@yccd.edu]

Robinson Crusoe: Cultural Reflections and the “Man in a State of Nature”

It’s been argued that stories printed in the “novel genre” first collided with popular culture when Daniel Defoe published *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. This paper argues that the initial success of *Robinson Crusoe* occurred because of a shared collective cultural framework that celebrated certain English traits; deep religiosity on the one hand and a penchant for mercantilist – if not capitalist tendencies – on the other. The novel certainly portrayed the “Man versus Nature” theme to its ultimate. Defoe followed this thematic path already blazed by English philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. However, Defoe deviated

from the treatises of Hobbes and Locke through fiction rather than political philosophy. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* not only represents the explosion in popular chapbooks, belles-lettres, and novels in the early-eighteenth century, but – crucially – an ascending boom of both literacy rates and complex, market-oriented distribution systems of all things printable and sellable. *Crusoe* cut to the chase quickly in a way Hobbes and Locke could not. By studying how Defoe's character, *Crusoe* (Man), crafted change upon the island's landscape (Nature), husbanded its fauna for domestic use, taking full dominion, scholars gain significant insights into late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century cultural Protestantism. Not only is nature subservient to mankind, but – in a Weberian sort of way – mankind has a moral and God-given obligation to put nature to use. By choosing to place this “Man in Nature” theme in a vehicle of fiction – at a time when Empire-building, state-craft, and life itself grew increasingly competitive – Defoe not only fired the imaginative core of his readers, but guaranteed himself a certain modicum of sales success: eight printings of the book occurred between 1719 and 1735.

Kübler, Janet (California State University, Northridge, USA)[janet.kubler@csun.edu]

and **Cummings, Randal** (California State University, Northridge, USA)[randalc@gmail.com]

Hollywood Visions, Malibu Realities: An exchange between the extra-terrestrial, Klaatu and the scientist, Helen, from the 2008 remake of The Day the Earth Stood Still

Our proposed joint presentation by a marine biologist and an historian of religions focuses on environmentalist-fueled films and documentaries, their paradigmatic significance/s, and the current state of the environment as gauged from contemporary scientific perspectives. In culling clips from a wide panoply of films and documentaries ranging from such productions as *The Hellstrom Chronicles*, *Inconvenient Truth*, *Planet in Peril*, and Leonardo DiCaprio's *11th Hour*, to such feature films as *The Blob*, *The Happening*, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, as well as Disney nature films and animated nature-anthropomorphic fantasies, we develop a visual/conceptual clothesline surveyed through the binocular lenses of eco-pessimism and eco-optimism. A number of paradigmatic scenarios come into focus where Gaia-driven utopian symbiotic harmonies live in stark juxtaposition to dystopian apocalypticisms and imminent doomsday retributions. In the spectrum ranging from eco-pessimism to eco-optimism, each of the polarities in extremis has the potential of folding off the linear plane into an apathetic or dis-engaged dimension of eco-denial. Eco-denial can be illustrated by fundamentalist and ultra-conservative reactions to global warming and mass extinction of biodiversity, and in retreat of scientists from the macro-scale pessimistic implications of their scientific purviews into blindered and siloed micro-specializations and research projects shielded from global implications by their limited scope. In the discussion that follows our presentation, we hope to engender a vision of eco-realism and a set of prescriptions/actions that expanding such a vision might entail.

Lapinskas, Adomas (Sodertorn University, Sweden)

[adomosielia@yahoo.com]

and **Laura Lapinskiene** (Central European University, Hungary)[laurossielia@yahoo.com]

Visual anthropology of the affective landscapes and spiritual practices in the post-socialist city

We are engaged in the collaborative research project that explores the everyday practices and popular imaginations concerning the urban/rural spatial practices and spiritual landscapes in the postsocialist Lithuania. One of the central themes in our research is the stories on the imaginary spaces and embodied everyday practices, narrated through nature/spirituality dimension within our field sites in Kaunas, Lithuania. How do these constructions operate on the level of popular, everyday imagination? What kind of influences (new media, transnational religious movements, economic transformations) are circulating in these particular spaces? We propose to exhibit the visual story (short documentary video, ~10 - 15 min.) and provide a commentary on our recent fieldwork encounters, presenting anthropological, particular,

'emic' view on the creative cultural practices that reproduce and challenge the boundaries of nature/culture. What are the moments in popular imagination that perform the 'natural' as privileged site of spiritual practices? All of this is presented through the individual life-story, witnessing despair, creativity and persistence in the affective landscapes of post-socialist modernity. The argument of the presentation is that in order to understand the intersection of religion, nature and popular imagination in the context of post-socialist Lithuania one should step beyond 'identity politics' (religious affiliations, subcultural identities) and embrace Deleuzian openings, interstitial interactions between material spaces, histories of power and ongoing, contingent, spontaneous articulations of hope, faith and love. In the theoretical framework influenced by the 'new materiality studies', we suggest that the affective landscapes of the spiritual are assemblages, emerging through the interaction of multiple actors and populated by various kinds of entities, both human and non-human.

Mason, Robert (California State University, Northridge, USA)

[robertjamesmason@gmail.com]

From Jurassic Park to Avatar: Construction of Sci-Fi mythologies of nature in response to Axial Age discourse.

This paper will discuss Axial age theory as formulated by Karl Jaspers, reformulated by Robert Bellah and Karen Armstrong. Basic to the theory is the idea of a change or development in human consciousness that took place in a rather narrow time frame in most of the major regions across the world. These fundamental changes led to a reorientation in the way humans approached their environment. The world was perceived in terms of *contemptus mundi* and complex strategies were developed to address this new orientation. The perception of the world became an ambiguous conception. Technologies focused on material benefits of the world, while many religious practices sought ways of distancing the world; world-negating practices. With this framework, the environment became something that was constructed and packaged for human consumption; and nature became something commodified in need of control. The results of this kind of thinking and practice has had mixed results. Scholars have posited that technology cannot proceed without accompanying 'accidents'. Almost all technologies can be shown to have a down side—nuclear energy, transportation technology, construction technology, etc.—and this has led to critical scholarly evaluation of Axial age thinking for the last several decades. Concomitantly, criticism of policies toward the environment informed by axial age civilization has increasingly been surfacing in American pop culture from political debate to the entertainment industry. Because American pop culture is so variegated and the religious responses to environmental issues less than uniform, this paper will focus on the way the genre of Sci-Fi has been used as a medium for criticism of environmental policy and the underlying religious conceptualizations that inform the discourse—do Western religious traditions have the resources to embrace serious environmental concerns?

Mauch, Christof (Rachel Carson Center, LMU Munich, Germany)

[mauch@lmu.de]

Stranger than Paradise: Religion, Nature and Culture in Malibu, California

Malibu in Southern California is one of the most affluent beachfront cities in the world. In many ways the place resembles a modern day paradise with warm, sandy beaches, lagoons and piers; the city limits include the rugged landscape of the Santa Monica mountains, canyon views and exotic flora and fauna, including mountain lions. But the city of Malibu, with its “27 miles of beaches,” is also one of the most dangerous places to live. It may well be America's natural hazard capital. As wildfires have depleted the kind of vegetation that can retain the soil, heavy rains have regularly caused dangerous mudslides. Above and beyond that, Malibu's famed beaches are disappearing under rising sea levels. Why do people live in Malibu? In what way have Californians, their perceptions and their politics increased or reduced the risk of natural catastrophes in the Malibu region? Why is there less sprawl in Malibu than in the neighboring city of Los Angeles? What role have conflicts over land use played in Malibu? And what role has

'religion' played in the ways that nature and culture evolved over the centuries – from the times of the Chumash natives to the present? How can one write an environmentally informed cultural history of the strangely paradisiac town of Malibu, especially when it is also a place poised on the brink of disaster?

McAnally, Elizabeth (California Institute of Integral Studies)
[elizabeth_mcanally@yahoo.com]

Pouring Water into Consciousness: Reinventing Human-Water Relations

Given the urgency of the global water crisis, it is imperative that we humans reinvent our relationship to water. To avert the disastrous effects of water pollution, scarcity, overpumping, damming and diverting, desertification, inequitable distribution, and climate change, there must be a shift in how human consciousness and cultural worldviews perceive water. We must stop taking water for granted, viewing water as a mere resource, a commodity to be bought and sold. The time is ripe for us to cultivate a new water consciousness that holds water as a sacred source of life calling for our respect and care. This presentation explores various aspects that could be helpful in cultivating a new water consciousness. Water consciousness includes what Gary Snyder refers to as "watershed consciousness" or "bioregional awareness," pointing to the importance of learning the flows of water within local bioregions and within the planetary hydrosphere. Water consciousness also involves what Gaston Bachelard and Ivan Illich refer to as an awareness of the archetypal, psycho-spiritual powers of water (e.g., reflection, purification, depth, chaos, boundary-dissolution, etc.), powers that reveal how the materiality of water actively informs human imagination. Furthermore, water consciousness shares in what Bron Taylor terms "Aquatic Nature Religion," which entails a variety of spiritual practices (e.g., surfing, kayaking, fly fishing, etc.) that cultivate a sense of the sacred through daily interactions with water. Throughout this presentation, I argue that pouring water into our consciousness is crucial to the development of mutually enhancing relations between humans and water. Reconnecting with water and celebrating the spirit of water brings water into our awareness and into our ethical concern.

