

## **The Berkeley Workshop, Oct 21-23, 2016:**

*Environmental change and ritualized relationships with the other-than-human world*

Collaboration – Topics – Participants

*The workshop was co-sponsored by REDO at the University of Oslo, the Peder Sather Center for Advanced Study at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.*

This is the first time the REDO research group collaborated with non-REDO institutions (UC Berkeley and other dep. at the University of Oslo) that were not otherwise originally affiliated with the research grant. It was also the first workshop to explicitly invite U.S.-based researchers from a number of other institutions (UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis, University of Florida, and member schools and centers of the Graduate Theological Union). The extended workshop was co-funded by a grant from the Peder Sather Center for Advanced Study at the University of California Berkeley and co-hosted by the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Twenty scholars were invited for the event.

### *Topics*

The two-day workshop was to focus on the method, theory and techniques of perceiving and writing about the other-than-human in our research projects, on how we might bring in landscape, animals, elements, forces beyond the human, without constantly referring to framing these in terms of the human.

The first session featured projects that reminded us of the need to take ritual seriously in the re-framing and shaping of social consciousness and the difficulty of measuring impact, or social effectiveness of rituals. Several projects are engaging pilgrimage and landscape, and are working on shaping language and conceptuality for grasping the relational networks of those. We were reminded of the careful choice of conceptual tools to be used and the need for precision in our descriptions and case studies to bring out the key facets that make up the complexity of processes and relations. Some of the questions on our first day included: how do we write about working in a world that itself is a protagonist in many ways? And how are human bodies interacting with these agents? How is ritual recoded and ritual studies enabled to encompass these multispecies narratives? What narratives enable and motivate the adaptation that is necessary to provide not only ritual effectiveness but social change in weakened democratic structures? This was one of more salient points of conversation and engagement: what happens when the "other-than-human" considerations of personhood meet the "Realpolitik" of civic engagement and democratic structures.

The second session featured projects that foregrounded the challenge in using the terminology of "(re)enchantment" around our relationship to nature, particularly when it becomes seen as something with a historicity. Many of the presentations raised the consideration of how space shapes ritual and shapes experience of the narratives, species,

and memories engaged. What languages would there be to learn, a language of things, a language of nature as a sacred text? In what ways do the dead in some of our projects engage in doing political work? What is the promise of these languages entering actual legal discourse, such as in the Latin American constitutions that have included the "rights of Pachamama" and the establishment of "ecocide" as a charge that will stand in an international legal court?

The broader communities at UC Berkeley and the GTU were invited to a special open concluding panel session, *Environmental Change, Re-thinking Religion*, at the Doug Adams Gallery at the Center for the Arts and Religion, GTU, Sunday, Oct 23, 2016. The panelists were invited to reflect on how some of the issues discussed at the REDO/Peder Sather workshop might challenge theology as a discipline.

### *Participants*

Workshop organizers included:

- Jone Salomonsen (University of Oslo /REDO & Peder Sather)
- Jonathan Sheehan (UC Berkeley /Peder Sather)
- Sarah Pike (Chico State University /REDO)
- Marion Grau (Norwegian School of Theology /REDO)
- Devin Zuber (Graduate Theological Union)
- Yohana Junker (Graduate Theological Union)

Other workshop participants included:

- Rune Flikke (University of Oslo /Peder Sather)
- Kjetil Hafstad (University of Oslo /REDO & Peder Sather)
- Graham Harvey (Open University, UK /REDO)
- Michael Houseman (École Pratique des Hautes Études /REDO)
- Nina Hoel (University of Oslo /Peder Sather)
- Morny Joy (University of Calgary /REDO)
- Jens Kreinath (Wichita State University /REDO)
- Marianne Lien (University of Oslo /Peder Sather)
- Andrew S. Mathews (UC Santa Cruz /REDO guest)
- Samuel Robinson (UC Berkeley /Peder Sather)
- Candace Slater (UC Berkeley /Peder Sather)
- Karen Lykke Syse (University of Oslo /Peder Sather)
- Bron Taylor (University of Florida /REDO guest)
- Paul-Francois Tremlett (Open University, UK /REDO)
- [Marisol de la Cadena, UC Davis, REDO guest, canceled]

Participants in the panel discussion at the Doug Adams Gallery, GTU, Oct 23, 2016:

- Devin Zuber, moderator (Center for the Arts and Religion, GTU)
- Rita Sherma, Professor and Director, Center for Dharma Studies (GTU)
- Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, Assistant Professor of Ethics (PSR, GTU)
- Kirsi Stjerna, Professor of Lutheran History and Theology (PLTS, GTU)