

# **The Body in our Philosophical, Literary and Religious Traditions Biennial Conference in Philosophy, Religion and Culture Abstracts 2000**

**Purushottama Bilimoria**

Deakin University

Title: "Body-Corporate (Divine + Human) in Their Tradition - Ramanuja and his Sankara-Mimamsa detractors"

Abstract: What would the symbol of the "body of the divine" be like in the Indian tradition? The paper surveys the early scholastic debates over the inclusion of God in Brahmanic metaphysics. Non-theistic systems, such as the Nyaya, gradually incorporate a Supremely Being with limited transcendental powers and properties. What though of His "body" and its relation to the human body? Would the Law of Karma apply equally? While the Nyaya spoke of dyads, triads and relations, they did not develop further this episteme. It was Ramanuja (11<sup>th</sup> century) who formulated an integrated conception of a single Body- Corporate shared by both individual human beings and Ishvara (the Lord) alike, around the unique identity of Brahman, even as a body envelopes the soul. However, this provoked resistance from Shankara's disciples (for whom corporeality is *maya* or a falsity superimposed upon the Impersonable Brahman.) Others objected that God would then be capable of all the evil and defilement that corporeal existence inherently gives rise to.

On the other hand, the ascetic practices ensuing from this theology came rather close to tantric or alchemical technology of *parrhesia*, underscoring a profound reverie in embodiment and deepening access to the Body of God by active participation in the divine power and its essential qualities. The critical point is that there is only ever One Body. But other problems arise, not least of individuation, subject status of the doer and the *other*; and just whose are the dreams, karma, and so on? The mystical succour aside, there is blurring of boundaries necessary for morality and freedom. Indeed, differences of caste, culture and gender appear to be swamped. While others see herein vistas of empowerment for the marginalised as well.

**Lynn Brunet**

Art History and Theory, University of Newcastle

Title: "P.I. for Sale. Images of wounding in the work of contemporary Filipino artists"

Abstract: Alwin Reamillo and Juliet Lea (Reamillo and Juliet) are expatriate Filipino artists currently living in Perth. In 1995 they created a series of work entitled P.I for Sale which depicted maps of the Philippine Islands printed on bedsheets, accompanied by images of wounding, rape, disease and medical intervention. Some of the bedsheets are printed with childhood comic characters from American sources. The images invoke the body and its violation transposed onto the Filipino culture as a whole. They imply the notion of colonisation as rape and suggest futile attempts at repair. This series is probably one of the most explicit in a contemporary culture in which trauma as wounding frequently appears.

In the Philippines wounding and martyrdom lie at the heart of the culture, with Catholicism holding a hegemonic claim to its metaphorical expression. Multiple processes of colonisation are at the heart of this wounding. This paper will analyse the work of Reamillo and Juliet and the trope of colonisation as rape in the context of the broad category of wound imagery in contemporary Filipino art. It will trace the link between the expression of the wound in its Catholic form and more recent attempts to secularise and demythologise the social wound.

This paper is part of a cross-cultural investigation into the work of a selected group of contemporary artists from Australia, the Philippines and the United States in relation to the theme "Fragmentation, Identity and the Aesthetic Negotiation of Trauma". Its theoretical argument is drawn from contemporary discussions of trauma based on the formative work of Pierre Janet, a contemporary of Freud, in the 1890s.

## **Michael Cotter**

Title: “Les Murray's Embodiments”

Abstract: Murray's work reveals the limit to perception, intimating that passage beyond that limit might be negotiated in imagery suggesting the unspoken, present among the objects and experiences of the daily world as the unspeakable.

There are frequent embodiments of the transcendent in Murray's work, as we have all come to realise. It is less frequently observed that often the embodiments within Murray's poetry project biographical experiences and impulses. How best to reach a clear view of the suggestive power of such moments? The process whereby poetry transforms experience remains still unknown, and pretty well unknowable. In that sense, critical theory can help only by providing interpretation with philosophical grounding. The metacritical direction, however, a turning towards the poetry within the context of the poet's biography, as a means of better understanding its author, may afford some more productive perspectives on the embodiments realised as elements of the poetic vision in total.

This paper proposes a review of Murray's poetic career in the light of these propositions, noting that the body is not among the least of such projections. Such a review also indicates the suggestive functions of Murray's various presentations of his social experience, especially that which occurred during his formative years. What is thus revealed is an image of the poet disappearing into his work, whether in poems as early as 'Spring Hail' or in the more contemporary verse novel, *Fredy Neptune*.

This disappearance enables Murray to present the body as metaphorical resource: in his work, imagery of the body expresses notions of power, as well the extremes of pain and alienation. Most informatively, the verse of *Fredy Neptune* is an autobiographical distillation of an imagined self against a backdrop that is at once emotional and ethical, while always firmly rooted in the practical.

## **Paul Crittenden**

Department of Philosophy, University of Sydney

Title: “Thomas Aquinas and the Unity of the Body Politic”

Abstract: Thomas Aquinas attached considerable importance to the unity of the state (*civitas, communitas politica*), but he followed Aristotle in rejecting the Platonist principle that “the greater the unity of the state, the better”. This is reflected in his insistence that reference to the state as a body has to be understood metaphorically; for the state, he says, is not really a body. The unity of the body politic is a limited unity which depends on the preservation of forms of diversity among its component parts, including the capacity for independent action on the part of its members. Problems arise, however, when Aquinas attempts to relate his account of political unity to the spiritual authority of the Church. In this context, he invokes an enlarged version of the corporeal metaphor, governed now by a principle of subordination according to which “secular power is subject to spiritual power as the body to the soul”. This appears to take political unity to excess in the name of the primacy of faith; in its terms, his position stands in an inverse relationship to the type of political unity which Marsilius of Padua espoused, two generations later, in arguing for the subordination of religious authority to the state. In the meantime, John of Paris, drawing on Aquinas but concerned to deal directly with the central political issue of the time, had elaborated a more satisfactory account of the integrity of the political order and its separation from papal power.