McDaniel, Justin (University of Pennsylvania, USA)
[jmcdan@sas.upenn.edu]

On Buddhist Birds: Affect, Nature, and Mytho-Zoology in the Study of Buddhism

Despite their prevalence in Buddhist literature and art, animals, especially birds, have not been explored in any serious way. When they are studied, narratives and popular artistic depictions of birds in Buddhist cultures are often reduced to "representations" of human emotions, human struggles, and the like. In this paper, I approach the subject of birds in Buddhism through the lens of Affect Theory. As scholars like Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg explain -- to study affect is to study "of accumulative beside-ness." It is the study of accumulation of encounters. The senses accumulative images, feelings, scents, and sounds constantly. It is the slow accretion of knowledge in the form of non-discursive impressions. It is not the systematic learning of facts, dates, titles, terms, narrative sequences, ethical standards, and logical progressions, but the body's "capacity to affect and be affected." Birds are so common in Buddhist stories, murals, illuminated manuscripts, dance dramas and comedies, jewelry, and decorative parts of clothing and temple architecture that they become, like ritual and music, repetitious affective encounters experienced in Buddhist popular culture. I assert that these affective encounters are as fundamental, if not more fundamental, to the ways Buddhists learn to be Buddhists, because they are more accessible and common, than ethical arguments, philosophical treatises, and doctrinal formulations.

McGregor, Joan (Arizona State University, USA)
[JOAN.MCGREGOR@asu.edu]

Understanding Leopold's Land Ethic through Feminist Ethics

Leopold's "Land Ethic" has inspired many who to become adherents to his vision. His genuine knowledge of the landscape about which he writes combined with his emotional and aesthetic connection to those

environments, elucidated by his elegant prose style draws readers into his vision of an ethic that encompass humans, animals, and the land itself. Leopold chastises us for our solely instrumentally valuing the land for our economic benefit. That conception of the land as a commodity he argues will be seen as we evolve as outdated and abhorrent as Odysseus' callous hanging slave girls when he is angry. Leopold extorts us to "think like a mountain" when we act attending to the relationships of the roles that the different members play in the community. But more than that cognitive change in thinking, Leopold encourages us to be open to our feelings about the land, to care and love our land community. Though Leopold's book *Sand County Almanac* has been read by millions around the world, exactly how we should philosophical understand what Leopold's ethic prescribes for us is a matter of debate. The leading contenders as interpreters of Leopold's work, Baird Callicott and Bryan Norton, come away with surprising different interpretations of Leopold's ethics. Norton and Callicott's accounts have enhanced our understanding of Leopold; nevertheless, they neglect critical aspects of Leopold's ethic. In this talk, I will argue that Leopold's ethic is enlivened and enriched by uncovering its tremendous affinities with contemporary feminist theories in ethics. The central concepts in feminist ethics that I will focus on are: an ethic of responsibility, the role of care and affections in our moral life, the role power plays in moral relationships, particularly those of domination and submission, and how moral theorizing is done, specifically the place of naturalistic epistemology in ethics.

Mickey, Sam (University of San Francisco, USA)
[sam_mickey@yahoo.com]

Fear and Loathing in Psychedelic Nature Spirituality: A Trip to the Desert of the Real

Psychedelic drugs have shaped the development of a wide variety of spiritualities, including nature spiritualities oriented toward experimentation with intense, boundary-dissolving, sensory experiences, wherein the self and the natural world converge. One such nature spirituality is implicit in the 1998 film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, based on the novel of the same name by the "gonzo" journalist and pop culture icon Hunter S. Thompson. *Fear and Loathing* portrays a wild and drug-fueled trip in which a fictionalized Thompson (played by Johnny Depp) goes to Las Vegas with his legally dubious lawyer to find and cover the story of "the American dream." I consider how this film affirms psychedelic experiences of the sacred power of natural phenomena (e.g., reptiles, plants, water, desert) and how it criticizes various spiritualities, including a critique of the utopianism, idealism, and anti-modernism in psychedelic spiritualities. Through that affirmation and critique, the film celebrates Las Vegas in all of its deserted reality, that is, its groundless artificiality and errant depravity, which characterizes Jean Baudrillard's "desert of the real." This celebration resonates with Mark C. Taylor's realized eschatology, in which the desert of Las Vegas is the site of the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth. The deserted realism of *Fear and Loathing* makes it unique among psychedelic nature spiritualities. Questions remain about whether and how psychedelic nature spiritualities can/should be integrated into society.

Monajati, Zarrin (Munich University, Germany)
[zarrin.monajati@gmail.com]

Environmental problems from the perspective of Iranian cinema

This research tries to study the influences of Islamic environmental ethics on Iranian cinema. For, first, the Islamic republic of Iran as the case study, because this society actually has the Islamic cultural framework in populace and the system of government and its cultural and social attributes have been especially affected from a long Islamic history. In addition, Iran due to its various natural resources and varied biodiversity is one of rare cases in Islamic countries which according to the statistics, has been seriously affected by the results of environmental crisis after the modern ages. So it can be a perfect example that has all the necessary features to create a nature-friendly culture based on the comprehensive vision of clear understanding of the existent capacities and limitations in this Islamic moral system that actually was matured in its environmental ethics direction. And an analysis of related films to

environmental problems in cinema whether in documentary films or dramas could be one of the methods to show the social feedbacks of these Islamic educations and instructions in media.

Morgan, Phillip Dwight (McMaster University, Canada)
[morganpd@mcmaster.ca]

From the Earth's Core to the Heavens: Willowdale Baptist Church and the Negotiation of Air Rights in Toronto

The secularization thesis, and its central assumption that the social significance of religion must decline with modernization, has been a dominant trope within sociological and historical analyses of religion. Its influence, however, is not exclusive to these fields. It is also evident in subjects such as urban history and urban environmental history which, by and large, exclude religious institutions such as churches from their analysis. This exclusion stems from a belief that religion is ill-suited to the urban environment. By looking at the process whereby an 88-year old Baptist church in Toronto debated whether or not to sell its air rights to a condominium developer in 2006, this paper complicates the alleged tension between church and cities. It juxtaposes the developer's economic conception of air space with the church's economic-religious sense of air and reveals that air is much more than modern commodity; it is a complex space of negotiation filled with conflicting use and exchange values. Indeed, as a diffuse and immaterial part of nature that can be bought, sold, and traded, air is the epitome of modern property. It is also, however, a space wherein a Baptist church in Toronto expresses its commitment to its God-given mandate to serve the community.

Mukonyora, Bella (Western Kentucky University, USA)
[bella.mukonyora@wku.edu]

Anthropocentrism versus Biocentrism: Re-telling stories of Evolution

This paper responds to calls made by two powerful scholars of religion, whose work shows that they are concerned about voices that represent western intellectual history as much as they are interested in news from other religions and cultures. The first is Rosemary Reuther. She asks for "scientist-poets who can re-tell the story of the cosmos and the earth's history in a way that can call us to wonder, to reverence for life (sic.), and to the vision of humanity living in community" (Radford-Reuther 1992: 58). The second is Karen Armstrong. She writes, "Mythology and science both extend the scope of human beings. Like science and technology, mythology, as we shall see, is not about opting out of this world, but about enabling us to live more intensely within it (Armstrong 2005: 3). This paper shows how telling old stories as yet to be explained; of creation and the nature of life on earth associated with a chance of becoming revived to support African oriented humanistic calls to preserve ecosystems and protect life.

O'Fearghail, Ester (New Mexico Highlands University, USA)
[eofearghail@hotmail.com]

Georgia O'Keeffe Country: Art as Religion

"If I paint it enough then God will give it to me."-Quote by Georgia O'Keeffe as given by guide on the Ghost Ranch Tour. Where exactly is Georgia O'Keeffe country and how does one get there? It is advertised as the region in northern New Mexico where modern artist O'Keeffe painted, however I propose it exists as well in the popular imagination of those who believe in it. Tours to it leave from Taos and Santa Fe or if you like, you can drive yourself to Ghost Ranch and be taken on a tour where someone will try to put you in the exact spot that O'Keeffe stood in when she painted a particular view of nature. There are different types of tours, driving, walking or painting, but the the goal is the same: to walk where the artist walked, stand where she stood and see what she saw. This presentation will compare the function of art to religion from an anthropological or cultural perspective. We will additionally take a trip to Georgia O'Keeffe Country to see how art and religion were tied together by the artist and how this connection might be kept alive today in the popular imagination of those who tour it.

