



4th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

“Living on the Edge”

16 – 19 December 2010
University of Western Australia, Perth

Conference Programme



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Introduction to “Living on the Edge”

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, in association with La Trobe University, Melbourne, is organising its 4th International Conference, between 16 and 19 December 2010, at the University of Western Australia (UWA-Perth). Located on the edge of land and sea, Perth's is a perfect site at which to discuss the notion of 'Living on the Edge'. Long known as one of the remotest cities in the world (and frequently, even in Australia!), Perth has nonetheless taken on a leadership role in articulating and implementing notions of environmental sustainability; in 2003, Western Australia became the first state in the world to have a State Sustainability Strategy. Perth figuratively 'lives on the edge' and yet, carries the potential to play a more central role in the positive transition to a more sustainable future.

Questions then point to the edge as a place of transition and transformation, a launching place for change and action to counter ecological degradation and regenerate communities and ecosystems. The conference asks how human and nature ecologies are affected by the environmental crisis. It covers the variety of challenges and approaches to change – scientific, social, psychological, spiritual and cultural – that emerge through living on the edge. Through a multi-disciplinary framework of religion, nature and culture, the conference explores the relationships between people and nature, social and ecological systems, local and global economies, art and ecology, science and religion, and cultural diversity and biodiversity.

Edge spaces, like ecotones, are places of rich fecundity. Using the metaphor of the meeting of two ecosystems, the edge represents the meeting place between disciplines where different modes of knowing and working are shared. It interweaves personal stories of environmental, social and spiritual change with theoretical discussion from a range of disciplines in dynamic interchange. It transcends the boundaries to move to new possibilities of mutual understanding, research and action.

The following questions serve as guidelines for exploring the themes of 'Living on the Edge'.

1. How is living on the edge defined in a local, regional or global context?
2. What features and qualities are reflected in an environmental, social, psychological, economic and spiritual sense?
3. Are we living on the edge of extinction? What are the tipping points?
4. How do local histories and cultures distinguish living on the edge?
5. Can the 'edge' be integrated with the 'centre'? And what are the implications?
6. How do the natural sciences deal with edge issues? Do the social sciences hinder or help? Is there a meeting point?
7. How do individuals and communities cope with the awareness of ecological deterioration? Is there a relationship between social, psychological and ecological resilience?
8. Predictions of rising rates of environmentally displaced or affected people in the coming decades raise some important psycho-spiritual themes. What sorts of social and psychological distresses are anticipated? How does secularism or religiosity contribute to or alleviate these experiences?

9. How are Indigenous cultures affected and how are they effecting change?

Other important issues concerning the 'edge' may include: the rural-urban interface; the sea-land interchange; the problem of water resources; the nexus between peace and warfare; dichotomy tame-wild, male-female, East-West.

About the ISSRNC

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC) is a scholarly community engaged in critical inquiry into the complex relationships between human beings and their diverse cultures, environments, socio-religious beliefs and practises. The ISSRNC facilitates scholarly collaborations and research, and disseminates research findings through regular international and regional conferences and the affiliated *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* (London: Equinox Publisher). The Inaugural Conference of the ISSRNC "Exploring Religion, Nature and Culture" was held in April 2006 in Gainesville, Florida, followed by the Second Conference on "The Re-Enchantment of Nature Across Disciplines: Critical Intersections of Science, Ethics and Metaphysics" in January 2008 in Morelia, Mexico. The Third Conference was held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in July 2009 on "Religion, Nature and Progress". In keeping with its international spirit, the ISSRNC crosses hemispheres for the first time with its Fourth Conference on "Living on the Edge" in December 2010 in Perth, Western Australia.

16th December 2010

Conference Open at the Exhibition Grounds, Kings Park and Royal Botanical Gardens, Perth, Western Australia

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| 1430 – 1530 | Conference registrations |
| 1530 – 1540 | Welcome to Traditional Nyoongar Country: Dr. Richard Walley, Nyoongar Elder and Social Justice Activist |
| 1540 – 1600 | Welcome to Western Australia: Dr. Bradley Pettitt, Mayor of Fremantle and Murdoch University |
| 1600 – 1630 | ISSRNC Presidential Welcome: Prof. Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Groningen, The Netherlands |
| 1630 – 1730 | Opening Plenary: Prof. Freya Mathews, La Trobe University: ‘At the Edge of Meaning: the Eco-Genesis of Religion and Ethics’ |
| 1730 – 1800 | ‘Edge and Belonging’: Dr. Richard Walley |
| 1800 – 1900 | Aboriginal Dance and Didgeridoo performance: Dr. Richard Walley’s dance troupe Aboriginal Productions and Promotions and Australian BBQ |
| 1900 – 2000 | Bushwalking through sacred Nyoongar sites in King’s Park with Dr. Richard Walley |

17th December 2010

0930 – 1100 Plenary Session 1: Alexander Lecture Theatre

Presiding: Prof. Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Keynote Speaker: **Prof. Clive Hamilton, Australian National University:** ‘The Metaphysical Implications of Geoengineering’

1100 – 1130 Coffee/tea break

1130 – 1300 Morning Parallel Sessions

Location: **Arts Lecture Room 4: ‘Natural Resources: Crises or Opportunities?’**

Presiding: Jan Boersema, IVM - VU Amsterdam

Phil McManus and Glenn Albrecht, Sydney University and Murdoch University, Australia: ‘Conflict in God’s Country: Coal mining and thoroughbred breeding in the Upper Hunter, Australia’

Daniel Roland, Kent State University, USA: “Responding to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Sunday Sermon: A Study in How Clergy Members Apply Scripture in Addressing an Environmental Disaster”

Michael Pearce, University of Queensland, Australia: ‘Taming the ‘wild’ spirits in Thailand: Nature, consumerism, and alterations at an ecotone’

Location: **Arts Lecture Room 5: ‘Edge and Environmentalism’**

Presiding: Jay Johnston, Sydney University

Aidan Davison, University of Tasmania, Australia: ‘At the edge of the centre: environmentalism, modernity, transformation’

Ben Habib, La Trobe University, Australia: ‘Climate Change Consciousness: Planting Philosophy as the Seed for Cultivating Behavioural Change’

John Croft, Gaia Foundation, Germany: ‘The Power and the Promise of Dragon Dreaming: Participatory Strategic Planning for Ecologically Sustainable Community Economic Development’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 6: ‘The Indigenous Edge’

Presiding: Juan Carlos Galeano, Florida State University

Jo Diamond, University of Canterbury, New Zealand: ‘Possum dreaming, possum eradication: an edgy Trans-Tasman Sea cultural, ecological and belief based exploration’

Virginie Bernard, University of Western Australia: ‘Yaraguia: a Baladong Nyungar family based association preserving biodiversity and regenerating traditional knowledge in the Avon Valley, Western Australia’

Rebecca Galeano, Florida State University: ‘A Slippery Slope: Children’s Perceptions of their Role in Environmental Preservation in the Peruvian Amazon’

1300 – 1400 Lunch at the Sunken Gardens

1400 – 1600 Afternoon Parallel Sessions

Location: Arts Lecture Room 4: ‘Groves, Gardens and Pilgrimages’

Presiding: Yamini Narayanan, La Trobe University

Anne Melano, PhD candidate, Monash University, Australia: ‘The Grove as Crossing Point; Recovering a Spiritualised Nature’

John Ryan, PhD candidate, Edith Cowan University, Australia: ‘*Kaanya* in a land of contradictions: Towards sacred botany’

Christopher Howard, PhD candidate, Massey University, New Zealand: ‘Re-enchantment on the Edge of the Himalayas: Sacred travel as a sign of the times’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 5: ‘Cutting Edge of Modernity and Technology’

Presiding: Dora Marinova, Curtin University, Australia

Amy Kit-size CHAN, Hong Kong Shue Yan University: ‘At the Edges of Human, Nature and Technoscience: Bridging Cyberfeminism and Ecofeminism’

Susan Gallacher, Science and Innovation, Western Australian Government: ‘Technopagans: Hybrids on the New Edge’

Geoff Berry, Monash University, Australia: ‘The Symbolic Quest Behind our Cities of Light: Eternal Feasting and the Ecological Cost of Fuel Fetish’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 6: 'Ecotones and Edges'

Presiding: Jo Diamond, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Sylvie Shaw and Michael Pearce, University of Queensland, Australia: 'Rivering from catchment to the Bay: A study of the Brisbane River'

Michael Newton, Canada: "We were saved by a tiny plant": Reconnecting to nature in a remote fishing village'

Karin McKay, University of Western Sydney: 'Flourish or Fail: Cultural Wellbeing as creative ecological process'

Location: Arts Lecture Room 9: Film

Juan Carlos Galeano, State University of Florida: 'The Trees Have a Mother 2008' (70 minutes)

1600 – 1630: Coffee/tea break

1630 – 1830: Plenary Session 2: Alexander Lecture Theatre

Presiding: Rod Giblett, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia

Keynote Speakers:

Mary Stange, Skidmore College, USA: 'Hunting the Edges: The Intersection between "Hunter-Conservationism" and "Green Environmentalism"'

Jan J. Boersema, IVM - VU Amsterdam, The Netherlands: 'Easter Island: If no Collapse, what else? Cultural adaptations while living on the edge'

18th December 2010

0830 – 0920 **ISSRNC Members Meeting: Arts Lecture Room 5**

0930 – 1100: **Plenary Session 1: Alexander Lecture Theatre**

Presiding: Sylvie Shaw, University of Queensland

Keynote Speakers: **Prof. Bob Reece and Prof. Anne Boyd, Murdoch University and Sydney University: ‘The Sounding of Australian History: Kabbarli at Ooldea – a new opera’**

1100 – 1130: **Coffee/tea break**

1130 – 1300: **Morning Parallel Sessions**

Location: **Arts Lecture Room 4: ‘Edge of Historical Environmentalism’**

Presiding: Aidan Davison, University of Tasmania

Albertina Nugteren, Tilbury University, The Netherlands: ‘Academia on the edge between green and grey: A critical look at green projections into religious pasts’

Deborah Guess, Postgraduate student, Melbourne College of Divinity, Australia: ‘Arthur Peacocke’s theology of Emergent Evolution: A Resource for Ecological Christology’

Yusuf Siddiq, Punjab University, Pakistan: ‘An Ecological Journey through Medieval Muslim Bengal: Reflection of Nature in Islamic Architectural Calligraphy’

Location: **Arts Lecture Room 5: ‘Culture, Mythology and History’**

Presiding: David Tacey, La Trobe University

Juan Carlos Galeano, State University of Florida: ‘*Amazonía*: Poems from a resilient world’

Sally Borrell, New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies, New Zealand: ‘Writing the edges: Margaret Atwood’s narratives of slippage’

Joan Kelly, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore: ‘Zones of Contact: The Making of a Painting’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 6: ‘Case Studies from Asia’

Presiding: Takeshi Kimura, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Rebecca Fanany, La Trobe University, Australia: ‘Local and Cultural Response to a Major Earthquake in West Sumatra, Indonesia’

Chien-Ming Lu, Yeong-Tyi Day, Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan: ‘Agricultural Technique under Indigenous Gathering Culture - Examples of Village Farm Garden of the Sa'owac Village of Amis Tribe at Taiwan’

Xiumei Guo and Dora Marinova, Curtin University, Australia: ‘Economic Prosperity and Sustainability in China: Seeking Confucian Wisdom for Adaptation and Mitigation of Global Climate Change’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 9: ‘Ideological Spaces and the Edge’

Presiding: Freya Mathews, La Trobe University

Sylvie Shaw, University of Queensland, Australia: ‘An Ecological-Religious Conversion: Turned on to Nature’

Rob Giblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia: ‘Quaking Zone: Where body, land and mind meet’

Laura Stocker, Curtin University, Australia: ‘East Meets West in Yiddish Life Writing: paradox, palimpsest and persistence’

1300 – 1400: Lunch at the Tropical Gardens

1400 – 1600: Afternoon Parallel Sessions

Location: Arts Lecture Room 4: ‘Eastern Religions’

Presiding: Sylvie Shaw, University of Queensland

Tsutomu Sawai, Kyoto University, Japan: ‘Ecological Ethics in Sekimon-Shingaku Thought: Considering Ishida Baigan’s Religious Experience’

Wong Kin Yuen, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong: ‘Ecological Ethics/Aesthetics and the Chinese Classics: Enacting the Deleuzean Differentiation in China’

Sudeep Jana Thing, Curtin University, Western Australia: ‘Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) in Nepalese Himalayas: Intersection of nature, culture and religion’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 5: ‘Edge of Religion and Sustainability’

Presiding: Yamini Narayanan, La Trobe University

Takeshi Kimura, Japan: ‘Voices from the Edge: Religions for Sustainability’

Chris Doran, Pepperdine University, USA: ‘Living on the Edge by Being Frugal’

Anna Halaloff, PhD candidate, Monash Univeristy, Australia: ‘Multifaith Responses to Climate Change’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 6: ‘Intersection of Flora, Fauna and Human Subcultures’

Presiding: Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Groningen

Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, University of Sydney: “Living on the Divide: Transpecies identities. What can be learnt from Furies and Otherkin?” Humans with a furry edge to them?

