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The Wisdom of the Body: Embodied Knowing in Eco-Paganism

by

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS. DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES.

Doctor of Philosophy

EMBODIED KNOWING IN ECO-PAGANISM
by Adrian Paul Harris

Although embodied knowing is fundamental to our experience, no previous study has detailed its role in a specific spiritual group. This thesis offers a new model of embodied situated cognition, and develops an embodied hermeneutics which uses Focusing in phenomenological research. I apply these tools to the first detailed ethnography of Eco-Paganism to reveal powerful processes of connection which have considerable significance for religious studies and ecopsychology.

Chapters 2 and 3 survey the literature on Eco-Paganism and embodied cognition. Chapter 4 uses the latter to synthesise a model of embodied situated cognition which I call the 'enactive process model', because it draws primarily on enactivism (inter alia, Varela et al., 1991), and Gendlin's process philosophy (Gendlin, 1997). Current research shows that key aspects of cognition are situated and embodied (inter alia, Varela et al., 1991), such that we often think with place (inter alia, Preston, 2003). This raises epistemological questions which I address in a discussion of embodied philosophy in Chapter 5. I then explain my embodied hermeneutics methodology, and the practical application of the Focusing Interview technique, in Chapter 6. My fieldwork autoethnography, Chapter 7, provides an intuitive, felt understanding of life on a road protest site, and is followed by ethnographies of urban and protest site Eco-Paganism in Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 10 discusses six processes which create a sense of connection to the organic environment, which include the felt sense (Gendlin, 1981) and the wilderness effect (Greenway, 1995).

I conclude that a type of wilderness effect can catalyze the emergence of a complex 'nature based' spirituality amongst site Eco-Pagans, while a less intense form affects urban Eco-Pagans. Eco-Pagans sometimes use these processes of connection to think with a place. The processes of connection and thinking with place are fundamental to embodied situated knowing in Eco-Paganism, and help explain many of its distinctive aspects. By demonstrating the importance of embodied situated knowing in Eco-Paganism, I highlight the potential for further research into processes of connection and the impact of different physical spaces on religious

practice in general.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

SECTION I: LOCATING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter 2: Eco-Paganism Literature review

Chapter 3: Embodied Cognition Literature review

Chapter 4: Embodied Situated Cognition: A Synthesis

Chapter 5: Embodied Philosophy: My Ontological and Epistemological Grounding

Chapter 6: Research Design and Methodology

SECTION II: FIELDWORK

Section II Introduction: Between Protest Site and Urban Life: The Spectrum of Eco-Pagan Practice

Chapter 7: “You’re not studying it – you’re living it”: An Autoethnography

Chapter 8: Listening to the Threshold Brook: Urban Eco Paganism

Chapter 9: The Power of Place: Protest Site Eco-Paganism

Chapter 10: Eco-Paganism: A "sacred relationship with the world"

SECTION III: CONCLUSION

Chapter 11: Conclusion

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Original Aims and Objectives
Appendix 2: Focusing - The Six Steps

References
References to works outside this thesis use the Harvard system. References to titles of thesis chapters are given in the text in single quotes, while references to sections of chapters are italicized.

List of figures and illustrations
Fig. 1: The Cognitive Iceberg
Fig. 2: Embodied Metaphor and Habitus

Fig. 3: Focusing and the Felt Sense
Fig. 4: The Trance State
Fig. 5: The Duck/Rabbit Drawing
Fig. 6: The Hermeneutic Circle
Fig. 7. Topic guide showing notes on chronemic and paralinguistic aspects of the interview
Fig. 8: A Typology of Eco-Paganism
Fig. 9: Place and Community

Table #1: Processes of Connection

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Adrian Paul Harris, declare that the thesis entitled 'The Wisdom of the Body: Embodied Knowing in Eco-Paganism' and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have quoted fro the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Date: 29 January, 2008

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over ten years ago I gave a presentation that was to change my life. I was speaking at the Newcastle University conference, 'Paganism Today' about another way of knowing: The "somatic, physical knowing ... [that] is the knowledge of faith, of emotion, of the gut feeling" (Harris, 1996: 151). I concluded then that profound spiritual experiences involving nature could inspire environmental action, and that this process was grounded in embodied knowing. My words spoke of an unexplored landscape and I embarked on a remarkable journey of discovery which culminated in this thesis: I have concluded that life changing processes of connection mesh with the embodied situated knowing which underpins our being-in-the-world. My 1996 paper[1] promised much, but left many questions unanswered: I have now attended to those questions, and clarified both the process of embodied knowing and its role in Eco-Paganism. My answers are as profound as I'd hoped and more surprising than I ever imagined.

I begin with an overview, where I set out the deficiencies in existing research, explain my aims and objectives and provide a brief outline of the thesis. After a more detailed discussion of themes and findings, I explain my use of the terms 'organic environment', embodiment, knowing and cognition and then offer my conclusion.

OVERVIEW

Deficiencies in Existing Research

Although I was initially inspired by the puzzle of embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism, I later realised that this revealed a much bigger question: What is the role of embodied knowing in religion and spirituality in general? With very few exceptions, current religious studies approaches are profoundly disembodied, and this question has been far from adequately addressed. This is a severe handicap to the progress of religious studies, because we lack understanding the 'knowing' which is fundamental to religious and spiritual experience.

To approach the bigger questions about the role of embodied knowing in religion and spirituality, I needed to focus on one group, and Eco-Paganism was an obvious choice. In principle I could have researched any group, as embodied cognition is fundamental to being human. There is some material related to forms of embodied knowing in faith traditions, notably Christianity (Isherwood and Stuart, 1998), but Eco-

1 Although my paper was presented in 1994, I refer to it throughout by the date of its first publication.

Pagans are an ideal test case for several reasons. First, Eco-Pagans valorize the 'body' and 'nature' - two problematic terms I discuss below - which suggests an enhanced awareness of embodied knowing. Second, I was interested in how embodied knowing might influence motivation, and Eco-Pagans are by definition activists. Third, Eco-Paganism is a significant but under-researched spirituality. Finally, as an insider I am intimately familiar with some forms of embodied knowledge in Eco-Paganism, so I already have a privileged understanding. On a more reflexive note, I wanted to test the bold claims I'd made at the 'Paganism Today' conference with ethnography and a more nuanced autoethnography.

Although embodied knowing is widely discussed across many disciplines, no existing study attempts to integrate this work into a coherent model, partly because Western "[p]hilosophy has established itself on the foundations of a profound somatophobia" (Grosz, 1994: 5). One of my first tasks was to clarify our general understanding of embodied knowing and formulate a model that could be applied to qualitative research.

Initial Aims And Hypotheses

Aims and Objectives[2]

My primary aim was to determine how notions of 'embodied knowing' could be used to interpret the practice of Eco-Paganism. Several sub-aims were required to achieve this: I first established which theories of embodied knowledge were appropriate to researching Eco-Paganism, and then used these to develop a 'hermeneutics of embodiment' methodology. This methodology was then used to research a range of Eco-Pagan practice. My final thesis went beyond these initial aims in that I synthesised the enactive process model and set out an embodied philosophy.

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into three sections, the first of which locates my research. Because my thesis is concerned with two very different fields, I have two literature reviews surveying first Eco-Paganism (Chapter 2), and then embodied cognition (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I use the second literature review to synthesise a model of embodied situated cognition. This raises fundamental questions about epistemology which I address in Chapter 5, "Embodied Philosophy". Having established a sound philosophical foundation, I explain my "Research Design and Methodology" in Chapter 6.

Section two presents the results of my fieldwork. After a brief introduction to provide an overview of the territory, I present Chapter 7, " 'You're not studying it – you're living it': An Autoethnography".

2 Adapted from those registered with the University of Southampton, February 2004. See Appendix 1.

This autoethnography provides an intuitive, felt understanding of life on a road protest site, which compliments the more formal ethnographies that follow in Chapter 8, "Listening to the Threshold Brook: Urban Eco Paganism" and Chapter 9, "The Power of Place: Protest Site Eco-Paganism". Section two closes with Chapter 10, "Eco-Paganism: A 'sacred relationship with the world' " which draws together the treads of my fieldwork to present a coherent pattern. Section 3 consists of my final concluding chapter which sets out my argument, my original contributions to research and its wider relevance.

Audience

Although of primary interest to religious studies scholars, my survey and model of embodied knowing will prove of interest to researchers in a wide range of disciplines, including social science, philosophy and cognitive neuroscience. Social science academics in general will find my hermeneutics of embodiment methodology useful in researching the embodied knowing that lies beyond existing approaches. Finally, my study provides Eco-Pagans with a deeper understanding of our spirituality.

THEMES AND FINDINGS

Mapping the key themes running through this thesis will both present and contextualise my main findings. My thesis has four main themes, two of which set the initial questions and two of which emerged from the research. To research embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism, I undertook an *ethnography of Eco-Paganism* (theme 1), to which I then applied a theory of embodied situated cognition. My literature revealed that embodied knowing is situated, so my second theme is *embodied situated cognition*. Embodied situated cognition argues that in knowing the world we become part of it, and *connection* emerged as major theme in my ethnography, so this became my third theme. Many aspects of my research *problematizes conventional dualities*, and this is especially apparent in theories of embodied situated cognition and my ethnography, so I identify this as my fourth theme.

I begin by presenting a review of literature on Eco-Paganism (Chapter 2), which introduces the sub-theme of the relationship between Eco-Paganism and mainstream Paganism. I note that some Eco-Pagans are predominantly urban, while others are more likely to be found on protest sites. I next turn to research into embodied situated cognition (Chapter 3), where it becomes clear that there is a great deal of consistency across disciplines. There is generally agreement that mind is immanent in the world, and the degree of integration between what we conventionally understand as ‘self’ and ‘world’ problematizes the subject-object distinction. Because of this tight integration of 'self' and 'world', place can have a profound impact, not only on our thinking but

our entire being-in-the-world. Chapter 3 describes a form of embodied knowing which Gendlin calls the 'felt sense', which can be accessed using a practice called Focusing[3] (Gendlin, 1981).

The degree of consistency in embodied situated cognition research allows me to synthesise a coherent theory of embodied situated cognition (Chapter 4). This - the 'enactive process model' - combines enactivism, a leading approach in cognitive neuroscience (inter alia, Varela et al., 1991), with Gendlin's process philosophy (Gendlin, 1997). My synthesis is presented graphically in Chapter 4, fig 2, as 'The Cognitive Iceberg'.

By this stage, my thesis has raised fundamental questions about epistemology and ontology which need to be addressed before discussing my methodology. Chapter 5 uses Gendlin's embodied philosophy to address these issues. Gendlin's epistemology enables me to discuss embodied knowing from the perspective of propositional, academic knowledge, and collapses the subject/object distinction, thus avoiding the problems intrinsic to dualism (inter alia, Gendlin, 1997; Levin, 1997).

My methodology chapter builds on this epistemology to demonstrate how Gendlin's Focusing approach can both access embodied knowing and underpin an embodied hermeneutics (Chapter 6). This allows me to explore embodied knowing using an embodied methodology that is underpinned by an embodied epistemology, and thus grounds me in a virtuous circle of reflexive understanding.

My qualitative study of Eco-Paganism has three strands: an autoethnography, and studies of urban and site Eco-Paganism. I use my enactive process model to explain the role of embodied situated cognition in all strands. In Chapter 7 I present an autoethnography of my life on road protest sites which enhances the reader's embodied understanding of my research by providing a "vicarious experience of the things told” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000: 751). I problematize several dualities, including academic discourse versus emotional engagement, and entering/leaving the field. Chapter 8 is a study of urban Eco-Pagans which highlights several differences from mainstream Pagans. Feelings of connection with place emerge as the key interview theme, and I identify several processes which facilitate this experience, including the felt sense (Gendlin, 1981). The role of embodied situated cognition is especially apparent in the way participants 'think with place', as well as in spiritual healing, trance, ritual and relationships to the organic environment. Chapter 9 discusses protest site Eco-Paganism, and again notes the importance of processes of connection, the most important of which is the 'wilderness effect', which has

3 I always capitalize Gendlin's term Focusing to distinguish it from more common usage of the word. Not all authors follow this practice.

previously only been observed on wilderness treks (Greenway, 1995). I show how the processes of connection can catalyse profound spiritual experiences, and blur perceived boundaries between self and other. Embodied situated cognition is again extensive. I draw these threads together in Chapter 10, where I use the enactive process model to analyse the processes of connection and thinking with place. I conclude that the processes of connection can enable a communion with the world that awakens Eco-Pagans from the dualistic dream.

TERMINOLOGY

Nature

In the course of this thesis I use several terms that resist simple definition, and 'nature' is the first and most mercurial. Both Sutton and Williams consider the word to be the most complex in our language (Williams 1983: 219; Sutton 2007: 2), mainly because its meaning changes over time, revealing as it does so major developments in human thought (Williams 1983:224). 'Nature' encompasses three areas of meaning: "(i) the essential quality and character of something; (ii) the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both; (iii) the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings" (Williams 1983: 219). During the Romantic period of the late 18th century, the third meaning acquired an ethical flavour, as 'nature' came to refer to the "goodness and innocence" of the 'unspoiled places' of the 'countryside' (Williams 1983: 223). These different meanings are often confused or conflated, a fact that complicates any explanation of contemporary Paganism as a 'Nature Religion'. The editors of *Nature Religion Today* (Pearson, Roberts and Samuel, 1998) suggested that contemporary Paganism is a nature religion in that it involves “a reorientation towards, and a resacralisation of, both external nature and our own physical embodiment” (Pearson, Roberts and Samuel, 1998: 1). This definition, though adequate, is based squarely on meaning (iii) given above and ignores meaning (ii) of nature as an "inherent force" which is at least as significant to many contemporary Pagans. (See 'Eco-Paganism Literature review').

Bookchin claims that the languages of many aboriginal peoples lack any equivalent for our word "nature" because they are "[i]mmersed in nature" so "it has no special meaning" (Bookchin, 1993). Some argue that we should avoid talking about 'nature' altogether: As Evernden points out, our contemporary use of the word emphasises a "sense of separation between the human subject and the surrounding field of natural objects" (Evernden, 1992: 102). Ingold concurs that 'nature' only exists "for a being that does not belong there, and that can look upon it, in the manner of the detached scientist" (Ingold, 2000: 20).

He prefers the word 'environment', but clarifies the term, emphasizing that any environment is relative to those organisms who exist as part of it and that an environment is a process, which is "fundamentally historical" (Ingold, 2000: 20). Ecopsychologist Fisher, comes to a similar conclusion: In as much as "the natural world" is "a network of relationships", it "is not a thing all, but a constant flux of interweaving processes" (Fisher, 2002: 97). Ortner's re-thinking of her 1974 paper 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' recognises the limitations of her prior use of Levi-Straussian binary oppositions, and adopts a more process based approach, wherein 'nature' becomes understood as Strathern puts it, "those processes that proceed autonomously in the world, and 'that limit the possible' of human action" (Ortner, 1996: 179).

Despite these attempts to clarify the meaning to the word 'nature', I conclude that it remains too vague and culturally loaded for this thesis. Although most of the planet has now been influenced by human activity, this ranges across a very broad scale from wilderness to shopping precinct. Thus, Ingold's suggestion of 'environment' remains problematic, as it fails to distinguish places that are highly modified by human activities, like cities, from those less influenced by us, like ancient woodland; both are my environment when I am there. I will therefore use the term 'organic environment' to refer to the "the natural world" as "a network of relationships" (Fisher, 2002: 97) and processes which "proceed autonomously in the world" and “ 'limit the possible' of human action" (Ortner, 1996: 179), but which is nevertheless "fundamentally historical" (Ingold, 2000: 20).

Embodiment and Knowledge

The term 'embodiment' is used with different emphasis by different writers, so I need to be clear about my own understanding. There is a substantive discussion of this term in my literature review of embodied cognition (Chapter 3), but I would note here that I do not use the term 'embodiment' as a more nuanced name for the body, but rather to refer to ways in which we are embodied in the world.

It is difficult to differentiate between embodied cognition, embodied knowledge(s) and embodied knowing, partly because such "subjugated ways of knowing" (Foucault, 1980: pp. 81, 84) evade conventional analysis. Despite the challenge of feminist epistemology, the Western analytic tradition resists the notion that knowledge could in any sense be ‘embodied’. Existing definitions, however, can clarify somewhat: *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* describes cognition as “The use or handling of knowledge” (Gregory, 1987: 149), but leaves moot the question of what ‘knowledge’ means. However, whereas 'knowledge' suggests something one might use, 'knowing' implies a state of awareness, an understanding or way of being-in-the-world, and

therefore more accurately describes what I am researching. As Bourdieu puts it, "[w]hat is 'learned by the body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is" (Bourdieu, 1990: 73).

My embodied cognition literature review (Chapter 3) leads me to conclude that at the level of embodiment it is practically impossible to make distinctions between embodied cognition, embodied knowledge(s) and embodied knowing. However, I perceive an advantage in retaining the terms 'embodied cognition' and 'embodied knowing' to clarify a fundamental distinction between what Merleau-Ponty calls the physiological or "the objective body", and "the phenomenal body," which is how an individual phenomenologically experiences their embodiment[4]. Although there are occasions where we experience our own body as a physiological entity, we typically experience subjective embodiment as "a unified potential or capacity for doing this and that - typing this sentence, scratching that itch, etc." (Audi, 1999). I therefore adopt two complementary perspectives; one focused on the physiological body (embodied cognition), and the other phenomenological and experientially intimate (embodied knowing). Neither approach is 'truer' than the other, but both offer up different, equally revealing modes of understanding. We can learn only so much from looking at an apple; biting and tasting it almost reveals another entity. Approaches such as cognitive neuroscience favour the physiological body, while others – for example phenomenology and anthropology - typically emphasize the phenomenal body. However, adopting these two perspectives offers clarity, as it becomes clear that the objective body engages in embodied cognition, while the phenomenal body can experience an embodied knowing. This approach is most adequately summarized by Varela et al., who "see our bodies both as physical structures and as lived, experiential structures - in short, as both 'outer' and 'inner,' biological and phenomenological". The term embodiment carries this double meaning: "it encompasses both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms" (Varela et al., 1991: xv-xvi).

Conclusion

Having described the deficiencies in existing research, I explained my aims and objectives. I then set out the four main themes of my research. The first two themes set the initial questions: I examined my ethnography of Eco-Paganism from the theoretical perspective of embodied situated cognition. This perspective, and my ethnography, highlighted the importance of connection, which therefore became my third theme. As my research repeatedly problematizes conventional

4 The phenomenological tradition often uses the terms 'leib' for the 'lived' or phenomenal body and 'körper' to describe the physical 'objective ' body. (Embree et al., 1997: 66). Lakoff and Johnson make a similar distinction between "neural embodiment" and "phenomenological embodiment" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 37)

dualities, I identified this as my fourth theme. I used these themes to structure the discussion of my research findings, before closing by defining several key terms.

Chapter 2: Eco-Paganism Literature review

"Paganism not only holds a solution to our environmental crisis ... it can bring about a revolution in the way our culture makes sense of reality. For Paganism puts us back in touch with the body; by reconnecting our wordy analytical culture with the physical self, Paganism brings us back to the Earth" (Harris, 1996: 149). Stirring stuff, certainly, but does the rhetoric hold? Though I first spoke those words at a conference in September 1994, they still frame my discussion. This chapter explores the relationship of Paganism to "our environmental crisis", questions its claim to counter-cultural status and considers to what extent Paganism "puts us back in touch with the body".

There is no single 'Paganism'[5], but rather many 'Paganisms' (Blain, Ezzy and Harvey, 2004: vii) with various global manifestations[6]. However, certain "taxic indicators" (Harvey, 2004: 2-3) mark the network of Traditions, organizations, texts and practices that form what we might call 'mainstream Paganism'. Various spiritual approaches including Wicca, witchcraft, Druidry, Heathenism (Asatru or Odinism), western Shamanism and some strands of Goddess spirituality, sit, sometimes uncomfortably, beneath the Pagan umbrella. Several of these approaches - notably Wicca, Druidry and Heathenism - identify themselves as 'Traditions' (Davy, 2007: 145) with specific initiation ceremonies, practices and training, but many Pagans have a more eclectic practice and do not identify with any Tradition.

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5 The terms 'contemporary Paganism', 'Pagan' or 'Paganism' are more accurate and less likely to offend rather than the alternative 'Neo-Paganism'. To speak of Neo-Paganism implies a closer relationship to the classical variety than historical research supports (Hutton, 1999: vii) and simultaneously offends practitioners some of whom feel the 'neo-' prefix "represent[s] a veiled judgment of their religion as being in some way inferior or inauthentic" (Strmiska, 2004).

6 I focus on UK practice throughout but also draw on research based in the USA, specifying that location where appropriate.

THE CONTEXT of ECO-PAGANISM

Paganism is often described as a ‘nature religion’ (Pearson, Roberts and Samuel, 1998: 1), but as Davy points out "some Pagans affirm a transcendence of nature" and "believe in a sort of divinity that is not of this world" (Davy, 2007: 7). Furthermore, while it is true that most Pagan practice is "centrally concerned with celebrating Nature"(Harvey 2000: 155), that celebration does not usually extend to environmental activism or even necessarily increase awareness (Davy, 2007: 175) and most Pagans "don't often think about the ethical and political implications of what they are doing"(Adler 1986: 397). Environmentally active Pagans are in "a minority"(Davy, 2002: 90) and Davy concludes that "although Pagan discourses tend to support environmentalism, perhaps the average Pagan does not tend so much toward political action"(Davy, 2002: 92). This widely supported conclusion (see inter alia, Adler, 1986; Ezzy, 2006; Greenwood, 2005; Smith Obler 2004; Letcher, 2000) is less surprising when we recognise that many Pagans "understand 'nature' as a symbol" rather than a real place or the actual living environment (Davy, 2007: 24).

It is within this context that a movement has emerged over the last 20 years which is commonly called ‘Eco-Paganism’ in the UK, although it is sometimes described as "Practical Paganism” (Westwood and Walbridge, n.d., Plows 1998 and 2005; Letcher 2001). The relationship between Paganism in general and Eco-Paganism is complex and the latter is not simply a sub-set of the former. Current theoretical understandings of Eco-Paganism are discussed below, but in brief, it is a distinct attitude and approach to the practical expression of Paganism that expresses itself in environmental action. Although ‘typical’ Eco-Pagans do exist, there are many more Pagans who at one time or another express Eco-Pagan sensibilities. On the other hand, some Eco-Pagans - especially itinerant protest site Eco-Pagans - have little or nothing to do with mainstream Paganism. Bearing this complex relationship in mind, I begin by exploring the common ground between Paganism and Eco-Paganism, pointing out particular Eco-Pagan emphases where relevant.

'Nature' and the Knowing Body

Western mainstream culture has a pragmatic approach to the environment and at best an ambivalent attitude to the body. But for most Pagans the body and our sensual relationship to our environment is fundamental, and engenders an embodied understanding. As LaFleur points out (1998: 48) how we understand the human body reveals our deeper metaphysical assumptions, and by placing the sensual body at the heart of spiritual experience Paganism can challenge the dominant ideology at both a physical and a symbolic

level. For Harvey "[e]mbodied reality is authoritative in Paganism"because Pagan understanding is located in everyday life and experience (Harvey, 1997: 187). Raphael describes Goddess spirituality as a "somatic spirituality" (Raphael, 1996: 75) that resacralizes the body (Raphael, 1996: 82), while Salomonsen comments that the symbols used in Reclaiming Witchcraft are grounded in "the human body, sexuality and parenting, as well as the earth and the seasonal cycles of the natural world"(Salomonsen, 2002: 14). This is typical of Pagans in general (inter alia, Adler, 1986; Hardman and Harvey, 1995; Harvey, 1997; Pearson, Roberts and Samuel, 1998).

In an interview in *People of the Earth* Alexei Kondratiev expresses his belief that "attunement to the natural world"is the main contribution Paganism can make to the modern world. This attunement "is not just an intellectual understanding"but rather "a gut feeling", and he explained that Pagans "react in a very personal and visceral way to Nature"(Hopman and Bond, 1995: 25). In her study of US Pagan Festivals, Pike suggests that the dancers in a fire ritual "construct their identities around the fire by moving back and forth between verbal and somatic ways of knowing" (Pike, 2001: 189). This helps create a new relationship to the body that rejects socialized values and celebrates those of contemporary Paganism, such as sacred sexuality. During the ritual "the body both expresses and constructs meaning" (Pike, 2001: 197-198).

This validation of embodied knowing is especially common in literature related to Eco-Paganism. Salomonsen quotes Reclaiming witch Francesca, for whom significant understanding comes from a profound physical involvement:

> You get involved with your whole being, with your god spirit, with your sacred animal nature, with your passion – you bring all parts of you and you experience it (Salomonsen, 1998: 144).

Francesca's experience illustrates Starhawk's understanding that if we are to move beyond the "thought-forms of estrangement"we must focus on the physical: "what we can see and touch and hold" (Starhawk, 1982: 29). Starhawk - a Reclaiming founder member - prefers symbol to abstraction "because it evokes sensual and emotional, not just intellectual, responses"(Starhawk, 1982: 11) and concludes that "[o]ur economic and political systems, our science and technology, are rooted in our alienation from our bodies and from the realms of deep feeling" (Starhawk, 1982: 137). Eco-Pagan activist Alisha Little Tree spoke of the "knowledge in our bodies that tell us what's right"(Taylor, 2001: 231-232) while academic Eco-Pagan Plows describes the experience of protest camp rituals in similar terms:

> We were tuning into the Earth's heartbeat, to a frequency you

> find only through faith and instinct (Plows, 1998a: 289).

Taylor describes similar practices at activist gatherings in the US. Although some used hallucinogens and alcohol, most activists sought ecstatic spiritual experience through drumming and dancing:

> Fuelled by hard-driving music and drumming, some activists report mystically fusing with the cosmos, 'losing themselves' and their sense of independent ego, as they dance into the night (Taylor, 2001: 228).

(Eco-)Pagan Space

Beyer opines that Pagans valorize physical place, stressing relationship to what is local (Beyer, 1998: 17 and 19), and this is certainly true of Eco-Pagans, for whom this belief is expressed in the practice of building a relationship with the spirit(s) of a place, the genius loci (see inter alia, Patterson, 1991; Taylor, 2001). But how true this is of Pagans in general is debatable, as evidenced by the degree of attention paid to UK 'sacred sites' like Avebury, Glastonbury and Stonehenge (Bowman, 2000: 92; Harvey, 2000: 159) as well as more exotic places like Delphi and Crete all of which are "popular destinations" for Pagan pilgrims (Rountree, 2006: 95).

Pagan festival gatherings, which last from a few hours to a week or more, provide a space where participants can overcome the alienation Starhawk speaks of (Pike, 2001: 24). Pike is concerned specifically with large[7] Pagan gatherings in the USA:

> Dimensions of self and space are interconnected for Neopagans; boundaries are fluid between self and other, imagination and reality, and human and nature. Festival space dissolves these boundaries by telling participants through their senses that the space belongs to them and is different from the other spaces they live in (Pike, 2001: 28 –29).

It is illuminating to compare the sacred liminal space of contemporary Pagan festivals with that of the Eco-Pagan protest camps, as both create a "shared reality"that is very different from conventional experience, (which Pikes' respondents call "Mundania”), but is considered "*more* 'real' because [it embodies] an ideal reality"(Pike, 2001: 21). Letcher notes that the "enchanted world"of the protest camp is a "forgotten, and *truer* [aspect of] reality” (Letcher, 2001b: author's emphasis). In each case the contrast is moral and ontological, and celebrates the carnivalesque. Although both festival and protest space are established using narrative, ritual, and imagination, there are

7 Such festivals usually included over a hundred people. Similar events are held less frequently in the UK and Europe.

significant differences: Whereas the laws of Mundania permit festival space, confrontation defines the Eco-Pagan camp. The festival lasts for a brief, set period of time – usually no more than a week - but a protest camp has no pre-determined end point, so creates a tension that magnifies the sense of liminality. While most protest sites are based in wooded areas, the East London M11 Link Road protest was a notable exception that nevertheless exemplified the unique qualities I've identified. In November 1993 the protest culminated in the occupation of Claremont Road, a street of over 30 houses, and by the Summer of 1994 it had "transform[ed] into a 'festival of resistance'" (Butler, 2003: 384).

Practice and Belief

Because practice and experience are more important than belief, Paganism has little or no creed and the question of what to believe is open to the individual (Davy, 2007: 13; Harvey, 1997: 161). Beyer considers "a strong experiential basis where personal experience is a final arbiter of truth or validity"to be a defining feature of Paganism (Beyer, 1998: 17), while for Starhawk, Witchcraft is not a belief system at all, but simply an "attitude of joy and wonder to the world"(Starhawk, [1979] 1989: 108). Vee Van Dam, editor of *Spiral* magazine (circa. 1989), agreed:

> I do not even think of Paganism as a religion; I perceive it as a 'feeling' and when clear about things as a 'knowing' … many so-called Pagan religions … lose the 'feeing' of the Spirit for the sake of dogma, tenets, rules and often useless rituals.

Van Dam's definition of Paganism is quoted approvingly by UK Eco-Pagan Richard Westwood in *Earthwise* magazine (Westwood, 1988: 12).

Although there is agreement that "Paganism is not so much a set of beliefs as a way of relating to the world" (Harris, 1996: 153), the specific practices of Eco-Paganism introduce an inevitable tension. Adler once assumed that Paganism would "consider the protection of the earth a religious duty"and so "anyone who did not feel this way … was not a 'real Pagan'" (Adler, 1986: 399). Activist academic Letcher held a similar view:

> if Pagans are not taking a leading role in the struggle against environmental destruction then they not only disempower themselves, but their religion and that which they hold to be most sacred (Letcher, 2000).

Letcher concludes that there are "inconsistencies within modern Paganism"and compares 'Radical' activist Pagans with the 'virtual'

Pagan mainstream (Letcher 2000).

Deity

The prioritization of practice over belief is apparent in relationships with deity, which vary enormously. Not only do Pagans disagree on every aspect of this relationship, but may hold apparently inconsistent beliefs or have no beliefs at all: Philip, a Wiccan, wrote:

> I am monotheist, duotheist, pantheist, panentheist and atheist and find no contradiction in that whatever (Philip, pers. comm. 11/10/2006).

Inquiring into how Pagans practically relate to deity is more useful than asking about belief, and we can differentiate between 'working' with deity and 'worship'. Most contemporary Pagans "devote themselves to one or more gods or goddesses" (Cowan, 2006: 179), but acts of worship often blur into practical work with or through deities to empower a spell, ask for counsel or invite some degree of possession (Harris and Nightmare, 2006: 234).

Beyer's claim that Pagans stress relationship to what is local (Beyer, 1998: 19) is again not borne out, as reference to local deities is unusual and generally linked to the kind of specific 'sacred sites' referred to above. Many Pagans work with a generic Goddess, a God and Goddess partnership (Pearson, 2002), or deities from ancient pantheons of Egypt, Greece, Rome or Celtic or Nordic Europe (Pearson, 2002; Harvey, 1995). For Druid priest Philip Shallcrass "[a]ll Gods are one God, and all Goddesses are one Goddess" (Shallcrass, 1998: 164), and this is true for many Wiccans (inter alia, Greenwood, 1998: 101; Crowley 1998: 170) and Pagans in general (Cowan 2006: 180). The most common alternative view is that each deity is a distinct entity (Cowan, 2006: 180) sometimes understood as "powers of nature" (Restall Orr, 2005: 10) with the Goddess conceptualized as "the Earth Mother" (Stuckey, 2002: 115). Some Pagans have a more psychologized understanding of deity as "role models" (Davey, 2007: 18) or the "inner motivations ... of a persons life" (Harvey 1997: 75-76) and Wicca in particular has been influenced by Jung (Greenwood, 1998: 105; Crowley, 1995).

Ritual

Ritual is difficult to define (see Grimes, 2000) but for the purpose of this thesis I use my own definition of contemporary Pagan ritual:

> A Neopagan ritual is a process played out through performance. It is set apart from the mundane and involves physical activity and symbolic verbal or non-verbal communication expressed through multiple sensory modalities. Some Neopagan ritual intends to engage with 'ultimate reality' or mystical powers and takes place in the context of a heightened emotional state (Harris

and NightMare 2006: 217).