Olmsted, Galen (University of Florida, USA)
[galen.olmsted@ufl.edu]

A River of Mess: Abstracted Ruin and the Sublime

This paper uses images from two of the artist's installation and the work of Georges Bataille on materialism, to explore the relationship between material and idea, kitsch and shit. Created in response to catastrophic personal loss, the installation engages both dichotomies of exaltation/degradation, science/religion, and art/kitsch. In seeking to avoid any transposition of meaning onto the material, the work becomes anti-metaphor. For Bataille, a transgressive French surrealist, "The conformity of dead matter to the idea of science is, among most materialists, substituted for the religious relations earlier established between the divinity and his creatures, the one being the idea of the others" (Visions, 15). This notion of two paradigms is explored in the installation. Using an extruder (a device that operates by forcing matter through dies), the artist constructed an installation of both intact and broken shapes. The idea of the never-ending extruded tube operates analogously to the infinitely reproducible ersatz objects contained in kitsch. This presents a perplexing problem within the work, because of the power kitsch has to turn everything into repulsion. In the artist's sprawl of porcelaneous wreckage, beauty and violence are brought into relief. Porcelain's purity is stripped of its authority, demoted to the status of reject by the collapse of wholeness. In a manner analogous to the horizontal operations Pollock demonstrated, the artist crumples, folds squashes, and breaks the porcelain. By leaving the surface untouched, the artist finds ways of exposing the material's real characteristics rather than covering it or mimicking something with it.

Olmsted, Jane (Western Kentucky University, USA)
[jane.olmsted@wku.edu]

Rivers Spilling, Overflowing: Metaphors and the Realities of Healing

This presentation reflects on metaphor and healing by examining the ways in which "the literary" intersects with "real life." Drawing on the author's own poetry in response to the murder of her youngest son, the presentation explores ways in which metaphor provides a way of understanding the impossible. If, as David Orr has argued (*Hope Is An Imperative*), human imagination evolved because of connection to Nature, whereby "the sense of awe toward the creation had a great deal to do with the origin of language and why early humans wanted to talk, sing, and write poetry in the first place," where do we find the time for awe today (as if it be scheduled); and how do we encourage living poetry when our dominant ecologies are fraught with destruction, despair, and disconnection from each other and the Earth. Given this, poetry is not a luxury, as poet and activist Audre Lorde said, it is essential for our survival. Works on metaphor include George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, William Rueckert's "Metaphor and Reality," and Ted Cohen's *Thinking of Others: On the Talent for Metaphor*. In examining some of their conclusions, this paper considers the extent to which water and rivers function as metaphor, and whether this is a good thing or not—do we, as Derrick Johnson suggest, absorb the wounded other in order to appropriate its qualities for our own purposes? Or, is metaphor an essential part of the human imagination, one that allows us to understand the other?

Orey, Spencer (Duke University, USA)
[spencer.orey@duke.edu]

City of Rose Quartz: Stones and Power in Los Angeles

Diverse New Age movements from yoga and meditation to tarot reading and channeling incorporate crystals, categorized stones said to possess many unique divine and healing powers. Certain crystals are said to be able to heal injuries, some to soothe stress, and others to bring love, financial security, or luck. Dismissive critics argue that crystal powers are impossible to prove scientifically and that crystal practices rely on deception at best and cultural appropriation at worst. Even so crystals form the basis for an expansive healing industry that renders entire parts of the world as bearers of ancient wisdom to be discovered, extracted, and used. Many crystals such as amethysts are mined in one part of the world, shipped to another part to be polished, and then shipped again to individual stores throughout the United States. While scholars have situated crystals as part of larger discourses of care and circulation, little attention has been devoted to the stones themselves, to the actual work that crystals do. Practitioners avow that crystals have direct effects upon the body of anyone who holds or even stands in proximity to powerful stones. Crystals are claimed as objects with agency beyond a rational

explanation, objects with the power to heal and even possess users. If their very properties are controversial, how can we ethnographically approach the anti-rationale behind crystals? I draw upon fieldwork at a prominent spiritual bookstore in Los Angeles, California, a major center of the contemporary New Age landscape, where influential intuitives, tarot readers, astrologers, and spiritual life coaches engage in using, buying and selling crystals. My paper explores what work the anti-rationale of crystals does in the world as part of this expansive and vastly influential spiritual life.

Parvaiz, Mohammad (Zakir Husain Delhi College, India)
[maparvaiz@googlemail.com]

Enriching Islamic Theology with Environmental Consciousness

Islamic theology, as it is taught today, is focused mainly on three principles, namely, belief (aqā'id), prayer (Ibaada) and practices (muam'laat). Though under practices, one's duties towards Allah (huqooq ullah) and towards fellow beings (huqooq ul-ibaad) are dealt, their main focus, by and large, remains socio-economic. This is despite the fact that Quran as well as Prophet's traditions speak a lot about various components of environment and the balance amongst them. A paradigm shift is needed here in our formal as well as informal system of education both at the school/college and Madrasa level. Islamic Education System (IES) should incorporate Environmental Education (EE) from an Islamic perspective. The role of man as custodian (khalifa) of earth and its resources, establishment of balance (al-mizan) among various environmental components, establishment of justice (adl), respect for life and peace (amn), judicious use of resources and prohibition of extravagance (israaf), forbiddance to spread corruption, chaos and pollution (fasaad), conservation of resources (amana) and their equitable distribution (eita), social development (zakaat), land reclamation (ihya'al-mawat), establishment of reserves (al-hima), sanctuaries (al-haram) and charitable endowments (auqaaf) should be an integral part of such an education system. The Islamic Foundation for Science & Environment (IFSE) has developed two models. One is for the modern or secular system of education, where as the other is for Deenee Madaaris. Both the models are being tested at appropriate levels. The proposed paper will deal with the concept in detail.

Paton, Priscilla (St. Olaf College, USA)
[paton@stolaf.edu]

Redeemed by the Least of These: Salvation Narratives and Animal Rescue

Tales of how a dog or horse in need "saved" a person emotionally and spiritually have become very popular in the animal-obsessed culture of America. This presentation examines the rhetoric and narrative structure of selected nonfiction accounts, including Jon Katz, *A Good Dog: The Story of Orson, Who Changed My Life*; Karin Winegar, *Saved: Rescued Animals and the Lives They Transform*; Susan Richards, *Chosen by a Horse: A Memoir*; and Temple Grandin, *Animals in Translation*. "Saved by an animal" narratives generally differ from self-help accounts in emphasizing the suffering and ostracism of another (the abused, neglected animal), the selflessness required of the human being, and the grace offered through the demands of bonding with an animal. These testimonials, like many stories of transformation, loosely adapt religious concepts of sin, suffering, grace, spirituality, and salvation. Two related subthemes dominate. First, when people learn to care for an animal, the "least of these," they will advance to universal compassion. Second, in rescuing an animal that has suffered or "sinned" through misbehavior, the human will recover his or her own better nature, so both ascend from a lowly, isolated, "fallen" stance to a loving communion. Reading these paradigms in the context of salvation theory (soteriology), as outlined by Ernst M. Conradie, illustrates the assumptions and limitations of animals as agents of salvation.

Peterson, Mark C.E. (University of Wisconsin, Washington County, USA)
[mark.peterson@uwc.edu]

James Cameron's Avatar and the alienation of nature

Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and his discussion of "Estranged Labor" (in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*) acquire a

refreshing urgency when viewed through the lens of James Cameron's blockbuster, *Avatar*. The movie is a sweeping epic of one man's pilgrimage toward self-discovery, set on a distant planet -- named Pandora -- where a colossal and world-consuming corporation has discovered a mysterious element, and metaphorical sledgehammer, called "unobtainium." The story, focused on the struggle between the technological domination of nature and authentic life, rests on the familiar frameworks of estranged labor and colonialism usually associated with a Marxist critique. In *Avatar*, Cameron suggests that human beings have become so thoroughly alienated from their labor, from the products of their labor and, most of all, from themselves as fully human that only one path remains: overcoming alienation requires becoming an alien. This essay considers the implications of becoming alien on Marx's analysis of alienation of labor.