## **Stephen Curkpatrick**

Evangelical Theological Association (Churches of Christ Campus), Melbourne.

Title: "Ethical discourse in a perspective cognisant age: Derridan reflections on Nelson Mandela"

Abstract: The tortured issue of *ethical discourse in a perspective cognisant age* presents at least two critical foci for Christians. First, there is the challenge of articulating ethical values with grip or traction in a pluralistic society; and, second, the challenge of affirming difference within interpreter contingent perspectives of the current hermeneutical milieu. These foci can converge in the human body, as a site of discursive traction with difference and perspective contingent values. In its cry for dignity in the face of human 'limit experiences,' the body is an enduring site for sensitive dialogue and contingent consensus of values, whatever the perspectival differences stemming from culture, language, or belief system.

In his admiration for Mandela ("The Laws of Reflection: Nelson Mandela, In Admiration," 1987), Derrida provides an aperture for the possibility of holding different perspectival, contingent, and 'uninvented' values, while also affirming historical and communally registered traces of consensus for human dignity, to which Mandela gives testimony. For Derrida, Mandela affirms an *originary* trace of human dignity, yet performatively 'reinvented,' testimony contingent and perspectival, drawing from heteronomous headings in Tribal lore and European law, the latter, he both affirms and critiques. Mandela therefore exemplifies admiration for the traditions of human rights and dignity as just ethics, and, testimony to ethical performance. This has significant correlations with biblical tradition.

## **Jim Douglass**

PhD student, University of New England.

Title: "God takes a Body: Reflections on Colossians 2:9"

Abstract: "In him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily". This is a fiercely Christian statement. I will seek to rework this verse into a list of equivalent or implied forms with some of their implications.

Some forms are:

- In Jesus Christ we have the bodily presence of deity
- Deity can take a bodily form
- Total deity can be present in bodily form
- All of deity can be expressed in a body
- God has a body
- By having a body Jesus lost none of his (essential) deity.

These equivalent or apparently equivalent forms can be used to test the boundaries of the Trinitarian Incarnational formulae. Again we can unpack this verse as follows:

By means of his body Jesus Christ is the location/scene where all the fullness of deity can reside.

The body of Christ is the place of both human and divine identity.

The body of Jesus Christ is significant for the conceivability of deity.

Total deity comprehended within a human body suggests God's nature is not infinite (Scripture indicates that God's understanding alone is infinite).

On the basis of these implied forms I intend to argue that the nature of God is finite even locatable. Much of theistic philosophy has made God remote where God is negatively described as infinite, invisible, inconceivable, incomprehensible and beyond the grasp of any reasonable, identifiable human activity. The Christian message is to make God understandable, comprehensible, conceivable, finite which is the force of this verse. The implication of this view vis-a-vis other concepts of God such as pantheism, panentheism etc. will be considered.

**John Dunnill**

Murdoch University, WA.

Title: "Communicative bodies and economies of grace: Sacrifice in the Christian understanding of the body"

Abstract: Christian theology is rooted in a sacrificial culture, a culture which it has misunderstood almost from the beginning, so that today misconceived notions of sacrifice are widely used - by self-proclaimed defenders of Christian 'orthodoxy', by feminist and liberal revisionists and by critics of the theological enterprise. The aim of this paper is to bring critical understanding of sacrifice, particularly in Israel, into relation with current debate about the body, to develop an alternative perspective with implications for Christian thinking about creation, redemption and Christology.

Opposition to sacrifice has been used among Christian theologies to defend both spiritualised and materialist accounts of the human person and salvation. By contrast with both, it will be argued that participation in sacrifice entails involvement in a bodily economy of interchange (whether vegetable, animal or even, in the extreme case, human) through which humanity relates to divinity. In sacrifice, the body is the means of divine communication and transformation. The paper will argue that sacrificial awareness of the body, in the sense proposed, provides a necessary ground for a Christian theological anthropology.

**Ian Ferguson**

Title: "A Nice Arrangement of Molecules"

Abstract: As a naturalist I offer a clinical and "earthy" view of the body, embedded in a world history and in evolution in particular. From this base all matter is argued to be living, I.e., to have soul as the cause of movement and thought and which emerges along with body at each higher level of complexity. The physical world, including all psychic phenomena, is governed by its own laws and by human choice. There can be not direct divine intervention. Spirituality is the realm of moral choice manifested when human life reflects the will of God.

All bodies are windows through which life is expressed and impressed. Our tendency to neglect the body in rational discourse is due largely to our socio-symbolic mental development, emphasised in civilisation and over-relied on in the search for explanation and meaning. The unity and the sacred are in nature.

**Bill Fey**

National Seminary, Bomana, Papua New Guinea

Title: "Taking Seriously our Bodily Being"

Abstract: Contemporary Western cultures, with a background of science and materialism think of the human person as a "mindless body" or a "computer made of meat." In contrast African and Melanesian cultures with a background of tribal traditions and animism think of the human person as a "bodyless mind" or a "disembodied spirit." The complexity of our real experience reveals that both are mistaken. This paper argues that it is better to say that the "body is in the soul" than to say that the "soul is in the body" for our "bodily" way of being is included in our "human" way of being.. To take seriously our "bodily" way of being as absolutely essential to our "human" way of being has profound implications in epistemology (there is no human knowledge without the senses) and ethics (there is no human action without the emotions.) It has implications in a philosophical discussion of human powers (where imagination in particular involves a close interplay of sensible and intellectual acts) and in a theological reflection on heaven (where we will remain bodily beings although transformed and therefore will continue to sense and feel, to take up space and pass through time although sharing in God's eternity.)