Jay Johnston, University of Sydney, Australia: ‘On Having a Furry Soul: Concepts of Spiritual Subjectivities in Otherkin and Furry Subcultures’

Su-Chen Hsu and Chien-Ming Lu, Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan: ‘The New Ethical Relations of Eco-Art within the Social Movements – Examples of Plant-Matter NeoEden Art Project (2008-2010) of the Sa'owac Village of Amis Tribe at Taiwan’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 9: Workshop

Lori Pye, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA: Living On the Edge: An Ecopsychological Perspective (1.5 hours interactive session)

1600 – 1630: Coffee/tea break

1630 – 1800: Plenary Session: Alexander Lecture Theatre

Presiding: Sylvie Shaw, University of Queensland

Keynote speaker: Prof. David Tacey, La Trobe University: ‘At the Edge of a New Animism: Australian spirituality, ecopsychology and the animation of the world’

19th December 2010**0930 – 1100: Morning Parallel Sessions****Location:** Arts Lecture Room 4: ‘Edge of Education and Sustainability’**Presiding:** Yamini Narayanan, La Trobe University

Steve Andrews, PhD candidate, Curtin University, Australia: ‘Empowering Interaction and Connection With The Ocean Through Underwater Photoelicitation’

Justin Lawson, PhD candidate, Deakin University, Australia: ‘Amongst the climate of chaos, there is faith: An analysis of faith-based community responses to issues of sustainability and biodiversity’

Rumana Islam, PhD candidate, Curtin University, Australia: ‘Bangladesh Agriculture in the Age of Climate Change’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 5: ‘Reframing Self and Knowledge’**Presiding:** John Ryan, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia

Amzad Hossain and Dora Marinova, Curtin University: ‘Self-Reliance and Living on the Edge of Climate Change’

Vivienne Robertson, Sufi leader: ‘Emerald and Ruby: A Sufi Vision for Transforming the Edge’

Marnie Orr, Middlesex University, United Kingdom: ‘Shifting Terrain: Activating land and body through knowledge systems exchange’

Location: Arts Lecture Room 6: Workshop

Dimity Podger and Zarin Salter, Macquarie University and University of Western Australia: A workshop to experience a faith organisation’s approach to learning at the edge: Comparative Study of the Bahá’í Writings and Education for Sustainable Development Literature (60 minutes interactive session)

1100 – 1130: Coffee/tea break

Abstracts

Steven Andrews and Laura Stocker, Curtin University, Western Australia

Empowering Interaction and Connection With The Ocean Through Underwater Photoelicitation

This presentation assesses the efficacy of underwater photoelicitation, a new experiential environmental education technique, on participant learning about marine sustainability. Humanity's dependence and increasing impact on our ocean ecosystems demonstrate the need for greater protection of the coast and seas. We suggest here that innovative marine educational tools designed to connect humans meaningfully to the ocean world may be a useful way to support its protection. Although marine education has been popular for many years, research has not focused on fostering direct experiential connections between participants and the ocean through visual learning. Photoelicitation is a research technique using photographs (taken by the participant) as a focus in an interview. Photoelicitation and other visual learning methods have been used successfully in education about the terrestrial environment; the combination of experiential and visual learning can create a powerful educational tool that can elicit discussions around environmental values and perspectives. Our research is two pronged: assessing this technique through adult participants and assessing through high schools.

During the summer and autumn of 2010, groups of adult volunteers were given digital underwater cameras to use while they snorkelled in the waters around Dunsborough, Western Australia. They took photos of features that were significant to them and the effectiveness of underwater photoelicitation as an educational tool was assessed. Participants critically reflected on the significance to sustainability and environmental education of their own photos and those of others during interviews and group work. The research questions of primary relevance were: Did the photo-elicitation process alter their cognitive and/or affective domains, and did the participants change their intended behaviour toward the ocean? We found that participants developed a better understanding of underwater photography and now intend to snorkel and take underwater photographs more often. We also found that participants' views of the ocean shifted through the sharing of multiple perspectives while sharing their underwater photography as a group. We also present the curriculum and the proposed research that will be completed within Western Australian high schools this next year.

Virginie Bernard, University of Western Australia

'Yaraguia: a Baladong Nyungar family based association preserving biodiversity and regenerating traditional knowledge in the Avon Valley, Western Australia'

The Avon Valley, situated east of Perth is part of the Wheat Belt, the main agricultural region of Western Australia, and as such has been extensively cleared and farmed. Within the framework of my PhD thesis, I am working with Yaraguia Enterprises Incorporated, a Baladong Nyungar family based association.

Yaraguia is trying to effect change by developing a property (Avondale Park) in the Avon Valley that it acquired in 2006 under the environmental stream of the Land Acquisition

Program of ILC (Indigenous Land Corporation). In partnership with Greening Australia Western Australia and the Avon Catchment Council, Yaraguia is focusing on 'healing the country' by developing a fully structured re-vegetation and conservation program as a process of regenerating the property back to its more natural state and restoring part of its original biodiversity.

Yaraguia combines contemporary practices and culturally appropriate processes to fight against salinity and soil erosion and to contribute to the reduction of the greenhouse effects and is attempting at a multiple use of the landscape. Yaraguia incorporates European traditional farming practices such as crop growing and grazing sheep, as part of its lease-back agreements, and farm forestry while developing 'non-traditional' farming options such as rehabilitation and revegetation with the aims of producing bush foods, bush medicine and carbon sequestration as key outcomes for securing environmentally, culturally and economically sustainable land management practices.

This project will also have for desirable effect the regeneration of family and cultural ways. Colonisation irreversibly disrupted the life of Indigenous Australians and the deep spiritual understanding of the environment they had developed. Nowadays, the environmental crisis is another threat to the knowledge they have managed to preserve. Yaraguia wishes that its actions will help local Aboriginal people re-connect with their country and so with their traditional knowledge and culture.

Geoffrey Berry, Monash University, Australia

The Symbolic Quest Behind our Cities of Light: Eternal Feasting and the Ecological Cost of Fuel Fetish

Do the cities of light we inhabit - seen most profoundly from above in the famous NASA photographs of the planet at night - reveal some deeply symbolic quest beyond their physical nature as incandescent population centres? This presentation considers the modern city as a site of desacralised transcendence, where the commodity is consumed in an endlessly addictive cycle of ephemeral overcoming, as a quest to live in eternal light and feasting. The fuel fetish that drives this incredible pyre clearly comes at considerable ecological cost, but proposed shifts from a political economy of fossil to renewable fuels will not enable the transformation of today's anthropocentric consciousness of consumption. While the cities of light continue to attract exponentially more constituents, the primate moths instinctively drawn towards such luminescence remain evermore dazzled by the great glow of human self-involvement it mediates. The premodern fascination with the mysteries of the cosmos, formerly enjoyed under the splendours of the dark sky at night, is now lost in a haze of light pollution and white noise. Equally, attendance to the delicate cycles of life and death here on earth is steadily removed to a marginal concern compared with the real action, which takes place under the spotlights of mass media, is advertised with the glare of billboard and TV or internet screen, delivered via hi-tech laser technology or simply constructed along the lines of city street lights and office buildings, virtually empty at night but still glaring ferociously at the heretic unbelievers with the message all urban space shares: continue to consume, if thou shalt inhabit the eternal city!

Jan J. Boersema, IVM - VU Amsterdam

Easter Island: If no Collapse, what else? Cultural adaptations while living on the edge

For many scholars Easter Island (Rapa Nui) is a textbook example of a flourishing and highly developed culture with fascinating religious practices that has collapsed due to the overexploitation of its natural resources. This pre-modern collapse story made its way into many environmental science textbooks. According to Ponting and Diamond it is a grim warning to the world, Earth Island is Easter Island. The story has also met a few critics; their doubts about this ‘overshoot and collapse’ theory have been voiced since 2002.

A collapse in the way most authors have described it, involving a deforestation followed by hunger, starvation, tribal warfare and even cannibalism is neither supported by the earliest historical writings – the 18th century journals of European explorers - nor by the scientific evidence. More recently, strong evidence has been presented in favour of a relatively late arrival of the Polynesian settlers and a major role (by preventing regeneration) of the Polynesian rats in the apparent deforestation. However, the stronger the case grew against the repeated claims of a pre-European ‘ecocide’ the greater the need for a more reliable picture of the past. Hunt’s hypothetical population model is dissatisfying in this respect and seriously flawed for the period after the first European contact with Easter Island. While Hunt’s model suggests a demographic collapse following the first visit by the Dutch in 1722, my take is that Easter Island has undergone an unexceptional demographic transition. An improved model developed in collaboration with Ruben Huele (Leiden University) will be presented.

Finally I will raise the question if this ‘reconstructing the past’ bears any relevance to the present day debate on sustainability, quality and the role of religion. Do we need an ‘eco-religion’ as proposed by Bahn and Flenley?

Sally Borrell, New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies

Writing the edges: Margaret Atwood’s narratives of slippage

‘What if we continue down the road we’re already on? How slippery is the slope? What are our saving graces? Who’s got the will to stop us?’ This is how Margaret Atwood describes the questions central to the first of her two recent narratives of ‘slippage’. Through an examination of *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and its sequel, *The Year of the Flood* (2009), this paper addresses literature as a response to the problems of ‘living on the edge’, concentrating on themes of ecological ‘points of no return’ and the marginalisation of environmentalist resistance. Especially when taken together, Atwood’s two novels raise important questions about environmental degradation and humans’ practical, social and spiritual attempts to cope with this phenomenon. The setting is a futuristic world which has already gone ‘over the edge’ ecologically, and where environmentalism, represented by a group known as God’s Gardeners, is thoroughly marginalised. This works to foster a sense of urgency in the present, although Atwood also explores what it might mean to survive beyond the edge, after the human species is dramatically depleted by a virus. Here, a contrast appears between the texts as *Oryx and Crake* opens and leaves open questions about the future of humanity, but *The Year of the Flood* closes many of these down again. I analyse these points with reference to Richard Kerridge’s work on resignation and to Greg Garrard’s discussion of apocalypse in

environmentalist literature. I argue that these novels illustrate the need for balance between hope and despair within narratives of environmental crisis.

Amy Kit-sze CHAN, Hong Kong Shue Yan University

At the Edges of Human, Nature and Technoscience: Bridging Cyberfeminism and Ecofeminism

In the 21st century, human species is located at the edges of human/cyborg, nature/culture, biological/ artificial, organic/ inorganic, and autopoiesis/allopoiesis. The fundamental question is: “What are we becoming?”. This is a particularly trying time for feminists since they have conflicting views to the question. Some of them think that the future of feminism lies in looking ahead towards a technoscientific future; on the other hand, some of them believe that it’s time we should go back to our root, to our mother-nature. This paper attempts to explore the issue of transition and transformation of human species with special focus to two branches of feminisms – ecofeminism and cyberfeminism.

When Donna Haraway declares “I’d rather be a cyborg than a goddess” in “A Cyborg Manifesto,” she seems to declare that the future of feminisms lies in science and technology instead of looking back to goddess-worshipping. At first glance, it is without doubt that these two branches of feminism, if not opposing each other, at least are not compatible. The former deals with cyborgs, science, technology and information while the latter concerns itself with environment, ecology, goddesses and animals. However, this paper argues that the basic questions they are asking are indeed similar, that is, what is human being and what becomes of our future? More importantly, both attempt to subvert the dichotomous relationship between human and others and propose a new worldview. This paper will first discuss the similar grounds of ecofeminism and cyberfeminism, and will go on to explore the gentle bridge between the two.

John Croft, Gaia Foundation, Germany

The Power and the Promise of Dragon Dreaming: Participatory Strategic Planning for Ecologically Sustainable Community Economic Development

The failure of Copenhagen and Cancun climate summits suggest that the attempts to resolve the issues arising from Climate Change cannot be resolved at the level of international agreements binding of nation states and business corporations. As a result it is suggested that we are in the first stage of an overshoot and collapse scenario. Ways of minimising the difficulties that will result from this are discussed. It is suggested that these must be addressed by mobilising community involvement. One means by which the author has been doing this is presented, and its successes enumerated.

Aidan Davison, University of Tasmania

At the edge of the centre: environmentalism, modernity, transformation

This paper considers the question of whether the changing nature of environmentalism since the 1960s in high-consumption societies can be understood as the result of movement from

the edge to the centre of social affairs. The fading of countercultural hopes for ecological civilisation and the rise of promethean faith in sustainable development is commonly represented as a process of ‘mainstreaming’; a process in which many environmentalists have traded high-ideals for pragmatic influence. I argue, in contrast, that ‘Western’ environmentalism has from the beginning existed in ambivalent relationship to modernity that confounds geometrical spatial metaphors such as edge and centre. Drawing upon the cultural history of suburbanisation in English-speaking high-consumption societies, I present the half-world of the suburb as rich but neglected ground in which to investigate the relationship between edge and centre in environmentalist engagements with modernity. A topological account of edge and centre is offered that emphasises the coproduction of radical possibilities for cultural transformation and self-perpetuating dynamics of cultural reproduction; of edge and centre. I conclude by arguing that appreciation of this ambivalent relationship between transformation and hegemony within environmentalism promises less adversarial and more self-aware and empathetic strategies for political change.