According to Adler, Kelly claimed that "the Craft ... is totally defined in terms of the ritual" (Adler, 1986: 170), and given the many functions that it fulfils it is no surprise that it serves a "vital need" for many Pagans (Harris and NightMare, 2006: 234). Some form of ritual is important to most - perhaps all - Pagans, but it is practised in a wide variety of ways: Wiccans claim that their religion "can *only* be expressed and experienced though direct participation in its rituals" (Pearson, 2007: 69), so Wicca is ritually orthopraxic, but other Pagan rituals are more eclectic or ad hoc, and can include simply sitting in the woods (Harvey, 2000: 158), dancing (Pike, 2001) or other intentional performances.

Although my 1996 paper claimed that ecstatic Pagan rituals could heal "the rift between body & mind" (Harris, 1996: 153), Hutton notes an emphasis on control in contemporary witchcraft rituals which "lack the ecstatic, euphoric, and abandoned quality of many tribal and shamanist ritual practices; the object is usually not to lose consciousness but to enhance and deploy it"(Hutton, 1999: 407). Given the pervasive influence of the Craft on contemporary Paganism (inter alia, Hutton 1999; Melton 1993; Kelly 2002), my claim must be understood as selective at best.

Magic

Melton classifies Paganism within the "Magick Family" (Melton, 2002) but magic is tricky to define because "[t]he word *magic* works far too hard" (Glucklich, 1997: vii). Glucklich later offers Middleton's definition as authoritative: Middleton identifies as "magic" actions performed with the intention of bringing "about certain events or conditions" without any scientific "cause and effect relationship between the act and the consequence" (Middleton, 1987: 82). Middleton's understanding accords with Melton's belief that "[i]nherent in the magical world-view is the notion of control and manipulation"(Melton, 2002: 173). Pearson offers a more nuanced view that contrasts such "occult magic" with the more "'ordinary magic' of everyday life" that enables "interaction with other people or the Earth" (Pearson 2007: 101). This latter form of magic is concerned with "feeling[s] of connectedness with the sky, the trees, the soil" (Pearson 2007: 101) and distinguishes "stellar-based occultist magic from earth-based pagan magic" (Woodman, J., 2000, cited by Pearson, 2007: 101).

Earth-based and Esoteric Paganism

In our 2006 paper Welch and I traced the genealogy of contemporary Paganism through diverse currents of influence, the most important of which we described as "earth-based" and "esoteric" (Harris and Welch, 2006). Although these currents are not isolated from each other, they

carry distinct ideological characteristics and attract different socio-political groups. The Western Occult Tradition is the primary current flowing through Wicca, which has in turn influenced mainstream Paganism (inter alia, Melton 1993, Kelly, 2002 and Hutton, 1999.) This esoteric current is rooted in an ideology of anthropocentrism (Greenwood, 2005: 187), personal power and hierarchy (Hutton, 1999: 83; Kelly, 2002) that tends towards a patriarchal sexism (Salomonsen, 2002: 92-93). Given how much Paganism drew from this esoteric tradition, Harvey finds it unsurprising that "some Pagans do or say things which denigrate matter", and suggests that this leads to "a form of schizophrenia in which the celebration of Nature is assented to while disembodiedness is sought" (Harvey, 1997: 139). Greenwood claims that this high magic influence leads Wicca to be more concerned with "personal spiritual transformation" than "reverence for spirits of place" or the environment (Greenwood, 1998: 101-102), while Hutton notes that none of the many witches he researched had ever joined a protest camp "in sharp contrast with Pagan Druids and non-initiatory Pagans"(Hutton, 1999: 405).

However, an alternative current flows from the free festival culture of the 'new-age travellers' and biker scene into several interconnected streams. McKay claims that there were ongoing exchanges between travellers and peace camps throughout the early 1980's and quotes Don Aitken (*20 Years of Festivals*) that "[i]t was from the new Travellers that the Greenham women learned about benders[8]" (McKay, 1996: 58). Letcher opines that protest site Eco-Paganism, with its "romanticised gypsy life, and a new tribalism"also emerged from the free festival travellers (Letcher, 2005: 557). This same current blended with Druidry at Stonehenge to create the ‘alternative’ Druidry of the Glastonbury Order, Secular Order and the Loyal Arthurian Warband, many of whom identify as Eco-Pagans. Greenwood offers a similar model that focuses more on underlying ideologies than cultural influences. She compares the roles of esotericism and organicism in "nature spiritualities" and "highlights many contradictory and internal and inconsistencies that may throw doubt" on claims that Paganism is "inherently ecological" (Greenwood, 2005: 172-173).

We do not propose a dichotomy between two distinct groups, as many Pagans do not fit comfortably into any classification, but argue for ideal types. A typical earth based Pagan develops a spontaneous and intuitive practice where ritual is unstructured, ecstatic and focused on celebration. Earth based Pagans dislike organisation and some resist identifying as 'Pagan' at all. Esoteric Pagan groups, typically run by traditional Druids or Wiccans, tend to have a hierarchical organisation and ritual practice that inclines towards the formal and non-ecstatic. Crowley's brief description of Pagan worship provides an eloquent

8 A bender is a low impact dwelling commonly used at UK protest sites. It is made by bending coppiced wood to create a dome, which is then covered with a tarpaulin and lined with blankets.

illustration: She points out that some Pagans mark the seasonal festivals with "complex ritual" while others "simply sit and meditate or go outside to commune with nature" and suggests that these differences effectively mark "low and high church, field and temple Pagans" (Crowley, 1996: 169). Initial research suggested that earth based Pagans would be common in alternative Druidry and Eco-Paganism and my research confirms that this is indeed the case.

ECO-PAGANISM

Eco-Paganism has not yet been extensively researched and I have examined all material referring to the UK including magazines and grey literature. Although I have read material on US practice, I have not researched the movement in detail beyond the UK, though Eco-Paganism is widespread in the USA, and practised across Europe, in Canada, Australia and South Africa.

There are clearly similarities between Eco-Paganism and mainstream Paganism, but significant differences remain. First, there is a strong political dimension to Eco-Paganism that is often absent in the mainstream form. (See, inter alia, Harris & Scullion, 2004; Hine, 2000; Starhawk 2002). Plows, for example, reports that "spirituality often informs a political stance"and notes that it was through Paganism that she became radically politicised (Plows, 2001: 4).

The concept of Eco-Paganism emerged within the last 20 years, and the term itself is even more recent, with the earliest reference in *Moonshine* magazine # 7, which lists *Wood & Water* as a "goddess orientated eco-pagan magazine"(Westwood and Westwood, 1987b). The first discussions of UK Eco-Paganism were also in *Moonshine* magazine (Westwood and Westwood, various dates), and in the late 1980's several key articles were collected into the booklet encouraging Pagans to be more ecological and to apply magic to political ends. While *Moonshine* is clearly significant, Letcher opines that Eco-Paganism properly begins with the *practical* protests on Twyford Down the 1992 (Letcher, 2005: 556).

Who are Eco-Pagans?

Some Eco-Pagans are involved in a Pagan Tradition, counting themselves as, inter alia, Wiccans, Druids or Heathens (Harvey, 1997a, Letcher, 2000, 2002), but many are " 'detraditionalized' ", a term Letcher uses to describe the "elective and affectual spiritualities of protesters living more permanently at protest sites" (Letcher, 2005: 557), which emerged with the Twyford Down Donga Tribe (Plows, 2005). These two groups are not mutually exclusive (Letcher, 2003): Druids and Wiccans are found at protest camps (Roberts and Motherwort, 1997; Pendragon and Stone, 2003) and Eco-Pagans

typically move from one circle of influence to another: They may, for example, be part of the Dragon Network, an initiated Druid and a member of a protest camp tribe. Letcher's model has heuristic merit in defining ideal types, and I refer to detraditionalized and traditionalized Eco-Pagans throughout this thesis. According to Letcher, detraditionalized protest camp Eco-Pagans practice syncretic spiritualities that incorporate elements of "Buddhism, Shamanism, the New Age, Theosophy, 60s psychedelia, the Rainbow movement, and British folklore, whilst retaining a core Pagan doxa"(Letcher, 2005: 557). This eclecticism supports his claim that this "religion of the people ... has emerged from the community of protesters and their collective stories"(Letcher, 2001b). Letcher's model is valuable, but we also need to distinguish between the Eco-Pagans he identified on protest sites and more urban Eco-Pagans. Boundaries between all these categories are fluid, and at a given time a site Eco-Pagan may be a member of a Pagan Tradition or not, and others of either persuasion may be living a more urban lifestyle.

Bearing in mind the complexity of the distinction, traditionalized Eco-Pagans fall primarily into three groups: Reclaiming, Dragon and various Druid orders. Reclaiming is the best known, primarily because of the wide influence of activist Witch Starhawk, and though California Reclaiming has been extensively studied (Salomonsen, 1998 and 2002), research into the UK branch, founded in 2001, has been minimal (Dougherty, 2004). Although the UK based Dragon Environmental Network (founded by Harris in 1990) has a firm place in mainstream Paganism, it has been described as "the Dragon Tribe"(personal recollection, but see Butler, 2003: 399) and some detraditionalized protest camp Eco-Pagans count themselves as 'Dragons' (Harris, 1996). Several Druid orders are environmentally active, notably The Loyal Arthurian Warband and The Secular Order of Druids. The British Druid Order, which has now branched into the separate Druid Network, organized ritual protests at Newbury, but neither Order has the same level of activist involvement as the Warband.

Some Eco-Pagans remain largely ignorant of Traditional paths or even hostile to them. Rowe, a member of the Donga Tribe, refused the name 'Pagan' but felt it was close to what she felt: "I don't like to worship and idol [*sic*]. I worship the land because I live on it and I can feel the energy from that. I don't like structures and rules" (interviewed by Berens, 1994). Rowe's attitude is not uncommon, and reflects a distrust of urban Pagans who are initiated into one of the Traditions which are sometimes seen as hierarchical, rule bound and remote from the protester's spirituality, which is grounded in a life close to the land. When visiting Wiccans invited the Eco-Pagan protesters living in Lyminge Forest to join their ritual, they were told: "We don't need your rituals. We live it every day"(Roberts and Motherwort, 1997: 26).

Several features of mainstream Paganism are emphasised in Eco-Paganism. Obviously environmental practice is fundamental to Eco-Paganism, and stronger than mainstream Paganism activity. Letcher claims that the New tribalism [9] (Letcher, 2002: 85) found in Paganism is central to the construction of identity for many protest site Eco-Pagans. He adds that the aesthetic aspects of spirituality which are apparent throughout Paganism may be more significant for protest site Eco-Pagans (Letcher, 2002: 85), especially in the form of storytelling: "Stories are extremely important in the formation and maintenance of vernacular spiritualities. Eco-paganism is shaped, not by books or charismatic leaders, but by the language spoken and by the myths and narratives shared around the campfires, the hearths of the protest camps"(Letcher, 2001b). His point is borne out by the mythologised story of Claremont Road told by "Crow, the Shaman":

> a small tribe living at the East End of a Great Town, at the Edge of a Great Forest ... They then called up the magical peoples - the Dongas and the Dragons; tribes who came from nowhere and whose place was with nature. ... the tribes dressed up the palace of Claremont in strange colours and decorated it with mystical symbols, splendid icons and mysterious idols. They created a sacred place of pilgrimage and made it loud with foreign drum beats, music and dance (Butler, 2003: 399).

According to US activist Greg Sotir one of the "prime tenets"of Eco-Paganism is the belief in "taking an active stand to stop the rape of the planet", and he emphasises the importance of re-connecting with nature that is enabled by this practice (Sotir, 2003). Clysdale's academic discussion concurs: Eco-Paganism is a "movement"specifically concerned with involvement in direct action that opposes "what is seen as an increasing modern separation from the earth". Fundamental to this reconnection is the "nonintellectual experiential knowledge"which I have described as the "knowledge of faith, of emotion, of the gut feeling" (Clysdale, 2002: 86, citing Harris, 1995).

The organic environment is sacred to most Pagans, but this belief is expressed most practically in Eco-Paganism. Clifton and Starhawk agree that "participation in the natural cycles of the region empowers people" (Davy, 2002: 92), while protest site Eco-Pagans often have an emotional, embodied understanding of the genius loci. Although many lack "specific knowledge"about local ecology, site Eco-Pagans "often feel intense emotional bonds with the tree in which they live, or the land they are defending" (Letcher, 2005: 557).

A connection with elemental nature is an important aspect of site Eco-

9 See Bauman 1993; Maffesoli 1996 for more on "neo-tribalism".

Paganism and is enabled by the simple practice of camping or living in a low impact dwelling like a bender or tree house. Anderson notes that everyday life on a protest site creates "ties between self and place", at least partly because of "heightened awareness of the local environment's agency", which "ties participants closer to their cosmological value systems as they experience at first hand unmediated positioning with a broader ecological system" (Anderson 2004: 51). Although Pagan festival camps like those researched by Pike (2001) achieve this to some extent, those living on a protest camp will experience it most intensely. Life on a protest site makes the reality of our relationship to the environment starkly clear: Dealing with the mud, the rain, and the use and misuse of resources is everyday life: "The very act of living out, however dependent on wider society for food and so on, puts one in touch with nature in a way that is real, not virtual" (Letcher, 2000). However, Letcher also found that Eco-Pagans lacked environmental sensitivity and noted that those at the Newbury protest "trampled the flora into a quagmire and scared off the fauna"during rituals (Letcher, 2001c). This has not always been the case, and Plows emphasizes the importance of a "Practical paganism"that respects ecology (Plows, 2001).

Past research observed rudimentary protest site Eco-Pagan rituals that focused on celebration or protection (Plows, 2005: 505). Letcher claimed that "[s]uch celebrations are a product of the movement's origins in (free) festival, and so-called 'new-age traveller' culture"(Letcher, 2005: 557). Ethnographies from the late 1990's found that rituals were more likely to emerge spontaneously amongst Eco-Pagans at protest sites than they would in a more urban context, and they often had a wild Dionysian edge (Letcher, 2002; Plows, 2001). MacLellan described such rituals as "a mixture of traditional witchcraft, street theatre and odd bits of traditional shamanism"and confirmed Letcher's conclusion (Letcher, 2002: 84) that these rituals enabled practitioners "to give shape to their feelings about the earth they are trying to protect" (MacLellan, 1995: 145).

Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism

Environmental philosophy has influenced the activist movement and Eco-Paganism, primarily through Deep Ecology and ecofeminism. The activist group Earth First! assert that their "actions are tied to Deep Ecology, the spiritual and visceral recognition of the intrinsic, sacred value of every living thing" (Earth First! Worldwide, 2007), and Davy notes the membership overlap between Earth First! and Eco-Paganism (Davy, 2007: 178) that was apparent at Twyford Down (Plows, 2005). Deep Ecology - a movement as much as an identifiable philosophy - emphasizes that human beings are only part of the ecology of the

planet and that only by understanding our ecological interconnectedness can we fully realize our humanity (Naess, 1989).

Ecofeminism, which has always had a spiritual dimension (Primavesi, 1996: 46), is more influential on Eco-Paganism than Deep Ecology. Ecofeminism has a complex history that makes it difficult to summarise, but it is rooted in the belief that the domination of women is fundamentally linked with that of nature, so environmental activism is integral with work to overcome female oppression (Harris, 2007). Taylor claims that some of the rituals enacted by US Eco-Pagans are "informed explicitly by ecofeminist beliefs" (Taylor, 2001: 230), while Lecher suggests that the Eco-Pagan understanding of nature is at least partly grounded in ecofeminism (specifically Merchant, 1980) and Goddess spirituality (Letcher, 2003). The relationships between Goddess spirituality, feminism and Eco-Paganism are intricate, and I will not attempt to unravel them, but those "drawn to Paganism from the women's movement are often more politically aware than longer-term Pagans" and bring a "pro-environmental" stance to their Paganism which we might infer is otherwise absent (Crowley, 1996: 170). Some Eco-Pagans emphasize the ecofeminist celebration of the erotic (LaChapelle, 1992; Spretnak, 1989). Eco-Pagan Webster claims that the "cultural forces that are damaging the earth" also repress the erotic, which is "an archaic mode of perception that uses merging as a method to know the other" (Webster 2006: 3). She thus echoes Starhawk's injunction to "love nature ... carnally, with our meat, our bones" (Starhawk, 1982: 143).

Eco-Paganism and the Direct Action Movement

Although there is a long history of non-violent direct action in this country, the protest that began at Twyford Down in 1992 marked the arrival of Earth First! to the UK, and ignited the direct action movement in Britain. Twyford Down was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, but the Government decided a new road was needed, so a 250 metre wide and 40 metre deep cutting now slices through the chalk downland. The protest was intense and involved hundreds of activists some of whom - the Eco-Pagan Donga Tribe - lived at various camps on the Down. The fact that the Donga Tribe were named after the Iron Age track ways on the Down illustrates their "very strong self identification with the land" (Plows, 2002: 45). Because the Donga Tribe were the first site Eco-Pagans and formed the core of the key UK protest, their "actions and worldviews had a significant influence on the wave of activists that followed" (Plows, 2005: 505). In common with later site Eco-Pagans, the Donga Tribe practised a "very earthy" Paganism that saw "[e]veryday nature ... as magical", and combined basic herbalism with simple rituals that "often" involved entheogenic mushrooms (Plows, 2005: 505). Twyford Down marked the beginning of the protest

movement which was active at the M11 (1993), Newbury (1996) and "an estimated 200 anti-road campaigns" (Butler, 2003: 383), before merging into the 'anti-globalization' protests of the Global Justice Movement (inter alia, Seattle, 1999 and Scotland, 2005).

Worthington opined that "[f]rom the beginning the road protesters demonstrated a raw, untutored form of grass-roots eco-paganism that went further than any previous protest movement in embracing the land as sacred" (Worthington, 2005: 214), while Butler noted how "various expressions of 'spirituality', or 'energy' as it was often termed" united the otherwise diverse protesters at Claremont Road (Butler, 2003: 386). Although many protesters wouldn't call themselves 'Pagan', boundaries blur between Eco-Pagan and protester, with most sites revealing shades of Pagan-to-protester. A " 'Pagan discourse' [underlies] the [protest] movement" (Letcher, 2000), and Plows confirms that a "sense of connectedness"contributes to "a fairly 'standard' activist spirituality" which she describes as 'practical paganism'. Taylor asserts that the US radical environmental movement "can aptly be labelled 'pagan environmentalism' ", and notes that each issue of the US Earth First! activist journal is dated by Pagan festivals (Taylor, B., 2001: 178).

Letcher suggests that Eco-Paganism, "in particular ideas of nature", has had a profound influence on the protest movement (Letcher, 2003: 6), but the influence is reciprocal, and Eco-Paganism in its current form would not exist without the direct action movement. Doherty argues that a "protest camp can be understood as a heterotopic space in which it becomes possible to express a new way of life without posing a direct challenge to the social order" (Doherty, 1997: 13). Letcher opines that the liminal space of a protest camp may encourage an Eco-Pagan culture to flourish and points out that the pressure of inevitable eviction places protesters in a "festival-like" time out of time (Letcher, 2001a: 63).

Conclusion

Paganism is a complex movement which suffers from a schizophrenic split between its identity as a 'nature religion' and its esoteric origins. This split is highlighted by the existence of Eco-Paganism. Although there is much common ground between mainstream and Eco-Paganism, there are significant differences in emphasis, attitude and approach. Eco-Pagans are typically politicised activists with a strong sense of place. Eco-Paganism is found as a sub-culture within Traditional Paganism and amongst environmental activists, notably at UK road protest sites. These groups are not mutually exclusive and both are influenced by ecofeminism, valorize embodied knowing and tend to practice ecstatic rituals focused on celebration.

Although Eco-Paganism is a significant spiritual phenomenon, research into it has been minimal: MacLellan wrote that the future of the urban shaman lay in the protest camps (MacLellan, 1995: 145), while Harvey suggests that Eco-Paganism tests "our understanding of what 'spirituality' might mean"(Harvey, 1997b: 3). It is also apparent that embodied knowing is particularly significant in Eco-Pagan spirituality, as intuition and 'gut feelings' have priority over intellectual approaches and understanding emerges from physical involvement. Furthermore, Pagans sometimes experience the boundaries between body and environment as fluid (Pike, 2001: 28 –29) and Eco-Pagan spirituality is closely related to a sense of connection (inter alia, Letcher, 2005; Plows, 2002: 166). However, research into the relationship between embodied knowing and spirituality is lacking and fails to explain why Eco-Pagans are more motivated than mainstream Pagans. Existing research suggests that embodied cognition is fundamental to these processes and that further investigation into its distinctive role in Eco-Paganism will unearth more of its magic.

Chapter 3: Embodied Cognition Literature Review

> Probably 95 percent of embodied thought is non-cognitive,
> yet probably 95 percent of academic thought has concentrated
> on the cognitive dimensions of the conscious 'I'.
> (Thrift, 2000: 36).

Although western culture privileges rational self-conscious thought, we

intuitively know that our understanding is shaped by feelings that lie beyond the realm of 'objective knowledge' and conscious cognition. Extensive research concludes that these processes are in some sense embodied. Although as yet there is no fully articulated epistemology of embodied cognition, a consistent interdisciplinary model is emerging, as researchers are apparently discussing the same phenomena from disparate but consistent perspectives.

This chapter reviews the literature on embodied situated cognition in order to contextualise my work and establish the grounds for synthesising a coherent theory I can apply to my ethnography of Eco-Paganism. Considering the perspectives of phenomenology, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, cognitive neuroscience and ecopsychology reveals an interdisciplinary consensus about embodied situated cognition. Different disciplines repeat key themes: embodied situated cognition is practical, pre-reflective, and blurs conventional understandings of 'self' and 'world'.

Embodiment and the Body

References to 'the body' are common, but the term 'embodied' is generally to be preferred whenever we consider the phenomenological condition of our being:

> When we examine the body in everyday life, we might therefore more accurately speak of a sociology of embodiment rather than a sociology of the body (Nettleton and Watson, 1998: 4).

Csordas emphasises the fundamental point that:

> If embodiment is an existential condition in which the body is the subjective source or intersubjective ground of experience, then studies under the rubric of embodiment are not 'about' the body *per se*. Instead they are about culture and experience insofar as these can be understood from the standpoint of bodily being-in-the-world (Csordas, 1999: 143).

Although the term is complex, Thrift suggests that embodiment has four fundamental characteristics, all of which are pertinent to this review:

> First, it has to be seen through Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'the flesh', as a reversible and reflexive fold between subject and object ... Second, embodiment is *practical* ... it is *involved* in a relation with the world ... Third, embodiment always involves other objects ... fourth, embodiment is *expressive*. That is, the body is not just a passive surface on which society is inscribed (Thrift, 1997: 139-140).

Embodied cognition is an expanding interdisciplinary topic, so the boundaries set on this review must make it both cogent and comprehensive. The pace of research makes any work before Polanyi (1958) redundant, while to stay as current as practically possible I reference *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition* (Aydede and Robbins, in press), which is expected in 2008. I excluded work about non-Western cultures because my thesis concerns Western Eco-Pagans, and all my references are available in English. My focus on embodied cognition in everyday life excluded research into its role in teaching and learning. I also excluded physiology and mind/brain/body biochemistry, because they lie beyond the notion of embodiment set out above, and would add unnecessary complication.

PHENOMENOLOGY

While Erricker claims that it is "pointless to search for a strict definition of phenomenology" (Erricker, 1999: 83), and cautions against treating it as a distinct discipline (Erricker, 1999: 75), we can identify certain fundamentals. Phenomenology is essentially the study of *phenomena*, that is things as they appear in our lived experience (Allen, 2005: 188) and Allen lists five characteristics; descriptive nature, antireductionism, intentionality, bracketing and eidetic vision (Allen, 2005: 188). Although phenomenology is not "merely descriptive", and provides an important tool for understanding (Bowman, 1992: 14), Erricker suggests its descriptive emphasis opens phenomenology to accusations of "hermeneutical naivety" that are only deflected by applying a theory of interpretation (Erricker, 1999: 82). Antireductionism emerges from phenomenology's concern with the richness of phenomena as experienced, while intentionality refers to the way that all consciousness is "consciousness of something" (Allen, 2005: 189). If we are to attend to the phenomena itself, we must recognise our assumptions and the "natural attitude" of everyday life (Moran, 2002: 15), so that we can bracket them out of our understanding. Such bracketing enables us to clarify our immediate intuition of phenomena - our eidetic vision (Moran, 2002: 11-17).

Phenomenologically "[t]he body is primarily a way of being in the world. It is a form of lived experience which is fluid and ever-shifting. And it is also a way of interacting with one’s environment, of shaping it and being shaped by it" (Cavallaro, 1998: 88). Cognitive neuroscientists like Varela take the phenomenologists as their philosophical precursors because they demonstrated how "knowledge depends on being in a world that is inseparable from our bodies, our language, and our social history - in short, from our *embodiment* " (Varela et al., 1991: 149; author's emphasis). There is, therefore, a common consensus that to understand embodiment we require "a cultural phenomenology" (Csordas, 1999: 143).

Merleau-Ponty
Merleau-Ponty was fascinated by our *'being-in-the-world'* - the way our consciousness is incarnate *in the world*. Our awareness does not emerge from a disembodied mind located somewhere outside the physical, but is part of an *active relationship* between embodied humans and the world:

> The properties of the object and the intentions of the subject ... are not only intermingled; they also constitute a new whole (Merleau-Ponty, 1963: 13).

Merleau-Ponty concluded that the process by which we come to understand the world emerges from a unity between subjects and objects that is the direct result of our embodiment. As he puts it, "[m]y body is the fabric into which all objects are woven" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 273). Though his primary concern was with perception as an embodied process, he understood our entire being-in-the-world in the same way:

> As I contemplate the blue of the sky ... I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it 'thinks itself within me,' I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified, and as it begins to exist for itself; my consciousness is saturated with this limitless blue ... (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 249).

This practical, embodied *knowing* is quite different from the more *discursive* knowledge we can talk about. Crucially, it is also an interested knowing that is bound up with practical life. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, this is a "knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 144). This upsets the Cartesian world-view, because it is a form of knowing that transcends subject/object dualism: The 'I' that knows is tangled with what is known.

Abram
Abram applies Merleau-Ponty's work to develop an embodied environmental philosophy which understands the body as "a sort of open circuit that completes itself only in things, in others, in the encompassing earth" (Abram, 1996: 62). Abram claims that

> [e]ach place has its own mind, its own psyche. Oak, madrone, Douglas fir, red-tailed hawk, serpentine in the sandstone, a certain scale to the topography, drenching rains in the winter, fog off-shore in the winter, salmon surging in the streams - all these together make up a particular state of mind, a place-specific intelligence shared by all the humans that dwell therein ... (Abram, 1996: 262).

Thus our immediate environment influences our thinking:

> A large boulder, its surface spreading with crinkly red and grey lichens, is able to influence the events around it, and even to influence the thinking of those folks who lean against it - lending their thoughts a certain gravity, and a kind of stony wisdom (Abram, 2004).

Abram asserts that oral cultures are fully aware that we are "corporeally embedded" in a "living landscape" (Abram, 1996: 65), but anyone can experience this reality under certain circumstances. He explains how his fieldwork experiences shifted his senses so that he began to perceive the world in a new way:

> When a magician spoke of a power or "presence" lingering in the corner of his house, I learned to notice the ray of sunlight that was then pouring through a chink in the roof, illuminating a column of drifting dust, and to realize that that column of light was indeed a power ... influencing the whole mood of the room; although I had not consciously seen it before, it had already been structuring my experience (Abram, 1996: 20).

This experience revealed to him that perception is participatory in that it always involves "the experience of an active interplay, or coupling, between the perceiving body and that which it perceives" (Abram, 1996: 57).

Gendlin

Gendlin often expresses the idea that many things are, in a special sense, 'implied' in a situation with five dots, ".....". To make this specific use clear, I shall write this as ". . . . ." to distinguish it from the more conventional "..." which designates the removal of a section of text.

Gendlin develops Merleau-Ponty's ideas to show how *interaction* is more fundamental than perception: Our perceptions function as part of our interaction with the world and so become part of how we behave in any given situation. The "body senses the whole situation, and it urges, it implicitly shapes our next action. It senses itself living-in its whole context - the situation" (Gendlin, 1992: 345). This bodily interaction opens us to a sense of the world beyond what we conventionally call perception. Gendlin explains this by inviting us to consider an imaginary scenario. Imagine you're alone walking along an unknown street late one night and you become aware of a group following you. Your "body-sense" of the situation is much more than your perceiving them behind you; it includes "your hope that perhaps they aren't following you, also your alarm, and many past experiences -

too many to separate out, and surely also the need to do something - walk faster, change your course, escape into a house, get ready to fight, run, shout . . . . ." (Gendlin, 1992: 346). The ". . . . ." can encompass "more than we can list" including perceptions and emotions, but also memories of past situations and options of what to do next. There is nothing mysterious about this intricate "body-sense", and in fact it grounds our conscious awareness. In everyday language we lack a language to name it, but in the therapeutic practice of Focusing it is called the 'felt sense'[10] where it describes an embodied tacit knowing that Gendlin describes as "a special kind of internal bodily awareness ... a body-sense of meaning" (Gendlin, 1981: 10).

The 'knowing' of the felt sense may not be immediately apparent, and may in some way contradict our more 'rational' understanding of a situation. Continuing to explore the scenario outlined above, Gendlin invites us to imagine we are with a friend who has a lot of experience of the district, and who thinks you should turn the next corner and enter the nearest house, but at the same time confides that "the idea makes her body feel intensely uneasy" though she can't think why (Gendlin, 1992: 348). Gendlin suggest that you would be unlikely to ignore your friend's feeling, which is a felt-sense. It is immediately clear from such experiences that "body and cognition are not just split apart" (Gendlin, 1997: 181), and Gendlin echoes Polanyi’s famous comment when he writes that “your body knows much that you don’t know” (Gendlin, 1981: 39). The conscious mind doesn't usually articulate a felt sense immediately, and indeed, may never do so. How easily people access the felt sense varies considerably, as shown by the Experiencing Scale (Gendlin, 1961: 243) developed by Gendlin and colleagues, but anyone can learn to access and verbalise the embodied knowing of the felt sense using the Focusing technique (Gendlin, 1981).

Although Gendlin describes the felt sense as a "bodily sensed knowledge" (Gendlin, 1981: 25), we need to be clear that his approach requires "a new conception of the living body" as a *process* by which "the body means or implies" (Gendlin 1997: 19) and - in common with other thinkers discussed here - the Gendlian 'body' extends beyond the skin. For Gendlin 'the body' "is a vastly larger system" (Gendlin, 1997: 26) such that the felt sense *is* the entire situation (Gendlin, 1992). Yet the felt sense is "a physical sense of meaning" (Gendlin, 1981: 69) with "a BODILY quality, like heavy, sticky, jumpy, fluttery, tight" (Gendlin, 1986: 53; author's emphasis). Obviously there are bodily sensations that are *not* meaningful (Gendlin, 1981: 69), but in practice it becomes quite clear what Gendlin is referring to.

Although Gendlin doesn't discuss how Focusing might relate to spirituality, Fisher touches on the connection (2002: 101), while

10 Gendlin usually uses the term 'body-sense' in his philosophy and 'felt-sense' in his psychotherapeutic work. Although these contexts mean they can sometimes be read as subtly different, I treat them as equivalent.

Campbell and McMahon established the Institute for Bio-Spiritual Research to explore the relationship (Campbell and McMahon, 1985).

ANTHROPOLOGY

Bateson

Bateson's notion that “the mental world - the mind - the world of information processing - is not limited by the skin” (Bateson, 2000 [1972]: 460), has been highly influential on discussions of embodied cognition, notably in Burkitt, Greenwood and Ingold. Bateson's key insight here was that

> [t]he individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is also immanent in pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger Mind of which the individual mind is only a subsystem (Bateson, 2000 [1972]: 467).