**Peter Forrest**

Philosophy Department, University of New England, Armidale NSW

Title: "The Resurrection of the Body How is it possible?"

Abstract: We humans are equally well described as persons who are animals or animals which are persons. I shall assume that both these descriptions are misleading and that we are psycho-physical organisms. As a consequence our full survival requires our survival as psycho-physical organisms. Hence, if it is possible, we should seek a theory of the afterlife in which we are the same organisms, not just the same persons re-embodied. But this is not the only desideratum for an account of the Resurrection. We have, I submit, four:

- (1) Resurrection should be resurrection of the same body we have had on Earth.
- (2) Although there is an afterlife death should be a serious disruption, something worthy of dread
- (3); While the afterlife should be considered as divine gift we should avoid the thesis that God creates mere replicas of those who have died;
- (4) We should make sense of the recorded appearances of Jesus who passed through walls yet was no ghost.

How is all this possible?

A range of answers will be considered:

- (1) Van Inwagen's "body snatching" theory, according to which God removes the living and replaces them with corpses
- (2) Zimmerman's "falling escalator" theory in which just before death a person undergoes fission into one who dies and one who exists at another time and place,
- (3) my own "divine pruning" theory, according to which the whole universe undergoes repeated fission but God providentially annihilates most branches;
- (4) an "eternal life" theory in which after all history is over there is a state in which the past has been spatialised.

None of these is satisfactory, so I shall propose something new: the "many worlds but few minds" theory. This is based upon the idea that there are very many parallel universes. Minds are not however located inside universes. Rather a whole range of counterpart bodies share a single mind. I shall argue that this metaphysics is independently tenable as a philosophical anthropology, and that it provides an account of resurrection which satisfies the desiderata listed above.

**Guy Freeland**

University of New South Wales & St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College

Title: "The Body of a Virgin Queen: the Iconography of Elizabeth I"

Abstract: The claim is frequently made that many portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen, have the character of Eastern icons. A brief resume of the main features of Eastern icons is presented in order to provide a yardstick for considerations of the substance of this claim. It is shown that with respect to such formal characteristics of the paintings as the treatment of light, space and composition there are major resemblances. Furthermore, there are definite similarities in regard to the depiction of body parts, the use of garments to convey iconographic messages, and in the deployment of symbolic devices. There is even evidence to suggest, particularly in the case of portraits made late in the reign or posthumously, of a devotional use of the image of the Queen. While it is likely that, in general, influence of Eastern iconography was largely mediated by Western medieval traditions, there is one painting, the Rainbow Portrait (1600-1603), which very possibly provides evidence of a direct borrowing of a specific Byzantine iconographic convention. It is argued that this portrait, a true icon, has not just been misinterpreted but mis-observed. The painting is re-viewed and a fresh interpretation is advanced based on what is actually there for the eye to see. The Rainbow Portrait provides, it is suggested, a neat summing up of what was seen as the deep political and ecclesiastical significance of the reign of one of the greatest monarchs Europe has known.

**thea Gaia**

M.Sc(Hons)/PhD student, UWS - Social Ecology ,

Title: "Goddess Body Re-membered : Post-Community?"

Abstract: This paper looks at what is happening within the Goddess Spirituality Movement in Australia concerning the experience of "community". Inklings of what is named "post-community" are emerging, both challenging and energizing women who are remembering the forgotten power of the Goddess, and re-membering Her dis-membered body.

The term "post-community" is used paradoxically : (1) acknowledging the linear history of women experiencing a new sense of "belonging" - the affirming of women's bodies and the re-imagining of body as spirit giving a new clarity, about both the particularity and the interconnected-ness of all life forms; and ::

(2) paying attention to the timeless context of history and embodied life : to the "long long in the past""far far in the future""now" (C.Lavdas,1997) - honouring the immanence of life's creative energy as well as the mystery of transcendence ... sensitive also to the tension between respect for organic embodied process and the desire for an efficient organisation of a visible body, giving form to the new sense of connectedness !

Inklings of post-community are indicated in names being used : such as " a connective ", " a body of organised loose women", " connected aloneness ", and " women alone together" ... and celebrations, rituals, symbols and metaphors are sustaining the movement within the paradox. A Goddess body of women struggling for identity is learning to be both lake and river in a ceaselessly moving ocean.

The Goddess with 10,000 faces is bringing the timeless background of embodied life into the foreground of today, and the expectations of community once held and worked for are going into the background to be trans-formed : to a clarity about interconnectedness in "The Once and Future Goddess" (E.Gadon, 1989) embodied now.

**David Garlick**

UNSW Sports Medicine Programs.

Title: "FM Alexander and the Resurrection of the Body"

Abstract: FM Alexander was born in Tasmania in 1869 and died in London in 1956. An American physical education expert, in editing the writings of Alexander, entitled the book 'The Resurrection of the Body'.

When Alexander arrived in Melbourne in the 1890's he took up with enthusiasm dramatic recitals for which he had some histrionic skills. His career became clouded when he developed a crippling hoarseness. Medical advice proposed he give up his stage career. With his country training in resourcefulness and a strong measure of assertiveness Alexander decided to set out to cure himself.