Jo Diamond, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Possum dreaming, possum eradication: an edgy Trans-Tasman Sea cultural, ecological and belief based exploration.

Travelling through dramatic scenery of Aotearoa New Zealand necessarily means at least some visual encounter with the devastating consequences of brush-tailed possum presence that began in this country in the 1830s as a ‘cute’ importation (and fur-trade possibility) from Australia. Today, grey remnants of beech and other forest species remind a perceptive traveller of how a possums, living away from their ‘native’ habitat, chew through vulnerable ‘native’ species at rapid rate. This (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) possum is officially designated in Aotearoa as the all-time, number 1 ‘pest’, outnumbering humans 5 to 1. It is much maligned not only for its number and eating habits that dramatically and negatively affect indigenous flora and fauna but because it is a carrier of bovine tuberculosis, a great threat to this country’s agriculture-based economy. Travelling from this country to Australia can give rise to a shift of attitude that sees this arboreal marsupial in a more favourable light. The ‘enemy’ possum of Aotearoa is the ‘protected’ one of Australia.

This paper briefly addresses this conundrum of possum-based representation, exploring where, if anywhere, an actual and/or notional edge; boundary or border exists between the two countries in their respective environmental conservation policies and practices and in their culturally based beliefs about the ‘protected’ and the ‘pest’ animal. In preliminary fashion, the paper addresses an international instance of an animal that is, simultaneously, sought by humans for eradication as a pest, and given protection as a ‘native’ species whose natural territory is increasingly threatened by human population growth and urban expansion.

Largely philosophical in content, this paper draws on knowledge of environment-based cultural perspectives of what species, including the human kind, should be considered as belonging in particular places at particular moments of time. It takes inspiration from Indigenous Australian Dreaming, particularly possum dreaming, and from comparable Maori cosmology that relates to flora and fauna as kin. Its ‘edginess’ primarily relates to belief systems: those of ‘indigenous’ human cultures and those of not so ‘indigenous’ and to the current fashions of perceiving ‘species’ as valuable and/or dispensable, of belief systems as

relevant and/or passé and as conservation methodologies that, though all culturally founded and constructed, are far from being equally regarded and respected.

Chris Doran, Pepperdine University, USA

Living on the Edge by Being Frugal

Reports on spending and saving habits suggest that even in the midst of the worst economic climate since the Great Depression, Americans still are not very frugal people. One could even argue that frugality, once a central component of American Christianity, is now considered an optional virtue, if it is considered virtuous at all. In other words, frugality has been moved to the ‘edge’ of American Christian life. This is perhaps because, as James Nash astutely notes, frugality is a “subversive” virtue since it fundamentally denies the legitimacy of the consumptive lifestyle that has come to define Western culture. While both the Brundtland Report and The Earth Charter (which define sustainability for much of the world) talk about economic justice, neither discuss frugality as such. I contend that any definition of sustainability must explicitly include frugality. Employing Nash’s robust definition, I conclude the Christian notion of frugality, defined roughly as the voluntary sacrifice of the accumulation of material goods in order that some may be left for one’s neighbor, would not only have economic benefits, but dramatic environmental consequences as well. Moreover, many developed world politicians, economists, and environmentalists follow a particular interpretation of the Brundtland Report that opts for what Herman Daly and John Cobb call a “weak” version of sustainability, which ultimately gambles on the ability of human ingenuity to solve any environmental mess through the beneficent use of technology. I examine how this is hubris of the worst sort and how frugality could serve as a corrective to this vice. Finally, I maintain that frugality should not be considered another example of hair-shirt environmentalism; instead, it represents what Sallie McFague contends is the “abundant life” that comes from participating in a socio-economic structure that is at least a “pale reflection” of the kingdom of God.

Rebecca Fanany, La Trobe University, Australia

Local and Cultural Response to a Major Earthquake in West Sumatra, Indonesia

The city of Padang in West Sumatra, Indonesia, experienced a large earthquake on September 30, 2009, that caused severe damage to the city and surrounding areas. This natural disaster brought to the forefront the fact that the population was in fact poised on a number of edges. The city had grown greatly over the past 30 years to encompass the surrounding villages, emphasizing the collision of urban and rural environments. Culturally, the region is at a tipping point where traditional law and culture (*adat*) is under threat from a more modern, westernized lifestyle with modern aspirations. The earthquake itself brought to light a similar disalignment of ideas about scientific causation and religious attribution in this region which is strongly Muslim and religiously conservative.

This paper will discuss the ideas and views that circulated in the West Sumatran population following the September 2009 earthquake from the point of view of cultural epidemiology. It will focus on ideas of causation and result that are grounded in local religious views and cultural norms and will show how this event has allowed a number of edges to be seen and studied in this society. The majority of attempts to explain the earthquake drew upon Islamic

interpretations of various kinds and showed a strong pull towards a return to tradition. The lore that grew up following the disaster, however, showed strong aspects of westernized popular culture. Both the religious response and the cultural response were characterized by a tendency towards the supernatural, associated with less orthodox religious views and traditional (pre-Islamic beliefs). Taken together, this experience with disaster in West Sumatra shows the presence of a number of edges and the attempts of the public to adapt to multiple points of transition.

Susan Gallacher, Science and Innovation, Western Australian Government

Technopagans: Hybrids on the New Edge

Three convergent issues pertinent to investigations of agency and identity emerge in the early stages of the 21st Century: the proliferation of digital, network technologies, the rise of interest in secular – ‘new edge’- spiritualities, and our growing awareness of impending ecological crises.

Attempts to understand the ecological crisis within contemporary culture commonly focus on the rapid growth and ‘technologisation’ of Western culture, and its role in distancing us from, and compromising the integrity of, the natural environment upon which we depend for survival. Problematically, this focus tends to create a divide between ‘nature’ and ‘technology’, assigning nature as the pure pole against the corruptive pole of technological progress, and specifically, the virtual worlds of cyberspace.

During the 1990s groups involved with digital and network technologies referred to this exciting new landscape as the ‘New Edge’ (Sirius 1992). They claimed the age of the physical ‘new frontier’ had ended, and the frontiers of the 21st Century would be virtual: to be found within the networks of the datasphere, namely, the internet. Contrary to common concerns that the journey into cyberspace would take us away from concerns of the material, and would indeed encourage further disparagement of the physical environment, there have been exciting and innovative trends online which draw together the virtual and the material worlds.

I argue that the growth of cyberspace is both a space and a place which can foster attitudes which encourage and nurture ecological sustainability and spiritual flourishing. Furthermore, I suggest that identities emerge at the ‘new edge’ we call cyberspace which are explicitly hybridised. I propose that a specific identity, the technopagan, is a metaphorical and material identity which properly attends to the treble issues of ecology, technology and spirituality. The technopagan engages neopagan, earth-based spiritualities within the virtual worlds of the net.

In order to properly attend to ecological crises, and to fully understand the nature of human relations to the natural world, we must realign understandings of our relationship to technology. I suggest that technology is fully embedded in and central to our being-in-the-world. Understood in this way, we can understand the human as a hybrid identity, one defined in relationship with nonhuman others, including the technological. This hybrid construction is an identity composed of natural and technical parts, an identity at the edges of certainty, at the boundaries of nature and culture, masculine and feminine, spiritual and political.

Investigations into the cultures of the internet reveal some enlightening and promising connections between digital dwellers and nature worshippers. I propose that in fact there exists a natural synergy between the exploration and creation of cyberspaces, and the care of, and attention to, the natural world. Technopagans are agents who embrace the new edge of cyberspace, whilst remaining embedded in the natural cycles of the planet.

Juan Carlos Galeano, Florida State University, USA

Amazonía: Poems from a resilient world

Poems from my book *Amazonia* give poetic representation of the human condition through re-mythologization of various animals, plants, rivers and peoples of the Amazon region in the midst of current physical and cultural transformations taking place since the arrival of Europeans.

Folklore and myth stemming from indigenous cosmologies of the Amazon basin and the influence of a variety of poetic traditions ranging from the Japanese, the North American Deep Image to the surrealist poetry, particularly that from the Eastern European surrealism, as well as the sense of irony of Latin American poetry influence the fabric and form of the poems of this collection. Before the destruction of forests poems from *Amazonia* work like small myths in which the adoption of a humorous mode provides the reader with feelings of optimism and hope for survival

Juan Carlos Galeano, Florida State University, USA

The Trees Have a Mother 2008 (70 minutes)

The documentary film *The Trees Have a Mother 2008 (70 minutes)* produced and directed by Juan Carlos Galeano and Valliere Richard Auzenne is a film that illustrates how belief systems of indigenous cultures of the Amazon basin support sustainable ecological practices and faith in traditional values. In this film storytelling serves as a fabric for enquiry about religiosity and the environmental concerns of the inhabitants of the Amazon region. The film documents the true story of a mother searching for her son who has disappeared in the heart of Peruvian Amazonian rainforest. Her quest is told against the backdrop of Amazonian cosmological views expressed by forest, riverbank and city dwellers who believe in the existence of the supernatural world. As the mother consults local shamans about the fate of her son, stories about close encounters and relationships between humans, dolphins and other mythological creatures from the forest and underwater world propel this film. Their tales are metaphorical of the physical and sociocultural transformations of Amazonia under the pressures of modernity and its regard of nature as a commodity. Contrasting current practices of Westerners seeking to demystify nature through deforestation in the Amazon basin, this documentary gives ample exposure to people's trust in the power of sacred and medicinal plants able to bring comfort to spiritual unrest and benefit physical health. Accounts of daily life and their concern about the destruction of their environment reveal a heartfelt hope for the survival of the forests and humankind.

Rebecca Galeano, Florida State University, USA

A Slippery Slope: Children's Perceptions of their Role in Environmental Preservation in the Peruvian Amazon

Despite international attention and attempts to preserve the environmental diversity of the Amazon, it is an accepted fact that those who inhabit the forest must be the ones who preserve it. This presentation presents an analysis of how children in small rural riverine communities along the Amazon understand the importance of environmental preservation and whether or not they perceive themselves as important participants in the preservation process.

Children from two communities in the Peruvian Amazon, *San Rafael* and *Viente de Enero*, will be interviewed. Both *San Rafael* and *Viente de Enero* have received international funding over the past 5 years to implement ecotourism projects in hopes of creating a sustainable way of life.

San Rafael is a rural community of approximately 370 mestizo inhabitants 18 kilometers from the urban city of Iquitos (population 400,000) on the Amazon River. Accessible only by water, it takes a villager approximately 3 hours to travel to Iquitos by ferry.

Veinte de Enero is a smaller village located on the Yanuyaku river within the Pacaya Samiria nature reserve. Mestizo inhabitants who are descendants of the Kukama indigenous group total around 150 in number. The small town of Nauta, population 10,000, is approximately 6 hours away by boat.

Although both towns currently only have sporadic and limited electrical power from generators or car batteries the Peruvian government has recently installed the infrastructure to bring electricity to the village of San Rafael. Electrical poles and wires are presently poised to receive service in the near future.

This presentation will include findings from both villages, comparing and contrasting the results from each and linking findings to contextual factors.

Rob Giblett, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia

Quaking Zone: Where body, land and mind meet

Drawing on the work of Henry David Thoreau, in this paper I develop his concept/metaphor of 'the quaking zone' by distinguishing between feral and native quaking zones. Feral quaking zones are landscapes where the earth quakes and terror is experienced as a result of the inscription of modern industrial technology on the surfaces and depths (and sometime heights) of the body, earth and mind. The features of feral quaking zones and the quality of the human sensory experience of being in them is quite different, though, from quaking zones not made by modern human hands, or native quaking zones, such as swamps which are home to the fearful and horrific alligator and crocodile, and to death, decomposition and new life. Modern, industrial, even post-industrial, quaking zones are flooded, fire-ravaged or polluted cities, towns, or suburbs, watery wastelands, industrial ruins, toxic dumps, irradiated test-sites, muddy trenches, rust belts, and urban slums. They are feral quaking zones in which the natural elements of earth, air, fire and water have not only been displaced from their proper

places and disrupted from their creative mixtures, but have also been mixed destructively, run amok, caused havoc and made wastelands. Pre-industrial, and pre- and post-modern, quaking zones are dismal swamps, melancholic marshes, miry bogs, despondent sloughs and other exquisite wetlands. They are native quaking zones in which the elements of earth, air, fire and water are mixed creatively and are at home in their own place. Thinking about some landscapes as quaking zones gets away from the culture/nature, human/environment, artificial/natural divides and develops new ways of thinking and being that involve both culture and nature, people and place, body and earth, and body, mind, earth and water.

Deborah Guess, PhD candidate, Melbourne College of Divinity

Arthur Peacocke's theology of Emergent Evolution: A Resource for Ecological Christology

Ecological theology is a borderline discipline both in the negative sense that it is on the whole treated marginally within Christian churches (despite their frequent rhetoric of concern around environmental issues) and in the positive sense that, as is generally the case for ecological areas of concern, its nature is interdisciplinary both academically and in the broader cultural and political sense of engaging at many levels.