Price, Jenny (Writer, Los Angeles, USA)
[jjprice@ucla.edu]

Environmentalists in Paradise: Saving the Planet, Malibu-Style

If Los Angeles often seems to push the contradictions that lie at the heart of American ideas of nature to extremes, Malibu can seem to be an extreme version of Los Angeles. Nature lies at the heart of Malibu's self-image—it's the town that lives in, loves, feels a spiritual attachment to, and protects nature—and yet, it yearns to ignore natural constraints in order to build whatever and wherever it wants, which, famously, has often led to disaster. It's also an unusually affluent town that consumes massive quantities of nature to sustain the Malibu lifestyle. In this talk, I'll hone in on the fierce environmentalist credo that prevails in Malibu. What sorts of events—spiritual, social, cultural—does the town itself sponsor? What environmentalist issues do Malibu-ites fight for and against, and who benefits and who doesn't? How do the most prominent environmental actions and policies—going on nature retreats, building green houses, preserving the coast—work for and against environmental goals? And how, especially, does saving the planet, Malibu-style, showcase the strengths, weaknesses, and contradictions in the more generally American 21st-century brand of "save the planet" environmentalism?

Robertson, Eric (University of Utah, USA)
[ericjosephrobertson@hotmail.com]

The Queer Sublime: Volcanoes, Guts, and Sloppy Sounds in Shelley's Frankenstein

This paper addresses the disfiguring anxiety produced from the insistence of the procreative desire. If one resists this desire or attempts to create outside hetero-normativity, one faces the rupture of personal homogeneity. Debasement and the dissolution of death are expressed in the individual's attraction to self and non-procreativity. We compare the sublime as Emmanuel Kant constructs it, divine and procreative, confounding yet coherent within the protocols of reason, to Arthur Schopenhauer's expanded view of the sublime, destructive, self-dissolving, non-procreative, and profoundly queer. Between the texts of Anne Radcliffe and Mary Shelley, *The Italian* and *Frankenstein*, exists George Bataille's concept of the *Jesuve*. This sublime is the liminal manifestation of spatial instability promoted by non-procreativity. The sublime of the *Jesuve* revels in its own disfigurement and demise. George Haggerty helps us examine the queer gothic, what I posit is one's own attraction to self. This is a non-procreative compulsion that forces the individual to confront the inevitable decay and dissolution of one's mind and body. This self-attracted, self-centered state is an individual's abject nature, the sublime queer self, seeking, meditating upon, and coming to terms with self-annihilation. George Bataille helps us understand the eruptive power of the earth, the volcano as anus. He shows us what eruptions lie in wait just below the surface of our skin, and within our psychic conceptual membranes. The *Jesuve* is the communion of the within and the without, the unifying sound of wet lips and slippery entrails, of volcanoes and the eruptions of the mind in opposition to the powers of creation. The *Jesuve* is the rumbling of a monstrous, queer sublime.

Ross, Andrew B. (University of Nevada, Reno, USA)
[abross@unr.edu]

“Illuminated with Wisdom”: Religion, Art, and Science in William Bartram’s Travels

Quaker botanist and artist William Bartram’s 1791 book *Travels* may strike today’s reader as an odd assemblage of passionate sermons, precise scientific observations, and florid literary descriptions. Indeed, a close reading of Bartram’s narrative of exploring the American South reveals the confluence of spirituality, science, and art in the text—a combination of modes that contributed to the overall popularity of *Travels* in its day. In particular, Bartram’s book was widely read in Europe, where it helped to shape the global imagination of the American continent. *Travels* embodies the idea that America is a land where there exists a harmony between cultures and communities, between nature and man, and between the arts and sciences. This paper offers a reading of Bartram’s popular travel book that highlights the spiritual roots of American natural history, and considers the ways in which early popular descriptions of the American landscape imagined the physical environment as blessed by God’s hand—as a divine and beautiful land deserving of attention from both art and science.

Rosenbluth, Rachel (McGill University, Canada)
[rachel.rosenbluth@gmail.com]

Planting the Seeds of Change: The Jewish Framework for a Sustainable Food System

Food is a basic necessity, yet it is among the most paradoxical aspects of the contemporary global system. Food sustains human kind and is central to identity and culture, yet a shocking proportion of the world’s population lacks sufficient provisions, and the conventional food system is wrought with social and environmental issues. A number of alternative food system frameworks have emerged as antidotes to the problems associated with the conventional system. The paper, *Planting the Seeds of Change*, explores the ethical and legal systems rooted in Judaism to illuminate the Jewish framework for an equitable and sustainable food system. The paper discusses global food insecurity and its influences, and provides a brief outline of the history and role of sustainable agriculture in responding to food insecurity. Within that context, the paper provides a detailed analysis of Biblical and Rabbinic Jewish agricultural laws and food ethics, and assesses the wider implications for promoting sustainable and equitable food systems. The paper also discusses the broader Jewish values of social responsibility and environmental stewardship. Through an analysis of Jewish law, the paper demonstrates how Judaism promotes justice, sustainable agriculture techniques, and a consciousness shift (limiting egocentrism), which collectively contribute to a sustainable, secure and equitable food system. The paper highlights contemporary implementations of the Jewish food system, with its roots in ancient tradition, and considers some of the limitations of the traditional framework.

Reddick, Laura (California Institute of Integral Studies, USA)
[laurareddick@gmail.com]

Worldly Dimensions: Created Natures and Digital Art

Nature lives in the imagination. Nowhere in art is a human conception of nature better portrayed than in a video game. The fully realized natural worlds expressed in video game art both reflect our popular conceptions of nature and create ideas of what nature should be and how we should relate to the earth. Video game worlds allow the artists to create a three-dimensional, interactive environment where the viewer is fully immersed. These natural worlds are created as in a painting with the definition of a movie and the added feature of interaction. Video games reflect our cultural conceptions of nature as simplified and resource focused but also as an enchanted getaway, carrying the legacy of early American ideas of wilderness. Environmental elements are incorporated into spiritual themes within games and provide a space for religious exploration within the natural world. The progression of games with increasingly intricate environments shows an expanding appreciation for biodiversity and ecological complexity as well as technological advance. While ecological themes and interactions are beginning to be addressed in terms of a realistic experience, the focus remains on aesthetics and game play rather than ecosystem

interconnection and enchanted aspects remain marginal. The video game experience is similar to our lived visual experience and games portray extensive natural environments which convey cultural ideas of nature, especially for younger players. The creative power of the imagination as expressed in video games can promote the domination of the environment or has the potential to be harnessed to promote sustainability. Exploring the dimensions of the created natures in video game environments provides a window into popular ideas of the natural world and an avenue for ecological education.

Sanford, A. Whitney (University of Florida, USA)
[wsanford@ufl.edu]

Reflections of Gandhi: Non-violence, Self-sufficiency and Food Democracy in Contemporary Intentional Communities

Almost a century ago, Gandhi offered a paradigm for democracy that emphasized sustainability (to use contemporary language), equity, and social justice regarding natural resources, and he prompted us to expand notions of what constitutes violence. Today, Gandhi’s worst fears about centralized, or corporate, power over many aspects of our lives, including food, water, and seed, have materialized, and corporate imperialism has adopted the violence of colonial control. For those seeking social change, Gandhi has become an iconic figure for nonviolent resistance to social, economic, and now, environmental, injustices and for those seeking democratic control of resources. What I have seen, in visiting with multiple intentional communities in the US, is that a raft of values associated with Gandhi, including non-violent communication, appropriate technologies, voluntary simplicity, and self-sufficiency, have provided a vocabulary to reconsider, and perhaps resist, an increasingly individualistic and commercialized society. This paper explores how Gandhian values have shaped (consciously or not) practices at intentional communities, such as ecovillages and Catholic worker farms. I focus on three communities in the US Midwest, each with a different religious focus, that demonstrate experiments in the translation of Gandhian values into practice, but do so in the context of contemporary US culture. What unites these diverse communities is a commitment to practice non-violence in virtually all facets of life, from agriculture to building to inter-personal communications. These communities understand themselves as experimental responses to the violence of environmental and social crises, and as demonstrations sites and models for broader social change. Each community, however, interprets and enacts these values within their own cultural and religious framework, and their experiments help us imagine new possibilities of adapting and applying these ideas to other social and geographic contexts. To use Gandhi’s words: they are being the change they want to see in the world.