Alexander made a striking observation. He placed himself into the appropriate posture for dramatic recital interesting physiology here which is not entirely relevant to this learned assembly.

Alexander developed his findings into a corpus of teaching which he developed in Sydney and then brought to London. He made a considerable impression on members of the acting and other performing arts professions in relieving them of musculoskeletal problems.

Alexander also made an impact on the scientific profession since his observations were factual and not embellished with speculative theorising - John Dewey, the educational philosopher; Sir Charles Sherrington, Nobel Laureate and father of 20th century physiology; Niko Tinbergen, Nobel Laureate and ethologist.

FM Alexander is an example of a layman able to make insightful, empirically-based observations that have led to developing useful concepts; overwhelm other senses. In the case of the proprioceptive sense this leads to musculoskeletal problems and to a sense of being 'disconnected' between mind and body. In providing a process for re-establishing this connection, Alexander engineered a 'resurrection', and, at the same time, decided to observe himself in a long mirror. The comparison was striking – the posture he perceived himself to be making was not, in fact, what appeared in the mirror. There was a mis-match between his proprioceptive sense and his visual input. His sense of muscle action and body position and posture was defective.

Alexander then began to experiment on himself to direct attention to his muscles and his posture, to stop patterns of muscle actions (over-contractions) that were associated with his hoarseness and to allow more reflex control of muscles to occur. The effect of his observations led to an increase in height and widening across the shoulders with easier breathing, amongst other effects. There is some

### **Gerald Gleeson**

Philosophy, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Title: "Could a human embryo be the embodiment of a human person?"

Abstract: The status of the human embryo constitutes a limit question for the "theology of the body" in Roman Catholic teaching. This paper seeks to clarify the philosophical issues at stake with respect to determining the ontological status of human life in the earliest stages of development. Special attention will be given to "emergentist" accounts of human personhood.

### **Frances Gray**

Philosophy, School of Social Science, Faculty of Arts, University of New England

Title: "Love's function is to fabricate unknownness (e e cummings): the sensuous/orgasmic body in the divine"

Abstract: When I was young, I was taught that there were two possible ways to live my life: as a contemplative, absenting myself from the world, or, as an active, situated in the world. I was taught that to absent myself from the world was to broaden the possibility of my having access to the divine, and ultimately, to heaven. The life of asceticism, in various forms and to various degrees was seen as integral to the life of contemplation. The contemplative life was held to be a privileged life, a life that daily courted transcendence, a life of closeness to the hiddenness of the divine. The active life, which legitimately could include an overt sensual, sexual dimension, was undervalorised as part of the journey in/to the divine. In this paper I shall be exploring the idea that we are all exemplars of divine embodiment and that our sensuality/sexuality, our potential for orgasmic experience, mimics divine desire. 'Irigaray's response to Levinas, her essay, 'The Fecundity of the Caress' will provide my theoretical context.

"The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant and the fruit now emerges as the truth instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole.' G.W. F Hegel

### **Mary Harnett**

Title: "The Phenomenology of the Body and the Christian Sacraments"

Abstract: The paper will explore the phenomenology of the body as based on personal lived experience and with reference to the philosophies of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas and others. Special attention will be paid to the role of the body in consciousness of the other as another conscious transcendental presence and the development of intersubjective relationships. The last part of the paper will deal with the relevance of such understandings of the body to the meaning-structures involved in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, and their possible usefulness in catechesis.

**Mary Harvie**

Humanities Blacktown Campus, University of Western Sydney

Title: "Emaciated Truth"

Abstract: [...] What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms - in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically and which after long use seem firm, canonical and obligatory to a people [...] Friedrich Nietzsche *On truth and lies in extra-moral sense*

"lured by the exuberant outsiders, words put forth glowing tendrils, curlicues [...] which finger their way past the borders [...] into the white parchment margins"

Janet Turner Hospital *Homelands*

In his first words to Agathon, Socrates, in Plato's *Symposium*, is concerned that the pursuit of truth through rigorous, controlled reasoned dialogue, may be compromised from the margins by the exuberant excess of rhetoric and in particular metaphor. This paper calls our attention to the ambiguities that surround Socrates' praise of dialectic as a way to the truth. In *Self Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus*, Charles Griswold (1986:2) demonstrates that dialectic is both a conversation between those who seek truth, and a rhetorical procedure for thinning down excess in the form of a process of division and synthesis according to rhetorical forms. This paper argues that in Plato's dialogues truth is not uncovered but is represented as the passage between reason and imagination. The dialectic paradoxically feeds on the excess of words which accumulate in the conversations and at the same time performs a mode of analysis which fillets the truth from the fat of imaginative analogies, debones dialectic of both ethic and eros and steams the soul from the body. Dialectic represents truth as a lean form of words and imagination as superfluity.

H.G. Gadamer's essay on 'Plato and the Poets' suggests that figurative language in Platonic discourses, the ironic, erotic and heterogeneous, is the "the projection [...] of the soul's interpretation of itself in the logos". He also says that:

One cannot say that the sole function is to make Socratic truth understandable by expressing it allegorically [...] Socrates encounters something inexplicable [...] 1980:68-69).

Griswold and Gadamer come close but do not argue, as I do, that it is the peeling away of eros and ethos which finally makes dialectic incommensurate with the excess of truth. Words resist paring down to truth as meaning in a lean form of words.