Like other forms of Christian theology, ecotheology is required to give a significant place to an understanding of the event and person of Jesus Christ. In addition, the ecological conscious which informs ecotheology requires it to have a praxis orientation which prioritizes the concrete and particular over the abstract and universal. These requirements together indicate that a prime task of ecochristology is to articulate the distinctive, particular meaning of the event of Jesus Christ (the Incarnation). To date ecotheology has tended to prominently affirm the cosmic, general meaning of the Incarnation (as symbolising God's interest in, involvement in, or affirmation of, matter), but has given less prominence to discussing the meaning of the Incarnation as a particular, concrete event.

Scientist and theologian Arthur Peacocke (1924-2006), using the insights of evolutionary theory, expresses the distinctiveness of the Incarnation in terms of the process of emergent evolution. In this perspective the event of Jesus Christ both occurs within a context which has a broader (past and future) pattern of meaning, and is a genuinely novel, historically and geographically located, 'emergent' event. Peacocke considered that he had spent his life on various 'borderlines' such as between physics and chemistry, physical chemistry and biochemistry, and science and theology: borderline positions which have equipped his work to potentially inform the discipline of ecotheology in its task of positing the Incarnation as a particular and located event.

Xiumei Guo and Dora Marinova, Curtin University, Australia

'Economic Prosperity and Sustainability in China: Seeking Confucian Wisdom for Adaptation and Mitigation of Global Climate Change'

China has enjoyed miraculous economic growth in the past three decades. The country now has the world's second largest economy. However, China's economic expansion has been accompanied with the increasing environmental deterioration as the country has become the top global greenhouse gas emitter. Therefore, there is a desperately need for China to adopt a

sustainability course which allows for the right balance between economic prosperity, social justice and environmental protection. Actually, is the concept of sustainability new to China? How can China achieve sustainability by learning from the past and the country's rich history and tradition?

More than 2500 years ago, Confucius advocated “the unity of humankind with nature” and other ideas to encourage the harmonious relationship between human activities and the natural environment. Nowadays, we can see that Confucius' thought informed the basic concept of modern sustainability. However, Mao's slogan during the Cultural Revolution “People must be able to conquer nature” has led China to pursue economic prosperity without paying much attention to the natural environment. As the most populous country in the world, China is also contributing greatly to the global problems related to climate change.

Under the pressure of global warming, the world, including China, is desperately seeking solutions. This paper explores the wisdom of Confucius for sustainability and draws implications for solving problems related to climate change. It argues that absorbing nourishment from the Chinese cultural gene of Confucianism is important for China to educate its citizens to improve their environmental awareness. In fact, Confucianism is becoming more and more influential in China and Confucian philosophy can provide useful guidelines for achieving sustainability, particularly for changing the course in its economic development. This paper provides a strategic model for the proper interaction and integration of the principles of Confucianism and the modern concept of sustainability. China's heritage of its rich Confucian culture and its recent policy shift towards sustainability will help the nation to alleviate the global environmental issues and cooperate with the rest of the world to tackle climate change.

Benjamin Habib, La Trobe University, Australia

Climate Change Consciousness: Planting Philosophy as the Seed for Cultivating Behavioural Change

Climate change problem has its roots in our expectations—culture, history, education, market, advertising etc—which are not entirely our own. Our consumption choices are driven by manipulated wants, not fundamental needs. As a result, addressing climate change forces us all to challenge the very nature of who we are — our personal behaviour, our notions of success, our perceptions, education, institutions, culture and society. All of this is grounded in how we perceive our relationship with the ecosystems that sustain us.

This paper proceeds from the premise that lasting behavioural change is not possible without changing one's underlying beliefs. With this in mind, the author has trialled an activity with first year undergraduate students called the “climate change philosophy pyramid” to help students explore the process of environmental consciousness and behavioural change. Through a series of questions, this activity encouraged students to examine the underlying philosophical, epistemological, ontological and cosmological ideas upon which they have built their perspectives and behavioural responses to climate change.

From the direct observations of the author, this activity appeared to be an excellent starting point for self-examination and group reflection among the participating student cohort. The objective of this paper is to present the idea of the “climate change philosophy pyramid” as a

seed for developing a more rigorous practical tool for educators and climate change activists to use in helping ordinary people along their personal journey toward environmental consciousness and behavioural change.

Anna Halaloff, PhD candidate, Monash University, Australia

Multifaith Responses to Climate Change

In recent years a heightened awareness of global risks has produced an unprecedented interest in global peace and security initiatives. This presentation examines how multifaith initiatives have been implemented as cosmopolitan peacebuilding strategies to counter global risks—such as climate change and terrorism—and advance common security in ultramodern societies. From the 1960s onward, multifaith movements, alongside other social movements, including the peace, women’s and environmental movements, focused on issues of human and environmental security. While environmental concerns began to occupy a prominent place in the public sphere during the 1990s, the global risk of terrorism marginalised the issue of climate change at the turn of the 21st Century. However, following the release of *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006, the risk of climate change has begun to eclipse terrorism as the most prominent perceived threat to public security. Multifaith movements have transformed these crises into opportunities to build new models of activism and governance by drawing on the wisdom of multiple faith traditions. Insights gained from the study of ultramodern multifaith movements thereby indicate that we are at once perched on the edge of extinction and of discovering new ‘mazeways’ of sustainable glocal living. It follows that the *politics of fear* can best be countered by a *politics of understanding* – founded on cosmopolitan principles of interconnectedness and equal rights for all beings – modelled by multifaith peacebuilding movements.

Clive Hamilton, Australian National University

The Metaphysics of Geoengineering

Support is building for proposals to respond to global warming with geoengineering schemes—“the deliberate large-scale manipulation of the planetary environment to counteract anthropogenic climate change”. The most talked-about scheme is a form of “solar radiation management” involving injection of sulphate aerosols into the upper atmosphere. Proposals to permanently alter the chemical composition of the planetary atmosphere mark a new era in the relationship of humans to the Earth. The planet as a whole for the first time becomes an object and the boundary between the natural and the artificial is finally dissolved. To begin to think about the meaning of this metaphysical rupture, this paper considers the way in which the human relationship to what exists is conditioned by the nature of technology, which is itself a means of revealing the nature of being. I want to ask whether climate change and geoengineering represent not just a dangerous stage in the evolution of human society but a change in the nature of the Earth itself, so that the destiny of the Earth and of its human inhabitants form a unity.

Amzad Hossain and Dora Marinova, Curtin University, Perth

Self-Reliance and Living on the Edge of Climate Change

This paper defines self-reliance as a state that communities exposed to climate change can pursue to become sustainable. It implies living on their own accord pursuing an ethically righteous socio-economic culture in harmony with nature. Self-reliance is a self-regulating edge for practicing sustainable development in its full meaning, context and dynamics.

There is ample scientific evidence for anthropogenically generated climate change and this has been linked to the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. A further aggravating factor for the planet's ill health is the high level of consumption. A retreat from the present norms of development is required, and practicing sustainability within the concept of self-reliance could be a solution.

The paper refers to examples from traditional societies in Bangladesh and Australia to emphasise the importance of values-driven development. Such communities perennially pursue livelihoods without unsustainable emissions and heavy ecological footprints (as is in the urbanised world). Their co-existence with nature facilitates a better understanding of the natural world.

The values that inspire traditional societies to recognise self-reliance within local ecological systems as a sustainable pathway can reverse the culture of destruction of nature and society as being pursued by modernists. Addressing climate change can be embedded in self-reliant livelihood adhering to the sustainability principles at household, community, national and global level. The main shift in attitudes and practices towards arresting unnatural climate change can be achieved through values education rooted in people's spirituality. Acquiring naturalism through values education can make people understand nature and re-establish their broken connectedness with the natural world.

There is no proven alternative policy framework yet to prevent human made climate change. A policy network at national and global level is required for transforming the present culture of wasteful exploitation towards the culture of self-reliant sustainable practices, and values education should form part of it.

Christopher Howard, PhD candidate, Massey University, New Zealand

Re-enchantment on the Edge of the Himalayas: Sacred travel as a sign of the times

Research demonstrates that sacred travel, more generally known as pilgrimage, has been experiencing worldwide growth in recent years. Traditional religious sites and pilgrimage routes receiving increasing numbers of visitors include Santiago de Compostella, Bodh Gaya, Lourdes, Jerusalem, Mecca and the river Ganges, among others. Sites associated with cultural or national heritage – from Stonehenge and Delphi to Graceland and Lenin's tomb – are also seeing rising numbers of visitors who journey to them in manners that resemble pilgrimage. Still others make pilgrimage-like journeys to remote places of natural beauty and the culturally-exotic, such as the Himalayas, Machu Picchu and the Sahara desert. It would appear that contemporary sacred travel, a practice which blends pre-modern and modern elements, may reflect the ambiguities, as well as the spiritual needs of the times.

As people seek creative avenues for understanding, expressing, reconciling and temporarily stepping back from the complexities and uncertainties of life in late modernity – life often portrayed as being increasingly ‘on edge’ and in need of re-enchantment, making a pilgrimage is an increasingly popular option. One destination with a longstanding tradition of sacred travel is the middle Himalayan region, encompassing northern India, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. In this paper, I will briefly trace the evolution of pilgrimage and tourism in the region, focusing on how such ‘power places’ amass and perpetuate their ‘spiritual magnetism’ and draw particular visitors. Situating Himalayan sacred travel in a historical framework, I will discuss the various motivations, perceptions and practices of contemporary travellers in the region. Taking this phenomenon as a particular case, I will explore more generally what sacred travel can tell us about the zeitgeist of late modernity.

Su-Chen Hsu and Chien-Ming Lu, Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan

The New Ethical Relations of Eco-Art within the Social Movements – Examples of Plant-Matter NeoEden Art Project (2008-2010) of the Sa'owac Village of Amis Tribe at Taiwan

The Plant-Matter NeoEden has been worked on from an eco-art and cultural movement by Su-Chen Hsu and Chien-Ming Lu from 2006 to 2010. The project is beginning with the “Plants in adverse environments – Taiwan Series”, and also includes its sub-projects are their participation in the indigenous movement, such as “Internal Migrants”: Riverbank Vegetable Garden Plants in Daluan Village, “Tribe Was Born”: Sa’owac niyaro Was Born in a Vegetable Patch, and “Cultural Reconstruction: Material Cultural World of the Riverside Amis”.

The Sao’wac village is located the Dahan riverbank on the edge of metropolitan area in north Taiwan. In 2008, Hsu and Lu initiated an investigation on the agricultural environment for Sao’wac. In 2009, the village had faced compulsory evacuation by state apparatus. And they and residents went through a period of self-reconstruction. Now Hsu and Lu are working at the cross-cultural exchange that goes beyond the ethnic and social class restrictions. Artists/activists have employed a contemporary art style is no limitation on “media”, and they have expanded this channel of communication with the outside world in the form of: (1) mass media, (2) the power of writing, (3) social movements, and (4) artistic manifestations.

The village reconstruction and artistic creation both beyond the state apparatus, but they held 8 exhibitions in official gallery/museum in Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Melbourne and Beijing. Furthermore, the project has also got The 8th Annual Taishin Arts Awards Winner for Visual Arts. The creator has consolidated situated-knowledge and artistic method into social practice, their strategy is created a fresh counter-attacking route for the indigenous movement and a new cooperation between the indigenous and the Han people in Taiwan. Last but not least, the project has re-opened a new ethical relationship between the country, the consortium, as well as the society in general.

Rumana Islam, PhD candidate, Curtin University, Australia

Bangladesh Agriculture in the Age of Climate Change

Human induced climate change and associated sea level rise are the significant environmental issues in today's world. Though Bangladesh has very little contribution to global warming, it is the front line victim of climate change due to its geographical position, dense population, and strongly dependence on climate sensitive agriculture.

Bangladesh is an agro-based economy, and its agriculture contributes to 21% of the GDP and sustains livelihood of the nation's 52% labor force. Agricultural crop of Bangladesh is greatly influenced by seasonal characteristics and different variables of climate such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, day-length etc. It is also, often constrained by different disasters such as floods, droughts, soil and water salinity, cyclone and storm surges. These disasters are likely to be aggravated by climate change and sea level rise. Climate change is predicted to hamper the production of rice which is the staple crop of Bangladesh. This will increase the nation's dependence on other crops and imported food.

Agriculture in Bangladesh is already under pressure from huge and increasing demands for food and also, lack of enough agricultural lands and depleting water resources -both. Climate change offers additional challenge for policy makers and planners in Bangladesh. New concepts are required in the management of natural resources and agricultural systems. The paper suggests that general adaptation to climate change could mitigate some of the problems related to the issue.

The paper argues that general adaptation would be effectual as culturally people of Bangladesh are good steward of nature due to religious or spiritual beliefs. It is believed that human being is made with clay and they have to go back to soil after death. This faith makes them respectful to land and nature. People of Bangladesh are already praised for their congruence and surveillance in natural disasters. This strength of adaptation came from people's respect to nature and deep cultural heritage.