If "Mind" refers to a cybernetic system of patterned information, then it becomes difficult - or even nonsensical - to try to specify where an individual mind begins. Bateson imagines he is a "blind man" using a stick as a guide, and asks:

> where do I start? Is my mental system bounded at the handle of the stick? ... Does it start at the tip of the stick? (Bateson, 2000 [1972]: 465).

Bateson concludes that these are "nonsense questions" (Bateson, 2000 [1972]: 465), a prescient understanding confirmed by cognitive science.

Ingold

Ingold perceives a dualism in Bateson (Ingold, 2000: 16) and applies Hallowell's study of the Ojibwa to move beyond dichotomy:

> For the Ojibwa, knowledge is grounded in experience, understood as a coupling of the movement of one's awareness to the movement of aspects of the world. Experience, in this sense, does not mediate between mind and nature, since these are not separated in the first place (Ingold, 2000: 11).

This “poetics of dwelling” is grounded in a relational notion of personhood where the self inheres “in the unfolding of the relations set up by virtue of its positioning in an environment” (Ingold, 2000: 11). In this fully embodied ecology the organism integrates with its environment: “ 'organism plus environment' should denote not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality” (Ingold, 2000: 9). Body and mind are thus simply different ways of describing the same process, “namely the environmentally situated activity of the human organism-person” (Ingold, 2000: 171). This mode of being-in-

the-world engenders a knowledge Ingold calls ‘sentient ecology’ (Ingold, 2000: 116-17) that is grounded in “practical application” and “based in feeling, consisting in the skills, sensitivities and orientations that have developed through long experience of conducting one's life in a particular environment”. Ingold suggests that this is simply another word for “intuition” (Ingold, 2000: 25), but he clearly refers to the situated, practical and tacit embodied knowing consistently discussed in this review.

Csordas

Csordas defines "somatic modes of attention" as "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others" (Csordas, 1993: 138). Because we are "always already in the world", we cannot attend to a bodily sensation without simultaneously attending "to the intersubjective milieu that gives rise to that sensation", and thus the sensation "can tell us something about the world and others who surround us" (Csordas, 1993: 138-39). There is a clear parallel with Gendlin's description of how the "body senses the whole situation" (Gendlin, 1992: 345), and Csordas's 'somatic modes of attention' and Gendlin's 'felt sense' describe overlapping phenomena. Gendlin's felt sense is "a special kind of internal bodily awareness ... a body-sense of meaning" (Gendlin, 1981: 10), or what Csordas calls "bodily sensation". Furthermore, because we *learn* to understand its meaning when using Gendlin's Focusing approach, the felt sense is also "culturally elaborated".

The key difference between 'somatic modes of attention' and the 'felt sense' lies in the theoretical development of each term. Csordas is primarily descriptive: He describes the situations where somatic modes of attention occur, but fails to offer the kind of sophisticated theoretical underpinning provided by Gendlin (inter alia, Gendlin 1996). Furthermore, because Csordas is not concerned with the therapeutic potential of bodily ways of knowing, he has no equivalent to Gendlin's Focusing procedure.

Syme

Syme explains that deep cultural "knowings" in Scottish/Irish Gaelic speaking cultures are grounded in "bodily" knowledges, which are:

> what one feels in one’s body, the psychic mediumship of particular individuals within the community and the oral tradition (Syme, 1997: 206).

There are correlations with theoretical approaches already reviewed, most notably her description of how the body learns. Syme poetically recalls how as a child she came to learn her mother's knowing:

> "I know" my heart said. She’s speaking to me ... voice of baking bread, voice of heartbeat, voice of early morning gardener, voice

> of rocking arms, tapping feet, voice of stirring pots of food to the left, to the right, turn the teapot three times, once for your self, once for the culture, once for the world. My body finally knows my mother's voice. No words. Not one word between us (Syme, 1997: 212).

It was her mother's physical activity that taught her a situated, embodied knowing. She compares this experiential mode of knowing with learning Balinese dance:

> if you want to learn the dance I, the teacher must physically move your body. I turn your hand up, your foot out, your head to the left until you know. In the Gaelic, tap, tap, tap; stir, stir, stir; beat, beat beat; cake, babies, fishing nets, pounding cloth, think rhythm; think, feel, touch rhythm; repeat ... (Syme, 1997: 214).

As a result of honouring this "alternative epistemic ... we ourselves become more ... We come to know that we are part of, that we belong" (Syme, 1997: 216). This sense of a embodied deep connection to a specific place is particularity relevant to the emerging field of ecopsychology, discussed below.

Tacit and Explicit Knowing

Polanyi

Like Gendlin, Polanyi concluded that "we know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966: 4), referring to a tacit knowledge which is experiential and cannot be made explicit (Polanyi, 1958). This distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge is fundamental to the work of several key researchers (inter alia, Polanyi; Nonaka & Takeuchi). Explicit knowledge is variously called 'propositional knowledge', "embrained knowledge" (Quintas & Ray et al., 2001: 27), "knowledge that" (Ryle, 1949) and "knowledge about" (James, 1950). It is usually abstract and can be expressed formally in "words and numbers, scientific formulae, codified procedures or universal principles" (Quintas & Jones, 2002: 47). Nonaka & Takeuchi describe tacit knowledge as:

> not easily visible and expressible. Tacit knowledge is personal, context-specific and hard to formalize and communicate ... Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches fall into this category (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995: 56 and 75).

Tacit knowledge is fundamentally practical, situated and emotionally charged, and skills held as tacit knowledge are taught through observation, imitation, and practice (Nonaka, 1994: 19). Quintas & Ray et al. note that "[t]he mere transfer of information will often make little sense, if it is abstracted from associated emotions and specific contexts in which shared experiences are embedded" (Quintas & Ray et al.,

2001: 47 – 48). I therefore conclude that tacit knowledge is embodied and situated.

Several researchers suggest that metaphor and analogy can be used to work with tacit knowledge, which is significant in the light of the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1999), considered below. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) propose that metaphor and analogy "might enable colleagues to share, amplify and reinforce explicit representations of what had previously been tacit" (Quintas & Ray et al. 2001:47 after Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Several sociologists opine that a form of embodied tacit knowledge underpins social interactions. Games are a good example of how this might work. The rules of the game, strategies and complex physical movements combine in ways that mean a footballer often has no time to think thorough how to play: They must feel the game 'in their bones'. The principles of the game are embodied, and the full meaning can only be expressed in actions. Bourdieu, Foucault and Mauss all discuss these 'techniques of the body'. Although Foucault doesn't explicitly explore notions of embodied knowledge in depth, the concept runs through his work. Given Foucault's belief that power and knowledge "[d]irectly imply one another" (Foucault, 1977: 27), the process by which power inscribes itself onto the body can be described as a form of embodied knowledge (Foucault, 1980).

Bourdieu

Bourdieu describes a form of embodied knowledge called *habitus* (after Mauss, 1979). Habitus is a set of dispositions that the body learns and can use given the right social context. Because our social relationships *create* habitus, it is bound up with relations of power: How a class or group stand and move provides a social understanding of who they are. Bourdieu calls these characteristic ways of holding the body and gesturing the *hexis*, "[a] way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements" (Bourdieu, 1977: 87). The hexis is expressed in activity as habitus. The result is a powerful technique of the body:

> Bodily hexis is political mythology realised, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking* (Bourdieu, 1977: 93; author's emphasis).

Our behaviour is not determined by this system, but rather it provides a practical sense that inclines us towards one behaviour rather than another. It is a way of being-in-the-world rather than a considered reflection, and so it operates at a level that is at least partly

unconscious. The beliefs that order our behaviour are not states of mind but rather “states of body”, "instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad". These states, Bourdieu claims, operate through generating "countless practical metaphors" (Bourdieu, 1990: 68-69). The embodied cultural knowledge of habitus only exists in practical activity, so the concept entirely concurs with the consensus understanding emerging from this review of embodied cognition as tacit, practical and rooted in the body.

Bourdieu tends to emphasise the controlling aspect of habitus, but it can be understood as enabling. Jackson claims that changes in "the unitary field of body-mind-habitus" can free "energies bound up in habitual deformations of posture or movement" and thus "produce an altered sense of self" (Jackson, 2006: 328). For Syme the “internal knowledge” of belonging, which is the practical sense of the habitus by another name, is founded in a connection to both human physicality and to the earth - more specifically “to the particular history of the land” (Syme, 1997: 208). Trusting such inner knowledge “provides a platform for staying “connected” or in touch with one’s Self” which “contributes to a sense of psychological integrity and wholeness ...” (Syme, 1997: 207).

Burkitt

Burkitt claims that “[a]ll knowledge is embodied and situated, created within that fundamental unity between subjects and objects which is the product of having an active body” (Burkitt, 1999: 74). As we have seen, many others come to similar conclusions, but his key insight is that the development of cultural artifacts enabled new ways of thinking through the emergence of extended thinking bodies (Burkitt, 1999: 26). Extended thinking is not confined to the body within the skin, but is inseparable from the social and material contexts in which it takes place (Burkitt, 1999: 3). Burkitt references Mauss (Mauss, 1979), and there are clear resonances with the work of Foucault and Bourdieu, all of whom agree that techniques of the body can shift subjectivity. As Burkitt says:

> [o]ur way of 'being-in-the-world', of acting, knowing and thinking, is largely dependent on artifacts and how they re-form embodiment (Burkitt, 1999: 36).

Burkitt agrees with Bateson’s central insight – echoed by many other thinkers in this review - that we are always and already engaged in the world. Like Bateson, he concludes that “mind is itself immanent in the ecosystem, as a sensitivity to everything with which it is related, and as an ability to orient itself within those relations” (Burkitt, 1999: 69). Although Burkitt notes “the meaningful relationship of humans to the nonhuman world”, (Burkitt 1999: 72), his work remains focused on “artifacts, quasi-objects and mediating tools” (Burkitt, 1999: 73), so

fails to consider the potential of intimate engagement with that nonhuman world.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Greenwood

Greenwood's "magical consciousness", which she describes an "informal way of knowing" (Greenwood, 2005: 15), is reminiscent of the participatory perception which Abram's describes (Abram, 1996: 20) in that it is a "participatory and expanded aspect of consciousness" (Greenwood, 2005: viii). Greenwood gives various descriptions of magical consciousness as "a heightened awareness of an expanded connected wholeness" (Greenwood, 2005: 47), an altered or "shamanic" state of consciousness, or a perception of "non-ordinary reality". Magical consciousness is usually induced though a technique like dancing or drumming (Greenwood, 2005: 89), but simple "participation with nature may bring an expanded awareness of the deep connections between elements of nature" (Greenwood, 2005: 46). Greenwood draws mainly on Bateson's notion of an ecology of mind to theorise how magical consciousness operates, and her work remains essentially an anthropology of "magic and consciousness" (Greenwood, 2005: vii) that ignores wider dimensions.

Ritual Studies

Bell claims that ritual is a “bodily strategy that produces an incarnate means of knowing” (Bell, 1992: 163), while Grimes (Grimes, 1995) makes the provocative suggestion that ritual is a bodily way of knowing designed to move consciousness from the head to the body. Though Grimes doesn’t elucidate, Asad applies Mauss's notion of the habitus to problematize the distinction between religious ritual and more general bodily practices. Asad concludes that the role of ritual is not to express a symbolic meaning but to influence habitus, thereby helping to create district subjectivities (Asad, 1993: 131). Crossley makes a similar argument that rituals “are a form of embodied practical reason” (Crossley, 2004: 31). Drawing primarily on the work Mauss, Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu, he concludes that rituals are “body techniques”, that is to say “forms of practical and pre-reflective knowledge and understanding” (Crossley, 2004: 37). As such they can “effect social transformations” through transforming our “subjective and intersubjective states” (Crossley, 2004: 40).

COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE[11]

Peterson provides a valuable study of the significance of cognitive neuroscience for theology and concludes that:

11 I include two philosophers (Clark and Preston) in this section of my review who, though not cognitive neuroscientists, base their theories largely on work within the field.

> Our 'spirit,' however we may define that, emerges out of the activities of the mind/brain, which in turn are intimately connected to the body. A spiritual transformation, therefore, is in some sense also a biological one (Peterson, 2003: 94).

Until recently the dominant scientific model for human cognition was the symbol-processing, cognitivist model of the mind/brain as like a computer processing data (Bredo, 1994: 86 -87). Although in dominance for a quarter of a century, this approach failed to make progress, mainly because it "had moved too far from biological inspirations" (Varela et al., 1991: 86 -87).

Two philosophical assumptions underpin the cognitivist approach: First, it is profoundly dualistic, assuming a split between language and reality, mind and body (Bredo, 1994). Second, it relies on a belief in "representationalism", a philosophical stance notably critiqued by Rorty (Rorty, 1979). As a result, much of the older material in cognitive neuroscience retains a dualistic taint and there is often an assumption that the mind/brain/body remains somehow separate from the wider environment.

However, 'second-generation' cognitive neuroscience "begins with the realization that the body ... grounds and shapes human cognition" (Rohrer, 2007: 21 – 22), and provides "a wealth of converging evidence from various empirical disciplines that shows how our conceptual systems ... are grounded in patterns of bodily activity" (Johnson, 1999: 85). This approach, emboldened by the success of an embodied strategy to artificial intelligence research[12], can be usefully described as an "embodied cognitive science". Although I discuss key aspects of the theory in detail below, one conclusion is consistent: "human cognition is fundamentally shaped by embodied experience" (Gibbs, 2006: 3). In their extensive discussion of the evidence for "embodied theories of knowledge", Barsalou et al. draw on evidence from cognitive neuroscience, social psychology and cognitive psychology to conclude that if the argument between embodied and symbol-processing (representationalist) theories of cognition "were to be decided on purely empirical grounds at this point in time ... there would be no contest" and the embodied approach would triumph (Barsalou et al., 2005: 25). Niedenthal and colleagues likewise conclude that "[i]n sum, accumulating evidence from cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience supports embodiment theories of knowledge" (Niedenthal, et al., 2005: 188).

Enactivism

Varela and colleagues build on Merleau-Ponty's work to develop a model of cognition as "embodied action", a process they call "enactive"

12 See, for example the work of Brooks, 1999

(Varela et al., 1991: xx). They concur with the principle above that cognition is embodied and factor in the wider "biological, psychological, and cultural context" (Varela et al., 1991: 173). By emphasizing action they highlight that cognition is an aspect of the sensory body (Varela et al., 1991: xx) and that “knower and known, mind and world, stand in relation to each other through mutual specification or dependent coorigination” (Varela et al., 1991: 150). The enactive approach to cognition “is based on situated, embodied agents” (Varela, 2001: 215) and explicitly rejects representationalism, bypassing the "logical geography of inner versus outer” by understanding cognition as embedded in a total “biological/ psychological, and cultural context” (Varela et al., 1991: 172-173). They conclude that “organism and environment enfold into each other and unfold from one another in the fundamental circularity that is life itself” (Varela et al., 1991: 217).

Varela presents four "fundamental insights" of enactivism which he claims to be "established results" (Varela, 1999: 71). The first fundamental is that the mind is embodied and therefore "*[t]he mind is not in the head"* (Varela, 1999: 72; author's emphasis) and what we conventionally think of a 'subject' and 'object' are co-arising. Because the mind is embodied and arises out of "an active handling and coping with the world", then "whatever you call an object ... is entirely dependent on this constant sensory motor handling". As a result an object is not independently 'out there', but "arises because of your activity, so, in fact, you and the object are co-emerging, co-arising" (Varela, 1999: 71-72). The mind "cannot be separated from the *entire* organism" (Varela, 1999: 73; author's emphasis) or the "outside environment" (Varela, 1999: 74). Varela's second point focuses on the emergence of complex cognitive processes from much simpler sub-systems. The global process of cognition emerges from a huge number of simple interactions between "neural components and circuits" (Varela, 1999: 76). The relationship between local and global processes creates a "two-way street"; just as simple systems give rise to the complexity of conciousness, so what we consciously think impacts those local components (Varela, 1999: 76). From this stance it is no surprise that Varela introduces intersubjectivity, though he notes that this area is "not well charted yet". Our everyday assumption - reinforced by older "cognitive and brain science" - is that "a mind belongs inside a brain, and hence that the other's mind is impenetrable and opaque". However, he claims that recent research shows "that individuality and intersubjectivity are not in opposition, but necessarily *complementary*" (Varela, 1999: 79). Varela points to consistent evidence that "all cognitive phenomena are also emotional-affective" and that affect is a "pre-verbal" and "pre-reflective dynamic in self-constitution of the self". Thus our pre-reflective sense of self is "inseparable from the presence of others" (Varela, 1999: 80-81). Varela's final point is "far less consensual than the preceding ones" and

concerns issues of the philosophy of a "*neurophenomenology*" that lie beyond the scope of this review (Varela, 1999: 82; author's emphasis).

Johnson's pursuit of the enactivist approach leads him to conclude that the way we conceptualize and reason depends on "the kinds of bodies we have, the kinds of environments we inhabit, and the symbolic systems we inherit, which are themselves grounded in our embodiment" (Johnson, 1987: 99) In short, reason is embodied (Johnson, 1987:100) and grounded in an environment that includes "our history, culture, language, institutions, theories, and so forth" (Johnson, 1987: 207).

Both Csordas and Gendlin suggest that Johnson's cognitive approach fails to engage with our existential being-in-the-world. Csordas claims that Johnson misses the phenomenological dimensions of embodiment, and comments in a footnote that he is concerned with"the body as existential ground of culture" whereas Johnson (1987) "analyses the body as cognitive ground of culture" (Csordas, 2002: 289, fn#2). Gendlin writes that he and Johnson are engaged in a "friendly discussion" but criticizes Johnson's emphasis on "spatial movements" rather than considering the priority of the body "living-in its *environmental situation*" (Gendlin, 1997c: 169; author's emphasis). Csordas and Gendlin's criticisms are not directed at enactivism per se, but at Johnson's particular approach. In fact the core conclusions of enactivism - that key aspects of cognition are embodied, situated and grounded in practical activity - are widely accepted within cognitive science, and we see correlations with the work of Clark, Damasio, Merleau-Ponty and many others in this review.

Johnson joined cognitive linguistics researcher Lakoff to develop a theory of language and reasoning based on embodied metaphors. They claim that we reason using metaphorical concepts that are based on our embodied experiences. The way we use the metaphor 'more is up' provides a simple example: Because in health we stand up and sickness brings us down, we tend to think metaphorically of 'more' as being 'up' ('price rises') and less as down ('stocks plummeting'). These conceptual metaphors are learnt, and can be expressed in grammar, gesture, art or ritual. Lakoff and Johnson conclude that "[b]ecause our ideas are framed in terms of our unconscious embodied conceptual systems, truth and knowledge depend on embodied understanding" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 555). Their conclusions lead them to propose an ecological, embodied spirituality that recognises that the "[e]nvironment is not an 'other' to us ... it is part of our being" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 566).

Steen (Steen, 2000) is critical of Lakoff and Johnson's approach because they rely so much on linguistic evidence and so, he claims, fail to account for the deeper complexity of thinking. I conclude that

Gendlin's work, which correlates with that of Csordas in many ways, currently goes deeper into pre-conceptual and extra-verbal experience, and provides a fuller account of the relationship between language and thought than either Johnson or his joint project with Lakoff. However, embodied metaphor theory is not incompatible with Gendlin's approach, and Gendlin values Johnson's "beautiful work" on metaphor (Gendlin, 1997c: 174), suggesting they could "cooperate in a 'third generation' cognitive science" (Gendlin, 1997c: 169).

Despite these criticisms, Lakoff and Johnson's work has potential and others have already developed it. According to their original model we primarily use embodied metaphors as the source to makes sense of a target domain beyond the body. The process is one-way – the embodied source to the conceptual target. Other theorists, notably Faucounier and Turner (1995: 2002), argue for greater feedback between target and source and propose a more sophisticated theory, "conceptual blending". This recognizes the frequent situations where we blend an embodied cognitive metaphor with cultural, emotional and conceptual elements. Imagine, for example, that "you are watching the rain fall, responding emotionally and intellectually to what you see". We cognitively blend different ways of relating to such an experience, "a film version, a sketch of the rain, a verbal description", and these are "all connected by vital relations" (Turner, M, 2006: 17).

Emotion
According to Depraz and Gallagher, the "leading hypothesis" is that emotions are "inextricable from every mental act" (Depraz & Gallagher, 2003: 8), and Damasio presents the most developed theory of the role of emotion in cognition. Damasio claims that most of our decision making needs to be made quickly, so is accomplished by "body-related ... somatic-marker[s]" (Damasio, 2003: 148) which make emotion and feeling "indispensable" to the process of reasoning (Damasio, 2003: 145). Because we retain the knowledge of how previous responses impacted on our lives, we revive the "emotional signals" associated with those circumstances when a new situation arises (Damasio, 2003: 147). We are sometimes aware of this process, as for example when we get a "gut feeling" about something (Damasio, 2003: 147), but somatic markers also operate outside awareness producing "alterations in working memory, attention, and reasoning" (Damasio, 2003: 148). Damasio's theory is supported by "substantial evidence" (Damasio, 2003: 149) and correlates with Gendlin's notion of the felt sense.

Embodied Situated Cognition

Philosopher Clark draws on the insights of cognitive neuroscience to answer a question that is central to this review: "Where Does the Mind Stop and the Rest of the World Begin?" (Clark, 1977: 213). He

concludes that “extra-bodily resources constitute important parts of extended computational and cognitive processes”, and in some cases this “seepage of the mind into the world” challenges western notions of self. Clark follows Bateson in concluding that what we normally accept as "mental processes" extend beyond the "skin bag" into the local environment (Clark, 1977: 214). Clark avoids claims about the self/other boundary and does not suggest that “individual consciousness extends outside the head”, but concludes that what we refer to as mind is much more widely extended than the brain, and can “encompass a variety of external props and aids” (Clark, 1977: 215). This process, which Clark calls “robust cognitive extension” only occurs in special cases where “the relationship between user and artifact is about as close and intimate as that between the spider and the web” (Clark, 1977: 218). However, “beliefs, knowledge, and perhaps other mental states" sometimes depend on "aspects of the local environment” creating “hybrid entities” made up of “brains, bodies, and a wide variety of external structures and processes” (Clark, 1977: 218).

Such conclusions are widespread[13]: In his survey of the field Peterson notes that for a “significant number of researchers ... to understand the mind/brain in isolation from biological and environmental contexts is to understand nothing” (Peterson, 2003: 43). Theories of cognition beyond the ‘skin bag’ have spawned a new approach in cognitive science called “Embodied Situated Cognition” (ESC). Although ESC emerged from artificial intelligence research, it has become an interdisciplinary field enabling advances in psychology, philosophy of mind and social interaction theory (Almeida e Costa and Rocha, 2005). Evidence from neuroethology[14] supports the ESC approach: MacIver rejects what he calls ‘craniocentricism’ - the idea that what is really important is what goes on inside the skull - and concludes that the complex behaviour of organisms arises out of “a tight interplay of body, brain, and environment” (MacIver, forthcoming, 2008: 25). For these researchers embodiment means “the body-in-space, the body as it interacts with the physical and social environment” and they conclude that it ”is not just that the body shapes the embodied mind, but that the experiences of the body-in-the-world also shape the embodied mind” (Rohrer, 2007: 5).

Embodiment and Space

Preston applies ESC to environmental philosophy by claiming that "part of the feeling of attachment to place is quite literally an attachment of a portion of our cognitive architecture to the lands we inhabit" (Preston, 2003: xv). Preston recounts an experience the

13 Brothers usefully describes this approach as “externalism ... the idea that the mind is not “in the head” but in the individual's embodied interactions in the world” (Brothers 2005).

14 Neuroethology is a field that describes "animal behavior in terms of how the nervous system works". International Society for Neuroethology http://www.neuroethology.org/

anthropologist Basso had with a Western Apache cattleman named Dudley Patterson, who explained that particular places on tribal lands held a wisdom that could not "be grasped purely cognitively". Patterson needed to take Basso on horseback to these places of wisdom for him to "experience the places with his body", because "[t]he topography of the land had to filter through his limbs, the smell of the vegetation had to permeate his clothes, and the sweat created by the struggle of getting there had to drip from his body onto the ground" (Preston, 2003: 83). Culture is a key factor in this process, but Preston concludes that "[t]he physical environment is not just a site in which mind operates; it is a characterful place that influences the products of the mind" (Preston, 2003: 88).

Preston illustrates his argument with his own experiences, that echo those of Abram, above. Preston spent one summer volunteering for the National Park service in Alaska and found that the place "played itself out on my body and made its way into my body". As a result his "being-in-the-world ... took on a local character". This change took just two months, and Preston wonders how much greater the change might have been if he had lived there for years (Preston, 2003: 92). Although he adds that such dramatic examples are rare (Preston, 2003: 97), he emphasizes his key point that "people craft some of their very cognitive identity in communion with a landscape" (Preston, 2003: 100).

ECOPSYCHOLOGY

The Wilderness Effect

Ecopsychology is a new and "diverse field committed to placing human psychology into an ecological context", that proposes that the mind is "tangled up with" the natural world. (Fisher, 2005: 557-558). Perhaps the best established theory of ecopsychology is the 'wilderness effect' which Greenway claims is "increasingly accepted as a given" (Greenway, 1995: 128). There are several aspects to the wilderness effect, but fundamentally it involves "feelings of expansion or reconnection" which Greenway unhesitatingly describes as "spiritual" (Greenway, 1995: 128), and current research into the effect concurs: Davis reports that regularly "being and becoming in nature" over a long period of time becomes a form of ritual, "a potent spiritual practice" (Davis, 1998: 95). Baetz opines these kinds of experiences can "bring a spiritual and emotional (even a mystical) component not just to our personal lives, but to the modern environment movement as well" (Baetz, 1998: 3). Key concluded that "[t]here are so many examples" of spiritual experiences catalysed by wilderness "that it is almost ironic to seek to validate these kinds of experience when they are the basis of so many religions, traditions and forms of art" (Key, 2003: 65).

The wilderness effect is most apparent during 'wilderness' [15] treks lasting for more than a week [16], but ecopsychologists generally agree that "simply spending meaningful time communing with nature" (Shaw, 2006) is beneficial, and the full effect is a difference of degree rather than a difference in kind. Greenway agrees that there is "a gradient of the 'wilderness effect' - ranging from 'none' (no effect) to a complete blowout of one's usual programs for processing reality" (Greenway, 1995: 132).

- Greenway (1995: 128-129) provides a list of key aspects of the wilderness effect (cited by 60% of participants or more):
- 90% "described an increased sense of aliveness, well-being, and energy"
- 90% "stated that the experience allowed them break an addiction";
- 77% "described a major life change upon return";
- 60% of the men and 20% of the women "stated that a major goal of the trip was to conquer fear, challenge themselves, and expand limits";
- 60% "stated that they had adopted at least one ritual or contemplative practice learned on the trip";
- 92% "cited 'alone time' as the single most important experience of the trip";
- 73% cited "getting up before dawn and climbing a ridge or peak in order to greet the sun ... as the second most important experience of the trip".
- 80% cited " '[c]ommunity' or the fellowship of the group ... as the third most important experience";
- 76% of all participants reported "dramatic changes in quantity, vividness, and context of dreams".

He concludes that we are witnessing a profoundly shifted consciousness "writ vividly on the psyches of those experiencing extended stays 'away from cultural reinforcement' and 'vulnerable' to the natural dynamics of wilderness" (Greenway, 1995: 130).

Explanations

Various theories have attempted to explain this shift, with some emphasising sensory acuity while others suggest an awakened innate understanding. Roszak postulates a largely dormant "ecological unconscious" (Roszak, 1992) which can be awakened, while Wilson's 'biophilia hypothesis' claims that we have an inbuilt affiliation for nature (Wilson, 1975). Cohen (Cohen, 1995) estimates that people in western civilisation spend "over 95 percent of their lives indoors, cloistered from

15 Inevitably, I need to refer to 'wilderness' by which I mean open outdoor spaces with (at least) minimal management of flora and fauna.

16 Most of those studied by Greenway lasted for two weeks, although some were for three or four weeks long. Greenway, 1995: 124. Later studies have been made of 7 day excursions (Fredrickson, L. and Anderson, D., 1999).

nature", and concludes that this lack of sensory contact results in our common disconnection from 'nature'[17]. Sewall suggests that for many people perception has been dulled (Sewall, 1995) – a point also made by Harper (Harper, 1995: 189) - and they have thus lost connection with their environment. Research by McDonald and Schreyer (McDonald and Schreyer, 1991) and Beck (Beck 1987) conclude that the wilderness experience enhances sensory acuity, so supports this explanation.

Fredrickson and Anderson's research illustrated the importance of the "social dynamics between group members", which "played a large part in interpreting the wilderness place setting as spiritually inspirational". They emphasize that though their participants experienced the organic environment as "spiritually inspirational per se", most couldn't articulate these feelings without also "addressing the more social aspects of the place" (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999: 36). They conclude that it is a "unique combination of social interactions and landscape characteristics that render a place as spiritually inspirational" (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999: 38). Similarly, Stringer and McAvoy noted "camaraderie" as a "contributing factor" to spiritual experiences in wilderness (Stringer and McAvoy, 1992: 69). This research helps to explain the importance of community to the wilderness effect, and acts as a valuable corrective to the asocial explanations offered above.

Greenway argues that the effect is due to "a shift from culturally reinforced, dualism-producing reality processing to a more nondualistic mode" (Greenway, 1995: 131) which is experienced as "immersion in the reality in which you are swimming - of which you are a dynamic part" (Greenway, pers. comm, 2006). Bateson's influence is again apparent, and Greenway's claim concurs with discussions in this review regarding the relationship between mind and world. Greenway suggests that "self-reflective consciousness" (Greenway, 1995: 130) has "run amok" and led to the dualistic illusion that we are separate from "natural processes" (Greenway, 1995: 131). Key agrees, concluding that "[a]dventure in wild places" can awaken us from the dream of "metaphysical dualism that lies at the root of the current ecological impasse" (Key, 2003: 68).

Childhood Influences

In his introduction to the Japanese edition of Cobb's *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, environmental philosopher Shepard writes approvingly of her theory that:

> Children ... are engaged in expanding awareness from body to the organic surroundings, from self to the ecosystem ... In this play of body and earth the landscape becomes a model and method of anticipated knowledge, juxtaposing the systems of the body and the

17 Cohen appears to gloss over two meaning of 'nature': The first reference I take to be equivalent to my term "organic environment". His second use – the 'nature' Westerners are disconnected from – is more complex and perhaps romanticised. However, his points remain pertinent to my thesis.

> structure of the living nature (Shepard in Cobb, 1986).

He claims that Cobb describes "a new meta-physiology, connecting the most prized human faculties with the pungent presence of soil, leaves and butterflies ... a source of metaphors that bond body and planet, thought and place by the seemingly aimless, rhythmic frolic of children" (Shepard in Cobb, 1986). The ecology of mind Cobb describes is confirmed by recent research into childhood play from Cornell University (Wells and Lekies, 2006). Furthermore, ethnographies by Plows (1998b: 136) and Shaw confirm that that "childhood encounters with nature" (Shaw, 2004: 132) have a significant influence on adult environmental activism.

Fisher's 'Radical Ecopsychology'

Fisher powerfully applies Gendlin's work to ecopsychology, suggesting that as the felt sense is "the source of all our inwardly arising symbols", it is "the place where we discover the aims or intentions, the needs or claims, of the soul itself (the soul being the personification of the unconscious)" (Fisher, 2006: 228, endnote #69). He provides an example of one of his conversations with "nonhuman others":

> I feel a sudden resonance, where a message unmistakably comes through, as when a Raven flew onto a nearby branch of a hemlock to tell me who is boss and whose world I should be paying attention to. Such experiences need no justification beyond themselves for meaning is transmitted in them, and I feel a clear change in my existence, in the way I sense things following them (Fisher, 2006: 102-103).

This experience can become part of daily life and Fisher notes that "[t]he more I am able to attune myself to the natural world the more I discover that it is correspondingly attuned to me." (Fisher, 2006: 103).