**Kay Hayes**

Title: "Chastity and Piety in Heliodorus' *Ethiopica*"



**Abstract:** Heliodorus' *Ethiopica* is the last extant example of a body of work known as the Ancient Romantic Novel and is variously dated to the late third or fourth century AD. Conventionally the stories are about an extraordinarily beautiful, aristocratic couple, who meet and fall in love, are forced to leave home due to circumstances beyond their control, and embark on an adventurous journey before finally being reunited and returning home. While Heliodorus adheres to these conventions, his work stands apart both in narrative style and the emphasis he places on religion. The story begins at a religious festival in Delphi, and concludes at another religious festival in Meroe, the capital of Ethiopia. Charikleia, his heroine, stands at the centre of the text as the epitome of not only piety, but also chastity.

The important characters are categorised as either pious or impious, but significantly, their piety is gauged by their chastity, and Heliodorus contrasts and compares the secondary characters with Charikleia in order to do this. Even the hero, Theagenes, does not quite measure up initially to the heroine, who makes him swear a holy oath to respect her virginity. However, ultimately both the hero and the heroine, once married, become the priest and priestess of the Sun and Moon in Ethiopia.

This personal religious emphasis is probably the reason why some scholars have claimed that the author is the same Heliodorus known as a Christian bishop, who enforced celibacy upon his clergy, and posit his work among the early Christian writings. However, Heliodorus also received condemnation from the Christian fathers because of the immorality contained within his work. Therefore, the close relationship between chastity and piety in his work remains problematical.

### **Graham Hughes**

United Theological College, North Parramatta

**Title:** "Overcoming the Invisibility of the Body in Protestant Worship"

**Abstract:** While a discounting of human embodiment is characteristic of Western Christianity generally, it seems difficult not to believe that Protestantism has carried the tendency to its furthest extremes. The paper examines the ways in which the tendency works itself out in Protestant worship practices along two lines: the intellectualization of faith and the depreciation of spatial and temporal reference for worshippers (the discounting of their space- and time-bound physicality). In terms of the first decremental dimension, the paper proposes that it is precisely the sermon—which should have been Protestantism's strength and joy—that both suffers from and contributes to an intellectualizing of faith. With respect to the second, it attempts to show that the derogation of space and time has badly damaged the Protestant ability to name God as 'Other'. In both cases, to name the fault is to imply some of the remedies which could be brought.

### **Marguerite Johnson**

Department of Classics, School of Humanities, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle

**Title:** "Marks of the Devil"

**Abstract:** The representation of witches in early modern European written and pictorial traditions reflects a fascination with the body of the witch. Both male and females accused of sorcery were subjected to rigorous physical examinations for the marks of the devil. In relation to women, however, the fascination with the body began some time prior to their appearance before their interrogators: in writings such as the "Malleus Maleficarum", for example, women were regarded as physically weaker than men and also as sexually insatiable - as creatures driven by their bodies rather than their minds. The latter physical (and intellectual/spiritual) condition meant they were, from the beginning, more prone to the temptations of the devil.

This paper aims to explore the fascination with the body of the female witch in early modern European sources. The physical weakness of women will be addressed in relation to the concept of male superiority and the connections between physicality and intellectual and spiritual infirmity. The treatment of the witch's body once she is accused will also be discussed as will the issues of physical torture, execution and disposal of the body. The witch as the temptress, the insatiable being, the one driven by her bodily desires and the one whose guilt will be revealed by the 'invasion' of her body are important themes.

**Vrasidas Karalis**

Sydney University

Title: “Breaking the Body: Representability and unrepresentability of form during the iconoclastic dispute in Byzantium”

Abstract: The main issue addressed in this paper is the question regarding the representation of the body of Christ and indeed of the human body during the 8th and 9th century Byzantium. The dispute is taken as the starting point for the discussion of the aesthetic relationship between religion and corporeality and the dilemmas that have tormented it. Against the background of the iconoclastic ideas, the paper will trace the survival of the tendency for unrepresentability through the protestant traditions and will discuss their relevance to the uniconic art of today. Finally, the paper will delineate the similarities between the ideas of the iconoclastic period and the contemporary condition of producing art and will discuss the possibility of a Christian Humanism through a new representation of the body.

**Gerard Kelly**

Theology, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Title: “The Body as an Early Christian Image of the Unity of the Whole of Creation”

Abstract: This paper will explore how the image of the body was one of the earliest expressions in the Christian community of the “saving mystery of God revealed in Jesus the Christ”. While the Christian tradition has placed great emphasis on the Pauline theology of the Body of Christ, especially the Lord’s Supper, there seems to be a more powerful body image at work in the Letter to the Ephesians, culminating in chapter 5 with the reference to husbands and wives. Despite much suspicion of the body in the Christian tradition, this paper will argue that the body was the primary image used in the Letter to the Ephesians to communicate the full force and implication of God’s plan for one new humanity. Rather than being read as a text which sets up an unequal relationship between a man and a woman — as much of the interpretation that focuses on a parallel between Christ and the Church does — this letter actually uses the “unity” of the man and the woman to reveal the mystery of God’s plan for the unity of the whole of creation. In this scheme the body is a precious image of the fundamental revelation of God in Jesus.

**Winifred Wing Han Lamb and Heather Thomson**

St Mark's National Theological Centre, School of Theology, Charles Sturt University

Title: “Dignity and Wholeness, body and soul: a dialogue between theology and philosophy”

Abstract: This back-to-back presentation by Heather Thomson, a theologian and Winifred Wing Han Lamb, a philosopher is the beginning of a dialogue between philosophy and theology on the human person. Their shared interest in theories of the human person, particularly on the ageing body, brought them into conversation. This presentation will further develop joint papers they gave at an Ageing and Spirituality conference in Canberra in January this year. They describe their approach as follows:

Heather Thomson:

My theological research on humanity as the image of God has led me to ask how the body can meaningfully be spoken of in this context. Traditionally it has been in the soul or the inner person that we find God's image, and in the way we act towards each other, reflecting God's love. That the body has been counted out has had some positive consequences, in that both women and men were therefore counted as equally able to image God. Both genders, and all races of people, have souls.