Jay Johnston, University of Sydney

'On Having a Furry Soul: Concepts of Spiritual Subjectivities in Otherkin and Furry Subcultures'

The concept of the soul has often been deployed to locate and enforce barriers between the human and animal, and it is therefore not surprising that it would have a role in emerging forms of subjectivity articulated in Otherkin and Furry human-animal subcultures. This paper aims to identify the aspects of religious traditions being employed in these contexts: especially concepts from Buddhism and Jainism and contemporary universalised forms of Shamanism (such as those developed by Michael Harner). Secondly, with reference to the work of Donna Haraway and Kelly Oliver, it will consider the ethical aspects of the type of animal-human relationship that these emergent forms of spirituality and subjectivity assume. At their heart sit a series of tensions and boundary challenges, not only betwixt 'animal-human' but also self-community and matter -spirit. Simultaneous local-global dynamics are constituted in these non-theistic, self-directed spiritual practices.

Joan Kelly, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Zones of Contact: The Making of a Painting

Artist Joan Kelly operates in “zones of contact”, a theme elaborated in the 2006 Sydney Biennale: places where competing narratives of power compete, where silences speak to unwritten histories. Kelly reinvents the body through the environment of these zones: be it the foreign worker chattels of Little India, the brothels of Calcutta, or the factory towns of the Shenzhen Economic Zone. These zones mark the intersection of the grand narrative of globalization and progress with those of the lived reality at the bottom of the pyramid. This is landscape to the art of Joan Kelly. Kelly reinvents the body through the environment of these zones: be it the foreign worker chattels of Little India, the brothels of Calcutta, or the factory towns of the Shenzhen Economic Zone. The research traces the ten days history of making a painting in Little India, Singapore where competing powers operate in rivalry and congruity. The painting is 2 meters in height, oil on canvas and made in the street. The location provokes the intersection of local Indian food shop owners, Chinese shop house owners, Bangladesh migrant workers, Indian and Chinese female massage workers, male trannies, international tourists, local professionals and the artist of Irish decent. The painting acts as the point of encounter. The act of making is viewed as discovery and destiny rather than execution. The painting traces the history of its making as a living record of the intersection, communication and access to those who made its contact. How do the visual arts gain acceptance and legitimize contact with minority communities? Can visual language access tangible and intangible knowledge? Can an artist mould perceptions towards abstract concepts? The view is intimate and seen from the artists.

Takeshi Kimura, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Voices from the Edge: Religions for Sustainability

In the present framework of the Sustainability Studies and Climate Science, there is virtually little room for any insights from religions to be taken seriously despite religious scholars’ earnest research on religion and ecology. In this secular knowledge system, it is a daunting challenge for both scholars of religions and religious practitioners to make their views heard and incorporated into any sort of attempt to construct public discourse on sustainability. Yet, there are some important roles for them to play. On the side of scholar of religion, it is necessary to delineate what sort of contributions both of them are able to make within the broad framework of Sustainability Studies. I will discuss the issue of how to locate religion or cultural religions in the scheme of Sustainability by referring to several examples from Japanese religions. At the practical level, several religious organizations have attempted to contribute to solve environmental issues. I will refer to several cases such as Ise Jingu, a major Shinto Shrine, a model of religion-based environmental conscience, and followers of Mokichi Okada through several religious organizations, who have been carrying out natural farming since 1940s.

Justin Lawson, PhD candidate, Deakin University, Australia

Amongst the climate of chaos, there is faith: An analysis of faith-based community responses to issues of sustainability and biodiversity

This study aims to investigate how followers of a faith-based tradition perceive and act upon various environmental concerns. The study is based in Australia, with a focus on faith communities' awareness and involvement across five environmental management themes; biodiversity protection, energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management and cultural property heritage.

In addressing these themes, the study is designed to investigate five methods of implementation, namely:

1. Education

How are faith groups informed?

How effective is the dissemination of information relating to issues of sustainability?

2. Advocacy

In what capacity do faiths advocate support in environmental issues (e.g. politically, corporately and/or locally)?

3. Facilitating action

How do faiths engage in actions?

4. Networking

What networks exist?

Where are the gaps?

5. Engaged ethics

Are there any effective campaigns derived from an environmental ethic?

One thousand surveys were sent to members of the general public, while 2989 surveys were sent to representatives of 56 different denominations and faith communities throughout Australia. Over thirty interviews have been conducted with 21 representatives of different faith communities as well as over a dozen site observations performed. This is a work in progress, with almost 600 responses from the surveys already obtained and with 40 of the 56 groups represented in the study.

Preliminary analysis shows that there has been an inconsistent implementation of strategies and very little interaction with other faiths on matters concerning the environment, primarily due to lack of funding and human resources. One significant barrier to upgrading sites of worship was the restrictions placed on heritage listed properties. There were very mixed views on how deeply involved faiths groups should be with regard to environmental issues; these mixed views were held amongst religious, spiritual and atheist individuals alike. Also emerging from the data is a need to readdress the cornucopian-accommodating-communalist-deep ecology environmental ideology to include a spiritual paradigm into the spectrum.

Chien-Ming Lu, Yeong-Tyi Day, Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan

Agricultural Technique under Indigenous Gathering Culture - Examples of Village Farm Garden of the Sa'owac Village of Amis Tribe at Taiwan

Sa'owac Village locates at river bank of subordinating area of metro Taipei in western Taiwan. Inhabitants are composed of Amis tribe having departed from their homeland for around 40 years, mostly born of 1925~1945 with their former and beginning life of 30-40 years in indigenous tribes, and their later half of about another 40 years in metropolitan areas, gather to form a new metro-styled indigenous tribe.

The formation of the village started off exploration for new territory on metropolitan, which include collecting traditional herbs, gathering wild edible plants, and fishing in the river. After they found a land reclaimed from the river mother-land like, they colonized here, by building shield, improving environment, and planting. It has been over 30 years, and this village becomes a self-feed community, in spite of the metropolitan resources. It starts to regain the traditional practices.

The fundamental of the self-feed comes from high-efficient agricultural collection technique, and high-rated harvest food-gathering chart. The village farm garden, based on its river bank original shape, with long term farming, form a micro-valley ecological system, which provides high-efficiency and varieties for collecting food. At the same time, through continuous research on environment, and appropriate gathering rules, build up high-rated harvest environment for collection. Such combining form of gathering and agriculture from subordinate of metropolitan will be a paragon in the future.

Freya Mathews, La Trobe University, Australia

At the Edge of Meaning: the Eco-Genesis of Religion and Ethics

In the face of environmental crisis we urgently need agreement, across cultures and nations, on the moral significance of the biosphere. Environmental philosophers have tried to *reason* their way towards such moral accord by devising *arguments* for environmental ethics. But arguments crumple in the face of people's established moral convictions. Moral "truth" is not a product of reason; rather it is hatched inside stories, the kind of primal stories that have been the province of myth and religion. Historically, such stories have been inescapably culturally specific and relative. Is it possible in the modern world to imagine a *common* story, one that could emanate in a global moral commitment to our increasingly stricken natural world? Could science for instance serve as such a universal story? This is doubtful. Science may be a universal form of knowledge but it is not a story because stories are inherently normative, and science is normatively neutral. Yet a universal story, one which can be seen to subtend all religions and all ethics, and is in fact the very ground of meaning itself, is currently coming into view. It is a story which has been backgrounded throughout the history of civilization but which the Great Extinction Event currently taking place on the planet is finally bringing back to light. It is none other than the life-story of the earth.

Karin McKay, University of Western Sydney

Flourish or Fail: Cultural Wellbeing as creative ecological process'

Pressures of Global society have devalued deeply soulful creative and ecological practices that allow cultural and spiritual wellbeing to be lived. Although many facets of daily life influence wellbeing it is often viewed as static or something that can be attained, balanced and sustained but has reached the limits of usable meaning. This study uses data from sixty women artists and performers from the 2009 EarthSpirit Festival including The Wisdom Tree earth based spiritual group and four other women's groups from The Blue Mountains, to examine how the process of wellbeing was experienced through creative cultural practices. Arts based narrative analysis, in-depth interviews and ethnographic observation were used to examine practices of art making, experiencing nature, meditation, journaling, group process, connecting to divine energy, exhibiting artworks, performing in and organizing a festival. Overall the study found a distinct "cultural wellbeing" process, which had at its centre three core elements of centering, creating and sharing. These elements, common to all the groups, were used primarily to access a life essence energy, interpreted and manifested in unique forms by these diverse groups. The findings suggest that far from being static, cultural wellbeing includes a series of transformational processes in an ebb and flow motion on a continuum within certain limits. This process follows a similar pattern to ecological life cycles such as birth, moon tides and the roots and branches growth of trees. Although wellbeing has been viewed as life-balance, it should be recognised as a process encapsulating constant cyclical breaking apart and reforming with shifting phases of growth and development. This means that creative practices, therapy, community arts projects or education programs for sustainability and community wellbeing will flourish and fail depending upon the limits and phases of the individuals and groups involved. Instead of viewing these projects and cultural wellbeing processes as sustainable, new recreated projects even if in familiar forms need to be considered to align with the synergy of that particular community. These findings are also relevant for organizations needing evidence of sustainable outcomes for endorsement from funding bodies as it provides a model demonstrating where in the process a project is located, so that vital funding is not cut right before a productive phase is entered.

Phil McManus and Glenn Albrecht, Sydney University and Murdoch University, Australia

Conflict in God's Country: Coal mining and thoroughbred breeding in the Upper Hunter, Australia

In May 2010 the proposed Bickham coal mine in the Upper Hunter region north-west of Sydney was rejected. The site is near the Pages River and upstream of the most valuable thoroughbred breeding farms in Australia. Is this decision an isolated incident attributable to the proposed mine being relatively small and located in an environmentally, culturally and economically sensitive area, or are we on the edge of a new era in environmental management? If it is the latter, what does this decision mean for hydrological considerations in other coal mining and agricultural conflicts? What does this decision mean for the numerous operating coal mines that are proposed for expansion, or for new coal mining proposals? The thoroughbred breeding industry is wealthy, well-connected and influential. What are the implications of this decision for communities that exhibit none of these

characteristics, and may already be experiencing displacement or solastalgia as their environment deteriorates around them?

This paper explores the above issues by considering the historical activities and expansion of the coal mining and thoroughbred breeding industries in the Upper Hunter Region, the perspectives of thoroughbred breeders with regard to nature and climate change, and the changing character of climate debates as competing industries position themselves in the region. These actions and debates contribute to the cultural construction and identity of the region – including as God’s country, as bursting with energy, as scarred land or as nature nurturing a crop of thoroughbred champions. How these identities co-exist or clash is important in shaping the context for decision making about the future of this region.

Anne Melano, PhD candidate, Monash University, Australia

The Grove as Crossing Point; Recovering a Spiritualised Nature

The grove offers a powerful and connective site of re-assertion of a spiritualised nature, in a discourse which is defiantly oppositional to that of the development of 'natural resources'. In connecting to nature, particularly in its iconic form of 'the forest', the struggle is to find a space where humans may enter both physically and within consciousness. In many places and times, the grove has been such a place of entry. In Jean Hegland's *Into the Forest* (1996), the grove symbolises not just a place of spiritual connection, but the place where a change in consciousness will be brought about and a new way of life will begin. In *Avatar* a 'virtual grove' is offered as a sacred, mystic space and as the crossing point where an American can join the consciousness of Pandora. While the relation of these texts to Indigenous cultures could be interpreted as problematic - Indigenous beliefs and practices functioning largely as a bridge for the Western protagonists' transcendence - there is more than this to the story of the grove, which offers a powerful mythos and continues, even within modernity, to value affiliation with nature.

Michael Newton, McMaster University, Canada

“We were saved by a tiny plant”: Reconnecting to nature in a remote fishing village

This is a study of a small community on the tip of Newfoundland’s Northern Peninsula. Here a small plant, that grows nowhere else on the island, and 35 others that are rare and endangered, have given the local people a new appreciation of the environment.

The people of Raleigh have always relied on the land and the ocean, which surrounds them on three sides, but a decline in the fishery has meant that they have had to leave to find work elsewhere in Canada. They long to return. Now some have been able to do that because of the discovery of rare plants on the bare rocky peninsula that lies across the bay from the village.

With their own ingenuity and help from botanists, conservationists, visual artists, poets, NGOs and government agencies, the people of the community have established a new connection with nature that has changed their lives as their area becomes a destination for botanists, artists and tourists from around the world.

This is a marginal community living literally on the edge: culturally, geographically and economically. In spite of liminality and indeed because of liminality this community has achieved a renewal of their connection to the natural environment. In fact, one local inhabitant described what is going on now as a spiritual renewal for the whole community.

The presentation will trace the community's move from an isolated village with a subsistence economy living off the land and the sea, through economic downturn and out migration to be able now to enjoy a renewal of spirit because of a tiny plant.

Albertina Nugteren, Tilbury University, The Netherlands

Academia on the edge between green and grey: A critical look at green projections into religious pasts

The history of Religious Studies as an academic discipline shows that religious ideas and practices are constantly in motion, even if stasis and boundedness are often regarded, both in scholarly and popular accounts, as the organising principles of religious life.

What happens when religious traditions, especially those distanced both in time and space, are being consulted for the sake of inspiration in contemporary green issues? Does all the selective mining of religious traditions for the sake of contemporary inspiration miss the point, and should a religious tradition, for history's sake, stay primarily within its particular bounded time and space? Or are the dynamics of cross-time and cross-space encounter an indication of one of the basic functions of religion, regardless of the historian's protest?