Seaman, Matthew (University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia)
[m.seaman@uq.edu.au]

Space, Place and Grace: The Salvation Army, New Media and the ‘Open Air’

This paper aims to explore and critique the relationships between space, place and grace within the work of the Salvation Army. Particularly during the Salvation Army’s earlier years the “cathedral of the open air” was seen, as Winston (1999:8) describes in the New York context, ‘a figurative canopy spread over the city, [which] turned all of New York into sanctified ground.’ Competition for use of popular space in which the ‘Army’ could further its mission to ‘purify the moral atmosphere’ involved using a number of contemporary mediums to reach a wider audience including brass bands, theatre and the early adoption of filmmaking, particularly within Australia. From the darkest and most neglected areas of late 18th century London the movement spread rapidly throughout the world, modifying its methods quite effectively for new cultures and climates. Development of the Salvation Army’s views of place came with the vision to institute a three stage process to move people from places of poverty and pollution to a state of health and hope. The plan included farm colonies, which were aimed to ‘unite the landless man with the manless land.’ These plans were ended prematurely to a variety of reasons, however Salvation Army use of wilderness for rehabilitation and restoration continue. The primary agenda which has driven the Salvation Army’s forays into public space,

uncultivated places, and new media stems from the Wesleyan and evangelical Christian traditions. This mission, to spread the hopeful, graceful and salvific story of Jesus, has continued to be a driving force for the movement. However, it is argued that Salvationists' concerns and affinities with nature have largely focused on anthropocentric concerns at the expense of both human and non-human life. With current environmental issues in mind, a more holistic understanding must therefore be rediscovered for the benefit of all Earth.

Seamon, David (Kansas State University, USA)
[triad@ksu.edu]

The Place of Nature and the Nature of Place in American Independent Filmmaker John Sayles's Limbo and Sunshine State

In American independent filmmaker John Sayles' seventeen feature films, places—both natural and human-made—regularly play a major role in sustaining or undermining the lives of characters. This presentation focuses on two of Sayles's place-focused films: First, his 1999 *Limbo*, set in Alaska; and, second, his 2002 *Sunshine State*, set in Florida. The aim is to draw on the range of environmental situations presented in these two films to interpret phenomenologically some of the broad lived characteristics of contemporary American place experience as Sayles understands them. In *Limbo*, Sayles presents the Alaskan environment both as a romanticized, picture-perfect landscape as well as an uncaring wilderness that threatens human lives. In *Sunshine State*, he highlights characters who must deal with how their local communities are being undermined and destroyed by corporate tourism and global real-estate development, which both aim to create artificial human and natural environments that, unlike the hazardous Alaskan wilderness, are controllable, risk-free, and absolutely safe. A major conclusion is that, for Sayles, contemporary places, both natural and human, are what we make them and, ultimately, neither pure, indomitable nature nor artificial, compliant construction by human beings can guarantee “the good life” or “finding one's place.”

Seecharran, Diana (University of Guyana, Guyana)
[diana.seecharran@uog.edu.gy]

***Co Authors: Bernard, Calvin and Haynes, Lakeram
Traditional Natural Resource Management in the North Rupununi
Wetlands – Oma ponds***

Indigenous people have a long-standing and unique relationship with their land through cultural practices and traditions. Western science now acknowledges that the preservation of the environment by indigenous cultures is based on a knowledge system that influences sustainable use of resources and environmental conservation. This valuable ecological knowledge has emerged over centuries of direct interactions between the communities and their surroundings that fostered the evolution of cultures which are significantly eco-centric. In this paper, we report on an investigation of the state of the Oma pond tradition of the Makushi people of the North Rupununi District, Guyana and the value of this tradition in the management of natural resources. Oma are spiritual beings, manifested in the form of animals or inanimate objects, which inhabited, protect and control the ponds. Oma restrict activities in and around the ponds and in particular are believed to influence resource exploitation. Information on the state of tradition was gathered through structured and semi-structured methods deployed among a stratified random sample of five communities along the Rupununi River, where the tradition is thought to be best preserved. The value of the tradition in conservation of resources was examined by comparing black caiman and bird populations of Oma and Non-Oma ponds. Our findings indicate that this tradition is viewed as having no origin but is sustained through oral communication and the accounting of personal experiences with the Oma. The tradition appears to have been transformed in relatively recent times by interactions with other cultures and is fading in much of its range. Village leaders can control the Oma and therefore hold the wisdom for managing the resources of the ponds. Oma ponds were found to have a larger population of black caimans along with a higher diversity and abundance of birds than the Non-Oma ponds.

Shilling, Dan (Arizona State University, USA)

[danshilling@cox.net]

Leopold's Land Ethic and the City

While remembered as a wilderness advocate, Aldo Leopold lived in cities much of his life: New Haven, Madison, and Albuquerque, among others. This talk suggests his land ethic is relevant to urban design, by drawing on Leopold's life, writings, and associations with urbanists. References to highways, population, signage, and pollution pepper Leopold's prose. Civilization, progress, and their political trappings are often threats to healthy landscapes. It would be natural to extend his voice to today's sustainability dialog, which is not restricted to wilderness. A favorite Leopold target is the booster's “unthinking” agenda. When Leopold ran the Albuquerque chamber, his newsletter aimed to “make the public think” about the character of his city. His frustrations culminate in a 1923 essay, where he skewers the growth machine devouring Albuquerque. Today's economist would call his idea of progress “triple bottom line.” Towns are more than utilitarian hubs. It's no stretch to extend Leopold's ethical equation to municipalities of all size, since they too are ecosystems, say urban gurus like Richard Florida. It is helpful to consider the relevance of Leopold's land ethic for planners, architects, and other makers of place. Certainly the lexicon shared by New Urbanism, sustainable development, smart growth, and other place-centric visions reflects Leopold's concerns: sense of place, grassroots activism, values, heritage, and land health. Today's “geography of nowhere” contradicts Leopold's prescription for that health: “Stability and diversity.” Frank Lloyd Wright taught “organic” architecture, and other urbanists joined in: Jane Jacobs, Ian McHarg, Lewis Mumford. *The New Exploration* (1928) likewise linked cities and human values. Written by Leopold's friend Benton MacKaye, it attacks America's “profoundly disharmonious environment.” Mumford's introduction calls it comparable to Walden. MacKaye worships Thoreau; he also praises Leopold for connecting place and humans. He understands the link between mountain thinking and urban design.

Taylor, Sarah McFarland (Northwestern University, USA)
[smcftaylor@gmail.com]

Green Values Gaming: Sustainability Interactives, Stewardship SIMS, Eco-ARGs, and the Quest to Translate Environmental Ethics into Real World Action

In collaboration with a team of researchers at USC's Annenberg School of Communications, media scholar Henry Jenkins studies how various groups are “repurposing pop culture toward social justice” by creating what the team calls a “participatory culture.” Jenkins' case studies range from Harry Potter fans for gay rights to defiant Palestinians protesting the Israeli occupation with their traditional keffiyahs over skins painted blue, evoking the film “Avatar's” Na'vi people. In this conference presentation, I will add environmental games to this list of popular culture being “repurposed,” arguing that the realm of “play” in both board games and video games has become a powerful site for the transmission of “green values” and environmental ethics. What's more, many of these games employ catechistic-like approaches, explicitly religious language, dynamics of ritual, and postmillennial frameworks that encode the games' ethical content within a terrain of religious idiom and performance. In outlining three different genres of environmental games, I make the case that the medium of Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) currently holds the greatest efficacy potential for putting environmental ethics into action in real world spaces. This multimedia research presentation draws upon a range of sources for analysis: participant observation in online game sites, interviews of game creators and game manufacturers, narrative analysis of game bloggers, archival resources on game players and their postings, and board game material culture analysis.

Taylor, Bron (University of Florida, USA)
[bron@brontaylor.com]

Surfing into Paradise and Catastrophe: Hollywood and Malibu in the construction of religious and parareligious surfing imaginaries

At least since surfing apostle Tom Blake, who learned from the Hawaiian surfing legend and missionary Duke Kahanamoku, carved “Nature is God” on the Malibu cliffs, surfing has had a strongly religious, or at least, religion-resembling dimension. The practice has

evoked ecstatic experiences of belonging and connection to nature and feelings of kinship with the non-human organisms sharing coastal environments. It has also involved tribalism and violent territoriality, as individuals and groups vie to control the practices' ritual space, demonstrating dominance over and excluding those they feel unworthy of it. Other dangers abound, the pounding surf itself, often over rocky reefs, and marine predators: sometimes surfers disappear, leaving behind only their surfboards . . . marked by shark teeth. The way the coastal surround is perceived – celebrated as the closest earthly place to heaven, a place to conquer and demonstrate mastery of nature and lesser beings, and as a dangerous space always on the brink of catastrophe – has been fueled and shaped both by Hollywood (the industry) and Malibu (the place, both real and imagined). The entwined features of a beautiful and dangerous nature, and beautiful and dangerous people, as presented in films including several filmed along the Malibu coast, *Gidget* (1959), *Big Wednesday* (1978), *Point Break* (1991), and not, *5 Summer Stories* (1972) *Jaws* (1975), are explored in this presentation of the complex production of religion and nature, in the ecstatic and calamitous surf zone. The presenter was a lifeguard along the Malibu coast during a 15-year career with the California State Parks System, and he will integrate first hand stories, both ecstatic, and martial, from his Malibu days.