When the body is not included, it means that some bodies can not be valorised over others as being more in God's image (the male-like God reflected in the God-like male).

However, to view divine likeness in humanity as residing only in the soul assumes a dualism of body and soul, which in contemporary times is critiqued as not being holistic. The challenge, as I see it, is to develop a theological anthropology of the whole self, such that the body may be included in the image of God, but as icon and not idol. How might the whole self be an icon of God? This question is applied to a test case, the ageing and dying self, to see how the dignity and honour of the image might be understood when the finite body is included. This also takes me into the ethics of the image in that we have sacred power in relation to the care and well-being of each other.

**Winifred Wing Han Lamb:**

My philosophical interest straddles the areas of education, religion and theology. As a teacher involved in teaching philosophy in school, I have also been interested in philosophy of childhood and particularly in the recurring notion of the 'whole child' in education. In considering what 'wholeness' could mean for the education of children, I have been led to consider also what meaning it holds for the self through the 'changing scenes' of life, especially in the face of the challenges of ageing.

The notion of 'wholeness' is philosophically elusive but it holds an intuitive appeal and invites articulation of the deep truths of faith with respect to persons in all sorts and conditions of life. My paper is an attempt at that articulation. The notion of 'wholeness' that I advance challenges dualistic notions of the self as WELL AS what Charles Taylor has called the view of 'monological' self, in favour of the 'dialogical' self. But how is dialogical selfhood to be understood when BODIES are in radical decline and when they suffer dementia? In my paper, I explore the idea of a dialogical communion enabled by a 'loving eye'(Sally McFague) of another so that my wholeness in such situations depends on others and upon their reverence and love in continuing my story.

**Matthew Landu**

Good Shepherd College (Seminary), Fatima, Papua New Guinea

Title: The Body, Non-existence, and disunity

Abstract: Phenomenologists and Existentialists have helped to bring the problem of the body to the centre stage of philosophical discussion. From the moderate realist point of view,, their explanations, which have their metaphysical and gnoseological origins in Descartes, far from saving the body from its denigrations by the Platonists, asks for the complete annihilation of the body. Sartre reaped the true fruit of the Cartesian patrimony. I will do a critique of the phenomenological and existentialist concepts of the body and provide the Aristotelian-Thomistic alternative which saves the unified composite of body and soul which is the human being. The body, in moderate realism, is understood in terms of actuated potency. Ironically, it must be equated with non-existence, before its own salvation is secured.

**Susan Murphy**

Q.E. II research Fellow, Social Ecology, University of Western Sydney (Hawkesbury)

Title: 'This Very Body, the Buddha'  
body and place in Zen Buddhist practice

Abstract: Zen Master Hakuin Zenji, the fierce and prolific teacher who so thoroughly reformed and regenerated Zen in 17th century Japan, declares in his great sutra 'Song of Zazen', "*This very place is the Lotus Land, This very body, the Buddha*". In this paper I will take up the great challenge Hakuin issues in these words, in order to explore the nature of Zen meditation practice ('Zazen') and its intimate relationship with this very body, this very place, in just this moment. Realization cannot occur anywhere except in an ordinary, sacred, mortal human body. Some Western accounts of Buddhism have mistaken it for an ascetic, body-denying practice, based probably on a slight acquaintance with some aspects of Hinayana Buddhist philosophy. Anybody who has had a taste of (Mahayana) Zen poetry and koans cannot fall into this error, as we can quickly discover. I will situate my discussion in relationship to several important Western writers on embodiment and place,

including Norman O. Brown, Lewis Hyde and David Abrams. This work comes out of my research into embodiment and sense of place during my current ARC Fellowship, but its most fundamental basis here will be my fifteen years as a student of Zen and in recent years as a teacher of Zen, in a Western Zen lineage (headed by Robert Aitken, Roshi) whose tradition is both Soto and Rinzai (koan-based) in character.

**John Nigem**

Philosophy, Sydney University

Title: “The Turning Body and the Moment of Vision”

Abstract: In this paper I will offer a discussion of the body in terms of Bk VII of Plato’s *Republic* : with reference to the *periagogic*, *περιαγωγή*, body; and in terms of Luke 15:11-32: with reference to the *metanoial*, *μετανοία*, body in the parable of The Prodigal Son.

In each case I will offer a phenomenological analysis of the body and its significance in terms of these two key philosophical / theological images or ‘hypericons’.

Then taking a Pauline lead (2Co 12:10) I would also discuss the idea of the body’s strength-in-weakness. Through a consideration of partial or complete states of being such as sleep, dream, vision, sickness, affliction and redemption I will discuss the notion of the connection or correlativity between bodily dispositions and noetic / visionary receptivity. This part of the discussion will also involve an analysis of aspects of Biblical language concerning literal and metaphorical references to, and images of, the static and the kinetic body.

Finally, in a further consideration of, *περιαγωγή*, *μετανοία* and *ερμηνεία*, I will draw on the Biblical account of the story of Saul of Tarsus and on Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *Oedipus at Kolonus* in such a way as to draw attention to the centrality of the body in terms of the *phronetic*, *φρονησις*, dimension of Truth, mainly with reference to a phenomenological consideration of temporality and circumspection.