Whose interests are served when religious pasts are selectively explored? What pitfalls should be avoided? And are there any valid ways in which the historian of religion can accommodate such frivolous blurring of the edges? In other words, can the historian's grey scope ever meet the green gaze of today's inspiration seekers?

In this presentation I explore ways to set up criteria for such an encounter.

In spite of all the boundaries that the academic study of religion theoretically respects and obeys, much crossing of boundaries and blurring of edges is constantly taking place, both within academia and outside, in "the real world" of needs, hopes and fears. The historian of religion and the area specialist may not like this, and would rather keep a particular tradition (and especially its scriptures) within its contained time and space, but now that intercultural traffic crossing over the edges of distinct traditions has become an established fact, what should be the criteria for such a-historic "interpretation", its selective "borrowing", and its subsequent "appropriation" in green inspirational discourse?

I argue that although religious traditions have no formal copyrights, there should be methodological restrictions to processes of appropriation by outsiders. Rules for a "fair trade" should be established. In this regard it may be the task of the academic historian of religion as well as the area specialist to contextualise the "grey" treasures of the past and the distant, in order to tone down the frivolous blurring of edges in popular "green" discourse.

Marnie Orr, Middlesex University, United Kingdom

Shifting Terrain: Activating land and body through knowledge systems exchange

To engage in the world whilst living on the edge implies promoting individual agency, starting with whatever sensibilities are present. Each individual exists as a body, a transitional and liminal site, changing with the seasons, over time, and according to immediate environments. The domestic body, labouring body and the dancing body, as well as other physical *approaches to place* that we assume as bodies adapted by environment, can be perceived as shifting states reflecting cultural and ecological concerns. The body is hence directly engaging with matters surrounding sustainability and continuance based on its capability to physically and verbally articulate critical response to interior (anatomical) and exterior (environmental) space.

In addressing current issues surrounding our relationship to the world, ourselves and each other, this presentation outlines the work of live research artists Orr & Sweeney, proposing practical, strategic ‘tools for survival’, physical and verbal in nature. The ethos of this work embraces the body as the source of truth when perceived in relation to its environments. These ‘truths’ form our terrain of knowledge and experience, and can be mapped, navigated and referenced as we engage with the world.

As facilitators and artists, Orr & Sweeney ask, how can we activate land and activate ourselves when our ‘navigational tools’ are based on out-of-date readings? Their research generates new forums for face-to-face and face-to-place interaction in order to map and re-map personal, societal and transnational terrains towards this question.

Adopting an inter-cultural approach, these forums are designed to generate critical response across community, and are held within culturally and ecologically significant sites, in consultation with local knowledge holders, field scientists and land management professionals. In promoting diverse knowledge systems exchange, this multimedia presentation highlights Orr & Sweeney’s research perspectives in addressing the body’s individual and shared relation to a changing environment.

Michael Pearce, University of Queensland, Australia

Taming the ‘wild’ spirits in Thailand: Nature, consumerism, and alterations at an ecotone

This paper identifies some of the religious dimensions of human interactions with the natural environment in Thailand and addresses some the cultural ways in which such interactions have been conceptualized and managed. Through a discussion of small shrines known as ‘spirit houses’ the essay explores the role of these shrines as mediators of relationships that are established between humans and the places they inhabit. Local interpretations of these small but ubiquitous shrines in contemporary urban Thailand suggest how edge-spaces, or the ecotones where human development and urbanization meet undeveloped and ‘wild’ nature, can be defined and negotiated in the local cultural context through animist or relational principles. It will be argued that rapid development of the Thai nation-state has contributed to re-interpretations of the shrines from their previously relational orientation, and this trend is particularly observable in urban areas. Although nature and culture have been defined in

various ways within the Thai context and the shrines discussed in this paper have been considered as representations of ‘civilized’ and ‘ordered’ culture dominating ‘wild’ and ‘untamed’ nature, the focus here is placed upon Thai attitudes towards the continuance of enshrining spirits as one method by which humans enter into appropriate relationships with the places they inhabit.

Dimity Podger and Zarin Slater, Macquarie University, Australia

A workshop to experience a faith organisation’s approach to learning at the edge: Comparative Study of the Bahá’í Writings and Education for Sustainable Development Literature

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an approach to education aligned with a transformative sustainability agenda. UNESCO has identified faith groups as playing a role in the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. However, there are few publications examining how faith organisations understand ESD in relation to their own perspective of principles necessary for individual and societal transformation and whether there is conceptual compatibility. These questions were addressed in the author’s doctoral research, which used a case study approach to examine the perspectives and experiences of the American Bahá’í Community as it considered ESD in relation to its vision, teachings, and goals.

This workshop revisits one of the activities from a Bahá’í ESD seminar of this faith community, which she assisted in designing, aimed at helping mainly Bahá’í participants to explore the relationships between the Bahá’í teachings and a section of ESD literature, and consider implications for Bahá’í educational and community development practice. Participants in this workshop will study excerpts from Tilbury and Wortman (2004) *Engaging people in sustainability* outlining key elements of ESD and excerpts from Bahá’í readings. Participants will discuss the central messages, spiritual values and spiritual principles of the excerpts, identify any relationships between aspects of the Bahá’í Faith and ESD, and identify potential points of synergy. Through participating in this workshop attendees will learn about ESD, aspects of the Bahá’í Faith, and consider a community education approach to learning at the edge.

Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, University of Sydney

“Living on the Divide: Transpecies identities. What can be learnt from Furrines and Otherkin?”

Humans with a furry edge to them?

Furrines are the subject of much suspicion from an array of perspectives. From derision on popular American TV shows and in internet forums, much of this anxiety appears to be homophobic, a little prudish and fearful of a perceived disloyalty to what counts as the ‘objectively’ or properly ‘human’. A recent academic paper published in *Society and Animals* pathologises a proportion of furrines as suffering from ‘species identity disorder’, which they base on ‘gender identity disorder’. Gender Identity Disorder remains highly controversial within both psychology and beyond, so what does the labelling of aspects of furriness as ‘disorder’ tell us about the desires around normative humanness? To have attracted so much

suspicion and derision, we might ask; are furies, in fact, on to something? I propose that furies can be thought of as living on the edge of normative humanness and that in their articulation of a connection with animal figures, totems, spiritualities, there is much that this subculture might tell us about how being more than ‘just human’, is a risk worth taking.

Lori Pye, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Living On the Edge: An Ecopsychological Perspective (1.5 hours interactive session)

Our disconnection from self, one another, and nature has us living on the edge of social, environmental, economic, educational, political, and personal crisis - these are interconnected issues. This forces us to ask: is the human species eco-suicidal? Will we destroy our species, others, and the very planet we rely on for survival?

Being on such an ecopsychological edge urges us to reflect, to acquire the skills and understanding necessary to change or transform - to evolve more consciously. The sooner we do this, the more quickly we will discover richer sources of human sensibility, resiliency, flourishing, aesthetics, and acquire the knowledge on which an enduring ethic, a sense of a sustainable direction can be built.

During this session I will import images and metaphors from the rich field of ecology into psychology, which allows us to "ecologize" our experience of the psyche, and "psychologize" our relationship to nature, providing opportunity for change. Because psyche too is an ecosystem, it shares characteristics of all ecosystems - the complexity of processes, interdependence, differentiation, complexity, need for diversity, and the inevitability of change. The objective of this presentation is to assist in transforming the way we look at self, other, and planet – as interdependent, diverse, and evolving ecosystems.

My contribution to this conference will be to compare principles from depth psychology with corresponding principles in biology and ecology in order to imagine how metaphors and images can either hold a framework or myth in place, or stimulate the creation of changes in attitude and behavior, in other words - the creation of a new narrative that recognizes humanity *as a part* of nature. From this change in perspective, we might better address the enduring questions of our role on the planet.

Bob Reece and Anne Boyd, Murdoch University and Sydney University

The Sounding of Australian History: *Kabbarli at Ooldea* – a new opera

Kabbarli at Ooldea is a projected new chamber opera on the life of a contested icon in Australian history, pioneering anthropologist Daisy Bates (1859-1951) by historian-librettist Bob Reece and composer Anne Boyd. Known as *Kabbarli* (Dreamtime ‘wise-woman’ or ‘grandmother’) Daisy Bates lived alone in a tent on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain for sixteen years (1919-1935) working to support desert Aborigines attracted to the historic waterhole at Ooldea, an environment substantially disrupted by the establishment of the Trans Australian Railway. Focusing upon a newly composed extended ‘Aria’ (to be performed during the Conference), this paper will offer a number of perspectives on ‘living on the Edge’: Bates physically lives in Nature on the edge of the desert; she is poised between the Eurocentric and indigenous worlds, declaring herself able ‘to think Black’.

Claiming to be a Christian, she is nevertheless opposed to the missionisation of what she calls ‘my natives’ and has a profound regard for and understanding of their spirituality. At the same time, she firmly believes that they are doomed to extinction and that her ethnographic work amounts to writing their epitaph. The new opera is designed to be cross-cultural. It will involve the participation of an indigenous dance company; a main indigenous character; the use of *Pitjantjatjara* in significant sections of the work (to be learned and sung by non-indigenous opera students at the Sydney Conservatorium) and non-singing parts for indigenous participants to be drawn from the local communities in the Ooldea area. It will project a ‘Dreamtime’ cosmology both in its setting and through its principal characters. This encounter between a white woman and the indigenous world on the edge of European civilization offers an opportunity for the exploration of complex issues surrounding indigenous representation in the creative arts, in particular the scope for collaborative practice in the production of a contemporary Australian musical work, telling a uniquely Australian story.

Vivienne Robertson, Western Australia

Emerald and Ruby: A Sufi Vision for Transforming the Edge

For the Sufi, the human is a living embodiment of an unfathomably great mystery which continually calls us into being. The work of the Sufi is to awaken to an intimacy with, and embodied realisation of, this mystery.

This paper will offer an approach to ‘living on the edge’ based on contemporary Sufi practice which places the ‘Ruby of the Awakened Heart’ at the centre of our collective work. It will also suggest and explore steps towards a necessary balance between the development of consciousness and the development of conscience. The paper will propose that the discipline of cultivating the mirror of the heart allows us to move toward the articulation of a vision and wisdom which is informed by a source beyond our everyday functioning.

This source will be presented as a place of return, symbolised in Persian lore by the Emerald Mountain, where the soul remembers its purpose and regains awareness of the place where “the two seas join”. The paper will present the view that it is here, where the inner and outer realities meet and where the eternal comes face to face with the temporal, that we are presented with a guidance which can transform and clarify our vision of Reality. Understanding and utilising technologies for this journey to the Emerald Mountain will be presented as an essential part of our quest to prevent further damage to the earth.

It will be proposed that by submitting to this alchemical work, like gemstones whose beauty and clarity emerge after periods of endurance, heat and pressure, we are able to both truly know and adequately tend the ‘sacred manuscript of nature’ with a vision illuminated by the eternal light.

Daniel Roland, Kent State University, USA

“Responding to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Sunday Sermon: A Study in How Clergy Members Apply Scripture in Addressing an Environmental Disaster”

The presentation will report on the findings from an exploratory research project analyzing sermons delivered by clergy members from various Christian denominations speaking to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The research project utilizes Grounded Theory and the interpretative framework of Dervin’s Sense-Making Methodology to identify the contextual dimensions from which clergy approach and perceive the oil spill situation, the various elements employed to construct conceptual bridges to achieve a sense-making experience of the oil spill situation, and the desired outcomes called for through the sermon texts.

The research project invites clergy members to participate in an electronic survey designed to gather personal demographic information, to discover the various information resources used when preparing a sermon addressing an environmental disaster, and to measure the extent and dimensions of clergy member interest in environmental issues. The survey also asks for demographic data concerning the congregation(s) served by clergy members such as economic impact of the oil spill, clean up volunteerism, financial support, response to sermons addressing environmental concerns, and so on.

The research project also asks clergy members to submit digital copies of the text of sermons addressing the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The research project aggregates the sermon texts into a database to facilitate keyword searching and the discovery of unique and common patterns, themes, references, etc., within and across different variables.

The presentation will speak to the conference theme of the challenges and approaches of social, spiritual, and cultural change and focus on the Sunday sermon as the communication medium for effecting such change. Sense-Making Methodology is especially appropriate for the theme of a conference that seeks to define living on the edge. The presentation will also contribute to the multi-disciplinary nature of the conference by speaking from the perspective of Information Science.