Toyosawa, Nobuko (University of Southern California, USA)
[toyosawa@usc.edu]

Nature, Spiritual Places, and the Popular Imagination: Washū Yoshino yama shōkeizu (Illustrated View of the Scenic Yoshino Mountain in the Yamato Province, 1713)

This paper examines an illustrated guidebook to the Yoshino Mountain, entitled, Washū Yoshino yama shōkeizu (Illustrated View of the Scenic Yoshino Mountain in the Yamato Province) written by a scholar and traveler, Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714). Located in deeply mountainous area of present-day Nara prefecture of Japan, the Yoshino has prospered as one of the most spiritual places throughout Japanese history. This short guidebook, published in 1713, exemplifies a site of interaction of different spaces that constitute Yoshino — religion, poetry, nature, and travel. By examining this guidebook as an object of spatial, historical, and visual narrative, I hope to show the complex formation of cultural identity that developed in combination of indigenous practice of worshipping the deities (kami cult) and Buddhist cosmologies since the medieval time. How did the medieval imagination of cosmos, which was predominantly religious, continue to constitute the popular imagination of the universe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century when more secular elements such as leisurely travel came into being? What stories can be identified in the development in the guidebook images when we read the visual together with or against the written textual part? Reflecting the native belief that the deities and holy spirits reside in nature and landscape, this paper explores both changing and ensuing elements in the visual and textual narrative of early modern Japan.

Trusty, Teresa (American Association for the Advancement of Science, USA)
[teressa@alumni.stanford.edu]

Constructive conversation: Leopold's "Land Ethic" in the Amazon

Aldo Leopold's well-known ideas about conservation and the human relationship with the non-human world privilege a particular vision of environmentalism that is regionally and culturally limited. He based his philosophy primarily upon his experiences in North America and his interactions with European-Americans during the first half of the 20th century. Given this perspective, this paper asks what, if anything, Leopold can contribute to the discussion about and practice of conservation by indigenous people living in the global South. This paper explores this topic with respect to the Amazon, the vast watershed that covers the majority of northern South America. Western conservationists active in this region, who are affiliated with non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and even national governments, approach conservation from a particular point of view that reflects their training, which often includes elements of Leopold's philosophy. Meanwhile, indigenous people whose ancestors have a history of residence in the Amazon Basin commonly

hold worldviews that are distinctly different from these Western ideas, even in cases where belief systems have changed through interactions with other cultural groups. This paper argues that despite the narrow basis for Leopold's philosophy, his philosophy offers a way for Western conservationists to carefully connect with indigenous populations in this region. Success may increase the likelihood of sustaining the rich biotic and cultural diversity found in this region.

Van Horn, Gavin (Center for Humans and Nature, USA)
[gavinvanhorn@humansandnature.org]

An Evolutionary Cosmology, an Ecological Totem: Popular and Scientific Manifestations of Green Fire

Aldo Leopold's essay "Thinking Like a Mountain" was more than a parable about a redemptive personal moment; it was the fruition of a larger effort on Leopold's part to effectively communicate the fundamentals of a "land ethic." The essay expresses well Leopold's focus later in his life with overcoming the "senseless barrier between science and art" (in Meine 2002: 19), since it bridges the "objectivity" of the sciences with an affective, quasi-religious understanding of land that he believed should inspire ethical interactions with the nonhuman world. I will explore striking narrative antecedents to Leopold's "green fire" moment in "Thinking Like a Mountain," including writings by Henry David Thoreau and Ernest Thompson Seton, and articulate why wolves provided the quintessential totem animal for communicating a larger ecological "drama." Also intriguing is the way that Leopold's particular fusion of scientific observation and narrative myth has lived on through the metaphor of green fire. In the last two decades, green fire has been used as a moral imperative and justification for wolf recovery, as a framing device for conservation, and more broadly, as a description of biospheric processes. Both these literary antecedents and the essay's ongoing—sometimes surprising—impacts are worth exploring, not just because of the high regard in which the essay itself is held but because Leopold succeeded in navigating a problem that persists in our own time: the gap between scientifically informed understandings of the world and effectively communicating those understandings to the public.

Van Wieren, Gretel (Michigan State University, USA)
[Vanwie12@msu.edu]

The Origins of Aesthetic and Spiritual Values in Children's Experience of Nature

This paper presents preliminary findings from a recent study on the origins of aesthetic and spiritual values in children's experience of nature. This is a subject that has received scant to no prior in-depth, systematic consideration, particularly in the field of religion and ecology and environmental ethics. Consequently, this research is an exploratory rather than hypothesis-testing study. It uses a phenomenological study approach that relies on in-depth interviews and subjective testing and observation of children, as well as retrospective discussions with adults, to develop broad yet hopefully insightful and nuanced understandings of these key dimensions of human experience. The study assumes a bio-cultural perspective of aesthetic and spiritual values, assuming they are universal and, thus, biologically encoded tendencies in all humans, although expressed in highly variable ways and to varying degrees of robustness, satisfaction and benefit among individuals and groups, depending on the quality and quantity of experience, learning, and socio-cultural influence and support. It also assumes that aesthetic and spiritual tendencies developed during the long course of human evolution, including the present, because they have proved adaptive and functional in conferring fitness and wellbeing. Conversely, this paper proposes that the impoverishment and atrophied development of aesthetic and spiritual values can lead to maladaptive emotion and behavior. The study suggests that the experience of nature during childhood is critical to the healthy development of these tendencies, and that the impoverishment of children's meaningful and beneficial contact with the nonhuman world – which has been called "nature-deficit disorder" and "the extinction of experience" – constitutes dysfunctional conditions needing remediation.

Varner, Tess (University of Georgia, USA)
[tessvarner@gmail.com]

For Women and For the Earth: The Power and Promise of Cornel West's Liberation Theology

As one of America's most prolific and provocative intellectuals, Cornel West has captured public attention for decades. His work on race, class, gender, and otherness has frequently garnered attention in the public press, but his public persona is perhaps even more provocative. As much activist as philosopher, the iconic West has appeared across the media in everything from bit appearances in *The Matrix* trilogy, to an interview in the philosophical documentary *Examined Life*, to his own collection of soul, jazz, and spoken word recordings. Undeniably, West has brought "philosophy to the streets." While his religious heritage is fundamental to the "prophetic pragmatism" for which he is well known, the public press has left a great deal of his religious leanings unattended. A strong emphasis on liberation theology is evident in West's work, critically acknowledging humans' "radical conditionedness" and providing hope for the "wretched of the earth." Ameliorating social misery is at the forefront of his philosophical platform, yet he frequently fails to adequately address one of the most central social concerns of our time—the present environmental crisis.

In this paper, I look at West's liberation theology as a promising space for both the human and the nonhuman world. Drawing on West and the feminist environmental philosophies of thinkers like Ivone Gebarra, Dorothee Soelle, and Rosemary Radford Ruether, I look at the liberative potential of prophetic pragmatism to address the suffering and oppression of women and the nonhuman world by paying critical attention to the everyday experiences of the oppressed. Although West does not explicitly tie his prophetic pragmatism to environmental concerns, by shifting the focus of philosophy to the plight of the oppressed rather than fixed principles and truths from on high, West's work provides a robust discursive space for an environmental ethics that can adequately attend to the interests of humans and nonhumans alike, indeed taking the philosophy to the streets, but unwilling to stop there.

Walden, Elizabeth (Bryant University, USA)
[ewalden@bryant.edu] and

White, Carol Wayne (Bucknell University, USA)
[cwhite@bucknell.edu]

"Big Miracle": Popular Fantasies of Nature Rescue and Religious Naturalism

"Big Miracle" is a film in which humans surmount greed and self-interest to save at-risk nature. It appears that the "miracle" depicted in the film is that so many people with widely divergent interests come together to save whales trapped in the ice near the Alaskan coast. But a deeper implication is that these immense creatures -- and perhaps endangered nature itself -- have the power to unite fractious humanity. But what vision of nature constitutes this "miracle"? The authors contend that despite its feel-good quality, the film presents a problematic treatment of nature that re-inscribes popular attitudes toward non-human nature, which, paradoxically, contribute to the degradation of nature. In particular, the film reinforces the idea that it is humans' distinct difference from nature that enables us to save it. In identifying and assessing some of the troubling implication of such a view, we raise the following question: What expanded views of nature would help ground human action and ethical reflections in the present, and in the future? In our view, religious naturalism offers a set of theoretical insights that help reframe humans as natural processes in relationship with other forms of nature. It encourages us to reflect meaningfully on the emergence of matter (and especially life) from the Big Bang forward, promoting an understanding of myriad nature as complex processes of becoming, which blur the arbitrary ontological line that human animals have erected between other species, natural processes and us. Drawing on insights from a variety of thinkers, we advance a model of religious naturalism that offers a deeper level of ethical engagement, which opposes the facile ethics we see depicted in the film. This type of religious reflection encourages critical questioning of our values, behaviors, and resource uses as we conceive and enact our relationality with the more-than-human world.