Conclusion

When Merleau-Ponty articulated the phenomenology of the embodied mind, he concluded that in knowing the world we become part of it, and thus the conventional subject-object distinction was illusionary. Gendlin developed Merleau-Ponty's work, showing how an intricate "bodily sensed knowledge" (Gendlin, 1981: 25) emerges from our bodily interaction with the world. This felt-sense accords with anthropologist Csordas's 'somatic modes of attention', which are ways of "attending to and with one's body" (Csordas, 1993: 138). Other anthropologists have theorised aspects of embodied knowing: e.g. Bateson notably concurred with Merleau-Ponty that mind is immanent in the world. The sociological approach is significant for Mauss's notion the habitus, which was further theorised by Bourdieu. The habitus carries embodied cultural knowledge that is tacit and practical, so is consistent with Merleau-Ponty's theory.

Several religious studies scholars, frequently drawing on Bateson, Bourdieu, Merleau-Ponty or cognitive neuroscience, conclude that embodied situated cognition is fundamental to spiritual practice and experience. Second-generation cognitive neuroscience is especially influential, and confirms that cognition is embodied, situated and intricately tied in with emotions. Cognitive neuroscience also supports the position held by Merleau-Ponty, Gendlin, Burkitt, Bateson and others, that at least some fundamental aspects of the mind-body extend beyond the skin. Preston develops this discussion by claiming that we think with place, and this has a fundamental impact on our being-in-the-world. Enactivism is currently the most developed model of embodied situated cognition, and emphasizes that what we conventionally think of a 'subject' and 'object' are co-arising. Some enactivists (Lakoff and Johnson) emphasize the role of embodied metaphors in cognition. Their work has been criticized, but is influential and is likely to remain as part of an integrated model of enactivism.

Ecopsychologists concur with the consensus of this review that mind and world cannot be separated. Ecopsychology identified the wilderness effect, which demonstrates that spending time in the organic environment can catalyse profound spiritual experiences. The mechanism remains under discussion, but social and spatial factors seem significant. Related research suggests that childhood play in the organic environment has a significant influence on adult environmental activism.

A consensus emerges from this review that embodied cognition is situated and grounded in practical activity. This process is largely non-verbal and pre-reflective, and depends on an affective, sensual mode of being-in-the-world that reveals a fundamental integration between what we conventionally understand as ‘self’ and ‘world’. Because of the intimate relationship between 'self' and 'world', place can have a profound impact on our thinking and our entire being-in-the-world. My next chapter presents a model of embodied situated cognition based on this research that I then apply to my fieldwork.

Chapter 4: Embodied Situated Cognition: A Synthesis

"The heart has reasons that reason cannot know".
Pascal, *Pensées*.

Until the late twentieth century Pascal's point was well made, for our most fundamental motivations and the wisdom in our bones lay beyond rational understanding. But the synthesis I offer reveals how reason can at least learn to listen to the reasons of the heart. Embodied situated cognition is a complex phenomenon that cannot be adequately understood from a single perspective. A dance serves as a useful metaphor: We can analyse the choreography, music and physical execution of a dance, but this can't tell us how it *feels* to perform or watch it. Similarly we can interview the dancers, the audience and perhaps dance the steps ourselves, but we still won't understand how and why the choreography is effective. I thus adopt two complementary perspectives throughout: one focused on the phenomenological and experiential intimacy of embodied *knowing* and the other on the physiological body engaged in embodied situated *cognition*. My experiential analysis draws primarily on phenomenology and anthropology, while my more physiological perspective integrates the cognitive science of embodied situated cognition with Bourdieu's theory of habitus

Despite a remarkable degree of agreement across a wide range of disciplines, the considerable insights of cognitive neuroscience have rarely been integrated with those from sociology or anthropology, and even

those who have attempted such a synthesis don't draw on the breadth of material I have. We are still at an early stage in embodied situated cognition research, and I don't attempt to construct a full theory. I do, however, claim that new insights emerge that can illuminate the path of ethnographic exploration. I explain this synthesis in three thematic sections based on theoretical approaches reviewed in the previous chapter: theories concerned with metaphor and habitus; perspectives emphasising cognitive extension; and those studying the role of perception. I highlight interdisciplinary coherence, reveal previously unrecognised relationships between theoretical strategies and thus present a systematic integration. In some cases one theory can strengthen another: for example, Lakoff and Johnson’s cognitive metaphor theory can elucidate the mechanism underpinning Bourdieu's habitus. I also introduce new material, including Gibson’s “affordances" (Gibson, 1979), that are not strictly concerned with embodied situated cognition, but make a useful contribution to my model. I then consider challenges and critiques to the claims of embodied situated cognition. Throughout this chapter I apply different theoretical stances to existing fieldwork, sometimes drawing on my review of Eco-Paganism literature, and in the final section I demonstrate the explanatory power of my model.

THE ENACTIVE PROCESS MODEL

Embodied cognitive science "requires thinking through evidence drawn from a multiplicity of perspectives on embodiment, and therefore draws from multiple methodologies" (Rohrer, 2007: 14). Embodied cognitive science thus offers a sound basis for an interdisciplinary theory of embodied knowing, and enactivism is one of its foremost theoretical programs. Enactivism, which has a "reputable pedigree" (Preston, 2003: 30) and is grounded in "about fifty years of good research" (Varela, 1999: 71), builds on the insights of Merleau-Ponty and is either consonant with or has explanatory value for all the thinkers reviewed. Ingold's "sentient ecology" (Ingold, 2000: 116-17) is fundamentally an enactivist approach, as is Abram's less theorised model (Abram, 1996), while Preston applies it in his program of grounding knowledge in place (Preston, 2003). I described above how Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) enactivist model plausibly explicates Bourdieu's habitus, and although enactivism is more radical than Clark's stance, it is by no means incompatible with it. For all these reasons, enactivism forms the core of the model I apply to my fieldwork.

Gendlin can be understood as an enactivist, although he does not identify as such. However, on Gendlin's conception 'the body' extends beyond the skin into "a vastly larger system" (Gendlin, 1997: 26) in a way similar to the model offered by enactivism. Given that Gendlin's implicit is grounded in our memories, history and culture as well as immediate sensory input, I expect that it has a tight relationship with habitus, which I have already

linked to Lakoff and Johnston's embodied metaphor theory, but this must remain a hypothesis that would benefit from further research.

By combining enactivism with Gendlin's philosophy of the implicit, I synthesize a model of embodied situated cognition with more explanatory power than either has alone. This model is consistent with other theories discussed, and in several cases elucidates them. Given that Gendlin's key exposition describes his theory as *A Process Model* (Gendlin, 1997), I henceforth refer to this as the enactive process model. The enactive process model reveals that our being-in-the-world is bound up with the immediate environment and embodied cognition draws on it as a source of material to think with. Because different local environments provide different metaphors to think about the world they enable different ways of thinking such that in a given place there will be some thoughts we simply cannot think, because we lack the metaphorical substrate.

The Cognitive Iceberg

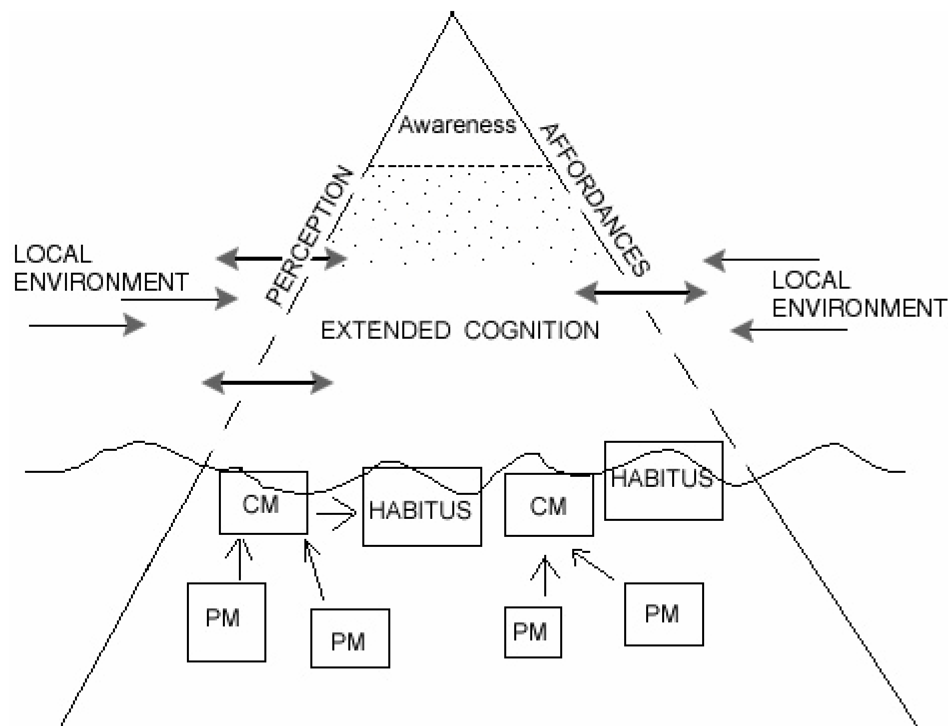


Fig 1: The Cognitive Iceberg

My 'cognitive iceberg' schematically represents the complex processes of embodied situated cognition. It is inevitably an oversimplification,[18] and

18 One fundamental element that I have not included is the considerable influence of the

presents the local environment and physical body as more separate than the enactive process model suggests. I explain the enactive process model in detail below, but in summary, the whole 'iceberg' triangle represents the physical body, while the area below the wavy line represents the "cognitive unconscious" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 10). This contains the Primary Metaphors (PM) that underpin Complex Metaphors (CM), and sets of interrelated Complex Metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999) which I interpret below as habitus seen from a different perspective. The physical body is engaged in a dynamic relationship with the local environment through extended cognition, perception and what Gibson calls "affordances" (Gibson, 1979). As 95 percent of embodied thought occurs below our consciousness (Thrift, 2000: 36), most of this processing never reaches everyday awareness, which is at the iceberg's tip.

At the top of the triangle – the tip of the proverbial iceberg – is everyday conscious awareness, which as we have heard, is a very small percentage of who we are. Consciousness is simply what we are aware of, the minimal aspects of a complex process, but because we identify our 'self' with consciousness we tend to discount the deep body 'self' that actually governs much of our behaviour. This top level of awareness is quite narrowly focused and tends to heighten our impression of a subject/object distinction. The dotted area just below the apex designates 'gut feelings' or felt senses. Further down the triangle awareness widens out into what I call the *deep body*, becoming less focused and blurring the distinction between self and other, shown in the graphic by the gaps appearing in the sides of the triangle. A distinct boundary marks off the cognitive unconscious because it's normally inaccessible to intentional influence or conscious awareness. However, this line is wavy, because under certain circumstances - in ritual for example (Asad, 1993: 131) - the deep body can access and influence at least some of what lies below the line.

The enactive process model (illustrated by the cognitive iceberg diagram) is a synthesis of several theoretical approaches. Some theories emphasize how cognition involves the individual body, and focus on stance, movement and gesture (see, inter alia, Bourdieu, Mauss, Syme). This approach typically suggests that cognition relies on cultural and embodied metaphors (Bourdieu, 1984: 172-3; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Syme, 1997). Several theorists conclude that as we are always and already engaged in the world, embodied situated cognition involves the immediate environment. Such cognitive extension may involve people, physical objects, light levels, sounds, the ordering of space, and the other-than-human world as tools to think with (see, inter alia, Abram, Bateson, Gendlin, Ingold, Varela et al.). Both the gestural/metaphorical and the cognitive extension models emphasize different aspects of the complex processes of embodied situated cognition/knowing and are not mutually exclusive, as complex feedback loops operate between the elements/sub-

hormonal and immune systems. I decided that factoring in this aspect would over complicate what is already an extensive analysis without a significant gain in insight.

systems described by each approach. Cognitive neuroscience estimates that only 5% of thought is conscious (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 13), so most of these processes occur in what Lakoff and Johnson call the "cognitive unconscious"[19] (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 9 -15).

In most cases, each theoretical stance was originally presented in isolation: Bourdieu, for example does not consider how the habitus might relate to cognitive extension. Therefore, although the enactive process model shows how different approaches mesh in complex interrelationships, I explain each aspect as a separate thematic perspective: I consider metaphor and habitus, cognitive extension, metaphors as scaffolding, and perception.

Metaphor and Habitus

Bourdieu's habitus is fundamental to gestural/metaphorical strategies, which illustrate how the practical sense of the habitus is rooted in metaphors that are embodied in the body schema[20] and the immediate environment. Furthermore, this practical sense orders our perception, thereby delineating what we attend to and how we apprehend it.

Jenkins (1992: *passim*, 76-80) is critical of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, claiming that it fails to explain how habitus actually functions. Jenkins argues that Bourdieu glosses over this issue with vague references to 'unconscious' processes, but Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphors may be useful in clarifying how habitus functions. Lakoff and Johnson's theory claims that we reason using metaphorical concepts based on our physical experiences (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). The "practical taxonomies" which Bourdieu used to decipher the meaning of Kabyle culture, are similarly rooted in the bodily schema: Male/female, front/back, up/down, hot/cold, are examples of practical metaphors that Kabyle culture – and, no doubt, our own – use to make sense of the world (Bourdieu, 1990: 10). This embodied "socialization instils a sense of the equivalences between physical space and social space and between movements (rising, falling, etc.) in the two spaces and thereby roots the most fundamental structures of the group in the primary experiences of the body which, as is clearly seen in emotion, takes metaphors seriously" (Bourdieu, 1990: 72).

On Lakoff and Johnson's model, Primary Metaphors are the basic units of embodied understanding, grounding simple assumptions like 'More Is Up' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 56). Primary Metaphors build into Complex Metaphors that help construct our conceptual systems, and "affect how we think and what we care about" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 60). We can explain how Bourdieu's habitus functions in terms of Primary and

19 This is not to be confused with the Freudian or Jungian unconscious. Lakoff and Johnson's concept is based on an entirely different model.

20 The body schema is a preconscious system that helps manage posture and movement (Gallagher and Cole, 1995).

Complex Metaphors, as shown in fig. 2.

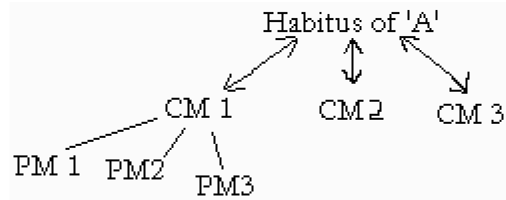


Fig. 2: Embodied Metaphor and Habitus

Primary Metaphors (PM) underpin Complex Metaphors (CM), and sets of interrelated Complex Metaphors can be understood as habitus seen from a different perspective. The stoic 'stiff upper lip' serves as a good example: 'Stiff Is Strong' is a Primary Metaphor that becomes Complex in the context of the emotional feeling of distress where the upper lip trembles. In a social context, the stiff upper lip, seen as an aspect of habitus, exemplifies a class bound moral imperative. A slightly adapted version of figure 2 is integrated into the cognitive unconscious on my cognitive iceberg diagram (fig. 1).

Cognitive Extension

Although there are variations in how theorists understand the relationship between 'self' and environment, they agree that place can enable cognitive processes we would otherwise be incapable of (Preston, 2003). Bourdieu's practical sense engages with the local environment in a way that is analogous to cognitive extension, and this process is apparent in Bourdieu's analysis of the Kabyle house (Bourdieu, 1990). The space of the house is organised according to the "practical taxonomies" described above in the section on *Metaphor and Habitus*: the house itself is female as opposed to the outside world of men, while within the house are light (male) spaces used for social activities and dark (female) areas set apart for more organic aspects of life like sleeping and sex (Bourdieu, 1990: 274). The house thus becomes cognised space (Rapoport, 1994) that is integral to the process of enculturation. As Benton says:

> social relations take as their terms not just persons ... but also physical objects, spatial 'envelopes', land, material substances and other living things, which are, likewise, space-time embedded (Benton, 1991: 21).

This is apparent in Butler's description of the space of resistance Eco-Pagans[21] created at the M11 link road protest:

> [T]he culture of resistance created at Claremont[22], the people who

21 Not all those involved with the M11 protest were Eco-Pagans, but, as noted in Chapter 2, there is "a Pagan discourse underlying the [protest] movement" (Letcher, 2000). This is apparent in Butler's description.

22 The whole of Claremont Road was occupied by activists during the height of the M11

> inhabited it and the rituals performed in the space functioned as an 'auto-critic' of everyday life in that the art and artefacts, the landscape itself, were purposefully (re)-created to 'display' and to confront this potential (Butler, 2003: 377-378).

Butler quotes Tilley to further her point:

> Spaces open up by virtue of the *dwelling* of humanity or the *staying with things* that cannot be separated: the earth, the sky, the constellations, the divinities, birth and death ... Cognition is not opposed to reality, but is wholly given over in the social fact of dwelling, serving to link place, praxis, cosmology and nurture (Tilley, 1994: 13 (quoted in Butler, 1991: 377).

Butler, Benton and Tilley are describing processes that involve cognitive extension, although none of them use that term: cognition is bound up with spaces, and as people transform an environment they are creating ways of thinking, of making sense of things.

Metaphors as Scaffolding

Neither Burkitt nor Clark explore the possibility that the other-than-human world might serve as scaffolding in the way described above, but applying Lakoff and Johnson's work suggests how this could work. Although Lakoff and Johnson's embodied metaphors are rooted within the skin enclosed body (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), cognitive extension can explain how we use aspects of our environment as scaffolding metaphors. Bourdieu suggests as much in his analysis of the use of practical metaphors in the spatial layout of the Kabyle house (Bourdieu, 1990: 93), while Thrift concluded that practical knowledge "tends to be based upon organic analogy or metaphor[s]" which "are usually based upon proximity" (Thrift, 1996: 102). To illustrate the point, Thrift quotes from Jackson's ethnography of the Kuranko of Sierra Leone, who "use the word *kile* ('path' or 'road') as a metaphor for social relationship" (Jackson, 1982: 16). The metaphor source is the way a local species of grass "bends back one way as you go along a path through it, and then bends back the other way as you return along the path" and the changing direction of the grass has become a metaphor for reciprocity:

> Thus, in Kuranko one often explains the reason for giving a gift, especially to an in-law, with the phrase *kile ka na faga*, 'so that the path does not die'. However, if relations between affines or neighbours are strained, it is often said that 'the path is not good between them' ... (Jackson, 1982: 16).

Abram's ethnography provides similar examples (Abram, 1996), while his suggestion that a boulder might lend our "thoughts a certain gravity, and a

protest. Protesters were evicted in December 1994.

kind of stony wisdom" (Abram, 2004) neatly illustrates Finch's conclusion that the organic environment can provide "an external template for internal emotions, a way of recognizing, giving shape to, an inner process". Finch suggests "that the physical natural world might in fact be the source of our emotional, psychological, and even spiritual lives" (Finch, 2004: 44). Examples of this process abound in Eco-Pagan practice, where metaphors are grounded in "the earth and the seasonal cycles of the natural world" (Salomonsen, 2002: 14).

How we understand our world influences our notion of self, and to the extent that we use environmental scaffolding metaphors, they will help to construct our being-in-the-world. Thus, if we predominantly draw on the metaphors of a restricted environment to scaffold our cognition, we may invite an impoverished existence. But our thought is not simply steered by cognitive extension using artifacts or environment: Because complex cognitive processes exist in a reciprocal relationship with simpler sub-systems, what we consciously think impacts on those primary processes (Varela, 1999: 76). Therefore "complex, human-generated ... belief systems" can "interrupt feedback ... from the sociocultural and biophysical environments" which underlie cognitive extension (Stepp et al., 2003).

The enactive process model helps explain several aspects of the wilderness effect. Using richer metaphors from the organic environment will have an impact on cognition, so could potentially shift our being-in-the-world or catalyses spiritual experience. Furthermore, Greenway notes that people can easily resist the wilderness effect, which is to be expected given the point made by Stepp et al. (2003). He opined that psychological "entry into the wilderness is relatively rare - people I think tend to have fairly deep-seated resistance to any basic change in viewpoint, habit, value, behaviour. The body is in wilderness, the psyche is hanging on to one's culture" (Greenway, pers. comm., 2006).

Perception

In as far as cognition uses the local environment as scaffolding, our sensory modalities will impact on the cognitive process. If my sensory acuity is constrained, then the extent to which I can draw on my environment for cognitive scaffolding will be reduced. In effect then, a finely tuned perception enables more effective cognition, a point supported in various ways by Merleau-Ponty and Ingold. Furthermore, given that wilderness experience improves sensory acuity (Beck 1987; McDonald and Schreyer, 1991), the perceptual dimensions of the wilderness effect will be enhanced. Thus, if the wilderness effect leads an individual to seek more wilderness experiences, a positive feedback loop would be established.

Habitus is a significant influence on sensory acuity: In simple terms, how I stand (slouching or tall), hold myself (head held up or down) and move

through the world will inevitably have an impact on my sensory acuity. Bourdieu's "practical taxonomies" guide our "perception and our practice ..." (Bourdieu, 1989: 73); they therefore determine what we pay attention to and may restrict our perceptual field.

Our intentions are also significant: Perception is not a simple process of receiving sense data from an objective reality of external objects, but emerges from "our whole involvement with the world, emotional and practical as well as purely intellectual" (Matthews, 2002: 54). For Gibson our perception of the world is active, and structured by what he calls "affordances":

> The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. The verb to afford is found in the dictionary, but the noun affordance is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment (Gibson, 1979: 127)

Affordances emerge from the relationship between the organism and the environment, and are represented on the right side of the cognitive iceberg (fig. 1). Affordances can relate to our physical capacities, acquired skills and "our acquired cultural embodiment" (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1999: 104).

Strictly speaking, I am concerned with Norman's adaptation of Gibson's term: For Gibson an affordance is a possibility presented by the environment that is independent of our recognition of opportunity, whereas Norman's more subjective *perceived* affordances depends on an individual's intentions, values and beliefs (Norman, 1999). Such affordances both constrain and enable behavior. Examples include "a path that beckons people to walk safely along it, a wood that is a repository of childhood memories, trees that invite young children to climb and so on" (Macnaghten and Urry, 2000: 169). Perceived affordances are culturally determined, and as a result "[i]ndividuals in different societies differ in what they perceive and value in their perception" (Rodaway, 1995: 12). Because of these processes and influences, we hear what we are culturally tuned to listen for and see what we are culturally focused to look for, and our sensory acuity shifts accordingly:

> What we perceive, for example, cannot be cleanly separated from how are moving our bodies, what emotions or desires we are feeling, what we are thinking, or what kind of language we have acquired. All of these are intertwined aspects of a single bodily existing (Fisher, 2006: 244).

The role of positive feedback loops is clear: My habitus guides my

perceptual expectations and inclines me towards a particular way of being-in-the-world, both of which then reinforce my habitus.

CHALLENGES AND CRITIQUES

On-line and off-line Cognition

It is generally agreed within cognitive neuroscience and psychology that that there are two fundamentally different modes of cognition; on-line and off-line (see, inter alia, Corr, 2006). It is important to grasp the difference, because several of the criticisms of embodied situated cognition only apply to off-line cognition. On-line cognition is concerned with "immediate input" from our local environment (Iverson & Thelan, 2000: 37), and deals with "here-and-now" tasks (Bassili, 1989: xiv) that require fast moment-by-moment processing. We switch to slower, off-line cognition to make more careful considerations, like when we make a mental check on something odd or plan future behaviour (Corr, 2006: 468). Everyday activity and conversations use predominantly on-line cognition, as does reading, but when the usual flow is interrupted we switch to off-line processing. To make this clearer, read:

> The old man the boats.

You will probably use off-line cognition as you start to read that sentence (taken from Meyer and Rice, 1992: 199), but then, as that approach fails, re-read it off-line to interpret the meaning correctly. On-line cognition is always situated in the sense that "all the elements of the problem are physically there in a given context and the organism manipulates them to generate an effective response" (Day, 2004: 110), while off-line cognition is only sometimes situated, as in the reading example just given. Immediate location is irrelevant for some off-line cognition, as for example, when we imagine a 'what-if' scenario to plan some hypothetical activity.

Existing fieldwork illustrates that Eco-Pagans predominantly use on-line cognition, drawing on metaphors based in the immediate environment for cognitive extension. Eco-Pagan practice engages with the place itself, the *actual* trees, rivers and plants, and is not concerned with theological issues of belief that would require off-line cognition (see inter alia: Harvey, 2000; Letcher, 2000, 2002; Plows, 2005; Taylor, B., 2001).

Wilson's Critique

Wilson usefully summarizes the six claims of the "emerging viewpoint of embodied cognition":

> 1) cognition is situated; 2) cognition is time-pressured; 3) we off-

> load cognitive work onto the environment; 4) the environment is part of the cognitive system; 5) cognition is for action; 6) off-line cognition is body-based (Wilson, M, 2002: 625).

She argues that some of these claims "are more controversial than others" (Wilson, M, 2002: 625) and cautions against over extending the application of the theory: Wilson's critique is comprehensive and includes all the key challenges to this stance. While the sixth claim, that "off-line cognition is body-based", "may in fact be the best documented and most powerful" (Wilson, M., 2002: 625), she argues that the remainder are, at best, "at least partially true" (Wilson, M., 2002: 625).

Her criticism of the first claim, that "cognition is situated" (Wilson, M., 2002: 625), does not impact on my application of the theory. She notes that "large portions of human cognitive processing" cannot be situated, and Kirsh and Anderson concur (Anderson, 2003: 116; Kirsh, 1991: 171). Specifically, these are off-line cognitive processes that involve "our ability to form mental representations about things that are remote in time and space" (Wilson, M., 2002: 626). However, I concluded at the end of the previous sub-section that Eco-Pagan practice primarily uses on-line cognition, so it is not subject to this critique.

I concur with Wilson that the second claim - that cognition is time-pressured - is too broad, as many of our daily activities "do not inherently involve time pressure" (Wilson, M., 2002: 628). However, this claim is not required or implied by the enactivist process model. Wilson supports the third claim, that "we off-load cognitive work onto the environment" (Wilson, M., 2002: 625), as long as we recognize that it is only applicable to on-line cognition (Wilson, M., 2002: 629), which is exactly how I apply the theory.

Wilson mounts a fairly robust attack on the fourth claim that "the environment is part of the cognitive system" (Wilson, M., 2002: 625), which, given the centrality of this claim to my approach, I need to discuss. Wilson’s critique hinges on what we mean by "cognitive system". On this basis she concludes that what she call the "strong version" of extended cognition, "that a cognitive system cannot in principle be taken to comprise only an individual mind", will not hold (Wilson, M., 2002: 631). There are two types of cognitive system: "Facultative systems are temporary, organized for a particular occasion and disbanded readily", while "obligate systems ... are more or less permanent, at least relative to the lifetime of their parts" (Wilson, M., 2002: 630). Because I am explicitly concerned with embodied situated cognition in quite distinct locations, I work with a model that uses facultative rather than obligate systems. Wilson accepts this "weaker version", which she concludes offers "a promising ... avenue of investigation" (Wilson, M., 2002: 631).

Wilson critique of the fifth claim, that cognition is for action, once again

focus on limitations rather than general validity. Although this claim is supported by much of the available evidence, it doesn't apply in all examples of cognition (Wilson, M., 2002: 632), notably excluding most off-line cognition. As discussed above, this does not impact on my application of embodied situated cognition theory to on-line processing.

APPLYING THE MODEL

My literature review typically addressed cognition during 'normal' consciousness, but I now apply the enactive process model to alternative states of consciousness. I am not positing some 'normal' state of consciousness, as we spend much of our time in some kind of alternative state or trance. However, it serves my purposes to assume a normal baseline state, illustrated in my cognitive iceberg diagram (fig. 1), to which I can compare.

Certain circumstances and techniques allow us to become more aware of the blurred boundary between self and world. As the waves ride up the side of a real iceberg, what is above the water and what is below changes constantly. So it is with conscious awareness: At times we are unaware of the deeper processes of embodied situated cognition - the sea around the iceberg is still. But at other times the sea is rough, and what lies beneath and above the waves shifts constantly. Our experiences make this apparent, as Leder vividly describes on an occasion when he was walking in the woods, caught up with his own concerns:

> a paper that needs completion, a financial problem. My thoughts are running their own private race, unrelated to the landscape. ... The landscape neither penetrates into me, not I into it. We are two bodies (Leder, 1990: 165).

Leder's mind is working off-line, and on my model his awareness is focused at the tip of the cognitive iceberg. But the "rhythm of walking" and the peace of the wood calm his mind and induce an "existential shift", so that he begins to notice the beauty around him. Gradually

> [t]he boundaries between the inner and the outer thus become porous. ... I feel the sun and hear the song birds both within-me and without-me. ... They are part of a rich body-world chasm that eludes dualistic characterization (Leder, 1990: 165-6).

Leder's awareness has slipped down the cognitive iceberg, broadening into what Greenwood calls magical consciousness (Greenwood, 2005), and this change in "body-mind-habitus" produces "an altered sense of self" (Jackson, 2006: 328). A fundamental aspect of this change in habitus is the deepening sense of personal embodiment which results from shifting awareness down the cognitive iceberg. This shift blurs the distinction between self and other, enhancing Leder's sense of connection.

The experience Leder describes correlates with the wilderness effect, which is present in the beneficial effects of "spending meaningful time communing with nature" (Shaw, 2006), and recalls Greenway's comment that the effect results from moving from a "dualism-producing" consciousness "to a more nondualistic mode" (Greenway, 1995: 131). Shifting awareness even slightly down the cognitive iceberg increases our sense of connection, enhancing empathy and thus contributing to a richer social community. Given that the wilderness effect correlates with this kind of shift, my model helps explain the tight relationship between the wilderness effect, a spiritual sense of connection and community. Greenway notes that 80% of participants on wilderness trips cited the sense of community as very significant (Greenway, 1995: 128-129) while other researchers found correlations between close social interaction and spiritual experiences (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999; Stringer and McAvoy, 1992).

Ritual, trance and meditation all help shift awareness to the deep embodied self, and can thus blur the boundary of the skin enclosed body, enabling a flow of information between 'self' and 'other' that ultimately makes nonsense of both terms. Questions concerning which mode of awareness is more 'real' are moot, as according to Varela the "mind is not about representing some kind of state of affairs", but is "fundamentally a matter of *imagination and fantasy*" (Varela, 1999: 77; author's emphasis). In everyday states of consciousness - which are clearly variable - the mind is "constantly secreting this coherent reality that constitutes a world" (Varela, 1999: 77): We construct a reality of apparent subject/object duality even though the mind is in a "non-place of the co-determination of inner and outer, so one cannot say that is outside or inside" (Varela, 1999: 73).

Focusing

The Focusing technique first described by Gendlin (1981) requires a form of attention that usually engenders an alternative state of consciousness.

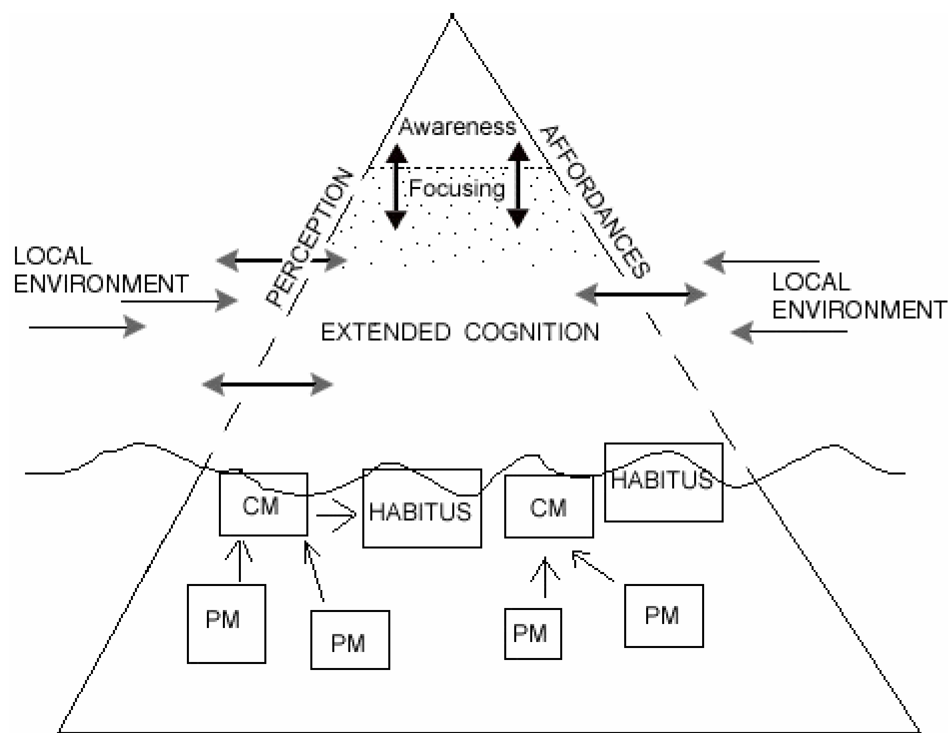


Fig. 3: Focusing and the Felt Sense

In fig. 3 I adapt my cognitive iceberg diagram to show the felt sense and illustrate the process of Focusing. The entire space of the triangle below the apex forms the ground of Gendlin's implicit, which emerges from our emotions, memories, history and culture as well as immediate sensory input. As before, the dotted area just below the apex designates 'gut feelings' or felt senses. Metaphor plays a key role in situated embodied situated cognition, and the implicit, in common with the cognitive unconscious, speaks the language of metaphor, which is how the felt sense is usually expressed. The felt sense emerges from the relationship between conscious awareness and the implicit, which is meditated through Focusing.