John Ryan, PhD candidate, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia

Kaanya in a land of contradictions: Towards sacred botany

Concerned with the sacred topographies of flora, as well as the spiritual dimensions of human-plant interdependencies, ‘sacred botany’ attends to the interstices between spirituality, culture and plants. Building on precedents from the ecological humanities (Rose, 2005), cultural ecology (Head, 2009), and spiritual ecology (Ivakhiv, 2007; Kellert 2007), sacred botany endeavours to complement – and perhaps contradict – the quantitatively-oriented approaches to human engagements with flora offered by ethnobotany and economic botany. In outlining the need for a interdisciplinary research model encompassing plants, culture, and spirituality, this presentation draws on the example of the Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*). The Christmas Tree has held a prominent, if befuddling, position in the topographical imagination of Western Australian settler society. The semi-parasitic tree has baffled and intrigued scientists and settlers for centuries (Hopper 2010). Known in modern

botanical circles as the world's largest parasitic tree, the *Nuytsia* is endemic to the Southwest Floristic Province of Western Australia. Nineteenth-century colonist George Fletcher Moore characterised it as 'another anomaly in this land of contradictions', whilst botanist Ludwig Diels confessed that 'I do not know of anything similar in the vegetable kingdom'. However, *Nuytsia* has a rich spiritual tradition amongst the Aboriginal people of the Southwest. Late nineteenth-century ethnographer, Daisy Bates, described it as *kaanya*, 'the tree of the dead, the sacred tree'. Through a reading of the cultural history of the Christmas Tree, as preserved in colonial settler journals, I conclude by pointing towards larger questions: how do spiritual beliefs about plants inform cultural and aesthetic attitudes? Where does sacred botany rest amongst its more technicized cousins of scientific botany and ethnobotany? What methods should sacred botany use to capture and theorise the spiritual dimensions of human relationships to plants?

Tsutomu Sawai, Kyoto University, Japan

Ecological Ethics in Sekimon-Shingaku Thought: Considering Ishida Baigan's Religious Experience

This paper illustrates the ecological implications of Sekimon-Shingaku thought, with reference to its founder, Ishida Baigan. Sekimon-Shingaku was a popular religious ethical movement drawing from Confucianism and Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa era. This movement popularized religious ethics in the 18-19th century overcoming such distinctions as social status and gender. Robert N. Bellah derived his theory of "civil religion" from the Sekimon-Shingaku movement. Although often regarded as secular ethics, it was based on religious experience.

In order to practice ethics, those committed to Shingaku were required to seek Enlightenment, called "knowing human nature" ("sei" o shiru: 「性」を知る). In other words, the attainment of a state of Enlightenment was the highest priority for the practice of religious ethics in daily life. Baigan's philosophical reflection arose in his heart each time when he was faced with every thing and event on the basis of his religious experiences. Based on his religious experiences, Baigan's religious ethics was not limited merely to human relations, but extended to those between humans and nature. The Western philosophical tradition pursued social ethics and ecological ethics separately as distinct areas of study, but Sekimon-Shingaku did not differentiate the two areas. Baigan's philosophical reflections in regarding the relationships both among humans and those between humans and nature were grounded in his own religious experiences.

This presentation elucidates the structural characteristics of Baigan's religious ethics, and then his understanding of the relationships between humans and nature. Traditional Japanese wisdoms of Sekimon-Shingaku suggest contemporary ecological problems.

Sylvie Shaw, University of Queensland, Australia

An Ecological-Religious Conversion: Turned on to Nature

Religious conversion is a process of individual change often triggered by emotionally-laden events. Theologian Bernard Lonergan (1972) describes conversion as 'an other-worldly

falling in love that is total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, or reservations'. This paper argues that a similar process occurs in transformative experiences of ecological conversion. It poses two main directions of eco-conversion that compels an individual towards a self-surrendering commitment to nature; they are experiences of pleasure and displeasure. My intention is to examine common elements in eco-conversion narratives to develop a profile of a collective environmental vision. From tender moments awakening to the natural world to traumatic events witnessing the destruction of nature, individuals adopt a kind of religious fervency, embracing their transformation and celebrating their realisation of environmental problems through a range of personal lifestyle choices and socially-engaged action. But this process of change may also be experienced as a difficult personal upheaval. Grief and despair may stifle their ability to act. Denial is possible. Rather than feeling empowered through collective action, individualism may lead to a feeling of powerlessness disillusioned by a political system which (they see) has turned its back on environmental problems.

(Lonergan, B. 1972. *Method in Theology*. London: Herder and Herder, 240)

Sylvie Shaw and Michael Pearce, University of Queensland, Australia

Rivering from catchment to the Bay: A study of the Brisbane River

The Brisbane River is the icon of this capital city. Via interviews with individuals connected to the river through work, volunteering, and leisure activities, the presentation journeys the river from the hidden spring on the edge of a tiny town nestled in the lea of the hills surrounding Brisbane to the wondrous Moreton Bay, a marine haven and marine park. Along the way we discuss the theoretical assumptions underlying the research study on the social and spiritual dimensions of the river. Using an analytical framework of eco-habitus and nature-based values, the paper reveals the significance of the river to Brisbane residents and 'river carers'. For some it is sacred, for others utilitarian; some see the river as a backdrop to the cityscape, a good place for a walk or a great view, while others respond to the river's call and get involved in riverscape regeneration. The river also attracts those with a religious or spiritual bent as a place for reverence, for regenerating their spirit and for building a sense of river-social and river-spiritual capital. 'Does the river have a soul?' Yes, replies the informant, 'It has thousands.'

Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, Punjab University, Pakistan

An Ecological Journey through Medieval Muslim Bengal: Reflection of Nature in Islamic Architectural Calligraphy

Defined by the Prophet Muhammad as *din al-fitra* or the religion of nature, Islam emerged as the religion of ecology in the riverine Bengal during its eight hundred years of historical presence there. Because of its emphasis on natural balance and harmony with the environment, Islam gradually became the popular religion of the ever-growing picturesque Bengali villages as human settlement expanded along the delta and as rice cultivation spread. Bengal's wonderful ecological balance and natural harmony left a strong impact in its popular literature, art, architecture, culture, and folklore. This symbiotic relationship between humankind and nature was thwarted during the colonial period in the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries because of the excessive exploitation of both human and natural resources. With ever increasing consumer culture, insatiable greed and lack of

social justice as a result of globalization, ecological balance of the region is deteriorating even more rapidly than before.

The harmony between nature and Islamic societies that prevailed for ages, may have been already lost to a great degree as westernization, albeit in the name of modernization, is rapidly changing these traditional societies. But its historical imprints can still be seen in Islamic Art, an important visual medium to convey cultural and spiritual messages to its people. Thus it may be somewhat surprising to find environmental messages even in the Islamic inscriptions in Bengal. In these artistic creations of the past, one can feel a strong bondage of mankind with nature that also convey an important and vibrant message of pluralism-- unity within natural diversity – that prevailed long in the Islamic societies.

Mary Zeiss Stange, Skidmore College, USA

Hunting the Edges: The Intersection between “Hunter-Conservationism” and “Green Environmentalism”

It is now a half-century since environmental philosopher Paul Shepard argued, in his seminal essay on “A Theory of the Value of Hunting,” that the hunter is an “agent of awareness” for the community at large. What he meant was that in both evolutionary and socio-cultural terms the fact of human hunting forces an acknowledgement of the complex ways in which we rely upon what wildlife managers conventionally refer to as “the consumptive use of nature,” not simply to survive but, arguably, to thrive. Given the facts of declining hunter numbers and the increased urbanization of American society, Shepard’s argument was beginning to lose its force in the mid-20th century. By the close of the first decade of the 21st century it would appear at first blush even less relevant to discourses about human culture and community.

And yet, I argue that, in the light of issues as various as global climate change and the epidemic of childhood obesity, the idea of the hunter is more relevant than ever. So, too, is the involvement of the hunting community in environmental education and activism. As a culturally-rooted activity, hunting uniquely combines several elements:

- Ecological awareness and environmental sensitivity
- Fitness and vigorous outdoor exercise
- The procurement of meat that is healthy and additive-free
- A complex set of physical and mental skills
- Deep knowledge and an aesthetic appreciation of non-human nature
- And at its best, and perhaps most importantly, a spiritual sense of connection with and rootedness in the more-than-human world

All of these factors make for an essential tool-box for confronting the array of issues facing environmental advocates today. In this talk I will suggest a theoretical basis for on-the-ground collaboration between hunters and “green” environmentalists.

Laura Stocker, Curtin University, Australia

East Meets West in Yiddish Life Writing: paradox, palimpsest and persistence

Yiddish is the language and culture of the Ashkenazi Jews. Historically, Yiddish was spawned by the creative tension of many Easts and Wests, including: the Middle East and Western Europe; Western Europe and Eastern Europe; Eastern Atlantic and Western Atlantic ports; and even Lower East Side and Upper West Side New York. For Jews living on and crossing the intersection of Easts and Wests, life was often dangerous and certainly edgy. In this paper I outline the history of the Yiddish people, with a particular focus on the East-West edge, to demonstrate how the unique and ill-starred paradox of 'Yiddish' arose. I also draw on my own family manuscript to illustrate the collision# blending and sometimes step-wise transformation of Yiddish as the Easts and Wests came together to change the religion, language, culture, sense of place and ultimately the destiny of Ashkenazi Jews. The manuscript, like Yiddish itself, is a palimpsest with many layers of writing and re-writing. The 'people of the book' could be more accurately considered the 'people of the palimpsest'. Yiddish, though nearly eliminated through centuries of persecution, culminating in the Shoah (Holocaust of WWII), has managed to persist in various forms and places, most notably in New York, but even in Israel where it was once, ironically, frowned upon as being too hybrid.

David Tacey, La Trobe University, Australia

At the Edge of a New Animism: Australian spirituality, ecopsychology and the animation of the world

The paper discusses two major influences on my appreciation of nature and country: the ecopsychology of Jung and Hillman, and the animistic cosmology of Aboriginal Australian cultures. Rationality and the rise of reason has deprived us of spirit and soul, and relegated both to archaisms of the past; we hardly dare use these terms anymore, for fear of intellectual embarrassment. Animism, as well, has been relegated to the primitive landscape of the ancient past, and yet Jung and Hillman argue for a return of animistic consciousness, as the way in which the psyche or soul responds to the world. The ego and rational mind can have its "science" and "facts", but myth, personification, and sacred presence continue to be needed by the soul, to find its orientation and sanity. The paper discusses various ways in which sacredness can be returned to the world, and it argues a case for the survival value of animism as a way of nurturing the human soul and protecting the soul of the world.

Sudeep Jana Thing, Curtin University, Western Australia

Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) in Nepalese Himalayas: Intersection of nature, culture and religion

The dominant paradigm, ideology and epistemology of nature conservation indispensable and deeply rooted today have been heavily influenced and shaped by the western notion of 'nature' and the discipline of natural science, often critiqued for artificial separation of nature (environment) and culture/ (human (society)). Conservation of 'biodiversity' by indigenous peoples, traditional and local communities, hitherto invisible in 'mainstream conservation discourse' (although often being the oldest forms of conservation driven by deep socio-

cultural/religious or economic relations with nature) is increasingly gaining attention and recognition today. Commonly termed as ‘Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas’ (ICCAs), they are areas or territories conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities with diverse motivations, institutions and practices contributing biodiversity conservation. This paper conceives ICCAs on the edge of international conservation discourse, revolutionizing conservation thinking, discourse and practice in relation to ‘Protected Areas’. It argues that this powerful evolving concept offers newer edges to foster dialogues and meaningful collaborations between social science and natural science in a contested domain of nature conservation. The paper particularly dwells upon the examples and experiences of ICCAs and ‘Sacred Natural Sites’ in Khumbu region - ancestral homeland and sacred landscape of Sherpa indigenous peoples practicing Buddhism - in Nepal. It attempts to substantiate link between Sherpa peoples and their intimate link with nature as well as their culture, religious values and conservation stewardship. It also presents some of the pressing challenges to their indigenous culture and natural environment.

Kin Yuen Wong, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong

Ecological Ethics/Aesthetics and the Chinese Classics: Enacting the Deleuzian Differentiation in China

This paper starts with a brief run-down of debates between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, which are later side-stepped somewhat by the non-centric approach of French ecosophy. It then moves to ecofeminist arguments, particularly by way of introducing a number of Chinese goddesses who, as the paper argues, have as it were been living on the edge by moving beyond centrism of all kinds. Having set in motion of preliminaries, this paper enters its arguments proper, namely, the ways the Deleuzian concept of differentiation (which harbors concepts such as mutual edging of human and inhuman, organic and inorganic, as well as affection and affects) can be contributing to our revitalizing and enacting or even eventing some Chinese central concepts such as the Confucian cheng, the Daoist “looking as things look at themselves”, as well as the cosmological yin-yang as arrayment of ordinates in Yijing. This last section of the paper is supported by the fact that Deleuze himself has made direct references to Yijing and Daoism in his ecoethics which, to the knowledge of the writer of this paper, have not been discussed before.

The “inter” of relationship among, say, climate change, environmental crises, and our sense of identity, would be propelling a kind of projection-reciprocation dialectic by each edging into the other as a “nuanced” discourse. Abhorred by images of ozone depletion, belching smokestacks, seabirds mired in chemical sludge, we are obliged to build a platform on which nature (physics), politics (polis) and science (logos) can be worked out towards an overall eco-ethics from both the west and the east. This paper therefore proposes to embark on an analysis of the triadic cycle of nature, human and technology at large as guided by the Deleuzian eco-ethics as well as its Chinese counterpart under concepts of stratification, virtual multiplicities, body-without organs and transversal communication etc.