Walker, Seth M. (University of Central Florida, USA)
[smwalke@gmail.com]

Is Captain Planet Really Our Hero?: The "Clumsiness" of the Captain Planet Mythos

"Captain Planet, he's our hero, gonna take pollution down to zero," was the famous jingle and motto for *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*, a popular children's cartoon television show from the early nineties. This paper examines the show's underlying claim, with the presumption that Captain Planet might not actually be our hero – at least not as he was originally conceived: as one who actively fights pollution and remedies environmental crises, which often involves a dramatic battle between himself and the polluting villains. This paper demonstrates the *problem* with such *solutions*, by exploring the applicability of Rittel and Webber's notion of "wicked problems" to climate change, and their often-cited corresponding "clumsy solutions," e.g., the narrative underlying Captain Planet and the Planeteers. This paper also analyzes the implications and assumptions of the rhetoric underlying the show's inherent message, and calls current and congruent global approaches, e.g., "geoengineering," into question by engaging alternative ideologies and religious worldviews. While Eastern, and perhaps most notably Buddhist, perspectives have often been embraced in recent years to offer a critique of the stereotypical – albeit traditional – Western worldview, i.e., an anthropocentric, domineering form of "stewardship," the subject-subjects orientation model provided by Christian theologian Sallie McFague is presented as one that not only offers the possibility for dialogue and mutual understanding, but as a unique framework for engaging the clumsiness of the solution depicted by Captain Planet. However, what makes this paper specifically unique and beneficial to scholars and critics is that it assists in the reevaluation of traditional Western perspectives regarding contemporary responses to climate change. Indeed, as this paper demonstrates, there are scholars and theologians from Western traditions already moving in this direction. This paper addresses the ramifications of such shifts, as well as their imminent necessity.

Whyte, Kyle (Michigan State University, USA)
[kwhyte@msu.edu]

Indigenous North American ethics and Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic": A Critical View of Comparison and Collaboration

Aldo Leopold's land ethic has been compared to Indigenous North American ethics of many tribal communities and argued to be relevant to the circumstances these communities face. This is an important topic for this conference since Indigenous North American ethics cannot be disentangled from their religious and community dimensions. These comparisons are well-intentioned when they seek to cross the chasm between non-Native environmentalists persuaded by Leopold's ideas and tribal members working tirelessly to guard the lands depended on by their communities. Yet how far across the chasm do we get? I will argue that comparison should not establish common ground that masks some significant differences between Leopold and contemporary tribal members on the meaning of social ties, history, and science. There are at least three challenges to the supposition that there is common ground between Leopold's and Indigenous North American ethics, which I will cover in the presentation. In light of these issues, building sustainable communities inclusive of tribal and non-tribal people must take its cue from the concept of collaboration, which has been developed in scholarship on Indigenous North Americans. Collaborating does not imply similarity, in fact it embraces difference. Those who see Leopold as a powerful connector between tribal and non-tribal people must realize that we live in a colonial world, not a post-colonial one. Tribal and non-tribal histories are not shared and they do conflict; similarities are only on the surface. Sustainable communities will be ones where it is not a taboo for anyone to claim publicly that Leopold missed the importance of family relations in his writings, that his ethical sequence is insufficient for justice to Indigenous histories, and that it is wrong to presume the primacy of Leopold over other ethics, even if the presumption is well-intentioned.

Wiebe, Joseph R. (McMaster University, Canada)

[wiebejr@mcmaster.ca]

The Spiritual Odyssey of Wendell Berry's Poetic Imagination

Environmental activist Wendell Berry's desire for culture to be better connected to nature is a "spiritual ambition." There is a sustaining spirit in nature that connects humans to everything from plants and animals to the sun and moon. Berry's spirituality is not a pious disposition but an insight into nature, an experience of the presence of "awe" in nature. Massive architectural constructions distort this sense of awe; fascinations with statistics of magnitude has made experiencing wonder of the world as it is insufficient without calculating the depth, height, and distance of the material that mediated the experience itself. Culture's disconnect from nature is based on a disordered spirituality, namely the distorted sense of relating to nature only in mathematical terms that be measured or accounted. Motivations for better environmental practices come from one's sense of the connection with nature. Destructive vices are the result of having an improper relationship to nature in mind, one that lacks the right feeling of awe. The proposed paper argues that Berry uses a poetic structure in his literature to shape the reader's spirit i.e., her/his imaginative sense of being a part of nature rather than master over it. His literature attempts to inform our cultural imagination of nature. Berry's work articulates his experience of the presence of spirit in nature. Berry is doubtful that religious or political institutions can enable a return to nature that would give people such an experience; therefore he uses literature as a guide. He presents the farmer, rather than the priest or politician, as the person most in tune with spirit in nature. The proposed paper will show how Berry uses the structure and literary tropes of *The Odyssey* in *The Memory of Old Jack* to illustrate a mind that is spiritually and responsibly connected to nature.

Willsky, Lydia (Vanderbilt University, USA)

[lydia.e.willsky@Vanderbilt.Edu]

'Build Therefore Your Own World': Emerson, Nature and the Apocalypse

When Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote his essay *Nature*, he was writing in equal part to reveal his own cathartic experience of Nature as well as to describe the powerful properties of Nature itself. Nature is depicted as both an end and a means; an end, in the sense that it is God's creation (and therefore perfect), and a means, in that it can serve as the catalyst for world-shaking, paradigm-shifting spiritual experience in the souls of human beings. Being in Nature changes you and changes your understanding of yourself in relation to the world around you. Therein lay Emerson's understanding of the term "Apocalypse." The true Apocalypse in Emerson's view did not destroy the physical world, but rather transformed the world of the mind and with it humans' understanding of their existence. The purpose of this paper is to analyze Emerson's understanding of the Apocalypse as a reaction of the individual mind to the natural world. Using *Nature* as the primary text, the paper unpacks Emerson's "hybrid theology," which is a mixture of Christian, Hindu and Buddhist understandings of the Apocalypse. Yet, even more pointedly this paper hopes to evoke what of Emerson's apocalyptic was original to Emerson. Is Emerson standing on the shoulders of others? Or is he actively creating something wholly new and different? Further, in a more modern and ecological sense, does Emerson's use of Nature as a means to a spiritual Apocalypse relegate the natural world to the role of a commodity, as a product important for its expediency, but not appreciated for itself? Does this then change our view of Emerson the poetic lover of Nature?

Woods, Mark (University of San Diego, USA)

[mwoods@sandiego.edu]

Whither Deep Ecology? A Mid-Life Crisis and Reappraisal

Birthing by Arne Naess in a 1972 talk, deep ecology is now forty years old. In human terms, this nonanthropocentric environmental philosophy has hit a mid-life crisis of hostility and obscurity. Deep ecologists still exist but are harder and harder to find; deep ecology, however, has become a strawperson whipping post target of much that is supposedly wrong with environmentalism and environmental advocacy. If it's not time to give up on deep ecology, it is at least time to seriously reevaluate

it. In terms of environmental philosophy, deep ecology is essentially a leftover relic from an earlier history of environmental ethics. In its heyday it was a much discussed and debated position during the 1980s and into the 1990s. Deep ecology, however, was defined and articulated in a variety of different ways, none of which congealed into a single, unified philosophical path or system. Where are the deep ecology philosophers today? While some of deep ecology's central ideas—such as nonanthropocentrism, holistic metaphysics, and overconsumption critiques—remain alive and well within environmental philosophical thought, deep ecology in terms of what Naess called an ecosophy seems all but dead today. Even if it is philosophically dead, deep ecology remains alive, perhaps as a zombie. A perusal of work within environmental justice, environmental social sciences such as sociology and political ecology, and anti-environmental discourses and diatribes labels deep ecology as one of the—if not the—main positions within environmental ethics. This leads to wholesale critiques and dismissals of environmental ethics qua deep ecology. Should the zombie be pronounced dead and given a funeral and burial? So whither deep ecology?

Zaleha, Bernard Daley (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)

[berniezaleha@pobox.com],

Hollywood's religion of choice: Does Hollywood peddle nature worship to an unsuspecting America?