Ritual

Ritual can use all of the aspects of embodied situated cognition - stance, movement and gesture, cognitive extension, metaphor, the felt sense and perceptual manipulation - but often more explicitly [23]. Because rituals take place within a space and time set apart, and often use techniques deliberately intended to shift consciousness, including breathwork, rhythm, movement and dance,[24] the processes of embodied situated cognition can be used more intentionally:

> Because we experience ritual in a heightened emotional state, a gesture or physical movement becomes loaded with symbolic

23 As noted in my literature review, contemporary Pagans deliberately create their rituals.

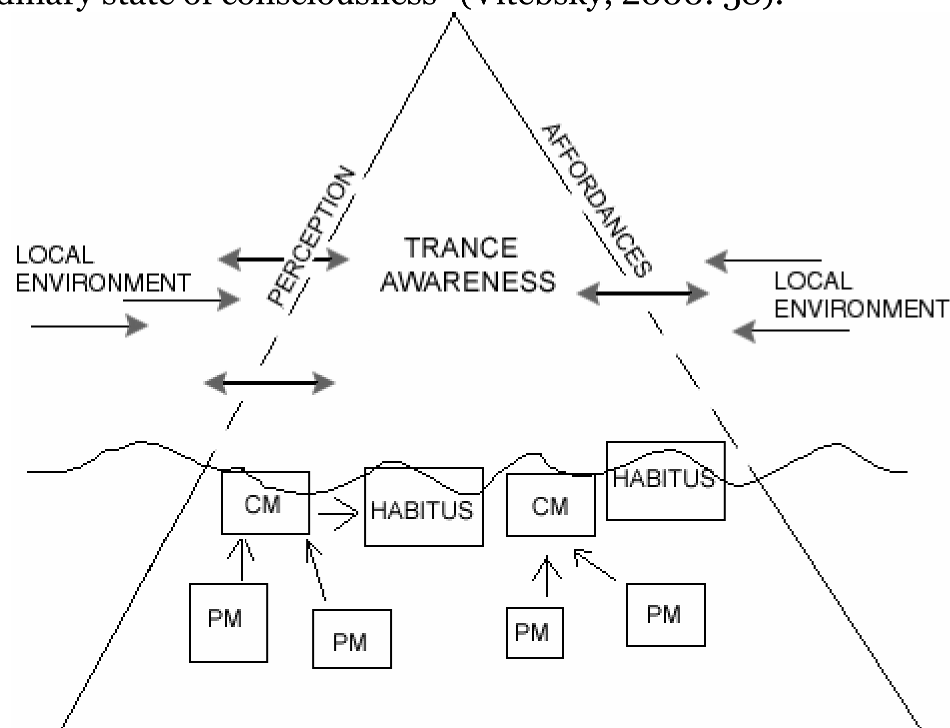
24 Entheogens, most usually 'magic' psilocybin mushrooms, are used in a sacred context but rarely in ritual.

power: What would be a simple wave of the arm in everyday space becomes an invitation to deity in the sacred circle (Harris and Nightmare, 2006: 226. Also see Bell, 1992: 93-117).

As a result, a ritual can enable the participant to access "know-how" that would otherwise "remains unintelligible and inaccessible to our reflective consciousness" (Crossley, 2004: 37). Thus, as Raposa says, rituals offer a means of "a thinking through and with the body" (Raposa, 2004: 115) that enables embodied thoughts and modes of thinking that are otherwise elusive. The enactive process model has considerable explanatory power for ritual studies: It elucidates how ritual "produces an incarnate means of knowing" (Bell, 1992: 163), moves consciousness from the 'head' (the tip of the iceberg) to the deep body (Grimes, 1995), influences habitus (Asad, 1993: 131) or transforms "subjective and intersubjective states" (Crossley, 2004: 40).

Trance

Trance ranges from the shallow trance of watching television to deep states where conscious awareness is apparently absent, and I am mainly concerned with shamanic states at the deeper end of this scale. Vitebsky describes shamanic trance as a "technique of dissociation[25] with a high degree of control" (Vitebsky, 2000: 59) that allows the practitioner access to a "dimension of reality" that "is not accessible to ordinary people, or in an ordinary state of consciousness" (Vitebsky, 2000: 58).



25 The term dissociation is drawn from psychology and psychiatry where it describes mental states ranging from daydreaming through hypnosis into what can be considered pathological like amnesia, the feeling that one's surroundings are unreal and depersonalization which involves "experiencing oneself as detached from one's own body or mental processes" (Brunet, Holowka & Laurence, 2001: 3).

Figure 4: The Trance State

Trance is complex and an extensive discussion lies beyond my remit, but the enactive process model again has explanatory power, as shown above. Figure 4 shows an 'ideal' deep trance state: trance takes many forms, and some degree of conscious awareness is common, so it is rarely as profound as shown here.

When an individual enters trance, their awareness begins to slide down the cognitive iceberg, and the apparent boundary between 'self' and 'other' becomes increasingly blurred. They soon begin to dissociate, a sensation that is often apparent even in light trances like daydreaming. As a practitioner moves into deeper trance states, conventional maps of 'reality' begin to break down, but up to a point the Shaman's training enables them to remain in control. There is a lack of research into what happens during this process, but I hypothesise that the Shaman uses whatever cultural maps are available to make sense of what she or he experiences. According to Varela "you can give an (enactively embodied) organism anything at all as an excuse for sensory-motor interaction, and it will immediately constitute a world which is shaped, which is fully formed. It's an amazing conceptual shift from thinking that there are properties of the world that you need to apprehend in order to make a coherent picture of reality, to the notion that almost anything would supply an excuse to invent a reality" (Varela, 1999: 77).

Conclusion

The demands of clarity required me to present each perspective on embodied situated cognition as if they were distinct, but as we have seen these different aspects interrelate in complex ways. Such analysis, which has been essential to understanding, inevitably distorts, and this model may appear to be quite instrumentalist: There is little sense here of a relationship or a conversation with the other-than-human world, and it suggests that we simply *use* the organic environment as a tool to make sense of our lives. This may be true in many cases, but the process can be experienced like a dance that enables deep communion. The steps of the dance are ancient, and when we make those old familiar moves we are once again in tune with the other-than-human world. There is a point where self and other bow and acknowledge one another before the dance begins. This is the ethical relationship of 'self' and 'other' upon which Levinas founds his ethics[26]. But in just a few fluid steps the self/other dance becomes a process in itself. If I learn the steps well, then suddenly - phenomenologically and spiritually – 'I' am no longer the dancer but the dance, at which point 'I' am not.

I have demonstrated how the enactive process model can elucidate

26 For Levinas, if there is no division between subject and object, then there is no 'other', so on his terms, there is no ethics. His approach is very different from the Buddhist and Deep Ecology view, but my dance metaphor offers a compromise.

existing ethnography, the wilderness effect, Focusing, ritual practice and trance. In Section II I apply this model and my cognitive iceberg diagram to my fieldwork, where it powerfully illuminates embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism.

Chapter 5: Embodied Philosophy: My Ontological and Epistemological Grounding

"How words are understood is not told by words alone".
Wittgenstein (1981: 144).

Reflexivity lies at the heart of this thesis: I seek to understand - to have knowledge of - a particular way of knowing. There are echoes of this reflexivity in my literature review of embodied cognition, where I discussed attempts to think about how we think. This reflexive circle need not be 'vicious', in the sense of tying me into a knot of self-reference, if I apply the tools of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Phenomenology is fundamental to much of the work on embodied cognition (see, inter alia Gendlin, Varela, and Merleau-Ponty) and as I explain later, hermeneutics takes a central role in my methodology.

It is from this background that I now discuss my philosophical stance and how it is grounded in the enactive process model. After framing my discussion using Kasulis's intimacy and integrity orientations (Kasulis, 2002), I discuss the failure of dualistic ontology and epistemology before

describing how an embodied naturalized epistemology (Quine, 1969) emerges from Gendlin's process philosophy (inter alia, Gendlin, 1997). By considering my ontological and epistemological stance, this chapter contextualizes the thesis in general and my methodology in particular.

INTIMACY AND INTEGRITY

In his 1998 Gilbert Ryle lectures, Kasulis proposes two alternative cultural orientations: Intimacy and integrity. Briefly, an 'intimacy' orientation understands that "self and other belong together in a way that does not sharply distinguish the two" and understands knowledge as "somatic" with "an affective dimension". In contrast, a culture of 'integrity' prioritizes "external over internal relations" and requires knowledge to be objective and "empty of affect" (Kasulis, 2002: 24-25). This "heuristic tool" (Kasulis, 2002: 172) describes normative discourse and does not essentialize a group or culture: Individuals within a culture may use both orientations in different contexts and the culture simply foregrounds one or the other (Kasulis, 2002: 134-135).

Kasulis originally developed his intimacy or integrity model to assist understanding the difference between Western "philosophical modernism" and Japanese traditional culture (Kasulis, 2002: 24) but his audience proposed many other correlations. Some suggested that in the West, feminine gender emphasizes intimacy over masculine integrity, noting the importance of intimacy in many feminist epistemologies (Kasulis 2002: 137), while others pointed to US subcultures that "seemed to be oriented more toward intimacy than integrity" (Kasulis, 2002: 24). Although he does not pursue the idea, Kasulis proposes that we consider the epistemology of the 'Dark Ages' as more intimate, shifting to the integrity orientation of the Enlightenment (Kasulis, 2002: 140-141) that is now challenged by postmodernism (Kasulis, 2002: 175).

Kasulis's provides a useful context to understand some of the underlying challenges of this thesis. The enactive process model clearly lies within his intimacy orientation: I have somatic affective knowledge when I have "the right *feel*" for something (Kasulis, 2002: 43). Such knowledge is "dark" in that its source "is not obvious even to those involved" and "is absorbed into the body somatically through praxis" (Kasulis, 2002: 79). Kasulis uses the example of how he might know that his child is worried through a sense "that my son is 'not his usual self'" (Kasulis, 2002: 48). Within the epistemology of intimacy "knower and known are not fully discrete" (Kasulis, 2002: 77), just as in the enactive process model.

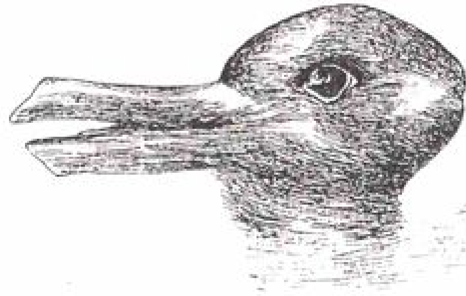


Figure 5: The Duck/Rabbit Drawing

Kasulis compares the switch between intimacy and integrity orientations with alternating between different languages (Kasulis, 2002: 153) or possible views of a bistable image (Kasulis, 2002: 22) like the duck-rabbit above. Some people will initially see this as a drawing of a duck, others as a rabbit, and most people can learn to switch between the two. But we cannot see it as both at once, just as we cannot adopt both an intimacy and an integrity orientation at the same time. In the "Introduction" I took an identical approach to differentiating embodied cognition and embodied knowing although both are intimacy terms, while the enactivist model (see inter alia, Varela et al., 1991) marks a shift within an integrity orientated scientific discourse towards intimacy.

As Kasulis argues, neither orientation is 'more true' or 'better' than the other, though each has clear benefits and costs (Kasulis, 2002: 141-149).

Western epistemology originated from an integrity orientation and, *a fortiori*, so did traditional academia, although significant challenges to the tradition mean that intimacy orientations are increasingly influential. As Kasulis points out, the integrity orientation can lead to an "internal dissociation of the self" resulting in a "split between the intellectual and the affective/somatic" if it is "pushed too far" (Kasulis, 2002: 143). Clearly this is often the case in the West, and although Kasulis does not discuss the epistemological ramifications of this situation, it is at least partly responsible for the failure of traditional ontology.

THE FAILURE OF DUALISM

Traditional Ontology

The "bipolarity paradigm" of the integrity orientation entails an ontological dualism (Kasulis, 2002: 100) that postulates a 'real' world that exists independently and ultimately beyond the grasp of the human subject. On this representationalist model our knowledge consists of representations of an independent reality: true knowledge requires an accurate correlation between what appears to the mind and what exists in an entirely separate outside world (Wolterstorff, 1999: 311). This

traditional Western philosophical ontology splits nature from culture, mind from body, reason from emotion and subjective from objective.

In the late twentieth century this established tradition was subjected to sustained critique by feminism and postmodernism, resulting in a "crisis of representation" (see, inter alia, Flick, 2006: 83-84; Rorty, 1979). My consideration of dualities like culture/nature in my "Introduction", mind/body in "A Theory of Embodied Knowing", and even ethnographer/field in my autoethnography, has repeatedly revealed their intrinsic flaws. I conclude, with many others (inter alia, Braidotti, 1991; Rorty, 1979), that we have inherited an inadequate model for understanding such fundamental concepts. Dualistic ontology offers a model of the world that ceases to function when applied to complex systems and processes. The situation is parallel to that in physics, where Newtonian theory is entirely adequate at a human scale, but fails once we consider the quantum level of the sub-atomically small. In a similar way conventional dualities function perfectly well in many contexts but as we study increasingly complex systems such divisions blur and finally collapse. The emergence of the 'intimate' enactivist model of cognition, driven partly by the failure of integrity orientated symbol-processing (representationalist) approaches may parallel the shift from Newtonian integrity to the more intimate quantum physics (Capra, 1975; Davis and Gribbin, 1991). One difficulty is that we are so used to using a dualist ontology that we sometimes struggle to think without it. We lack any equivalent of the mathematical language that enables physicists to articulate unintuitive concepts and negotiate the peculiar world of quantum physics, so we must find a new vocabulary to make sense of our emerging understanding. I will argue that just such a vocabulary is provided by Gendlin's philosophy of the implicit.

Traditional Epistemology

Although the main themes of Western epistemology can be found in Plato, it rose to prominence largely through the influence of Descartes and Locke. Descartes is most famous for the '*cogito*' - his belief that 'I think, therefore I am' (Descartes, 1968 [1640]: 103). His profoundly influential idea that the body and mind are entirely separate (Descartes, 1968 [1640]: 156) led to three centuries of epistemology based on the assumption of a disembodied thinker. This ties in with my discussions above: Kasulis identifies Descartes as influential on the emergence of the 'integrity orientation' which culminated in the Enlightenment and positivism (Kasulis, 2002: 24), while Locke's representationalist view of perception (Wolterstorff, 1999: 311) underpins symbol-processing theories of cognition.

Any dualistic epistemology is prone to haunting by the spectre of

skepticism because of the gap between internal representation and external 'reality', and Quine's response was to call for a thorough empirical investigation of how our beliefs are actually formed. Such a program meant "naturalizing epistemology" by applying science to the question of how we come to know. Epistemology then "simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science" (Quine, 1994: 25).

Feminist and Postmodern Alternatives

The main challenges to Western epistemology have come from feminism and postmodernism. There is no single 'Feminist Epistemology' and three strands are immediately identifiable: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemologies and 'feminist postmodernist' epistemologies (Harding, 1987b: 182). Feminist empiricism remains grounded in a conventional epistemology that seeks "objectivity" (Harding, 1991: 289) and so remains within the traditional realist ontology discussed above.

Feminist standpoint epistemologies initially show more promise since they begin with the realization that as embodied beings, our knowledge of the world comes "from a particular socially situated perspective" (Anderson, 2007). Because our physical location, political, social and gendered perspectives determine how we know, epistemology must be situated. In place of the dominant epistemology that valorizes masculine values over those associated with the feminine, Hartsock proposed a feminist standpoint epistemology that opposes dualisms and values the relational (Hartsock, 1983). She claimed that this would provide a less prejudicial and thus more accurate understanding of reality - i.e. one that was more objectively true. Notwithstanding her claim to greater objectivity, the main difficulty with Hartsock's theory is its mistaken assumption of trans-cultural sex relations (Longino, 1999: 333). Harding attempts to recover feminist standpoint epistemology by arguing for a *multiplicity* of standpoints that reflexively recognize their own understanding (Harding, 1993) but Longino argues that this reduces it to a series of equally valid perspectives (Longino, 1999: 333). Harding considers this as a strength because it emphasizes the need for reflexivity, while Haraway rejects Hartsock's attempt at epistemological closure (Haraway, 1991). Feminist standpoint epistemologies may in due course offer a suitable model of an epistemology of embodied knowing, but currently remain embroiled in debate.

Whereas feminist standpoint epistemologies assume there is an objective reality that we can know, some feminist postmodernists opine that such claims "rest upon many problematic and unexamined assumptions" (Flax, 1990: 56). Feminist postmodernism is a diverse school of thought, but in general it seeks to deconstruct a perceived Western philosophy of transcendence and objectivity by emphasizing intersubjectivity, relatedness and intuition. Although feminist postmodernism sometimes speaks the language of embodiment, it rarely steps beyond the theoretical

body. Because postmodernism begins with the primacy of *discourse* it cannot make any phenomenological engagement with the experience of the lived body, and so ultimately fails to develop a truly *embodied* epistemology.

Postmodernism in general has provided a powerful and valuable critique of Western epistemology (see inter alia, Braidotti, 1991). However, as I point out above, it remains largely trapped by a discourse model in which language is free-floating and dislocated from any given reality. Similarly "actions get their meaning from their relations to other actions, rather than from their relation to some pre-linguistic realm of human nature or natural law" (Anderson, 2007). I conclude that the very principles of the postmodern challenge to Western epistemology simultaneously refuse the possibility of a knowledge grounded in our embodiment.

Natural Science and the Humanities

In response to the dilemmas outlined above, I turn to the naturalized epistemology recommended by Quine (1969), a move which leads me to briefly consider the often fraught relationship between natural science and the humanities. Dilthey argued that the two are fundamentally different: The natural sciences are concerned with explanation (*erklären*) while the humanities seek understanding (*verstehen*) (Green, 2005: 397). Green notes that though religious studies scholars are often sharply divided into those who follow Dilthey's approach and those who "seek the objectivity of scientific explanation", most, including myself, acknowledge that both explanation and understanding are required (Green, 2005: 397). Kasulis can provide clarity: In Dilthey's late 19th century world science rested soundly on an integrity orientation in opposition to the intimacy of the humanities. Thankfully the 21st century offers more sophisticated approaches where science and the humanities can be in harmony. This is clear from the synthesis I presented as "A Theory of Embodied Knowing", where the enactivist model of cognition, which offers an *explanation,* and the phenomenological approach which seeks *understanding*, share an intimacy orientation.

EMBODIED SITUATED EPISTEMOLOGY

A methodology must be grounded in an epistemology, and although I have provided a theory of how embodied knowing functions, I have not yet underpinned that with an embodied epistemology.

I propose that there are two fundamentally different ways of knowing: Propositional knowledge and embodied knowledge/knowing. I have conscious propositional knowledge that Paris is the capital of France, but I also have an emotional, sensual knowing of Paris – the smells of Paris, the taste of Paris, that odd little back street that I couldn’t *tell* you how to find but that I could walk to with ease. This fuzzy, wordless, poetic knowing is

embodied. Propositional knowledge is validated by Kasulis's integrity orientation (Kasulis, 2002), and is described by Belenky et al. as "separate epistemology". Embodied knowledge/knowing is recognized within the intimacy orientation, and in many ways correlates with "connected knowing" (Belenky et al., 1986: 113). Although a PhD. thesis is a formal academic text, and as such primarily intends to provide propositional, not embodied knowing, this does not present a theoretical hiatus. First, it is apparent that we can discuss and understand *about* embodied knowing using propositional knowledge; second, we can use more explicitly creative approaches like autoethnography to enable the reader to gain a more empathetic (intimate) understanding (see Chapter 7); and third, we can use phenomenological exercises like those Merleau-Ponty and Gendlin provide, to allow the reader to have direct experience of instances of embodied knowing.

I turn then, to the contemporary philosopher and psychologist, Eugene Gendlin. Gendlin's process philosophy emerges from Pragmatism and is grounded in the embodied phenomenological experience of tacit knowledge. Rather than starting with metaphysical puzzles or theory, Gendlin's philosophy begins with the phenomenological experience of having a bodily sense of a situation, and then asks what this entails. A dualistic or postmodern epistemology cannot make sense of this process, and neither can existing physiological models of the body, but the fact that it *does* occur is obvious to anyone who takes a moment to observe their own process of creating meaning. Because Gendlin is both a psychologist and philosopher, he is well placed to offer the kind of naturalized epistemology which Quine called for. Although he acknowledges the value and power of science, Gendlin believes that the epistemology which underpins it cannot adequately deal with "living things" and proposes a "process approach" as an alternative (Gendlin, 2001). This approach understands "living bodies as self-sense making processes" (Gendlin, 2001). Propositional knowledge is not a process: I know now that Paris is the capital of France just as I did 30 years ago. But some embodied knowledge *is* a process - for example knowing how to find that "odd little back street" in the warren of the city - and it is these embodied processes which concern me here.

Many postmodernists conclude that "nothing can be prior to language and history" (Gendlin, 1992: 342) and as an example Gendlin quotes Foucault's claim that our once animal bodies were destroyed by history (Foucault, 1977b). But Gendlin seeks to move the discussion of language beyond postmodernism (see Levin, 1997) by showing that it emerges from the implicit ". . . . ." of the body-sense discussed earlier ("Embodied Cognition Literature Review"). To recall this notion, imagine you are writing a paper and trying to find just the right phrase for ... for what? Something as yet unexpressed but *there*. "The . . . . . knows what we want to say. It knows with a bodily gnawing, very much like something forgotten". The implicit is not preverbal; it clearly understands language

since it will reject words that do not 'fit' and will resonate with those that do (Gendlin, 1997b: 17). But the new words are not simply floating in the implicit and neither do they represent it. This becomes apparent with the change in the implicit when we find the right phrase - a "carrying forward" that is sensed as a release of tension (Gendlin, 1995: 547). Language, then, is not a *representation* but a *carrying forward* of the implicit, making it explicit in symbols. As Levin puts it, "speaking is itself a further living in a situation" (Levin, 1997: 49), which he then explicates:

> Symbols do not represent; rather, they relate to what we want to say in such the way that feeding relates to hunger. Feeding does not represent hunger; nor is there a hidden feeding underneath hunger (Levin, 1997: 50).

On Gendlin's model, language - or any form of expression - is where the implicit is carried forward and becomes explicit. Meaning only emerges when the implicit is carried forward by explication (Gendlin, 1964), so it is clear that "[f]eeling without symbolization is blind; symbolization without feeling is empty" (Gendlin, 1962: 5). Thus Gendlin "forges a continuity in which knowing is both an embodied and languaged process" and each is required "in the rhythm of closeness and distance that is required for meaningful knowing to occur" (Todres, 2007: 34).

To sum up, the bodily or felt sense emerges from the implicit and can be made explicit though symbolization. I can best express this using the metaphor of the implicit as a huge ball of string and the felt sense as one strand that we can pick up, perhaps using Focusing. As I pull on a strand (the felt sense) it slowly unravels (carries forward) the ball of string (the implicit) into my hands (the explicit).

This is a radically different conception from that offered by the representationalism of dualistic epistemology. Instead of an internal representation of an external 'reality', we have a process of knowing that is grounded within our embodied experience of a specific situation. Gendlin thus avoids the problematic 'view from nowhere' (Bordo, 1993; Braidotti, 1991), satisfies the need for reflexivity emphasized by feminist epistemology, and highlights the relationship between epistemology and ontology (Haraway, 2000: 78; Stanley, 1990: 14). Yet *contra* postmodernism, language is not free-floating but grounded in a pre-conceptual embodied knowing. For Fisher such "[a]uthentic speech" enables us to speak from our place in the world:

> Language is not a closed system of verbal forms, but a mode of poetizing, of allowing for the disclosure of new meanings, new forms, in our dwelling on or listening to the earth (Fisher, 2002: 132).

The Felt Sense

While Gendlin often uses the term "bodily-sense" (or occasionally "feeling") in his philosophy and "felt sense" in his psychotherapeutic work (Gendlin, 1981: 10), these terms are equivalent and he uses each as appropriate to the context. I generally use the term "felt sense" as this phrase is used most in the context of Focusing which forms a key strand of my methodology.

Gendlin's notion of the felt sense emerged from his empirical research into the frequent failures of psychotherapy and why it works when it does (Gendlin, 1981: 3). Those who were successful in therapy came to an inner knowing which Gendlin called the "felt sense", "a special kind of internal bodily awareness ... a body-sense of meaning" (Gendlin, 1981: 10) which the conscious mind is initially unable to articulate. A felt sense is more than just an emotion, though it usually has an emotional aspect: In everyday terms, the felt sense describes the fuzzy feelings that we don't usually pay much attention to - a vague 'gut feeling' or that inexpressible sense of unease we express as 'I'm not quite feeling myself today' or 'I just got out of bed the wrong side this morning'. A intuitive understanding of the felt sense is required to really understand Gendlin's work, so I will give a few more examples. Imagine you are at a conference and spot someone that you have 'a bit of a history' with. How does that feel? Maybe some butterflies. Maybe some vague memories. A mixture of things. That feeling is a felt sense. Or let's say you're taking a walk on a beautiful fresh morning, just after a rain storm, and you come over a hill, and there, hanging in the air in front of you is a perfect rainbow. As you stand there and gaze at it you feel your chest welling up with an expansive, flowing, warm feeling. That feeling is also a felt sense. In many such ordinary situations we sense that something is wrong - or right - but may find it difficult to express just *what* that wrong - or rightness - is.

We have all had a sense of not knowing what we're looking for, but being certain that we will know what it is when we find it. A poet, graphic artist, or indeed theoretician, will often have a sense of what their creative work needs to move forward, but it may initially be beyond their grasp. In such situations there is a knowing and a *not* knowing at the same time. What is known in this case is tacit and embodied and we seek to shift it into explicit conscious knowing. In each example the missing something - the next step in the process - is 'implied' by what is already there and this implied 'implicit' is one of Gendlin's central concepts. If we delve into our felt sense of the implicit, it begins to open up and "comes to imply more and more", revealing itself as an "*unseparated multiplicity*" (Gendlin, 1997b: 16; author's emphasis). Thus our experience suggests that the "bodily . . . . . [the 'implicit'] can contain information that is not (or not yet) capable of being phrased" (Gendlin, 1992: 349). But how? Gendlin's explanation meshes with the understanding of embodied situated knowing described by enactivism: The body "is an ongoing interaction

with its environment" (Gendlin, 1992: 349) and this explains how the felt-sense could access "a vast amount of environmental information" and how new creative work can emerge from it. Furthermore "if such a self-sensing body could also think, and could use its bodily . . . . . in its thinking, well, it would always think after, with, but with more than conceptual and language forms. This more would be realistic since it would be the body-environmental interaction" (Gendlin, 1992: 350). Gendlin emphasizes that as a result of this approach the subject/object distinction collapses: "We will move beyond the subject/object distinction if we become able to speak from how we interact bodily in our situations" (Gendlin, 1997b: 15).

Gendlin closes his 1992 paper by asking the reader "[w]hat will you say about my paper" and points out that though his audience probably have not yet articulated a response in words, it exists as an "internally intricate . . . . . bodily implying of speech and thought" (Gendlin, 1992: 353). With this example of what Levin calls his "reflexively constituted practice" Gendlin reveals what he asserts is happening in the very process of his sense-making (Levin, 1997: 45).

Experience
In the examples I gave earlier, of being followed by someone ("Embodied Cognition Literature Review"), or seeking just the right phrase to complete a sentence, there are two basic aspects: the explicit symbol and the implicit felt sense. The symbol is the form our experience takes; "a thought, a behavior, a sight or sound, an emotion ... an image, a rite, an event, some words" (Fisher, 2002: 56), while the felt sense is the "rich, intricate sensed experience of our situations" (Purton, 2007). All experience is just this "interaction between feelings and 'symbols' (attention, words, events) . . . . ." (Gendlin, 1964: 129). Symbols and the felt sense are in a dynamic relationship: The implicit felt sense becomes explicitly known when it is carried forward into a symbolic form that creates meaning, and a felt sense can be invoked when we are inspired by something richly symbolic. So as Fisher says, "[s]ymbols and feelings are thus mutually formative or determining: the traffic between them moves in both directions" (Fisher, 2002: 56). Furthermore my immediate experience draws on an implicit intricacy that is fed by a lifetime of experiencing complex situations as well as "imagined situations, situations about which we have read in novels or myths or biographies and so on" (Purton, 2007).

Conclusion

Gendlin provides a naturalized epistemology grounded in our phenomenological experience of the felt sense and consistent with enactivism, that enables me to discuss embodied knowing from the perspective of propositional, academic knowledge. The intricate embodied knowing of the implicit is carried forward to be symbolized in explicit awareness as, for example, speech, gesture or thought. Gendlin's

philosophy collapses the subject/object distinction in just the same way that enactivism does (Varela et al, 1991) by showing that the body is "an ongoing interaction with its environment" (Gendlin, 1992: 349), and thus avoid the problems intrinsic to dualism.

My methodology chapter builds on this epistemology to demonstrate how Gendlin's Focusing approach accesses embodied knowing, and can underpin an embodied hermeneutics. This allows me to explore embodied knowing using an embodied methodology that is underpinned by an embodied epistemology, and thus grounds me in a virtuous circle of reflexive understanding.

Chapter 6: Research Design and Methodology

There has been a paradigm shift in the academy: Positivist notions of objectivity are unhinged by postmodern epistemologies, while the empire of signs that has dominated since the 1960's is challenged by a sensual revolution. This sea change requires us to develop methodologies that "articulate the importance of the body on an experiential and subjective level of 'the everyday'" (Ahmed, 2004: 286). Such methodologies demand new ways to demonstrate rigour and validity: "In order for qualitative research to pursue embodied understanding, it requires procedures that show phenomena in both experientially evocative as well as structurally coherent ways" (Todres, 2004: 24). The methodological approach I develop embraces the need to respect the mind/body/self intersubjectivity of "the mind in the body" (Csordas, 1994: 20), and develops an "ethnography of experience" that recognises "that the self is constituted out of visceral processes as much as expressed

through them" (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1991: 293). It follows Gendlin's "reflexively constituted practice" (Levin, 1997: 45) in that it uses a methodology of embodied knowing to explore embodied knowing.

I begin by setting out the requirements of my methodological approach, which Action Research and feminist methodologies to some extent meet. However, hermeneutics ultimately serves my purposes best, so after discussing the general background and issues, I explain how an embodied hermeneutics can answer McGuire's call for a "mind/body/self intersubjectivity" (McGuire, 2002: 209) by adapting Gendlin's Focusing technique. I then describe my methodology in practice, beginning with a brief discussion of my sample selection procedure. Although my pilot phase proved valuable, the methodology I'd developed was inappropriate, so I took a different approach, developing the semi-structured interview into the 'Focusing Interview', which I describe in detail. During this fieldwork phase I had a "complete membership role" (Adler & Adler, 1998: 97) that enhanced my observation of life on protest sites. I explain how the insights gained from this role fed into my autoethnography, which provides an aesthetic texture to my research. Finally, I describe my application of an embodied hermeneutics to the interpretation and validation phases. As discussed in my introductory chapter, I prioritise the term 'embodied knowing' in this chapter because my primary concern here is with the phenomenological aspect of this process.