Presenter biographies:

Glenn Albrecht is the Professor of Sustainability at Murdoch University, Perth. He has worked collaboratively on transdisciplinary research projects in the domain of sustainability and ecosystem health and has produced research papers/publications in environmental history, transdisciplinarity, sustainability, environmental politics, environmental and animal ethics. His most recent publications have presented the new concept of 'solastalgia', a form of human distress related to the lived experience of negatively perceived environmental change. Along with colleagues he is working on a four year ARC Discovery Project to study the lived experience of climate change, using the Hunter Valley as a case study.

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Steven Andrews has a BS from University of California Berkeley and is working on a PhD at Curtin University (CUSP) in Fremantle, WA. Steve worked as a research diver studying artificial reefs and after this research was completed, he remembered that his most satisfying experience was when he taught fourth graders marine science. A love of underwater photography led to the creation of Steve's website, Earth Ocean Photo. Show Us Your Ocean! (PhD project) is a synthesis of these two passions. Music is also a backbone of Steve's life...

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Virginie Bernard is a French PhD student. She is doing her PhD at the EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) and the CREDO (Centre for Research and Documentation on Oceania) in Marseille, France. Her thesis is entitled "From 'Savage' to 'Farmer' ? Aboriginal Involvement in Agriculture in the Avon Valley, Western Australia". This is her second fieldwork in Western Australia as part of her PhD research. Her first fieldwork took place from August 2008 to February 2009. She is working with Yaragua Enterprises Incorporated, a Balardong Nyungar family-based association which is revegetating Avondale Park, a property in the Avon Valley.

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Geoffrey Berry received his PhD at Monash University in 2010 for a dissertation titled "Under the Dominion of Light: an ecocritical mythography", which dealt with the way the symbol of light has been utilised on behalf of empires old and new, and with the ecological costs of such alignments. His previous MA (Deakin University 2005), written as a creative piece of mythopoeia with a philosophical exegesis, considered the way mythic patterns continue to inhabit the modern mind. He teaches literature at RMIT and Monash Universities.

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Jan J. Boersema (1947) got his academic training as a biologist, major ethology, at the University of Groningen and lectured on biology and environmental sciences at the same University. He graduated in theology at on a thesis titled: *The Torah and the Stoics on Mankind and Nature* (English edition published with Brill, Leiden, 2001). In 1994 he became Reader in Environmental Science and Philosophy at Leiden University and at the same time Secretary General of the Council for the Environment at the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. At the same ministry he became a cofounder and member of Forum a think-tank operating from 1999 - 2002. In 2002 he was appointed as special professor, and in 2005 as full professor, at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam where he is based at the IVM (Institute for Environmental Studies) His inaugural lecture entitled *Hoe*

Groen is het Goede Leven (How Green is the Good Life) in which he developed a new theory on the ecological history of Easter Island was held in October 2002. His current research is focused on the relation between sustainability, nature, culture, worldviews and religion. Running title “How Green is Progress? His publications cover a wide range of subjects in the environmental field. With Wim Zweers he edited *Ecology, Technology and Culture* (White Horse Press, Cambridge 1994) He is editor in chief of two textbooks on Environmental Science: *Basisboek Milieukunde* (Boom, Amsterdam 1984, 1992) and *Principles of Environmental Sciences* (Springer Publishers, 2009). In 2003 he became Editor in Chief of *Environmental Sciences*. www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/15693430.asp In 2009-2010 he was elected visiting fellow at St Edmunds College, University of Cambridge UK.

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Sally Borrell holds BA (Hons) and MA degrees from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, and has recently completed her PhD at Middlesex University in London. Her MA thesis explored connections between gender, postcolonial identity and species in the work of Margaret Atwood. Her doctoral dissertation examines representations of human-animal relations in contemporary postcolonial fiction, with a focus on responses to humanism. Previous conference papers include ‘Duikers and Descartes: Theory and Practice in J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*,’ ‘Hindsight: Fiona Farrell’s *Mr Allbones’ Ferrets*’, and ‘Conflicting Posthumanisms: *Oryx and Crake* and *The Hunter*’. Sally was the administrator for the former British Animal Studies Network, and is an associate of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies.

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Aidan Davison is Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania. Drawn to transdisciplinary modes of teaching and research, and the author of *Technology and the Contested Meanings of Sustainability* (SUNY, 2001), Aidan has published widely on politico-cultural topics related to sustainability, development, environmentalism, and everyday life. This paper draws on his interest in linking personal experience and political relations through moral questions of sustainability.

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Jo Diamond undertook undergraduate studies up to Honours level at UWA in Anthropology and Art History. She completed a PhD in Australian Studies at ANU. Her doctoral thesis comprised an examination of dominant Trans-Tasman cultural discourses in relation to Maori women weavers. She has since published in various fields, including Art History, Anthropology, Religion and Cross-cultural Studies and is a Senior Lecture in Indigenous Art History at the University of Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand. She is a Maori woman of Ngapuhi descent and mother to a teenage son who is also of Nyoongar Western Australian Indigenous descent.

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Rebecca Fanany is at the School of Public Health at Latrobe University in Melbourne. Her teaching responsibilities are largely in the Common First Year and focus on introductory

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Juan Carlos Galeano was born in the Amazon region of Colombia. He is the author of *Baraja Inicial* (poetry, 1986), *Pollen and Rifles* (1997) a book on the poetry of violence *Amazonia* (poetry, 2003) and *Sobre las cosas* (poetry, 2010). His poetry, inspired by Amazonian cosmologies and the modern world, has been published internationally and translated into French, English, Portuguese, and German. It has been anthologized in a CD-ROM titled *Poesía Colombiana* (four centuries of Colombian poetry) produced by Casa Silva in Colombia, and in several anthologies in Latin America. Poems from *Amazonia* (2003) have been published in magazines and journals such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Field*, *Ploughshares*, *TriQuarterly*, and *Antioch Review*. His poems and folktales have also appeared in college textbooks, collections and in international anthologies such as *A poesía se encontra na floresta* (2000), *Literary Amazonia* (2004), *The Poetry of Men's Lives: An International Anthology* (2004), and *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005). His research on Amazonian culture has appeared in his collection of folktales *Cuentos amazónicos* (2007), *Folktales of the Amazon* (2009), as well as in the film he co-directed and co-produced, *The Trees Have a Mother* (2008). He also has published book-length translations of American poets in Latin America and translated Latin American poets for American journals. He teaches Latin American poetry and Amazonian cultures at Florida State University.

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Rod Giblett is the Director of CREATEC (Centre for Research in Entertainment, Arts, Technology, Education and Communications), Edith Cowan University. He is a graduate of UWA, University of Sydney and Murdoch University (PhD). He is the author of *Postmodern Wetlands: Culture, History, Ecology*; *Forrestdale: People and Place*; *Sublime Communication Technologies*; *Health Recovery: The Taoist Tai ChiTM Way*; *The body of the nature and culture*; *Landscapes of culture and nature* and *People and places of nature and culture*. A completed book of nature writing and environmental philosophy entitled *Black Swan Lake* is currently under consideration with UWA Press. He is completing a joint-authored book, *Photography and landscape* (with Dr Juha Tolonen). He is researching and writing a book on Canadian wetlands, a book of family and environmental history about the Manjimup area and a book about wetland cities. He is also a local conservationist in Forrestdale.

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Deborah Guess's main academic interest is in ecological theology and the degree to which a Christianity which maintains its identity and integrity is genuinely compatible with an ecological perspective. Her Master of Theology thesis (2006) was on the way anthropocentrism is handled by Thomas Berry, Sallie McFague and Charles Birch, and current postgraduate work (PhD) is with the Melbourne College of Divinity, on the theology of the Incarnation in relation to ecological christology, specifically looking at the theory of emergentist evolution. Deborah's interests include the Christian mystical tradition, the teaching and practice of Christian meditation, and the ethos and practice of sustainable living, particularly as expressed through the design system of Permaculture, the Slow Movement, and the Transition Town Movement.

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Christopher A. Howard Originally from San Francisco, California, I am at present a PhD candidate in social anthropology at Massey University, Auckland. I took my B.A. in Historical and Political studies and Cultural Anthropology at Chaminade University of Honolulu, with an emphasis on East Asian religions, literature and cultures. I also attended Sophia University, Tokyo, where I studied Japanese literature, language and contemporary society. After studying and working in Japan for 3 years, I came to the graduate program in Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington. Upon receiving my M.A. with research on endangered languages in Melanesia and critical discourse analysis, my interests shifted back towards anthropology and its intersections with social theory. The topic of my thesis in progress is contemporary sacred travel in the Himalayas, which I am exploring in relation to themes of modernity. In the future, I hope to apply the methodology of this research to other areas where sacred travel is being performed. A recent example which caught my attention is in the Atacama desert of northern Chile, where an interesting blend of Incan astrology, Andean folk religion, western astronomy and eco-tourism has been taking shape.

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Artists Fellowships Programme in Digital Arts 2004; Women's Worlds 2005: 9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women in Korea; Scotland's International Festival of Live Arts 2006; "Plant-Matter NeoEden Melbourne 2008" project at the Royal Botanic Garden Melbourne. Now she is focusing on art projects are how to research on plants in adverse environments has uncovered evidence of plant migrations in Taiwan's island geography, and also provides issues connected with the historical/cultural evolution of aboriginal, colonial, immigrant groups. Another focal point is the feminization of Asian immigration in the wake of the rapid economic development that began in the 1970's.

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Joan Marie Kelly has been teaching painting and drawing at Nanyang Technological University School of Art Design and Media, in Singapore for five years. While in the USA her while life as an artist brought her public art commissions and exhibitions, she founded and directed a unique art studio for adults with disabilities in Baltimore. This studio is still successful today. Kelly's introduction to Asia began in 1986 when she traveled to Indonesia carrying the pictures, letters and money from Indonesia foreign workers in New York to their families on Java. Presently, this thread has continued as issues of class, race, sexuality, consumerism, and power struggles come to the forefront in Kelly's work. Her research interests are: visual arts as access to knowledge, preserving intangible cultural heritage, and the transfer of knowledge through visual arts. Her research location focuses on Kolkata, India and North East Thailand. Kelly is a graduate of Maryland Institute College of Art and did her graduate studies at Western Connecticut State University, Masters in Fine Arts. Her recent exhibitions include: Ahuja Museum of the Arts, Kolkata India "Asia Art II", Invitational Exhibition sponsored by: Rajamangala University of Technology, Thailand at The Art and Cultural Exhibition hall Chaing Mai University, Invitational Exhibition sponsored by Rajamangala University of Technology, Thailand at Mae Fah Luang Art And Cultural park, Duel Exhibition Kolkata Academy of Fine Arts Kolkata, India, Invitational International Exhibition "Identity -Anonymity" The Lloyd Gill Gallery Weston, UK, curator: Antria Pelekanou.

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Chien-Ming Lu is Ph.D. candidate of Institute of Design of Chung Yuan Christian University, and Visual Artist on the Eco-Art focusing on the community. He has tried to make sure that all knowledge development, professional technology, and social activities take place on the basis of three considerations, namely "community, village, and local subjective thinking," "taking the locale and community as the units of the overall representation of culture," and "integration of interdisciplinary manpower and knowledge." He currently use "social realization" as my primary method, and hope to establish and accumulate the "theory and practice" of future societal adaptation via collective learning in the form of social movements.

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Michael Pearce is from Brisbane, Australia and enjoys the outdoors, swimming and being healthy. He has recently submitted his PhD thesis, which was an ethnography of Thai spirit houses typically found at the periphery of the house compound in contemporary urban areas. He is currently a casual tutor and occasional lecturer in the Religious Studies discipline at the University of Queensland and his scholarly interests include Thai popular Buddhism, new discussions of animism and the relationships humans establish with their environments, the neurophysiology of meditative altered states of consciousness and the dialectic between nature and spirituality. He is also currently working on a research project which seeks to explore the spiritual dimensions of the Brisbane River.

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 An analysis of 88 sermon texts delivered by clergy members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the Sunday following the denominational decision to ordain practicing homosexuals as clergy members.

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A cultural historian, he has written extensively on the history, civilization and culture of Muslim Bengal in English, Arabic, Urdu and Bengali languages including a dozen entries in the Encyclopaedia of Islam. Currently, he is working on the Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Bengal dating to the period between 1205 – 1707. The work aims to analyze the inner dynamics of the social, intellectual and religious transformations of this eastern region of South Asia using its rich Islamic epigraphic heritage. He is also the founding President of BANI (Bangladesh Association for Needy People’s Improvement), a rural welfare project for the rootless people in the poverty stricken areas of Kushtia, Bangladesh. BANI is successfully engaged in a number of poverty eradication efforts as well as ecological awareness programs in the villages and slums of Kushtia.

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LEGEND

- PAY PARKING
- PERMIT PARKING - RED
- PERMIT PARKING - YELLOW
- ACROD PARKING
- MOTORCYCLE PARKING
- BUS STOP
- TOILETS
- TOILETS WITH UNIVERSAL ACCESS
- UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO BUILDINGS
- LIFT
- PUBLIC TELEPHONE
- FOOD AND DRINK
- INFORMATION AND SECURITY INTERCOM
- PARKING AND SECURITY
- VISITOR INFORMATION



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