Ross Douthat, a traditional Roman Catholic and a regular conservative columnist for the *New York Times*, complained at the time of release of James Cameron's *Avatar* that the movie served as James Cameron's "long apologia for pantheism—a faith that equates God with Nature, and calls humanity into religious communion with the natural world," and further asserted that beginning with *Star Wars*, "pantheism has been Hollywood's religion of choice for a generation now." Is Douthat correct? Does Hollywood actively promote nature veneration in its movies? Each of the examples cited by Douthat examples—which also included *Dances with Wolves*, and Disney's *Pocahontas* and *The Lion King*—do indeed seem to hold nature venerating themes and tropes. In this paper, I utilize the Pure Pantheism/Dualistic Theism/Nihilistic Atheism sacrality scale as a heuristic tool for engaging in discourse analysis of various cultural products, and apply it here to the movies Douthat mentions, and in addition apply it to *American Beauty* (1999), *Stigmata* (1999), *Evan Almighty* (2007), and *Wall-E* (2008). As the paper will set forth, each of these movies were major Hollywood productions that achieved popular and/or critical success, and each does indeed contain nature venerating content that tends to the pantheistic end of the sacrality scale. Whether these examples show that pantheism is "Hollywood's religion of choice" remains to be established. A systematic discourse analysis of a broader selection of popular American cinema would be required to establish this claim. A research project to engage in just such a survey will be proposed.

Zechner, Johannes (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

[johannes.zechner@gmx.de]

Sylvan Nation: -The 'German Forest' and the Patriotic Imagination 1800-1945

All landscapes are symbolic phenomena at least as much as material ones. Combining Simon Schama's theory of 'nature as imagination' with Benedict Anderson's work on 'imagined communities', they can furthermore be conceptualized as imagined landscapes. These function as projection screens for cultural constructions and public perceptions, in each case reflecting particular historical and intellectual contexts. Considering modern German history, the prototypical imagined landscape arguably is the 'German forest'. From around 1800 onward, philologists, poets, and propagandists established it as a main symbol of Germanness, envisioning a spiritual relationship between the people and the forest since prehistoric times. Following the evocation of unworldly 'Waldeinsamkeit' by the popular poets Ludwig Tieck and Joseph von Eichendorff, the Grimm Brothers' widely-read fairy tales glorified the woods as a sacred Germanic treasure of the past. Subsequently, influential patriotic publicists like Ernst Moritz Arndt or Friedrich Ludwig Jahn propagated them as a seemingly native symbol of continuity and sovereignty. After World War I, such imaginations were

increasingly linked to the myth-conception of ethnic purity, contrasting the German 'forest people' with a stereotypical Jewish 'desert people'. During the rule of National Socialism, its policies of persecution were legitimized by referring to the 'forest as educator'—a once innocent landscape ideal thus entailing genocidal consequences as part and parcel of official ideology.

Special Sessions/Performances Abstracts

1-13

Vegan Spirituality/National Museum of Animals & Society

Carolyn Mullin (National Museum of Animals & Society, USA)

[carolyn@museumofanimals.org] and

Lisa Levinson (National Museum of Animals & Society,

USA)[lisablevinson@gmail.com]

Compassion: the True Human-Animal Bond

Carolyn Mullin discusses the founding of The National Museum of Animals & Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of animals and people through exploration of our shared experience. While many animals may be out of sight, they are part of our social fabric, living on farms, in city parks, laboratories, zoological attractions, and sanctuaries. Animals have played a significant role in every facet of society's development, from the gruesome (service animals in times of war) to the superfluous (as pelts and fiber in fashion and commerce) to the artistic (sources of inspiration) to the spiritual (sacrificial offerings or subjects of sermons). Our influence on the animals' social order cannot go without acknowledgement: our (un)intentional alteration of ecosystems, selective animal husbandry and conservation efforts. The National Museum of Animals & Society (NMAS) is dedicated to exploring this shared experience, a cultural narrative that remains largely unexamined and is unraveling at a rapid pace.

2-04

Workshop/performance

Ann Buxie (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)

[ann.buxie1@verizon.net]

The Genius of the Elements

This session, Re-Vitalizing Body, Soul, and Ethic through the Five Elements, offers a way to support and animate moral health by focusing attention on a relationship with Nature. Exploring the subtle wisdoms of the elements, grounded in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, restores wholeness to lives distanced from Her vitalities. Nature speaks to us in preliterate ways through feeling and the imagination. Her rhythms are our rhythms. The elements, in their movement and relationships, reveal a sacred teaching. Attending to our relationship with them restores harmony for the individual and to the functioning of a community. The session will be conducted in a conversational manner with material presented by the speaker, one-on-one or group exercises specific to each element, and group discussions of the material presented. Through poetry, contemplation, discussion, and practice, we explore how engaging with the elements heals and restores movement to relationships. I introduce the session with an overview of my approach, an approach that may be called phenomenological as well as poetic because, as Emily Dickinson said, "To find the phosphorescence, that light within, that's the genius behind poetry."

2-10a

Arts/Performances: Nature as Art in Practice

Maria Jaoudi (California State University, Sacramento, USA)

[jaoudim@saclink.csus.edu]

Spirit and Nature: The Paintings of Maria Jaoudi

Professor Maria Jaoudi's paintings, books, and teaching all stem from similar intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual studies in consciousness integrating science, nature, philosophies and theories of perception in cultures, religious traditions, and literature. In the sciences and arts, in

diverse cultures and times, the relationship of perception to reality and theories of both have been examined and debated. This rich tradition provides the basis for Jaoudi's investigations of cultural forms of expression undertaking synthetic and cross-disciplinary study and learning relating to the analysis of consciousness through the examination of human perception. Exhibits of Jaoudi's paintings are titled "Spirit and Nature" or "Inner and Outer Space." The intuitive wisdom of the mystical traditions is visually integrated to form landscapes of the Spirit in nature. These inner and outer worlds are taken from microscopic and telescopic imagery, psychological and dream states, and ordinary observations of daily life and nature.

2-10b

Era Pope (University of North Carolina, Charlotte, USA)

[eraelizabethpope@gmail.com]

So This Is What It Means To Become One With The Goddess: The Immanent Divine in Starhawk's The Fifth Sacred Thing

In her 1993 novel (and upcoming movie) *The Fifth Sacred Thing* Starhawk creates a futuristic ecotopia set in mid-twenty first century San Francisco that must save itself from ecological destruction at the hands of the post-Christian Millennialists. Themes in Starhawk's novel include sustainable living and nonviolence but her vision hinges on the idea of the immanent Divine, represented as the Goddess. Starhawk manifests her ideas of the Divine in prose through the use of magic and Pagan ritual that connect the Goddess to the natural world. She places humanity at the crux of both the problem of, and solution to, ecological ruin and she clearly shows that it is only through human unification with the Divine that the balance in the natural world can be restored, saving the human and nonhuman world alike. In conflating spirituality with her brand of ecofeminism Starhawk creates an interesting paradox. She both justifies her call to care for nature through sustainable ecological practices by imbedding Divinity within its core and simultaneously alienates those who might not share a similar understanding of spirituality by saturating her work so heavily with Pagan practices. In this paper I define the specifics of Starhawk's ecofeminism and show how her emphasis on a Pagan concept of Divine immanence complicates what is a seemingly simple message of care for the earth through sustainability.

2-15 Performance

Gwendolyn Alley (Pacifica Graduate Institute, USA)

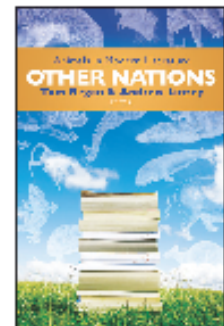
[gwendolynalley@yahoo.com]

Theodosia Burr Shepherd, "The Flower Wizard of California"

"In the love of flowers... [it is] as if the soul of the plant comes in touch with our soul. If the plant possesses the power to arouse such strong vibrations within us, is it possible the vibrations from us are received by the flower? We and the plant are manifestations of the same force." – Theodosia Burr Shepherd, in a letter to Luther Burbank
Southern California owes its flower seed and bulb industry to the vision and determination of Theodosia Burr Shepherd. The Shepherd family arrived in San Buenaventura in 1873. By 1900 Theodosia was the most famous woman in California; The Smithsonian Institution declared "it was she who put Ventura County on the map." Her speaking engagements included the 1894 Women's Congress in San Francisco. An interviewer said, "She is equally at home in literature and art, and alive to every question of the hour. She ought to give up her garden seed raising and teach people how to think and live."

This lively 20 minute presentation paints a vivid picture of life growing up in an 1890s California Mission town from the perspective of the daughter of an independent, spiritual, feminist who encouraged women to propagate seeds and businesses, to toss their corsets, and to demand their right to vote by saying: "Come out into the open air, careless of tan, freckles or unconventional clothing. Listen to Nature's teachings and become wise." Ventura County historian Suzanne Lawrence and City of Ventura Literary Arts Fellow researched and authored the script; her grandmother worked closely with Shepherd and her father grew up in the Gardens. Based on oral histories, newspaper accounts, and other historic records, the script illustrates the racism and sexism of the times. During a question and answer period, the presenter, Lawrence's daughter Gwendolyn Alley, will "unmask."

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