Methodological Approach

I needed a methodology that satisfied four key criteria:

1. It needed to allow me to access knowing that may normally lie outside conscious awareness.
2. It had to facilitate the emergence of valid research material.
3. Philosophically, it was important that it recognised different ways of knowing – what Heron calls an "extended epistemology" (Heron, 1996). Although we can make propositional statements about embodied cognition, embodied *knowing* emerges from engaged experiential understanding.
4. It had to be congruent with my personal integrity as an insider.

Although I found valuable strategies and theoretical approaches common to Action Research (New Paradigm Research) and feminist methodologies, neither satisfied my needs but remained influential on my methodology. The New Paradigm Research (NPR) described by Reason and Rowan (1981) is a methodology which falls within the range of approaches known as Participatory or Action Research. I chose not take a full Action Research approach, which requires goals and methods to be defined by participant researchers, because I had a clear aim from the start of my project. However, I followed the Action Research model in several important ways. The fundamental criteria of Action Research is

that we conduct research *with* people rather than *on* them (Dick, 2007), which necessitates producing knowledge that will be useful to participants who have in turn been involved in dialogue about research conclusions. The itinerant lifestyle of many participants made dialogue impractical, but I discussed research outcomes with representative participants before coming to final conclusions. Action Research recommends the "planning, acting, and reflecting" cycle (Koshy, 2005: 5) wherein the researcher begins with a tentative plan which they action and then reflect on. In principle, reflection informs a new plan and the cycle begins again, but in practice this valuable process is "more fluid, open and responsive" (Koshy, 2005: 5).

Although Harding rejects the notion of a "distinctive feminist method" (Harding, 1987a: 1), she makes recommendations, claiming that "[t]he best feminist analysis ... insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter". This locates the researcher, thereby revealing them "as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests" (Harding, 1987a: 9). Many feminists (though not all) affirm this rejection of the "ethos of scholarly objectivity" confirming the now widely held view that "there is no dispassionate, disinterested scholarship" (Christ, 1987: 497. See, inter alia, Harding & Hintikka, 1983; Stanley 1990a). For many researchers this stance has "replaced misleading notions of scientific objectivity, complete impartiality, and metanarrative, with issues of reflexivity, diversity, and difference" (Wallis, 2004: 195). Both Action Research and feminist methodologies use research to stimulate change, and if the researcher and participants share experiences (Harding, 1987a: 9) we would expect change in all parties. In practice my spirituality was first challenged and then nourished by my research, which simultaneously contributed to Eco-Paganism via my workshops, talks and articles.

New Paradigm Research and feminist methodologies have influenced my approach through their concern with lived experience, accountability, reflexivity, and emotional engagement. Feminist methodologies have the obvious additional concern with gender, notably the gender linked dualisms already mentioned in chapter 5, "Embodied Philosophy". Given the complex and sometimes controversial discussions around women's ways of knowing, intuition and the 'masculinity' of objectivity, I remained sensitive to issues of gender and knowledge throughout my research.

HERMENEUTICS

The embodied hermeneutics at the heart of my methodology is in no way incompatible with the principles discussed above, and in some ways develops from them. There is no "general theory of hermeneutics" (Penner, 2000: 65), but in principle it is a "theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning" (Bleicher, 1980:1) which different thinkers have variously developed. Some emphasize philosophical hermeneutics

while others focus on methodology, while Heidegger (1962 [1927]) applies hermeneutic philosophy as method. Gadamer claims that hermeneutics allows "what is alienated by the character of the written word or by the character of being distantiated by cultural ... distances to speak again" (Gadamer, 1979: 83) while Ricoeur emphasises reflexivity, describing hermeneutics as "explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others" (Ricoeur, 1974: 17).

Hermeneutics has a long and complex history which I will not review extensively. Briefly, hermeneutics originated as a Medieval technique of biblical interpretation which Schleiermacher broadened to apply to textual interpretation in general. Dilthey then extended it further to encompass the process of interpreting all "human behaviour and products" (Honderich, 1995: 353), opening the way for Heidegger to transform it into a phenomenological hermeneutics that could interpret Being itself (1962 [1927]). More recently Gadamer emphasized using hermeneutical dialogue to deepen understanding of our shared world though a "fusion of horizons" (Gadamer, 1989).

Several insights of contemporary hermeneutics will be familiar from the discussion of New Paradigm Research and feminist methodologies. Hermeneutic philosophy rejects 'objectivism' because it recognises that we always bring understanding to a situation - what Gadamer called our prejudices (Bleicher, 1980: 77) - so we cannot approach with a "neutral mind" (Bleicher, 1980: 2).

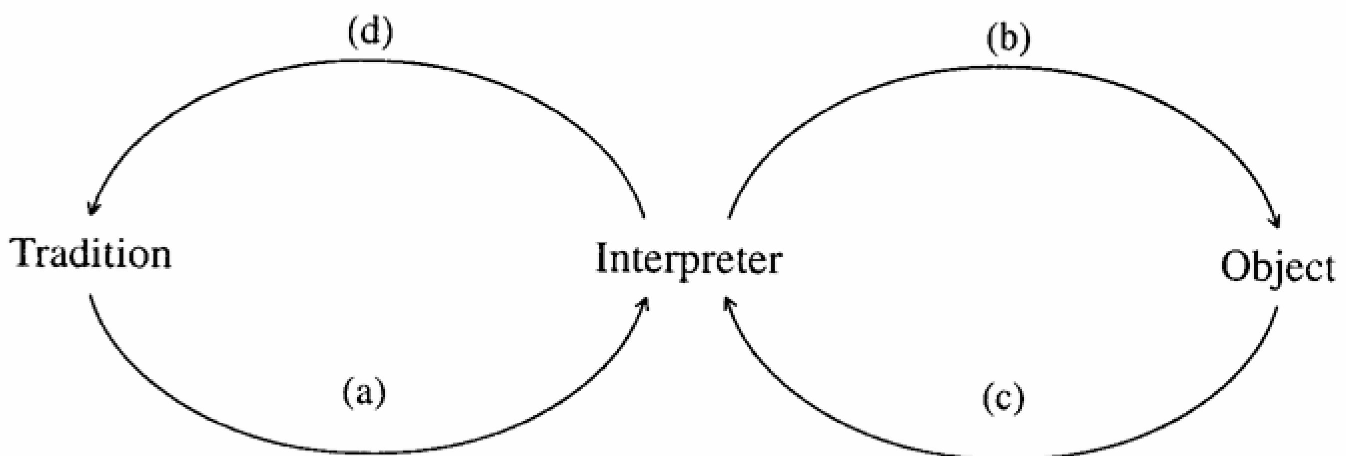


Fig. 6: The Hermeneutic Circle

This insight is based on the fundamental notion of the hermeneutic circle, a reflexive and subtle form of "connected knowing" (Belenky et al., 1986: 113) that has parallels with the Action Research cycle. In fig. 6 above, Gallagher (1992: 106) shows the hermeneutic circle operating on two levels, in a general context and a more specific one. Our foreknowledge, labelled 'Tradition', inevitably influences (a) the interpreters

understanding (b) of a text, person or situation (unfortunately named the 'Object'). Foreknowledge may be tacit, but in any case makes any claim to objectivity partial at best. We cannot escape our foreknowledge as such "[p]rejudices" are the very "conditions whereby we experience something [that can say] something to us" (Gadamer, 1976: 9). Once we accept that our knowing takes place within the hermeneutic circle, it can facilitate understanding: As far as possible we note the extent of our foreknowledge and then turn to what we wish to interpret (b). What we learn from our engagement with that text, person or situation gives us greater understanding (c) which we can once more apply to the question (b). The process is thus cyclical and may provide new understandings profound enough to change our foreknowledge, as indicated by (d) above. For Fisher intuition is essential because we need to be sensitive to "a taste or feeling for that which has yet to be formulated" and allow intuition to guide us into deeper understanding (Fisher, 2002: 40).

Penner (2000: 66) summarises three fundamental hermeneutic assumptions as central for religious studies:

1. Hermeneutics seeks to understand our "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*), "the familiar, unreflective, everyday world which involves a tacit knowledge and orientation" (Penner, 2000: 59).
2. All lived experience emerges from our historical and cultural context, including our consciousness and any interpretations we make. This entails problems of relativism which I discuss below.
3. Hermeneutics tends to view the history of science with "suspicion" (Penner, 2000: 66) as evidenced by debates about whether the study of religion is a science of religion or not.

I have already discussed the third point in my chapter on embodied philosophy, but I need to unpack the first two.

Understanding 'Lived Experience'

On Maanen's phenomenological hermeneutic model we research meanings "as we live them in our everyday existence, our life-world" (Maanen, 1990: 11), translating lived experience into a text that - ideally - expresses its essence in a way that allows the reader to re-live it (Maanen, 1990: 36). For this process to succeed we must recognise the 'prejudices' we inevitably bring to a situation before seeking engagement and greater understanding. A hermeneutic engagement is a dialogical (Bakhtin, 1981) "conversation with few hard and fast rules" (Fisher, 2002: 36) that seeks to widen our original horizon of understanding in an effort to meet that of the unknown in a "fusion of horizons" (Gadamer, 1989: 306). In hermeneutics the "keys to understanding are not manipulation and control but participation and openness, not [data] but experience" (Palmer, 1969: 215) and the process is transformative because it leads us to "gain self-understanding ... through our interaction with others"

(Fisher, 2002: 39). Thus, as Rorty understands it, a hermeneutical discourse is "*supposed* to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings" (Rorty, 1979: 360; author's emphasis).

Historical and Cultural Context: Validity and Relativism

The hermeneutic insight that we can never come to any situation with a neutral stance collapses the "the insider/outsider question" because it recognises that we *all* carry prejudices into our research. In recognition of my own prejudices, I note that I've been an Eco-Pagan for over a decade. However, I conclude that an insider will be more adequate to this task because researching embodied knowing benefits from an empathetic approach *from within*. I understand the experiences of research participants by reference to my own experience, which in hermeneutic terms means that my initial horizon of understanding is close to theirs. Moreover, because I am exploring embodied knowing in a group of which I am a member, my own reflexive understanding becomes part of my research data. (See *Autoethnography*, section below, and Wallis, 2004). I thus exemplify Wylie's assessment that our situation as insider researchers "should be regarded as a resource, not a liability" (Wylie, 1995: 268-70). However, I am aware that my prior experience of Eco-Paganism will influence my research, so I am particularly reflexive in my interpretation of material about which I have a strong feelings or opinions.

If all lived experience, including the process of interpretation itself, is simply an individual's perspective, in what sense is any interpretation valid? Scholars either avoid the issue or appeal to "the given", often via a phenomenological strategy (Penner, 2000: 61). Maanen's phenomenological hermeneutics is a good example: "*a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience - is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience*" (Maanen, 1990: 27; author's italics). The lived experience of the reader becomes a key element in its validation, as credible study presents "something we can recognise as an experience that we have had or could have had" (Maanen, 1990: 27). Caputo takes a similar tack: the 'rightness' of a hermeneutic interpretation "comes down to its ability to provoke the ultimate hermeneutic response: 'That is what we are looking for. That puts into words what we have all along understood about ourselves'" (Caputo, 1987: 81). Such hermeneutic validity is a felt 'rightness' in a specific context that does not claim to be objectivity true at all times for all people.

AN EMBODIED HERMENEUTICS

I have presented a theory of embodied cognition and an embodied epistemology, and on these foundations I build an embodied

hermeneutics that can articulate the embodied knowing of a particular individual or social group.

Fisher notes that Gadamer remains focused on writing and interpreting texts and "tends toward kind of linguistic idealism" (Fisher, 2002: 38). Clearly a hermeneutics which emphasis the textuality of experience may dry the flesh on the body, and Stoller cogently asks if it "is it not problematic to use the body as text metaphor in societies in which the body is felt and not read?" (Stoller, 1997: 5-6). To answer Stoller's question I discuss embodied approaches to understanding lived experience, and then show how they can be integrated into an embodied hermeneutics. Davidman suggests that we use "alternative sources of knowledge, such as our own emotions and feeling states ... to understand and convey the experiences of those we meet in the field" (Davidman, 2002: 20), and McGuire's work provides an excellent example of how this works in practice. McGuire describes an interview she made while researching attitudes of farm women in rural Ireland. Both McGuire and the interviewee were mothers, and McGuire was nursing her child as they spoke. McGuire describes how she related to the other woman through feeling "the sheer physicality of our mutual understanding. We understood each other, not only cognitively or emotionally, but also with our bodies ... I remember this moment now with my body/mind, not just mentally" (McGuire, 2002: 204). McGuire explains that their shared experience of nursing provided a "shared physical experience", which drew on her own "body/mind experience" (McGuire, 2002: 205). Kleinman and Kleinman argue for such an "ethnography of experience" as an antidote to the de-humanising tendencies of science:

> We live in the flow of daily experience; we are intersubjective forms of memory and action ... the self is constituted out of visceral processes as much as expressed through them (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1991: 293).

McGuire notes the Kleinmans' claim that the 'mind/body/self' "can be intersubjectively understood and that it can intersubjectively know others" (McGuire, 2002: 205), adding that if we could train ethnographers to use this understanding "by raising intuition to the level of consciousness" (McGuire, 2002: 208) they could apply this "mind/body/self intersubjectivity" to social situations (McGuire, 2002: 209). McGuire has been unable to develop such a methodology, but suggests the work of Csordas as a possible model (McGuire, 2002: 209). I discussed Csordas in my embodied cognition literature review, but briefly, he proposes a 'cultural phenomenology' that attends to "somatic modes of attention" (Csordas, 1993). These are culturally constructed ways of being aware of a situation through the body; for example in a ritual healing the healer might feel, see or hear visions that provide information about the healing process. McGuire concurs with Csordas that phenomenology is the appropriate tool for a methodology of mind/body/self intersubjectivity

as long as it demonstrates "precision and rigour about exactly *how* we know what we claim to have apprehended" (McGuire, 2002: 209), and Gendlin's phenomenological hermeneutics provides exactly that. As Madison explains, "Gendlin has described the hermeneutic interactions between our experience and symbols in a way that supports an intersubjective understanding while remaining verifiable in our lived experience" (Madison, 2001: 10). This process of verification is called *Focusing*.

Focusing

A felt sense is "readily accessible in experience and thus we are able to work with it phenomenologically" using Focusing (Madison, 2001: 7). Although Focusing is initially taught as a series of steps, it is actually more an approach than a technique, and different teachers present the steps in different ways (see Cornell, 1996; Gendlin, 1981 and "Appendix 1: Focusing Instructions"), but the principles remain the same. Focusing begins when we sense our bodily response to something, which can be our felt sense of an interview question or a fieldwork situation. We then seek a symbol for that response - what Gendlin calls a *handle* (Gendlin, 1981) - and sense whether that symbolization fits our felt sense. If it does, we can spend time exploring the symbol and allowing it to carry forward our initial felt sense (adapted from Jordan, 2005: 6). In chapter 5, "Embodied Philosophy", I referred to the sense of release we experience when we find just the right word or phrase to express an understanding that had been implicit. If we come to a similar sense of completion in Focusing we experience a bodily 'felt shift', a physical affirmation that we have brought some significant knowledge from the implicit into conscious awareness. A 'felt shift' describes just what we mean by an 'Aha! moment' that is accompanied by a release of bodily tension (Gendlin, 1981: 39).

Descriptions of the therapeutic use of Focusing speak of a process similar to McGuire's description of mind/body/self intersubjectivity. Psychotherapist Madison explains how throughout a Focusing session he keeps his attention on the "one intersubjective world" occupied by him and his client "as it exists each moment in our individual bodies" (Madison, 2001: 12). Another Focusing psychotherapist describes the experience of what Csordas calls "somatic modes of attention": "In my work I have felt an ache in my chest in the presence of a patient's grief, or a tingling in my arms and legs in response to another's anger etc. and I frequently consult my own body sensations (and my reveries and stray thoughts) to help me understand my patients' experience" (Solomon, pers. comm., 2007). Solomon uses Focusing in this process of consulting his body[27], and describes it as a way of "speaking *from* the body rather than *about* the body" (Solomon, 2006: 9; author's emphasis).

27 Solomon notes that he began attending to his body sensations before he became aware of Focusing. His body sense had been enhanced by Tai Chi, Bio-energetic therapy training and Vipassana meditation.

Gendlin appreciates that Focusing can be a "very helpful innovation for phenomenologically-orientated research", suggesting that it "may result in outcomes that are different and deeper than other qualitative research practices" because it "opens up the whole vast implicit experiential level" (Gendlin, 2003, quoted in Todres, 2004: 25). Todres has discussed the use of Focusing in qualitative research (Todres 1999, 2004 and 2007) and uses Gendlin's work to explore the role of "interembodied understanding" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 39)[28]. Focusing has also been applied within Grounded Theory (Rennie and Fergus, 2006) and in Heuristic Research, which does not use Focusing in interviews, but recommends it to elucidate the researchers own process of self awareness because it allows them to "identify qualities of an experience that have remained out of conscious reach" (Moustakas, 1990: 25). Although few researchers use Focusing to access embodied knowing in an ethnographic context, I have been in contact with several, one of whom, Jane Bacon, Reader in Performance Studies at the University of Northampton, advised me on my application of this methodology and I have referenced her specific contributions.

My embodied hermeneutics has five principles:

A Recognising that the body "is an ongoing interaction with its environment" (Gendlin, 1992: 349) moves us "beyond the subject/object distinction" (Gendlin, 1997b: 15). This intimate involvement with the world defines the "conditions whereby we experience something" (Gadamer, 1976: 9).

B The circumstances of our being-in-the-world (principle A) enable our awareness of what McGuire calls the "mind/body/self intersubjectivity" of social situations (McGuire, 2002: 209) which we can access by various means including Focusing.

C Researchers can develop this awareness in themselves and help facilitate it for their participants. (See, inter alia, Gendlin, 1981; Solomon, 2006).

D This awareness affords an embodied phenomenological hermeneutics grounded in "lived experience" (Maanen, 1990: 27; Penner 2000: 59).

E Gendlin's description of the "hermeneutic interactions between our experience and symbols" (Madison, 2001: 10) brings hermeneutic validity to this "embodied understanding" (Todres, 2007: 40) by grounding it in a felt 'rightness' (Caputo, 1987: 81).

Of the four methods I use to understand the process of embodied

28 Todres' 1999 paper has recently been reprinted in Todres, 2007 where I came across it for the first time. Although it did not inform my methodology this paper supports the approach I developed independently.

cognition/knowing, three are underpinned by these principles: (1) I used my phenomenological experience of mind/body/self intersubjectivity both in the field and during and after personal interactions with participants, applying Focusing to deepen this awareness during the later stages of my research. (2) Focusing was also integrated into my interview practice, as discussed in detail below, and contributed to (3) the interpretation phase. The fourth, my use of existing ethnographies, provided additional material to contextualise my fieldwork.

Triangulation

I have drawn on existing ethnography and my own observations to identify the research field and possible interview topics, while interview data, observation and auto-ethnography have in turn informed the emergence of my hermeneutic analysis. Using several complementary approaches to data gathering in this way is often called methodological triangulation (see, inter alia, Flick, 2006: 289; Richie & Lewis, 2003: 44: 73).

Massey is highly critical of triangulation, claiming that "many misleading and invalid claims are made" in its name (Massey, 1999: 183). Massey's critique proposes that the term 'triangulation' is an inappropriate description of how social scientists use multiple methods because it is based metaphorically on land surveying, which has a different epistemological and ontological stance. As a result it can lead to "claims of convergence, truth, validity, control of bias, completeness and so on looking far more solid than they really are" (Massey, 1999: 194). Further, the claim that triangulation can in some way validate (see inter alia, Schwandt, 1997: 163) implies the existence of a fixed social reality, a notion that most social theorists refute.

However, Richie notes that this is a "longstanding debate" (Richie & Lewis, 2003: 43) and many researchers have embraced the concerns expressed by Massey. Several authors emphasise that triangulation should be used to provide a richer understanding that is "not necessarily a more certain one" (Richie & Lewis, 2003: 44) while Flick emphasises triangulation as an alternative to validation that increases the scope, depth and consistency of research (Flick 2006: 390). The origins of the term are indeed unfortunate, but given that the qualitative research texts I use are aware of the issues and avoid implausible claims for triangulation, and I see no problem in adopting it.

METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE

My involvement with the environmental protest movement spans over fifteen years and I was involved at the UK's first road protest camp at Twyford Down (1991-1994), the London M11 link road protest (1993-1995) and Newbury (1995-1996). This background gave me an understanding of protest site activism and helped build rapport with research participants.

Sample Selection and Size

My Eco-Paganism literature review noted that Eco-Pagans can be categorized using two typologies: Letcher identified those explicitly involved in contemporary Paganism (traditionalized) and the more eclectic detraditionalized (non-aligned) Eco-Pagans (Letcher, 2004), while I distinguished between 'protest camp' and 'urban' Eco-Pagans. Although individuals do move between these fluid typologies, they are useful in providing a synchronic structure for my analysis which I present as a scatter diagram (figure 6). I sought interview participants in physical spaces, via organisations (for example The Pagan Federation - see 'Web Sites' references), the Internet (e-mail discussion groups and web sites) and through word of mouth.

Ethnographic Sites

Because there are very few protest sites in the UK at any one time, my ethnographic sample was self-limiting. I used several sources to locate sites including protest organisations such as Road Alert and Earth First! (see 'Web Sites' references), e-mail discussion lists (see 'E-mail discussion lists' references) and word of mouth. I visited all current (2004 -2007) road protest sites in England, Scotland and Wales, and two that are no longer active. My first visit took place in February 2004 with a week at site A [29]. In October 2005 I gave up the tenancy on my flat, placed my property in storage and went to live at protest site B. This became my main ethnographic location and I spent just over three months living there full-time. In January 2006 I moved back into a house but continued to live part-time at site B for several months, gradually reducing my time there as I moved into the interpretation phase. I remain in close contact with site B to date (January 2008). I visited site C for a few days in February 2006; I visited site D twice for a total of eight days (July 2006 and January 2007) and site E on several occasions between June 2006 and September 2006 for a total of nine days. I explore my personal experience of this research in Chapter 7, " 'You're not studying it - you're living it': An Autoethnography".

Site A was located in ancient woodland just outside a South Wales town. During my visit there were a total of about 12 people living in two small encampments and there was strong local support for the campaign. The protest lasted for about 3 months and has now been evicted. Site B was a long term encampment on a narrow strip of land which was part of a local park in a suburban town in southern England. It was notable in that it included an ancient burial site. The number of full-time residents varied over the two years of my involvement from 2 to about 12. Although local support was strong, site B has been targeted by arson and other attacks. At the time of writing (January 2008) site B remains threatened by a road widening scheme. Site C was a Somerset protest to stop the felling of an estimated 200 trees for a retail development. The camp, which lasted

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29 To help preserve the anonymity of my participants I label these sites alphabetically in the order I visited them.

about 6 weeks, consisted of a few very basic tree platforms and, briefly, part of a squatted factory. Numbers varied widely from one to 30 protesters and local support was mixed. It has now been evicted. Site D was established in June 2002 in a patch of woodland on the edge of a Scottish town and at the time of writing is ongoing. Numbers on-site varied but there were 6 to 8 living there during my visits. There was strong local support for the campaign but this has waned over time. Site E is an ongoing road protest in southern England established during May 2006 in several patches of woodland - some ancient - on the edge of a town. There are two camps and again numbers on-site varied, but during my visits the main camp had an average of ten residents while the second had 5. Local support has varied over time. Sites B, D and E had some well built low-impact dwellings and communal spaces.

Protest site Eco-Pagans are often itinerant, so I also attended key protest marches and events such as the first Climate Change Camp (August 26th to September 4th 2006) and the Earth First! Summer Gatherings in 2004, 2005 and 2006. This provided the opportunity to meet protest site Eco-Pagans, deepened my understanding of protest culture and built on my existing credibility, thereby contributing to rapport. Some urban Eco-Pagans attend events organised by The Pagan Federation or specific Traditions like British Reclaiming or the Druid Network (see 'Web Sites' references). I attended several such events each year between in 2004 and 2007. In addition, my long-term involvement with the Dragon Eco-Pagan Network provided access to potential participants from across the typological spectrum. (See 'Web Sites' references).

Participants

I chose the urban/protest site axis to identify participants because my literature reviews and initial fieldwork suggested that this was more significant than the traditionalized/detraditionalized axis. I undertook twenty-three interviews in a variety of contexts, including protest sites, organised events and private homes. I interviewed people from a range of geographical locations representing a wide selection of different types of Eco-Pagan to allow comparison, as follows:

Urban Eco-Pagans:
6 women.
4 men.

Protest site Eco-Pagans:
5 women.
8 men.

The gender differences reflect the situation in the field, as women are slightly more common than men amongst urban Eco-Pagans while men are more prevalent than women on protest sites. Four of the protest site interviews (three women and one man) took place during the pilot stage of

my research but I include them as there was no major change in my research agenda. There are slightly more protest site interviews as I wanted to complete a full study of all the Eco-Pagans on site B (eight people, four of each gender), without compromising the breadth of the study. This sample, when integrated with my other strategies, has allow me to achieve theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Pilot Phase

At the outset of my research I assumed that ritual was fundamental to Eco-Pagan practice, a conclusion based on personal experience and my literature review. I therefore developed a workshop based methodology for exploring Eco-Pagan ritual using the work of Edgar, Strobel and Halprin (Edgar, 2004; Halprin, 2002; Strobel, 2000). I planned to 'warm up' with Edgar's imagework, which seemed ideal as it uses what Pagans call 'visualisation', so would be familiar to participants. Strobel's 'Performance Hermeneutics' has been used to analyse Deep Ecology ritual (Strobel, 2000), while Halprin's therapeutic work serves as a useful adjunct as it focuses more explicitly on embodied knowledge as revealed through movement and creative expression.

My initial protest camp fieldwork made it clear that this approach was inappropriate: First, it became apparent that conventional ritual practice was far less significant than I or others had believed;[30] second, it was entirely impractical to run the kind of workshop I proposed on a protest camp. In retrospect this latter limitation should have been obvious, but I assumed that protesters would to take the time to participate. I could have used this approach with urban Eco-Pagans, but that would mean applying very different methodologies with different research populations, thereby compromising any comparisons I might wish to make. I therefore decided to develop an entirely different approach.

The Focusing Interview

Postmodern and feminist ethnographers emphasise the importance of relationship in interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1998: 51), and the semi-structured interview is the key technique of the latter. Feminist influenced interviewing "requires openness, emotional engagement, and the development of a potentially long-term, trusting relationship between the interviewer and the subject" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 36). Semi-structured [31] interviews are also called depth, in-depth, focused, unstructured, nondirective, open-ended, or active interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Fontana & Fey 1994; McCraken, 1988), and what I call a 'Focusing interview' is based on this model. Whereas the structured interview seeks precise data that explains behaviour according to a pre-established pattern, the semi-structured interview attempts to understand

30 The reasons for this are discussed in my fieldwork chapters.

31 Rice, P. and Ezzy, D. (1999) dislike the term 'semi-structured interview' as they think it implies "that the important issues in qualitative interviews are a watered down version of structured interviews".

complex behaviour in a more open way. According to feminist ethicist Raymond such open-ended questions "maximise discovery and description" (Reinharz, 1992: 18) and many ethnographers agree (Flick 2006: 149).

In their discussion of the 'depth interview', Reason and Rowan explain the importance of personal engagement and care. Because the "interviewer is genuinely concerned with the interviewee as a person", a greater level of rapport is achieved. The interviewee, sensing the interviewer's attitude, "seeks to respond in appropriate depth". In contrast with a more conventional interview, where the researcher asks the questions and the participant responds, this New Paradigm approach, in common with some feminist methodologies, invites sharing. Depth interviews have an open time frame and the interviewee may dialogue with the interviewer, "exploring intent, seeking clarification" and "actively participating in the process of seeking understanding" (Reason & Rowan, 1981: 203). The effectiveness of this approach has been demonstrated by empirical research from humanistic psychology: Jourand's work shows that the best way of getting someone to tell you something about themselves is to share the same kind of information about yourself, and this is especially true when the topic is intimate or personal (Rowan, 1988: 47. Also see Rice and Ezzy, 1999). As Oakley pithily put it, there is "no intimacy without reciprocity" (Oakley, 1981: 49). My own experience bears this out: One woman commented on my interview style, saying she liked it and found it easy to fully respond to my questions. Focusing enhances the effectiveness of the semi-structured interview because it engenders an attentive open attitude that facilitates the empathetic rapport required.

If, as Gendlin claims, the embodied implicit underpins all explicit meaning, then any interview approach would be advised to take it into account. A depth interview - and, perhaps, especially what I call a Focusing Interview - can enable the respondent to carry forward a felt sense to "*complete* and form" (Gendlin, 1964; author's emphasis) an implicit meaning into one which is explicit and verbal. It is important to recall that implicit and explicit meanings are fundamentally different: implicit meaning is preconceptual and so does not in any sense conceal explicit meanings. This understanding supports the theoretical framework that underpins existing practice in semi-structured interviewing, which emphasises that "meanings are continually constructed and reconstructed in interaction" (Rice and Ezzy, 1999: 54). I do not seek to unearth an explicit knowledge that my respondent has hidden within them: "Respondents are not ... repositories of knowledge - treasuries of information awaiting excavation" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 4). Explicit, verbal meaning emerges from the dialogical process of the interview and so respondents "are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 4). Gendlin allows us to understand more clearly *how* this process occurs.

Todres suggests that applying Gendlin's insights can inform discussions on "the 'truth values' of qualitative research" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 30) and outlines the four phases where it can be applied as "the informants task, the interviewer's task, the task of analysis, and the task of the reader" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 36). Although I do not use Todres terms, his approach illuminates my own. Bacon suggests that Focusing works well as an integral part of the depth interview (Bacon, pers. comm., 2006) where it has two aspects: (a) I Focused during and (optionally) after the interview and, (b) where appropriate, I facilitated the respondent in using Focusing to access their embodied knowing. I began by explaining that because I was interested in accessing "what the body knows", I used an unusual interview technique and I might invite them to pay particular attention to how their body felt. I explained that it can be quite hard to put embodied understanding into words and suggested using metaphors, sounds, movements or anything else that might help.

1) Interviewer Facilitates

Todres points out that participants use "a process of 'lived body' referencing" to authenticate the "'truth value'" of the words they use in an interview (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 37) and notes the value of Focusing to enhance that process. By clarifying the "process by which an informant brings phenomena to language" Gendlin provides the researcher with "the opportunity for a rigorous connection to the fullness of the phenomenon-as-experienced" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 37-38). Todres offers useful theoretical underpinning, but does not specify in detail how Focusing might be applied to an interview, and my discussion with Dr. Bacon informed the practical aspects of the approach I developed.

Fisher notes that "felt meaning" is "called forth" when we interact with something whose symbolic character arouses a feeling in us (Fisher, 2002: 56). An effective question will do exactly that, calling forth a felt sense and helping the respondent to articulate an explicit meaning. It was important that participants engaged with how they *felt* about a situation and carefully phrasing questions helped:

> "How was that for you?" or "How did you feel then [and/or] when that happened?" (Cornell, 90: 1996).

In most cases I then invited the participant to become aware of how these feelings might be expressed in the body as a felt sense:

> Do you sense any bodily feelings or sensations related to that experience/ this place/that moment? (Harris, interview topic guide, 2007).

I also used such phrases more generally, for example to help them access their felt sense of the protest site or tree or wood they were defending:

> How do you feel about the site/the wood/this place? (Harris, interview topic guide, 2007).