This will entail a discussion of the hermeneutics of the wound and the body as hermeneutical rite. In this connection a consideration of the stigmata will lead into speculations concerning the *apocatastatic αποκαταστασις* dimension of the historical, worldly wound, i.e. the essentializing and even eternalizing of what was once the historical, contingent, accidental wound - that is to say how the accidental bodily wound becomes essential to the converted and then perduring identity of the wound-bearer.

**Graham Pont**

Title: “Fixing the Body-Language: Towards an Australian Code of Posture, Deportment and Dance”

Abstract: Australia is probably unique in not having a national dance but almost certainly unequalled in the richness, diversity and antiquity of its dance cultures. This situation poses a range of complex problems for our educational system. My paper will address some of these problems through a consideration of Plato’s theory of early education and its possible relevance to modern Australian conditions. My aim is to offer philosophical guidelines to solving the practical problems of replacing the present eclectic or ‘multicultural’ pedagogy and codifying Australian posture, deportment and dance in a system suitable for implementation in state-supported (as well as private) education.

**Melanie Purcell**

University of Newcastle, Dept of Philosophy.

Title: “Immanence and the Reconciliation of Opposites: Manifold Unity Through The Embodiment of God.”

Abstract: Creation stories from around the world, attempt to capture the essence of the coming into existence of the universe. Most creation myths rely upon the fecundity of sexual union through the

anthropomorphic metaphor of copulation. The union of opposites is an essential feature in these cosmologies and the result is a self sacrificing state of non spatial, non temporal consciousness that comes into the experiential realm of the material universe, and hence the God the father mother of all that is, becomes all that is. God is immanent, a manifold unity, and we along with everything else in this reality are all the embodiment of  
God's/ess'es splendour

However, not all creation myths are the same. One that does not rely upon the union of opposites, is the Christian description of the origin of the universe. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made....." The rising logos is here cast as a purely masculine and infinite expanse that is the agent of God and in so being, God creates, through the Logos, the realm of the material. God is in this model, an external causal agent, there before the beginning, and still present as an external agent, after the creation; through his word, the logos, all things are made.

This paper explores a number of creation stories from indigenous cultures, from Ancient Egypt and from Alchemical literature, and compares them to the Christian narrative of the beginning. Through a comparison of these two different ways of casting the origin of origins, this paper explores the implications of each of these systems of cosmology through an analysis of their structural schemes, and argues that through the reconciliation of opposites, the concept of god is manifest as an indwelling force that is realized through a scheme that creates no external nor exclusive domain. Through the rising Logos, the scheme is one where an exclusive domain is relevant and a hierarchical structure imposed. Here God is not immanent but cast as the controlling authority and author of the universe itself.

### **Doug Purnell**

Pastoral theology, United Theological College, Parramatta and an exhibiting artist.

Title: "Pastoral ministry and the flesh and bones body"

Abstract: This paper will explore the flesh and bones body of the pastor/priest/liturgist/carer and its engagement with the flesh and bones bodies of the ones given to their care. The question was shaped for me when I recently participated in a CPE seminar at Westmead Hospital.

As I listened to those in the CPE programme I became aware of important questions about the body -- and how vulnerable I feel in my body when I stand beside someone whose body has been broken through accident or illness or decay. How vulnerable I feel when I try to be empathetic to the other... how easy to imagine their body is my body. It is not just the broken body that makes me vulnerable; the sensual and the sexual body scares me too. My life is in this body. I know there is a connection between body, mind and spirit and I work to keep all three healthy. The assumptions, that I make, are too dangerous, too arrogant. Can I, by an act of will, keep body mind and soul healthy? I think of M.M. who also sought health of body mind spirit, and who died mid-life, too young. What is the body? What is illness? What is healing? What is wholeness? What is health? How do bodies become ill? How does the body express its being, its sensuality... such important expressions in ministry for the pastor/carer/liturgist/priest.

And how to hold that in tension with God whom we describe in the symbolic words: "This is my body broken..."

### **John G. Quilter**

School of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield NSW

Title: "Mind Born of Woman"

Abstract: In religious and philosophical thought, "body" and its cognates have figured in a wide range of contrasts, usually to the disadvantage of the bodily. As a sample: bodily (=base) desires vs higher desires (of the mind, soul or intellectual part); the body (swma) as tomb (shma) vs the liberation of the soul in death; awareness due to the body and the violence (bia) of perception (=the realm of doxa) vs awareness due to the intellectual soul's attention to the forms-in-themselves (=real knowledge). Also in contemporary Functionalism, the burden of the distinctively psychological is carried by the higher-

level descriptions of people which abstract from physiologic, biochemistry, genetics and medicine. It does not matter to our mindedness that we have the bodies we have.

One of the most prominent critics of this orthodox contemporary position is John Searle. He has regularly insisted on the importance of the fact that we have the kinds of brains that we do, for understanding the nature of our mind.

In a very different project, Grace Jantzen has recently attacked Philosophy of Religion in the Analytic tradition. She suggests that contemporary Philosophy and Theology are dominated by the “imaginary of necrophilia” of patriarchal thought. In its place, she urges us to rethink ourselves as essentially “of woman born” rather essentially “beings unto death”, mortals who must face death. A persistent theme in this proposal is that we retreat from an epistemic, propositional account of religious thought, in favour of one which places more emphasis on ways religions affects our hearts and wills, as an “horizon of becoming subjects”, that is, becoming divine.

