

“Bridging Nature and Human Nature” is the theme of SAC’s 2009 Annual Meeting, to be held April 1-5 at McMeanmin’s historic Edgefield Resort at the entrance to the beautiful Columbia River Gorge in Portland, Oregon. This theme reconnects SAC with its origins, codified in Joseph Long’s *Extrasensory Ecology: Parapsychology and Anthropology* (1977), a theme echoed in Montague Ullman’s article, “Dreams, Species-Connectedness, and the Paranormal” (1990). Mentioning psi and ecology in the same breath initially sounds incongruous. However in *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement* (1981), Steven Fox points that out Muir’s journals camping in Yosemite refer to precognitive experiences and animistic visions.

SAC’s 2009 theme also resonates throughout Ian J. Pratts’ (1997) *Anthropology at the Edge: Essays on Culture, Symbol, and Consciousness* and his call to make “poetry” the language of ethnomethodology. This too is the new methodology and language of psi/spirit that Edith Turner calls for in her (2006) article “Advances in the Study of Spirit Experience: Drawing Together Many Threads.” Turner’s weaving of folklore and mythology, modes of discourse, story and narrative reflect the concerns of *ecocriticism* that Joseph Meeker echoes in *The Comedy of Survival* (1997). All of which raises the question, *what would our science be like if its methods of inquiry resembled the life promoting rays of our sun, as it shines onto the unopened bud of a flower, coaxing it to open and unfold itself?* This process-oriented methodology is offered as an adjunctive alternative to science’s present methods of data collection. Indeed this call to reinvent our narrative construction of science and culture is essential to bridging nature and human nature.

Moreover these concerns link SAC to mainstream anthropology and Gregory Bateson’s work on cybernetic systems that later grew into systems theory and systemic orientations of thought in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1977). Bateson’s book *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity* (1979) summarizes this. Unfortunately Bateson died while writing *Angles Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred* (1987), that his daughter Mary Catherine Bateson finished; linking the anthropology of religion with transpersonal and philosophical perspectives. A more accessible introduction to Bateson’s thought is Fritjof Capra’s (1983) *The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture*, (who frequently consulted with Bateson) that has a very green perspective and contemporary significance to eco-anthropology. Likewise a primordial significance harking back to Paleolithic cave art, where in his essay “Drowning Dogs and the Dawn of Art” (1993) Jared Diamond points out Cro-Magnon civilization collapsed due to global warming at the end of the Pleistocene, destructive technologies, loss of species and overpopulation.

Bridging Nature and Human Nature is therefore a call for a more intimate and sensual understanding of the universe in which we live. Morris Berman refers to this call for a new way of knowing as a reawakening of humankind's *participating consciousness*. Paul Devereux, John Steel and David Kubrin suggest it represents’ a waking up from our *geomantic amnesia*. Thomas Berry, Charlene Spretnak and Matthew Fox call it a renewal of humankind's sense of *communion with our earthbody*. Leslie Grey refers to it as *shamanic counseling*. Ralph Metzner points to this more sensual understanding of the universe as one means of *healing humankind's dissociation from nature*. Theodore

Roszak suggests it is a process of learning how to hear once again *the voice of the earth*; suggesting that the essence of humankind's "right relationship" with our earth body is the need to recognize and remember our co-evolutionary, symbiotic orientation with nature. Relating back to specific "praxis" concerns like "gardening-farming," "shelter-building," "child-raising," and how this dovetails with "spiritual sexuality."

SAC's 2009 conference hosts are John Baker, Jeff MacDonald and Mark A. Schroll. Possible topics for papers include: The History and Future of Ecopsychology, Bateson, Postmodernism and Shamanism, Entheogens and the Legacy of Albert Hofmann, Cross-Cultural Inquiries of Eco-Dreaming and Eco-Anthropology, Mind/body Approaches to Biomedicine and Medical Anthropology, Psi and Species-Connectedness, Mythology, Folklore, Poetry and Ecocriticism, Landscapes of Consciousness and Paleolithic Cave Art and Ethnomethodology. to John Baker at johnbaker@vcccd.edu. For more information and to download the proposal and registration forms: [www.sacaaa.org](http://www.sacaaa.org).