More explicit Focusing often helped a participant articulate a felt sense about their spiritual practice. During the pilot phase of my interviews a participant would sometimes find it hard or impossible to articulate their embodied knowing of a spiritual practice, and would say something like "I can't really put it into words ..." In the Focusing Interview I invited participants to become aware of their felt sense and this often enabled them to articulate their embodied knowing.

2) Interviewer Focuses

Before asking my first question I practised what Cornell calls 'attunement', which is a simple process of bringing awareness into your body (Cornell, 1996: 97). Cornell – a practising therapist – claims that this process enhances the therapists intuition, allowing them to become aware of material that is "not from your logical mind" and suggests that it is possible to become aware of "felt senses in your body that are not yours" (Cornell, 1996: 4-5. Cf. Madison, 2001: 12, quoted above). Todres likewise writes of an "interembodied experience" that emerges between the interviewer and the participant that provides an "embodied understanding" of their interaction. While Todres claims that he can confirm the existence of this "interembodied experience" by sharing some of the implications of his own "embodied understanding", he notes that "it remains a large task to consider the extent to which this can happen" (Todres 2007 [1999]: 39). I agree on both counts, so while "interembodied experience" can emerge in an interview, I chose not to share my embodied understanding given the issues of validity this could raise.

In practice this approach proved to be quite powerful, as exemplified in my interview with 'Zoe',[32] an urban Eco-Pagan. This long interview had been valuable, and I had asked all the questions on my interview guide. But as I concluded the interview I had a bodily prompting - a felt sense - that I had missed something. My process is apparent in the transcript:

> Adrian: Wow! Thank-you, That was super! [Zoe: Yeah?] Yeah, really interesting. Um. [LONG PAUSE] Ah. [LONGER PAUSE] Er, mm, er. [Adrian makes a few muttered noises]. Something that isn't down here [on my interview guide]. Something about connected, connection. [Zoe: Mmmm.] 'Cos we talked about connecting, earlier. [Zoe: Mmm, yeah.] [LONG PAUSE]

I spend another half a minute trying to get to the meaning of my felt sense until I say:

> We've already talked about connecting to a place. [Zoe: Mmm.] I have a sense that there's something more there. [Zoe: Mmmm.]

32 The names of most participants referred to have been changed.

> [LONG PAUSE] How - Do you feel your body has a particular role when you're connecting to a place?

What followed was one of most valuable sections of an already rich interview which I explore in more detail in chapter 8, 'Listening to the Threshold Brook: Urban Eco-Paganism', but without a sensitivity to the "embodied understanding" expressed by my felt sense that there was more to be said, I would never have asked the question.

Because I Focused from the start, I had a empathetic attitude towards the interview process that sometimes profoundly shifted the dynamic. Much of our spiritual experience is not rational, so any impression that I wanted 'rational' responses would close down the whole conversation, but Focusing helps create a space that encourages the freedom to communicate non-rational, spiritual feelings using more poetic modes of expression. Although the felt sense is usually articulated in a word or phrase, it can begin as a gesture, facial expression, movement or other bodily response, so the Focusing interviewer must be especially attentive to such details (Bacon, pers. comm., 2006). After the interview, I sometimes chose to Focus on the interview itself or some handle that emerged. In practice I did not find this added very much to what had already emerged, but it did help me settle after one particularly emotional interview.

Topic Guides and Recording

Arthur and Nazroo strongly recommend using topic guides that act as "an *aide-memoire* which guides the researcher during fieldwork and ensures some consistency in fieldwork approaches" (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003: 115). In practice topic guides are used flexibly to "enhance rather than inhibit responsive questioning" (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003: 136). Although I did not use topic guides for my initial interviews, I subsequently found them useful for the reasons Arthur and Nazroo suggest and developed several for use with different participant groups.

Although I used a cassette recorder to tape the interviews, I carefully noted any non-verbal elements that might be important. Gorden notes four kinds of non-verbal communication:

> Proxemic communication is the use of interpersonal space to communicate attitudes, chronemics communication is the use of padding of speech and length of silence in conversation, kinesic communication includes any body movements or postures, and paralinguistic communication includes all the variations in volume, pitch and quality of voice (Gorden, 1980: 335).

Chronemic and paralinguistic elements are apparent on the tape recording and could be noted later, but other non-verbal aspects of the interview needed to be noted at the time on my topic guide. I briefly

described the location and context of the interview, and provided space where I could note proxemic and kinesic aspects of communication next to a key word to remind me of when it occurred.

Word/Phrase	Interpersonal space	Movement, gesture or posture
EVERY WHERE... - MAYBE HERE.		GESTURES TO CHEST
I DON'T KNOW WHY THAT IS.	LEANS FORWARD	

Fig. 7: Topic guide showing notes on chronemic and paralinguistic aspects of the interview.

Because my research often took place at protest sites, it was not always possible to undertake a Focusing interview. In one such case ('Adam') I used the "ethnographic interview" described by Spradley "as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (Spradley, 1979: 58-59).

Interview Transcription

My interview transcriptions were verbatim and because spoken sentences rarely have the grammatical structure that a written sentence has, I used punctuation to show timings (chronemics) not structure or meaning:

- A comma, means a very short pause. Just a moment - as long as you would give a comma if you were reading a sentence out loud.
- A full-stop shows that a spoken sentence has ended and at the same time indicates a pause longer than a comma.
- [Pause] means a brief pause - the length of a long breath. I use ... when a sentence fades off and this will also mean there is a brief pause.
- [Long Pause] means a longer pause of up to three long breaths.
- I use a hyphen - when there is a break in the flow of meaning in a sentence but no pause.

Observation

Although my embodied hermeneutics developed during - and out of - the so-called 'fieldwork' phase (a notion I problematizes in my autoethnography chapter), the fundamental principles were apparent throughout. As an active Eco-Pagan I had a "complete membership role" (Adler & Adler, 1998: 97) which embraced a Heuristic research

recommendation that the researcher “get inside the question, become one with it” (Moustakas, 1990: 15). Jackson cogently suggests that to understand "bodily praxis" the researcher must inhabit the same world as the other person:

> Participation thus becomes an end in itself rather than a means of gathering closely observed data which will be subject to interpretation elsewhere after the event (Jackson, 1989: 58).

Although such involvement may be ideal, retaining a reflexive perspective is crucial, so I initially strived to retain what Douglas calls the 'theoretic stance' (Douglas, 1970: 22) as opposed to the 'natural stance' I might adopt outside the research context. My experience has, however, blurred this conventional notion of having a 'research stance' and a ‘natural stance’ to the point where a reflexive attitude has become second nature.

Though the term 'observation' implies visual data gathering, "all of the senses can also be fully engaged in this endeavor, from smell to hearing, touch, and taste" (Adler & Adler, 1998: 80). I extended this notion beyond the outdated five senses model to include, amongst other perceptual modes, proprioception and intuition, developing my sensitivity to what Brooks Gardener describes as the "Click! Experience" – those moments where a comment, action or feeling reveals its deeper emotional significance (Adler & Adler, 1998: 81). I followed Mehan & Wood's recommendation that initial observations be descriptive and quite general, shifting to selective observations as my research questions became more focused (Mehan & Wood, 1975). Throughout this process my observations were supported and integrated with the other aspects of my methodology, as this is when observation works best: Used "as part of a methodological spectrum that includes ... strategies such as depth interviewing or participant observation, it is the most powerful source of validation" (Adler & Adler, 1998: 105).

Participant Observation of Ritual

The discussion above is relevant to my role as participant observer of Eco-Pagan rituals, but there were several additional points to consider, notably the difficulty of recording what occurs in the ritual while fully participating in it. In practice, there are usually several opportunities to unobtrusively look round the group and count the number, age and gender of participants, and I took time out soon after a ritual to draw a simple map of the ritual space and note who was there, what they did, and how I felt during the ceremony. After a ritual any paraphernalia and offerings were usually left for long enough for me to take notes and/or photographs if appropriate. On one occasion I followed up a ritual with interviews with participants, but as my research proceeded it became apparent that formal ritual was less relevant than I had assumed, so I did not repeat this.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography describes the process of the ethnographer creatively exploring his or her own experience in order to illuminate the research and "questions the dualism of the insider-outsider paradigm" (Wallis, 2004: 197). In a sense my research has been autoethnographic from the start, as it originated from my experience of a "somatic, physical knowing" in Eco-Pagan ritual (Harris, 1996: 151); I have thus always been a key 'respondent' in my research. This is particularly important given the tacit nature of embodied knowledge and the embodied hermeneutics I developed, because I was able to observe my embodied knowing and thereby better understand the experience of my (co)participants. In this way I became a sensitive instrument tuned to the subtle nuances of the research material. Furthermore, my exposure to hermeneutics, New Paradigm Research and feminist methodologies revealed that abandoning the illusion of the objective, faceless interviewer required personal exposure and an openness to learn about myself as I try to understand others (Crapanzano, 1980). This realization is intimately related to embodied hermeneutics, as a researcher using an embodied methodology “must recognise the multiple subject positions that are invoked by the presence of their own body and the materiality of their fieldwork" (Ahmed, 2004: 286). Although I have already discussed such embodied reflexivity in theoretical terms above, it will become fleshed out in my autoethnography chapter.

Autoethnography can also challenge conventional notions of what counts as knowledge and offer alternative ways of knowing. As Tierney says "autoethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders" (Tierney, 1998: 66). For Ellis and Bochner a fundamental aspect of the power of autoethnography is that it can enable the reader to "feel the truth" of the writer's stories and so "become coparticipants" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000: 745). By evocatively expressing my embodied ways of knowing I enable the reader to come to their own felt sense of that knowing. Todres suggest that through aesthetic forms of writing the reader can be "intuitively empowered ... to engage with the phenomena in a more direct and personal way" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 41), thus providing an "experientially evocative" (Todres, 2004: 24) "texture" that enhances our understanding of thematic "structure" (Todres, 2007: 47). Whereas most of this thesis presents an analytic approach to structured data, I intend my autoethnographic chapter to provide a more intuitive, felt understanding of my research through an aesthetic "texture".

INTERPRETATION and VALIDATION

Interpretation

Most discussions of working with qualitative data speak of analysis, a term

originally found in hard sciences like chemistry, where it means "to break down a whole into component ... parts" (Schwandt, 1997: 5). Schwandt, who portrays this widespread procedural approach as quite mechanical and grounded in behaviourism, prefers other models, notably hermeneutics. Hermeneutics engages the researcher in a *dialogue* with the material to create an interpretation. This contrast leads me to consider Denzin's emphasis on the *art* of interpretation (Denzin, 1998: 313), which portrays the field worker as a storytelling *bricoleur* weaving a narrative from the field notes. As a corrective perhaps, Flick, having been somewhat critical of Denzin's apparent dismissal of method (Flick, 2006: 407), concludes that qualitative research requires both "art *and* method" (Flick, 2006: 408; author's emphasis). Hermeneutics is indeed a method and an art, so Flick's stance reflects my own. On the one hand, I am, like Denzin, concerned with what story the data can tell, but on the other I apply an embodied hermeneutic method.

The hermeneutic circle describes a process where interpretation is not limited to a fixed 'post-fieldwork' phase. For example, my recognition of the interpretative value of 'wilderness effect' theory came during fieldwork and emerged from a sensitivity to patterns of experience. At the stage where my only relationship was with a corpus of text, not a body of flesh, more conventional hermeneutic methods, such as considering language use and context, became valuable. However, I retained an embodied hermeneutics throughout. In practice some of the conventional approaches of qualitative data analysis, like coding text for themes, were useful, but my approach always emphasised context and sought to syntheses themes into related patterns of meaning. The concept of 'themes' is often left vague, but I based my understanding on Maanen's model of themes as "like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes" (Maanen, 1990: 90).

In Practice

Because my embodied hermeneutics evolved during my research, some of my early interpretation strategies were more *ad hoc*, but in the main there were three phases: I transcribed the tape verbatim, noting pauses, pacing and any emphasis on words, which inevitably meant listening several times to write the words exactly as they were spoken. Gendlin's research showed that hesitation and vagueness often accompanied the search for a felt sense, so it is important that I transcribed hesitations, pauses and fill-in phrases. I took notes during this phase. I then listened again while adopting a Focusing attitude, which provided an intuitive sense of what was being expressed. Again I took notes. Then I carefully read the transcript, looking for themes, relationships and patterns, and highlighting sections of text with different colours. My fieldwork notes were too extensive to apply this process, but as the material was from my own lived experience it was adequate to re-read my notes, again looking for themes, relationships and patterns, and transcribe relevant sections.

In common with the majority of qualitative researchers, this process began early on, influencing my process in a series of hermeneutic cycles that culminated in the interpretations presented in 'Section II: Fieldwork'.

Most interpretation relies on rational analysis whereas I used *both* rational analysis and my intuitive felt sense of the meaning of the text. Listening to the recording allowed me to be sensitive to the pace of speech, the tone and volume of the voice, and subtle verbal nuances that a transcription would miss unless it were so precise as to be almost unreadable. Even then, the actual experience of listening to the tape is more sensual - more *embodied* - that reading a transcription: The text of a transcription can only have the words; "Birds singing in the background". The 'text' of a tape recording actually has the sound of the birds singing, which helped me to get a much richer sense of the context of an interview. During the transcription and, especially, the Focusing phase, I sometimes got a very tangible bodily sense of what the participant was talking about. The words describing their feelings evoked a felt sense in me that provided a deeper understanding of their experience. This often felt odd, even slightly disturbing, as if I were stepping into the other person's mode of awareness as it was at a given moment.

Finally, having thematically coded the text of all interviews, field notes and interpretative comments, I began to explore related patterns of meaning using Mind Maps from which I developed my interpretations.

Validation

Cresswell lists eight "primary strategies" to ensure validity: Triangulation, member-checking, rich, thick descriptions, explicitly stating the researchers stance or possible "bias", presenting material that runs counter to the interpretation, extensive time in the field, peer debriefing and the use of an external auditor (Cresswell, 2003: 196). If we allow my long term involvement with Eco-Paganism as "extensive time in the field", I use all of these strategies.

Furthermore, Todres illustrates the value of Gendlin's felt sense in providing "intersubjective validity" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 31). Gendlin shows that our "bodily-participative-knowing" is "not just reasoned but recognised" in a "lived process by which languaging and embodying interact" (Todres, 2007 [1999]: 34). Focusing is thus more grounded than many phenomenological approaches because it is rooted in an identifiable felt sense that is embodied: As Madison says, the felt sense "is not a theory. It is *there"* (Madison, 2001: 7; author's emphasis). In addition the felt shift provides an unmistakable confirmation of the integrity of our intuitions: For Todres the recognition of rightness that is expressed in a felt shift provides the "source of accountability" (Todres, 2007 [1999]:40) that Caputo referred to above as the 'rightness' of an interpretation: " 'That is what we are looking for. That puts into words what we have all along understood about ourselves' " (Caputo, 1987: 81).

Conclusion

I am concerned with an embodied hermeneutics and a hermeneutics of embodiment: the former is *grounded* in embodiment, while the latter is focused on *understanding* some aspect of embodiment. While my current methodology encompasses both, I can envisage embodied hermeneutics being applied to a situation where embodiment was less primary. The embodied hermeneutics I have presented develops the work of Bacon, McGuire, Moustakas, and especially Gendlin and Todres, to provided a consistent methodology that fulfils the criteria set out by New Paradigm Research and the feminist methodologies discussed above. It also fits the requirements of the methodology of mind/body/self intersubjectivity proposed by McGuire, as it can readily be taught and has both "precision and rigour" (McGuire, 2002: 209). In practice it is a powerful and flexible means of researching embodied knowing which builds on existing research to make an original contribution to social science methodology. The power of this approach will become apparent in the fieldwork chapters, to which I now turn.

SECTION II: FIELDWORK

INTRODUCTION

Having laid out the parameters of this thesis in Section I, I now turn to my fieldwork. Section II begins with an autoethnography which gives a embodied sense of what life on the road protest sites was like. The second and third chapters of this section present my fieldwork findings and analysis of urban and protest site Eco-Paganism. Section II concludes with a discussion of all of my fieldwork in the context of a unifying model of embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism.

Between Protest Site and Urban Life

Letcher classifies Eco-Paganisms into two non-exclusive groups; those who are part of a given Pagan Tradition and more eclectic “detraditionalized" Eco-Pagans (Letcher, 2005: 556). Letcher's model is useful, but as not all protest site Eco-Pagans are detraditionalized, I distinguish between protest site and urban Eco-Pagans to provide a second axis, although boundaries between all these categories are fluid. Many Eco-Pagans will always live an urban life simply because of their temperament or circumstances, while some may occasionally visit protest sites for a few days, as I did for many years. Very few - if any - Eco-Pagans live entirety on protest sites. All activists occasionally need time off site

simply to avoid 'burning out', so will occasionally return to an urban environment to recuperate from illness, have a bath, visit family or friends etc. Protest site activists typically spend a few months or perhaps years living on one or more sites and then settle into a somewhat more conventional existence, although often not an especially urban one. Some choose to return to the protest site life occasionally and this cycle can go on for decades.

Combining Letcher's categorization with my own urban to protest site distinction provides a useful typology for understanding how my participants lived and practised over the period covered by my fieldwork. Although the scale is not intended to be precise, fig. 7, below, accurately maps my respondent's lifestyle at the time I interviewed or knew them. Those further to the Urban side have had less experience of protest site life: Sekhara, Sally and Jocelyn had never visited a site, Mark, Gordon and Barry had, while Emily and Michael had stayed briefly at a site. Millie, Jake, Debbie, Dave and Lauren spent a significant amount of time in conventional homes during my research period, Jan and Oak lived in woodland away from a protest site some of the time, while John, Rob and Ian were nomadic. John, Jo and Zoe were members of Druid orders, while I placed Ian and Adam at the opposite end of the Traditionalized - detraditionalized scale for reasons that become obvious. Sally and I were probably the clearest examples people who had become more detraditionalized over time, while John was a paradigm case of a move in the opposite direction

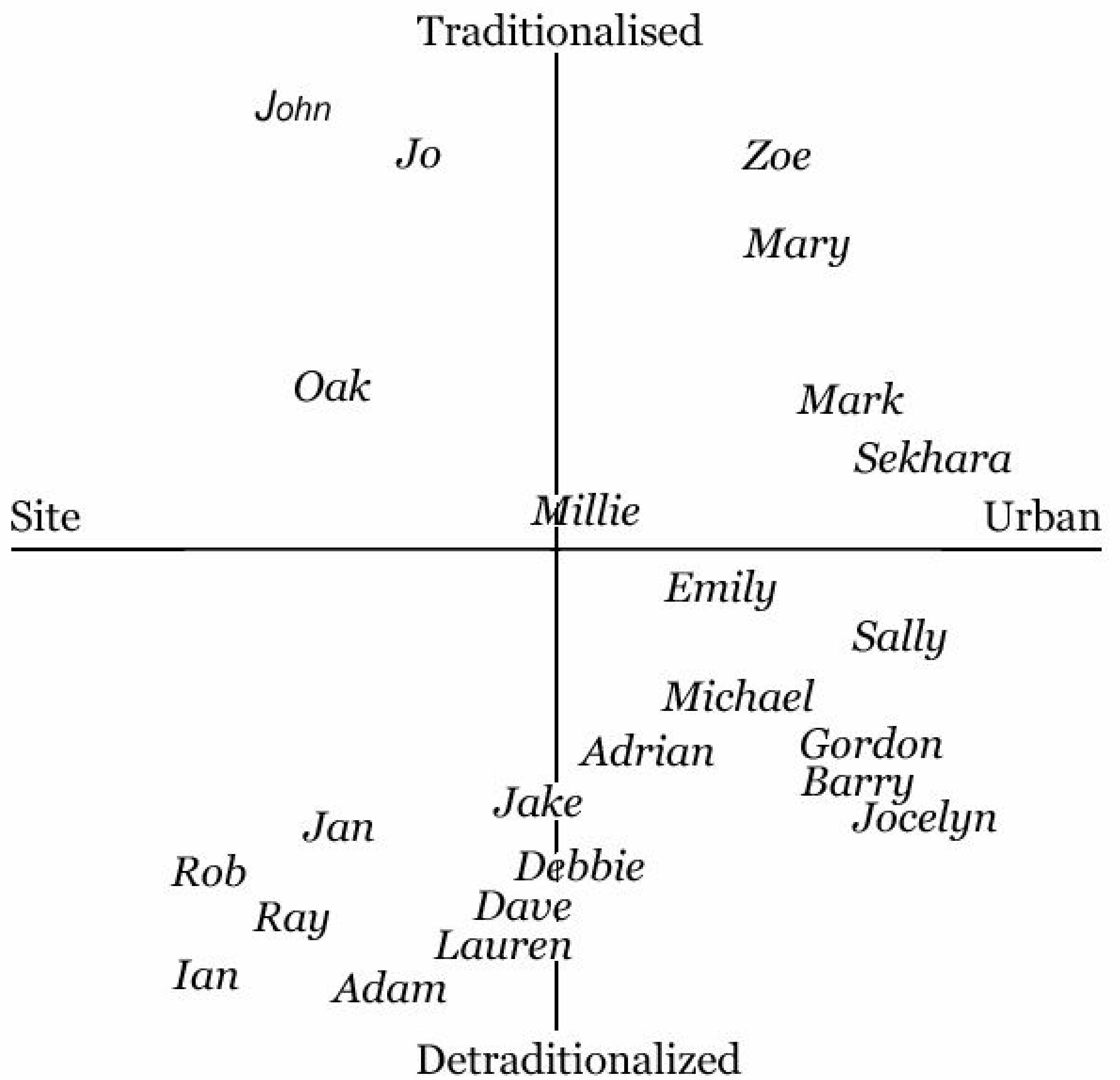

Fig. 7: A Typology of Eco-Paganism

Chapter 7: Autoethnography: “You’re not just studying then - you’re living it.”

"I should not talk so much about myself if
there were anybody else whom I knew as well".
Thoreau, *Walden or Life in the Woods*.

IREVISED

IChapter 7: Autoethnography: “You’re not just studying then - you’re living it.”

"I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well".
Thoreau, *Walden or Life in the Woods*.

Autoethnography is an *aesthetic* activity as much as an academic one in that it tells stories that invite the reader "to put themselves in our place" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 751). As such I must create an evocative reconstruction of life on protest sites that remains true to my experience. Although I've made minor additions to my original material for clarification, all substantive comments are verbatim and events occurred as described. Aliases are used throughout.

As autoethnographer, I am "a boundary-crosser" whose writing reveals "multiple, shifting identities" (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 3) that reflexively locate my personal sense of the research process. It thus becomes apparent that "in the field we are in dialogue with ourselves as much as we are in dialogue with others", and how fieldwork becomes a "'personal voyage of discovery'" (Bruner, 1986: 15). An autoethnographer's work typically reveals the "contradictions they experience" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 738), and such contradictions are an inevitable part of life on a protest site. We are inevitably caught in these contradictions, and the extent to which I lacked that awareness while on site reflected my embodied situation. Denzin emphasizes the way autoethnography combines autobiography with ethnography (Denzin, 1989: 27), and I integrate my wider life experience because it " has ethnographic interest" (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 9) and provides valuable material for analysis in chapter 10, 'A "sacred relationship with the world"'.

BOUNDARIES

We usually imagine the border between academic discourse and

emotional engagement to be well policed, but I now know it to be frangible. I sit in the lofty white space of 'Humanities 1' in the British Library, sitting dutifully at desk number 2177. But I am not engaged in bookish research. My reading has been closed by a memory of such emotional intensity that I almost weep. Reading Beverley Butler's[33] account of the M11 link road protest suddenly flashes back the laughter, the pain, the passion and the madness of it all. She visited Clairmont Road as an academic at the moment of its greatest wonder: I visit her written account as an activist long after its demise. Mine is a very different journey, and I am marked by it.

The moment brings to me the slippery nature of this work. It is not head work, all neat and analysed. Nor is it art, an overflow of feeling flooding the page. My work must live in some third space that celebrates emotional involvement yet honours academic discourse. I've glimpsed such a hybrid in the work of others, so I know at least that it is more than mythic.

My supervisor sits back in his chair. "Well, your chapter headings are fine ..." Dramatic pause. "... if you just want to produce a piece of philosophy". He poses like Rodin's *Thinker*.

"No, I want to ground it in fieldwork. I've included an outline of that in Chapter 9."

Oh yeah, I think to myself; after 'Embodied Metaphor in Magico-religious Practice', 'Phenomenology, Embodiment and Ecological Understanding' and 'Knowledge and the Body'.

"OK. If you want to do fieldwork, then this is out of balance. There's too little and it comes too late".

I know that what he's getting at: How much time do I want to spend on theory and how much on fieldwork? I'm really interested in how embodied knowing might tie in with ritual and changes in subjectivity, so I guess that means I need to leave the warm familiarity of the library and get out into the unknown world of fieldwork. Scary!

The Visit

Field notes:
It's January and I'm on a train going west. It started snowing just as the train left London and the fields all around are now dusted. Not ideal conditions to arrive in! Still, it may delay work on the road. I hope so. When I spoke to Jill on the phone she emphasised how "bloody beautiful" the woods are.

It was snowing pretty steadily as the train arrived at my destination

33 Butler, in Harvey 2003.

and the bus driver joked that I'd need skis in the woods. I smiled through my mixed feelings: I have the usual slight anxiety at heading into an unknown situation, tempered with a certainty that this is where I need to be right now and all will be well. Why am I so certain? My first thought is that this is in accord with the pattern of my life. Not being here would be a denial of how I identify myself. It's living the life I've created.

Dusk is falling as I get off the bus but within 15 minutes I find myself walking down the rough path towards the camp. A voice hollers out a "Hello!" from the bank above me. "Hi! It's Adrian – I phoned the camp a couple of days ago." I'm aware that at this moment I'm no more than a shadow in the dark, so I want to reassure them that I'm a friend. "Oh, hi! Come on up. There's a gap in the fence over here". A guy who introduces himself as Bob meets me with a smile and leads me to the fire pit where five others sit huddled round the warmth.

“Hi, I'm Adrian. I'm an old mate of Jill's and she was telling how amazing it is here.”

“Hi. Good to meet you. Always good to see new people. You staying long?”

“ No. Just for a few days.”

“OK - Always good to have visitors! Have you got a tent or something? You can always sleep in the communal bender if you like.”

“I'm OK. I've brought a tent and stuff. Guess I'd better pitch it before it gets too dark.” I head off and find a spot to pitch my tent near a tree. It's not exactly sheltered, but it'll provide some protection from the wind. I hope.

Back at the fire, I get chatting to a young woman of about 20 who's ‘site name’ [34] is ‘Ness’. When I tell her a bit about my understanding of Eco-Paganism she smiles with recognition and says "Oh, I guess I'm an Eco-Pagan then!" I smile with a different kind of recognition as this experience is quite common in Paganism in general. You don't get converted but just realise there's a name for what you already believe. My problem is that the name ‘Pagan’ doesn't fit me so well these days. I remember how the first draft of my Literature Review became a rant about how disconnected from the land mainstream Paganism is and my growing sense that it's lost the plot. If it ever knew it in the first place! I keep quiet about my doubts as we chat round the warmth of the fire for fear I might break the spell.

After a few rounds of red wine it's time for bed, so we all crunch through the snow to tents dotted round the camp. The snow is inches deep now

34 About a third of the people I met on protest sites used an alias which they referred to as their ‘site name’. Typically this was only used while on the site or involved in a protest action. Although the site name was supposedly to avoid identification by the authorities it appeared to have little practical value.

and even wearing all the clothes I have I'm cold as I struggle to get some sleep. We must all be crazy.

Next morning is bright and cold. The fire pit is warm and Bob has made some porridge. Joy!

"Hey, Bob, Any idea where that came from?" A spotlight of morning light picks out a Brigid's Cross hanging in a tree opposite. It's woven from corn and tied with a thin red ribbon, just like similar crosses I've made myself to celebrate the recent Pagan festival of Imbolc.

"Oh yeah. A couple of Wiccans came down a few weeks back and put them up".

I'm intrigued now and pleased to see such overt Pagan practice. "Really? Are they around much?"

"No", Bob replies, a little sadly. "They came down for a quick visit and we haven't seen them since."

I share his sadness, but for more complex reasons: I was initiated into Wicca over ten years ago but have seen very little in the way of environmental action amongst those who share that path. It would enhance more than just my ethnography to meet Wiccans on the site.

Field notes:
Jill came over last night and we sat by the fire to catch up over a cuppa. It's been a few years since the last big round of road building, and she had a sense that this marks the next turn on the spiral that started at Twyford Down. Ah, Twyford! Jill and I reminisced about those younger

days and how she has a sense that the magic is turning, rising to inspire a new generation of eco-warriors. We're both part of the 'old school', the veterans who were at Twyford and Newbury who thought we'd beaten the Tory road builders only to see a new and smarter foe emerge. But protest is growing and perhaps we can turn the tide.

The next few weeks are crucial as the contractors are rattled by the protest and behind schedule. Morale is high and we're building more defences everyday. Jill moved house recently so can't spend much time here now, but she thinks we can win this one. Let's hope so: There are bats, owls, badgers, dormice and toads in these woods. Sadly I need to get back to London tomorrow and I feel a little frustrated to be leaving so soon. A part-time PhD makes this kind of fieldwork almost impossible, so somehow I have to get funding to go full-time.

Arrival

Field notes:
Late autumn and my studentship has turned my life upside down: I have time to do in-depth fieldwork and now I can't afford the rent on my London place I have a push to do it! A few long days ago I was in London phoning the camp from my flat. Now the flat is empty and my material life sits in store. No word from any of the Housing Co-ops I've applied to, so it's up and off.

I arrive at camp in darkness and wander towards a fire which burns brightly in an old washing machine drum. A circle of faces look up as I come into the light.

"Hi. I'm Adrian. I spoke to Dave a few days ago about staying over."

"Oh, yeah. Hi! That's me. Grab a seat and sit yourself down. Always happy to see new people!"

Dave introduces the site crew: Phil, Ray, Jan, Tom, Oak, Debbie and Lauren. Lauren explained that she's "just a visitor" for now, so will be headed home soon. "Don't worry - We'll soon get you moved in!" Said Phil with a laugh.

We sit and chat for a while and then Dave offers to show me a good spot for my tent. "So, you staying for long?" He asks as he helps me set up.

"Not sure yet. I'll be here for a couple of weeks at least."

"OK" Says Dave with a smile. "See you in the morning. Sleep tight!"

After a cold night it's inevitably late morning by the time I struggle out of

my sleeping bag and head briskly towards the communal bender for breakfast. A head pops out of a tent: Jan wishes me "Good morning" with a smile.

In the communal bender, more smiles. "Hi, I'm Sam. Cuppa?" Says a bright, friendly woman as we meet over the kettle. "Yeah, love one thanks. I'm Adrian. I don't think we've met?"

"No. I live nearby, in town." She says, by way of explanation. "But I visit every week. Are you living on site now?"

"Yeah. I'm doing research into the spirituality of protest sites - studying what I call Eco-Paganism. Well, that and helping with the protest. I used to be really involved years ago and it felt like time to get my boots dirty again." Suddenly we're talking about the M11, Twyford Down and Newbury. Sam has heard of them but has been more involved with Greenpeace style campaigns which are much less anarchic. "So are you an 'Eco-Pagan' then?"

"Yeah - Have been for years." I say with a shrug.

"Oh." she responds, with a smile: "You're not just studying then - you're *living* it."

I nod, thoughtfully. She's hit the mark of course, and makes me even more aware of my dual status here, the ambiguity of my motives. I try to change the subject a little. "Are there many Pagans involved here?"

Sam hasn't told me much about herself until now, but, perhaps following my lead, shares. Yes there are several Pagans involved with the campaign, including her friend, Millie, who I haven't met yet. Sam tells me Millie might be popping in tomorrow, so we should talk. "I do like the Pagan way of looking at things, but I'd call myself a Christian, though I'm not involved with the Church".

We sit and chat about spirituality for a while until Sam finishes off her tea and gets up to leave."See you later!" Sam says, as she wraps up in her coat and heads out into the cold.