I think I want to argue that Jantzen is onto something valuable but that its visibility is assisted by a point we can glean from Searle about mind: an acceptance of the physical conditions (he stresses our brains) we find ourselves in, is a most important ingredient which informs our sense of the psychological concepts we apply to each other. Being born of a woman is one of those informing conditions. But this is an entirely general point about our notion of ourselves. Specifically as regards religious sensibility, some narrower element of relevance has to be found in the notion of being of woman born. In this connection, we will criticize Jantzen’s reliance on Lacan and Irigaray’s conception of the imaginary, and explore different sociologies of motherhood for their affect on implementing her proposal.

### **Annabelle Solomon**

Annabelle Solomon, MSci (Hons), PhD candidate, UWS Hawkesbury  
Australian Contemporary quilt artist and tutor

Title: “Perspectives on Embodiment as Sacred Space: Re-inventing the Wheel”

Abstract: Art acts as a mirror of and to culture. Rather than simply being a means by which life is reflected back to us, art carries the possibility of a two-way mirroring - the possibility of revealing the self as inherently creative in its production and also effecting an embodied experience of self-in-creation for the other who views the image. I am seeking to make links between this perception of self-in-creation to the recovery of an embodied theology in contemporary Australian Goddess spirituality, experienced through celebrating the cycles of birth, death and regeneration as the Wheel of the Year. As a worldview/spirituality/religion held by my ancestral forebears through their engagement with the natural world, the Wheel gave expression to and formed cultural perspectives experienced as co-creational embeddedness in universal cosmogony. Such a perspective may be termed ‘indigenous’, and offers the possibility of forming new perspectives on identity and the world-body, crossing boundaries where elements from prehistoric and postmodern perspectives may meet to unfold an indigenous consciousness, expressed in myriad forms, embodied globally. I am exploring ways of going full circle, of inverting and subverting unconsciously held beliefs about our place in the universe as women and humans through re-gaining a sense of creative subjectivity which re-aligns personal embodiment in place, time and space to story and symbol. The process is being explored and expressed through the creative medium of personal and group textile art practices.

### **Godfrey Tanner**

University of Newcastle

Title: “Possible Stoic Influences on the Credal Affirmation of the Bodily Resurrection of the Dead”

Abstract: The main Pagan influences on the debate about bodily resurrection were the Platonic philosophy schools which believed in reincarnation (as Josephus in the *Wars of the Jews Bk 1* tells us some Pharisees did), and the Stoics who regarded mind and spirit, and the cosmic force sustaining the

Universe, as wholly material and as sustaining all phenomena and causing all events by creating tensional fields penetrating and organising inert material. This warm elastic and intelligent matter called *pneuma* which created the cosmos by organising formless inert matter was supposed to pulsate in perfect harmony with every tensional field it set up. However *ptoia* or erratic pulsation in many fields led them to conflict with this physically based 'natural law' which should make all animate beings impeccable and inerrant. At death our tensional fields dissolve and their pneumatic content merges again with the Cosmic Pneuma which is also Providence and Right Reason. But some members of the middle Stoa insisted that disembodied *pneuma* from the dead wise (or inerrant) floated up the geocentric universe to the Moon and persisted till the end of the current world cycle. However, not having material to keep their *pneuma* in tension, they could neither perceive nor communicate, but kept the impressions already present unchanged. Hence a wise man should commit suicide to escape any agonising death whose impressions would persist unchanged. Effective life after death with no physical body was thus impossible.

As with Paul at Athens, Stoics found the doctrine of bodily resurrection attractive as a ground for baptism. Being God's elect, wise in his law which the world calls foolish, they would at the end of the world be re clothed in a body of flesh after the Last Day and Judgment, while the souls of sinners with erratic pulsation would be dissolved in the 'second death' after they were temporarily resuscitated with consequent capacity to perceive their damnation and impending extinction, as the verdict of divine justice.

### **Vince Vozzo** Sculptor

Title: "The World in a Grain of Sand"

Vince has proposed to exhibit and discuss some of his sculptures relating to the body which recommunicate and create an original 'man and woman symbol' synthesising philosophy, religion and art.

### **Peter West**

Research Group on Men and Families, University of Western Sydney

Title: "The Beautiful Body: Bondi, Boggabri and Byron Bay"

Abstract: This paper examines the idea of the beautiful body in Western literature, looking especially at the male body.

It is based on an ongoing research project at three locations. The first, Bondi is something of a national icon. It is home to the Bondi lifesavers, idolised and iconised as exemplars of the muscular male body throughout Australia. Bondi was once a locale of down-at-heel working class masculinity, but now a place which exhibits many of the features of the beautiful body syndrome. The second, Byron Bay, has more of a feel of getting-away-from-it-all. The third is seen as an example of rural masculinity. Ideas of masculinity are examined, using two Hollywood personae, Tarzan and the Terminator. The beautiful body syndrome is examined, with the suggestion made that the body beautiful can become a fascist aesthetic, associated with Leni riefenstahl and the glorification of Aryan maidens and muscular young Nazi men.

Two case studies are presented from the data and appropriate conclusions provided about current directions in masculinity.

### **John Wright**

University of Newcastle

Title: "If my body does not go to heaven, what does?: Under what conditions is the disembodied existence of persons a possibility?"

Abstract: Despite the fact that the cells in my body are almost entirely replaced over a period of about seven to eleven years, I nevertheless remain the same person. We seem to be able to imagine losing our physical body entirely and yet remaining the same person. If life beyond death, or disembodied existence, is to be possible, then it must at least be conceptually possible to remain the same person even though our physical body has ceased to exist. The paper develops a novel view on the problem of personal identity - or of what makes one the same person from one time to another - and examines its consequences for the possibility of disembodied existence, life after death and related issues.