

Subject: re: Avatar, Ethics, & Nature Spirituality (a cfp from the JSRNC)
Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 11:08:08 Eastern Standard Time
From: Julio Bermudez
To: (Architecture, Culture & Spirituality Forum) ACS

Dear friends

This may be of your interest.

Julio

Avatar & Nature Spirituality

A Call for Proposals for a Special Issue of the
Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

<<http://www.religionandnature.com/journal/>>

Précis

Situated in the mythical planet Pandora, James Cameron's motion picture *Avatar* is a metaphor for the relationships between human beings and their affective and religious (or if one prefers, their spiritual) relationships to the earth. It expresses a view commonly found among those in the environmental milieu, including grassroots environmentalists, sustainability practitioners, indigenous activists, and academicians analyzing the centuries-long erosion of Earth's biocultural diversity. The movie takes a strong stand in favor of such diversity, and for the animistic and pantheistic spiritualities long considered beneficent by many environmentalists. It has triggered a hostile reaction by many from religious traditions who consider the worldview expressed in *Avatar* a threat to their own beliefs and understandings, and to religious truth itself. It has left some viewers deeply depressed, feeling that there is no place left on earth where they can connect to nature and to each other, as did the Na'vi. Yet it has also evoked a highly positive response, which is not only reflected in terms of record attendance, but in widespread confessions of how the movie moved people to tears, in some cases, inspiring or rekindling environmental activism. Early journalistic reports even indicate some indigenous people have had a positive reaction to the film, finding affinities between their own spiritualities and struggles and those of the Na'vi. These are just a few of the reactions to the film that deserve critical scholarly analysis, which the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* (JSRNC) seeks to facilitate.

The JSRNC

The *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* seeks to explore "the relationships among human beings and what are variously understood by the terms religion, nature, and culture," as well as to reflect critically on "ethically appropriate relationships between our own species and the places, including the entire biosphere, that we inhabit." It is, therefore, an appropriate venue for the scholarly exploration of the cultural significance of *Avatar*. The editors of the JSRNC, therefore, are inviting proposals for a special issue tentatively titled "Avatar and Nature Spirituality." The overall goal is to illuminate the nature of the biocultural ground that *Avatar* has promoted, and which has also led to significant contention.

The full call, including how to submit a proposal, is now available at
http://www.religionandnature.com/journal/Avatar_cfp.htm

Please feel free to forward this email or the link immediately above to scholars whom you think might be interested.

Sincerely,

Bron Taylor

Editor, *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*

<<http://www.religionandnature.com/journal/index.htm>> .

Author of *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*

<http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental_books/dgr/dark_green_religion.html> (now available from the University of California Press).

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"yield and overcome, bend and be straight"