Field notes:
The activist in me hears that 111 trees are under threat, while the researcher notes that Millie is a Pagan. To be honest I feel more activist than ethnographer, but a 'third position' [35] *perceives that there need not be any conflict between the two, and in fact my activist status should enhance my ethnography. I'd really like to talk to someone with*

35 I'm using the term 'third position' in the sense used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), where it means "a step outside your view and the other person's view to a detached perspective. There you can see the relationship between the two viewpoints". (O'Conner, 2001: 33)

experience of this kind of dual role. Maybe Susan Greenwood? I'll call her.

I wake up and cringe: I've been here ten days now and I'm getting fed up with having to leave site to go to the loo. Most people use the public toilets that are about 20 minutes walk away, though there's evidence that not everyone bothers. So I suggest to Oak that we build a compost toilet. "Yeah. Go ahead. Maybe down the far end of site." For a moment I'm not sure if he realises that I don't have a clue about how to do it. I have all the practical skills of a highly trained academic – zero. But this isn't South London; I can't just phone up a compost toilet builder or ask my landlord to sort it out. We do it or it doesn't get done. So I grab a spade and get digging. Once I've started, Oak is happy to make suggestions about how it might work, and by the afternoon we're both banging nails into the pallet wood walls. As we finish off the compost toilet, Oak explains his next project: He wants to build a really high and well defended tree-house – one that will be really hard to evict. And he'd like me to help build it.

Field notes:
Several people here – or visiting regularly – are 'Pagan' in some sense. Millie celebrates (at least) some of the main festivals and attends the local Pagan moot. I asked her about the moot, and she said they weren't very interested in environmental activism. I let that pass without comment. Still, I get the impression from talking to people here that some form of intuitive spirituality is common. I know Andy [Letcher] said as much[36].

Time passes strangely on site: days feel short yet looking back over a week it seems like a fortnight. My second week has been enjoyable, though I've become increasingly confused about my role at the camp, so it's been a joy talking to Susan about my fieldwork. She doesn't just know the issues academically – she's been there.

"I sometimes wonder whether I'm doing what I should – As it is the University just paid for me to build a compost toilet on a road protest site!"

I'm making a joke of it, but my quandary is serious.

"Don't worry – That's all part of your work. I learnt how to bake cakes during my PhD fieldwork". She grins, and then goes on. "All that is part of your ethnography. You need to live the life to really understand it."

Fine, but that's not really why I'm here.

"But I get confused about my role there. It's just the kind of place I would have been anyway a few years ago, but now I'm not there as an activist,

36 Letcher, 2000.

but as an academic. Or am I? I dunno. I feel like I need to keep ‘switching hats’ from one to the other and it’s been doing my head in."

Susan shrugged: “It’s simple – You’re *both* all the time.”

It was like someone turned the lights on in a room at dusk. “Ahh! I see! So it’s not a problem – being one or the other - I’m both”.

“Well, you decide, but it sounds like it from what you’ve said. You’ve been mixing the two for years anyway. We can’t split ourselves up into boxes – How you feel will obviously influence how you think, so own that. You might be able to actually use it in your research. Note down how you *feel* about living there. Given that you’re researching embodied knowing you might get something useful from it.”

I leave Susan's place with a smile. Realising I can be both activist and academic without compromising either is the best news I’ve had in ages. Back at the camp, I'm welcomed with hot food and as I sit down to eat I'm aware of a sense of real belonging.

THE TURNING

Enchantment

I slept like a log last night and get up early, keen to get to work. First things first: The compost loo is a real boon and gives me an odd sense of pride every time I use it. That feels a bit peculiar, but I guess I've never thought of myself as being remotely practical, so helping to build something so fundamental to our lives here is significant. That's all great, but I can't help wondering how long I can stay here just on the principle that I’m doing good work for the campaign! I really need to make some progress with my ethnography or I can't justify being here. But then Susan did say just being here is all part of the ethnography. Might as well enjoy it then!

"Fancy a cuppa tea?" I'm doing myself one and always ask round. '"Yeah - Builders, please" says Oak. "And a herbal for me", Jan adds. They're chatting away in what serves as our lounge when it isn't a crash space - a small, slightly better waterproofed area where we keep extra bedding. I wander over with the tea and sit on an old sleeping bag. Then my ears suddenly prick up:

"I'd like to do a Land Blessing. We've been here a few weeks now and no-one's done anything for the site yet". Oak isn't particularly talking to me, but to Jan. They're old mates who've done ritual before, so she's the obvious person for him to share the idea with. I listen for a moment, and then chip in. "I'd really like to be involved if I can."

"Oh right, yeah, you're Pagan aren't you? Sure. Have you done anything like this before?"

I realise that I've kept fairly quiet about my own practice as I wanted to give space to hear other people's voices. In fact I have some ten years of experience and have facilitated several rituals on protest sites in the past. But the last thing I want is to be seen as some kind of expert, so I keep the details to myself as I say: "Yeah, some."

"Great! Fancy inviting an Element or something?"

Perfect! "Yeah - Cool! When?"

After some discussion we agree that a week on Sunday will give us enough time. "Excellent! Looks like we have a plan!" Says Oak with a grin.

Field notes:
I met Jo today. She'd visited the site before I arrived, and I've seen her e-mail messages on the 'Pagan Warriors' e-mail list. She's just read an article in the latest 'Pagan Dawn[37] *about our escapades at the G8 last year, so that got us talking about Pagans and activism. We agreed that it was great that* Pagan Dawn *was publishing more about activism now, but Jo didn't think it would make any difference to most Pagans. She sometimes goes to the local Pagan moot, but she doesn't think they are interested in our campaign. Worse, one of them told her we were wasting our time. Jo went off on one then, and went on to describe a Pagan fair she'd been to in London where everyone was wandering around clad in black velvet robes. She couldn't understand why they weren't more interested in the environment and implied they were quite shallow. I told her I'd come to accept that some Pagans were not environmentalists, which isn't quite true: I understand that academically, but still can't embrace it emotionally.*

I wake up and give a broad grin: That's one of my last nights in my cold, cramped, tent. I'm building myself a place to live, so Oak, Ray and I are headed over to some nearby woods to cut bender poles this morning. With that happy thought, I wander down to the communal for breakfast to find Jan is also a very good mood, despite piles of washing up.

"You look happy this morning!"

"Yeah, I'm going to plant seeds today. I love doing that." I look vague, wondering why. She give me a big smile as she explains. "It makes me feel like I'm talking to the Goddess."

I'm still pondering the profundity of Jan's joy as we arrive at the woods where we'll cut the bender poles. Oak and his partner live here in a

37 *Pagan Dawn* is the magazine of the Pagan Federation.

wooden house he built for them. Ray and I both need poles, so Oak shows us what to look for: The poles need to be straight, not too thick and nice and long. It looks easy enough, but it's not: I just can't see the wood for the trees! After a while looking far too hard for the right poles, I begin to get the knack: It needs a particular sensory acuity that feels like I'm relaxing into it and opening myself up to the space. Now I'm looking less and seeing more.

I seem to be doing OK, but then Ray starts going on about how "Oak made it look so easy" and we can’t find the poles like he can. I begin to lose my confidence as I take his doubts on-board and suddenly the bender poles disappear into the trees again. Still, all's well, as when it comes time to leave we have more than enough.

Sitting outside my new bender watching the waxing moon, I think, "This is my Paganism!" To worship something you have to be separate from it, but I don’t feel a need to worship nature. Actually, its stronger than that: I don’t feel it would make sense, because I *am* nature. My Paganism is an expression of a deep love for nature that doesn’t seek to reify it.

[N.B. I FIRST NOTED THIS FEELING WHILE VISITING A DIFFERENT CAMP, BUT STILL FELT THE SAME WAY AT THIS ONE. IS IT OK TO LEAVE THIS HERE? I'LL CUT IT OTHERWISE].

In the trees over by the railway I hear crows squawking. On the opposite side of the Camp the road drones by. The contrast seems poignant: Life in place, as part of a sustainable ecology sits opposite an oddly pointless series of individual journeys.

Field notes:
I’m still not sure how to describe the bodily feelings which arise during spiritual work. Last night we talked about how the site ‘felt’ to us. Dave

said he had a strong feeling from the site in the first few days. I 'felt' a strong 'energy' when I held 'Mr. Pointy' [Oak's antlered stag skull] and I had a different feeling when I was opening up my senses to the woods while looking for bender poles. But how can I articulate those feelings? They are the very essence of the work I want to do, but they are so outside conventional language use.

Are Eco-Pagans more ~~conscious of~~ *aware of using embodied cognition? Is that what I mean when I say that the most important thing I've learnt from Paganism is how to listen to my intuition? Note that I crossed out 'more conscious of' and used 'more aware of'. I am mistrustful of the conscious/unconscious duality. I suspect it will turn out to be an illusion, or at best, a misleading oversimplification.*

Before I came here I had all kinds of notions about keeping academic distance during fieldwork. Ha! Such ideas are now lost amidst the rush of life here, and I find myself sitting in the communal bender helping Debbie come up with a way of inviting the Spirit of Fire to our Circle this afternoon. My being here inevitably has an impact and trying to artificially minimise it seems naive and insincere. So I leap in and behave exactly as I would have years ago at the M11 or Twyford.

"So what does fire mean to you?" I ask. I am careful not to impose my ideas, but try to help Debbie find a calling to Fire that works for her.

"Heat, flames, passion, red, ..." Debbie has an affinity with fire anyway, and words and half-expressed feelings are quickly sparking. Before long we've forged a short but powerful calling that Debbie can truly own. And not before time, as Jan looks in to call us to the Circle.

Field notes:
Ritual went well. I nearly wept after Jan's short and very simple invocation of the Goddess though it wasn't much more than one line: "Welcome to the Goddess of the Well". Oak suggested that this was because she expressed such a strong belief. That resonates.

Ray wept openly at the end and I did a grounding meditation with him. He found the Elemental callings very moving, but isn't sure why. I did some interviews after the ritual. Fascinating!

I wake up with the remains of a dream. All I can remember is a man saying to me that answers don't come in a simple moment. He didn't say any more, but the implication was that solutions emerge over time. Mulling over my dream, I wander down to the communal for breakfast. I need some food before getting to work on what I suspect will be a long day.

Looking up into the branches, I forget myself for a moment and speak my

thoughts out loud. "God, that looks sketchy!"

"Yeah. I don't like going up, but it's gotta be done". Ray gives me a crooked grin, and starts to climb. Building work on the tree house hasn't been going well. It's pretty high and getting a shape, but it's really not safe. It occurs to me that no-one bothered to check with the tree before sticking a house in her branches. We should at least do a simple ritual or make some kind of offering. I'll get a bottle of something and go up this evening when the day's work's done. But right now I need to give Ray a hand. Oak is planning to leave the area to do some travelling in a few weeks, so we need to get as much done as we can while we have the numbers. Whether we get this finished by then or not, I'll really miss him.

By late afternoon work on the tree house is done for the day so I gather my stuff into a small rucksack: a bottle of wine and a Dragon Tree Rune[38] on a cord. I've opened the bottle and stuffed the cork back in - I don't want to be fiddling about with a corkscrew up there. It's a beautiful afternoon - cold but bright without much wind, for which I'm most grateful. I can cope with the height, but if the wind is up it gets a bit hairy. The climb is easy today. That bodes well. I get up high to where the platform will be and settle in as best I can. Laying back on the branch, I sink into myself and beyond, into the tree. I can sense anger at the intrusion. We've been careful not to damage the tree but it's used to birds not hairless apes! I spend some time visualizing two possible futures: one with the tree house and maybe many more summers here; the other without our efforts and probable felling within the next few months. I get a sense of understanding from the tree and come back to my usual, 'sitting 20 metres up a tree' awareness. I tie the Dragon Tree Rune onto a small branch near my head and share some wine with the tree. Though I probably enjoy red wine more than the tree does, the symbolism feels right. With a sense of something having been settled, I carefully climb down to earth and head off to the communal fire. No point wasting the rest of the wine!

Field notes:
When I lived in London I used do a brief ritual to greet the Elements. Why aren't I doing my Elements ritual anymore? 'Cos it's all here! Everyday I go and collect water, everyday I light a fire; I walk on the bare earth and spend most of the day under the open sky. In London I needed to make an effort to stay connected – here it just happens.

It's Sunday, so wandering into the communal space at 8.30 I'm surprised to see people already up, clutching mugs of hot coffee. It turns out the Jehovah's Witnesses came this morning. "Bastards!" Says Dave, with a good natured grin. "They turn up at 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning with a magazine called *Awake!*' Gotta laugh I suppose."

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38 The Dragon Tree Rune is symbol used by the Dragon Network as an amulet.

Ray kicks off with a bit of a rant about their last visit and how they'd said God would sort everything out. "I told them don't believe in God – well, not their God anyway. I believe in the Earth, not religion".

As we have breakfast a visitor arrives: Paul introduces himself by explaining that he's a long-term activist and when he heard about us decided he'd like to help out for a few days. We share a cup of tea and I offer to show him round. As we walk round and admire the trees, he says, "There's an energy you get living outside that you don't get in a house." I smile. I know just what he means, but wonder how I'm ever going to translate it into my PhD. Later, as we chop wood enthusiastically, he returns to his theme. "That energy I was talking about is what was keeps you going when there's loads of work to do".

Even munching on lunch I still need to be attentive, as a simple comment can be profound. Jan reflects on life on site: "I feel free here. I'm back to being myself."

Free. Yes, I've felt that myself. A feeling of lightness, sense of openness. It's great to hear other people express that too - It's not just me then! Once again, my own unspoken experiences are confirmed in apparently quite casual moments. There's certainly something special about this place - A sense that anything is possible. Yesterday when a car drove past shouting abuse, I joked that "The inmates are restless."

Dave laughed, but we both knew that my joke had a more serious edge. I later commented that when I'm not here I see it as a 'bubble of sanity'. Jan laughed at that, but she understood what I meant. I then explained how I see this as the staff room of the asylum. Perhaps the subtlety of that escaped some of those gathered, but others chuckled with approval.

While cleaning my teeth tonight I watch the cars drive past. I stand on grass, beside a tree in a space lit by the light of the half moon. They sit in a metal box, closed off, closed in. Although we are only separated by a short distance – maybe 10 metres – psychologically we occupy different worlds. The fence that surrounds this camp draws a very significant line between a self-created space of freedom and one of control. Lighting my wood burner tonight I think of Thoreau at Walden. Although our lives are quite different in many ways, I suspect there are deep resonances between us. That evocative phrase from Robert Greenway that 'civilization is only four days deep' comes back to me, and I suspect it is even more fragile than that: removing just some of the trapping of the 21st Century can profoundly shift our awareness. That is a powerful phenomenon, and it is perhaps what lies at the heart of the protest movement.

Field notes:
I'm feeling a bit rough. I read recently about how hard ethnography can be, and I'm feeling it today. So much to juggle! The demands of life on the

site, work on defences, the emotional intensity of this place, my own spiritual puzzles, plus the constant need to watch myself and others for ethnographic data. That is an emotional strain of a quite unique kind.

There have been quite a lot of changes here lately. Oak's gone and better weather has brought lots of new people on site who are still an unknown quantity. More people are good for the site in lots of ways, but it has cranked up the intensity. It's a bit like living in a soap opera here sometimes; there's always some minor – or not so minor – crisis. To be expected I guess. Large numbers of people passing through a liminal space will interact at a more intense level.

Feeling and Focusing

"Hey, Adrian - Wanna beer?"
"No – thanks." I smile politely. Just sitting round the fire pit with some of the crew tonight, but feeling a bit odd. Bored and a bit restless. Probably need a bit of time out. "Just going to get a fleece from my bender," I lie, and wander away from the glow of the fire. What's up with me? Wish I knew. Then I remember a book I just got on *Focusing* (Gendlin, 1981) that's supposed to help you get to stuff like this. Seems like a good time to give it a try.

After a quick read over the instructions, I lie on my bed and I close my eyes.

1: Clearing a Space.[39]

OK. So what's here, inside? Somehow I'm missing how the site was a few weeks back ... And I'm missing Oak ... Unsure about the new people ... I don't get any feeling like 'bored' though ... Maybe that wasn't it at all ...

2: Felt Sense.
… sense how it feels in your body when you think of it as a whole …

Oak going has left a hole ... a kind of emptiness ... but sticky ... and dark.

The felt sense is the holistic unclear sense of the whole thing … It is murky, fuzzy, vague.

It's changing now and is more than emptiness ... It's wobbly ... no ... sort of unsafe, like standing on rotten floorboards that aren't quite safe.

3. Handle.
What is the *quality* of the felt sense?

39 The instructions on Focusing that follow are from Gendlin, 1981

Yeah – ‘standing firm on rotting floorboards’. Mmm. That *feels* right. I’m feeling better, but can’t remember what the next step is. I pick up the book again.

4. Resonating.

Oh, yeah. I guess I’ve just done that. Next comes:

5. Asking.
Now you can ask *it* what it is … One of the most important procedures in focusing is this asking of ‘open questions’.

Ah. Kind of like an interview. “I’m curious to know what you might be about.” A sense like ‘falling’ comes to me. “Are you about fear of falling?” A twinge – Yes, it’s a kind of ‘fear’. That unsafe feeling comes again. “Is ‘unsafe’ right?” Another twinge, but that’s not quite it either. It’s like playing 'hotter-colder' when I was a kid. There’s something not as strong as ‘fear’ but not just ‘unsafe’. Yes – my felt sense twinges again like it’s saying “yes – warmer.”

Circling patiently I slowly get the sense of it: There’s my own feeling of insecurity, but mixed with that there’s a need to be strong for the camp, to help hold the space safe. When Oak was here it was easier, partly as he was really grounded and partly as things weren’t so unpredictable then.

Cool! A grin comes across my face. Weird – How come I’m smiling but haven’t sorted anything?

The body shift is mysterious in its effects. It always feels good, even when what has come to light may not make the problem look any better …

Oh, OK. And finally:

6. Receiving.
Whatever comes in focusing, welcome it. Take the attitude that you are glad your body spoke to you, *whatever* it said.

God, that feels better! I think I’ll just lie here for a bit and ponder this. I had no idea that something so simple could work so well. A moment later my mobile chirps: I have a text.

[You OK? Hol x]

I smile and text back:

[Yeah. Fine. Back in a mo. A x]

Changes

My mobile sings. I have a text from an old mate in one of the Housing Co-ops I applied for. With a shock I read that they have a vacancy in the house – Can I come for interview? Well, yes ... And before I know I'm booked for Wednesday night.

"Looks like I might be offered a place in a housing co-op. Some old mates have a vacancy."

"Oh. Great ..." Says Jan in a tone which translates that into "Oh. Shit ..."

I've been both dreading and looking forward to this. I've been finding it increasingly stressful here trying to manage needs – my own, other peoples, my research. But I know this won't be an easy transition for any of us.

Wednesday comes round fast and here I am, back in London. The 'interview' is more like a reunion as we've all known each other for years. As the room is already empty they're keen for someone to move in soon – and even keener that it's me! On one hand, I'm delighted as it means I'll have a stable base. Writing up is a nightmare on site and here I can get my books out of storage and get down to trying to make sense of what's going on. But somehow I don't feel ready to return to this more conventional life and feel strong emotional ties to the Camp.

"I'd love to move in. But if I do, I will be spending a lot of time at the Camp. Is that going to work for you?"

"That's fine! We thought you might say that ..." Smiles. "When can you move in?"

It needs to be soon or I'll lose my chance, so a day next week is agreed. Smiles and hugs all round as I leave to head back to the Camp.

Thankfully I get back late so no-one can ask me how it went. I need a nights sleep before telling everyone here what they pretty much already know – My 'exit strategy' has begun.

The next week drags on, and finally I wave a temporary goodbye to the Camp. "I've told them I'll be spending a lot of time here and I'll be back in a couple of days". That seems to have eased the way and I get a sense that people are really pleased for me. Still, it feels very odd getting on the train for London knowing I'll be sleeping in bricks and mortar again tonight.

And so it's done. The wheel turns again and I'm back living not very far from my old flat, where it all looks so very familiar. But everything has changed and there is no simple return.

RE-TURNING

Life is as strange as ever. I'd imagined that having a base in London would somehow make it easier when I'm at the Camp, but it hasn't worked like that at all. In many ways it's harder now, as one mode of life rebounds off the other, echoing through the days. The result is an oddly dislocated time, and I often wake up wondering whether I'm about to open my eyes to four square walls or the curve of a bender.

I'm reading about the M11 again in Butler's article, and as before I have to stop for a moment. My eyes water, as emotion rises in a flood. I recall an awkward moment in the British Library when I almost bust into tears reading this same article. Butler tells the story of Crow, the Shaman, but I just can't read it now. I *lived* that story: I was one of the Dragon people Crow speaks about, so I'm part of that myth. I guess I still am, as past and present are caught up in my long journey: First realising the paradoxes at the heart of Paganism, then finding another Paganism on protest sites, and now beginning to articulate it from my own perspective – one which I hope will be true to our shared experience.

Reading about approaches to fieldwork now makes me smile: My experience makes nonsense of any naive assumption that there is a 'field' we enter and then later make a dignified 'exit' from. It's become clear to me that in some fundamental sense I never left the field – or ever 'entered' it. I *am* the field and at the heart of my research methodology lies a heightened reflexive awareness of my life world that enables me to sense the process of embodied knowing.

Proverbios y Cantares 29
Walker, your footsteps
are the road, and nothing more.
Walker, there is no road,
the road is made by walking.
Walking you make the road,
and turning to look behind
you see the path you never
again will step upon.
Walker, there is no road,
only foam trails on the sea.

(Machado, 2004).

Conclusion

In addition to providing a vicarious experience of life on a protest site, and thus enhancing felt understanding, this autoethnography develops several of the thesis' themes. It contributes to my ethnography of Eco-Paganism by providing details of how it *feels* on a site: for example the physical exposure, the camaraderie and the way time passes. The gradual influence of the place on my own spirituality is also apparent. The chapter problematizes several conventional dualities, including academic discourse versus emotional engagement and entering/leaving the field, thus developing an ongoing theme. My spirituality, my relationship with mainstream Paganism, and my activism, are all relevant to how I approach and interpret my fieldwork, so this chapter also provides a reflexive frame for the ethnographic chapters that follow.

Chapter 8: Listening to the Threshold Brook: Urban Eco-Paganism

"... contented so to look
On mists in idleness - to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook".
John Keats, *The Human Seasons*

This thesis developed from experiences as an urban Eco-Pagan that led me to believe that a "deep knowing of the sacredness of the Earth" emerged from "ecstatic Pagan ritual" (Harris, 1996: 153). In fact I had only glimpsed part of a complex process of greater subtlety that is ultimately more powerful than I ever imagined. Perhaps I was too entranced by the drums to hear the voice of the threshold brook, but my respondents had sat quietly and listened, just as I have now listened to them.

In general my findings are in accord with other accounts of contemporary Paganism, as urban Eco-Pagans show a pattern of simple practice informed by emotion and an embodied sense of the sacred. However, three obvious features are distinctive: ambivalence about identifying as 'Pagan', a lack of spell-work and the minimal role of formal ritual compared to mainstream Paganism. More significant is a relationship with the land or specific places that is catalysed by various processes of connection. This connection is often understood thorough a felt sense and can pattern a sacred relationship to the world.

Introducing the Research Participants

I interviewed a representative sample of ten urban Eco-Pagans, six women and four men, from a variety of backgrounds and locations. They included one Druid (Zoe), one Reclaiming Witch (Mary), three Shamans with different approaches (Barry, Gordon and Sekhara) and five very different eclectic Pagans whose were influenced by a variety practices of including Witchcraft, Voodoo, Shamanism, Druidry, Goddess spirituality, Buddhism and Christianity. Mark, one of these five, identified as a "shamanic pagan". Michael, Mark, Zoe, Sekhara and Sally are members of the Dragon Eco-Pagan Network. Four lived in London, two in the West country, two in the West Midlands, one in Essex and one in Derbyshire. Nine had been involved in protest activism while one has focused on community work. Seven of those nine had been active at one or more UK protest sites. In several cases their occupations are relevant: Barry Patterson and Gordon MacLellan worked in environmental education, Zoe worked with fair trade imports from Palestine, Sekhara and Michael practised spiritual healing, Mary was a counsellor and Jocelyn Chaplin was a psychotherapist. Participants' ages were between late twenties and early fifties, with most in the middle range. In most cases names have been changed but Barry, Gordon, Mark and Jocelyn have kindly agreed to me using their real names. My explicit fieldwork with urban Eco-Pagans between 2004 and

2006 is grounded in my own long term involvement - I have been an urban Eco-Pagan since at least 1990 - which provided insight and prior expectations.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

Finding a Name

The first of several surprises was the common ambivalence about adopting the name 'Pagan'. Other scholars have noted that coming to Paganism is a process of *recognition* rather than conversion because "you don't become a Pagan; you find out that there's a name for what you already were" (Harrow, 2002: 113). Sally exemplifies Harrow's point when she says: "when I first found Paganism ... I thought, 'Oh fantastic I understand what I am'". This often profound insight brings a sense of 'coming home', but a newly identified Pagan's "hopes may be fulfilled or disappointed" (Harrow, 2002: 118), notably if the Pagan community seems to have a very different practice. Meeting Pagans who had different enthusiasms and lacked ecological awareness made many participants (8) uncertain about naming their own path. Was Paganism about a sacred relationship with the world or was it more about getting dressed up (Jocelyn and Mark) to join a "Gothy, jewellery flashing social scene" (Barry) down the pub (Zoe)?

While most researchers identify socio-cultural experience as the primary influence on Pagans, my research suggests otherwise. Ezzy opines that the Pagan 'coming home' experience results from an individual recognising "an integrated framework of thought and practice that incorporates a variety of more general ideas" (Ezzy, 2006). Social experiences are clearly significant, and Ezzy mentions "boring church services, dissatisfaction with repressive cultural norms, leaving home, relationships with boy/girlfriends etc." (Ezzy, 2006). His model loosely fits three of my participants: Mary came to Paganism via feminism, Michael through his girlfriend and Mark from books. But the other seven recalled a 'Pagan' spirituality in childhood and six cite experiences in the organic environment as fundamental: Emily grew up on a small holding; Sally remembered "feel[ing] the grass growing" when she was young, which "was the most lovely feeling, to feel attached to the earth", while Barry spent time in the countryside and "grew up" with a sense of "a presence in nature". Although all of them later read about Paganism, the first spiritual spark was the organic environment.

Although the cultural factors Ezzy outlines are significant, he, along with most other scholars (inter alia, Salomonsen 2002: Taylor, B., 2001: York, 1995), ignore embodied situated cognition. The enactive process model helps explain how playing in the organic environment can inspire spiritual experiences: As we have heard, embodied cognition uses the immediate environment to think with, and this process is enhanced when we can "use all the senses directly, without other people intruding or mediating that

experience", so that an "embodied sensuous relationship with nature" can be afforded (Macnaghten & Urry, 2000; 170-171). This finding also confirms previous research that childhood play in the organic environment encourages adult environmental awareness (inter alia, Cobb, 1977; Wells and Lekies, 2006).

PROCESSES OF CONNECTION

Connection

Almost all participants talked about the importance of place and the land (9), which was understood as sacred (4) and healing (6). They spoke of having a "sacred relationship with world" (Zoe), loving or deeply connecting with nature and/or the land, and how they celebrated and appreciated relationships with specific places. The so-called Pagan 'Sacred sites' were unimportant to urban Eco-Pagans, and several commented that they no longer (or never) had the feeling that they must "find some ancient sacred site" (Gordon). Those who mentioned them at all felt that the importance of sacred places was "over estimated" (Jocelyn). A consistent theme emerged that different places are special for different people, and potentially "[e]very bit of land is sacred" (Jocelyn) and "wherever you are in the world is worthy of celebration" (Gordon).

Although every bit of land is sacred people felt very attached to particular places. Emily felt she was "indigenous" to an "actual patch of land", while Mary's sense of "the Land" was grounded in "that bit of Land down there that I look at everyday and is so beautiful". This connection was rarely expressed in the abstract: The sacred is "about my locality" (Zoe); it is being somewhere that woos you "to lie down on the ground and hug it and stroke it. Just that feeling of being in the right place. [...] Where something in me, my spirit, but more than that, who I am, in my body needs to be in that place at that moment" (Sally). Sally commented that focusing on a particular place (Cross Bones cemetery) was very helpful in making a more general connection: "I find having a focus attaches me to everything really". Thus an intimate relationship with somewhere specific enables some urban Eco-Pagans to sense sacred relationship in itself:

> Paganism is [...] about making sacred relationship with the world that's around you. [Pause] And that could be with the spirit of your house or it could be with the dandelion in your drive or the tree or the old lady who lives next door to you (Zoe).

Just as the tiniest fragment of a hologram holds a perfect image of the whole, so a relationship with the "dandelion in the drive" or "honour[ing] the little weed in the garden" (Jocelyn) can pattern a sacred relationship to the world.

The Threshold Brook

The fundamental importance of this communion with place and the wisdom it can bring is perhaps best expressed by Barry:

> [I]f you have a little threshold brook [40], if there's a little stream like this running through your garden, everyday you get up and you go to work, it's just there, it's the background. You're not giving it any attention. That threshold brook is life passing you by, it's a source of delight to the sensitive soul like Keats. And yet the accountant, with his head in the cloud, and the deadline and a horrid commuting journey in the car through the rush hour traffic, doesn't pay any attention to the threshold brook. And their life is impoverished as a result. [...] The threshold brook is there. Now how about I actually spend some time with it? How about I actually show some appreciation to it? And how about one day, after maybe months or weeks or however long it takes, maybe how one day no matter how cynical or jaded or sceptical or clever, or over analytical I was, that one day this special brook actually did speak to me. And told me what I needed to hear. And then I got up from sitting by the threshold brook and walked back into my world a different person. And that blessing that comes through threshold brooks, using that as a designator for that kind of experience, [pause] then that is a very healing thing, and if everyone were doing that then we'd all have more respect, and we'd moderate our behaviour and we'd get on better.

Learning to listening to the threshold brook takes time. Michael told me:

> For a long time I was only interested in human activity then slowly came to notice things - or take extra notice of things - maybe that's the key - I started to take extra notice of things and I tried to get closer to the animals and the birds.

An important part of his approach "is not to use the mind [...] so that I can feel rather than think".

Healing

Barry describes the threshold brook experience as "very healing", and most (6) of my participants made specific reference to the healing power of place, but I will focus on one particularly rich example. Sally lives in London and is regularly visits Cross Bones cemetery, an unconsecrated burial site that was primarily used to inter prostitutes from Medieval times. For Sally "Cross Bones is a really happy place [and ...] a really healing place and I will always go there if I'm upset". Cross Bones has become a sacred site for several London Pagans, and "when the bombs

40 The phrase "threshold brook" is from John Keats' poem in *The Human Seasons:* "Fair things pass by, unheeded as a threshold brook".

went off in London in July the other year, we did a little ritual at Cross Bones. It feels like a real place to go with your pain or your grief" (Sally).

The Urban Environment
For many participants the power of place is apparent in urban environments, and nearly all my participants said the city was special, or as sacred in its own way as the countryside. For Sekhara "[t]he city is a place of power" and Jocelyn spoke of the "incredible ancient energy" of London. Others noted that human beings *are* nature: Michael lived in London and is aware that "[t]here's nature all around me - People". For urban Eco-Pagans anywhere can be sacred, and it "doesn't matter if you're in the city or the countryside" (Zoe).

Not everyone celebrated the human constructed world, and Emily preferred "being away from things constructed by humans". Barry was more ambivalent, and though he recognised the value of urban environments, was concerned that the city can easily become "a space built from symbols, a virtual reality, rather than physical structures & patterns of relationship" (Patterson, n.d.).

Ritual

My literature review explained the importance of ritual for Pagans, so I was initially surprised that it apparently had a low priority for participants, with half saying ritual was unimportant or marginal. Gordon rarely does "formal rituals" and believed that it is "too easy to get caught up" in "big rituals [...] to save the Earth" which actually distract us from working actively for change. Sally did not particularly like ritual, and added that "[i]t isn't really the way that I connect", while Mark did "what would probably be called a ritual, but a lot of the time I don't see it as such". However ritual was part of Zoe's everyday life, as she would usually bless her food, becoming aware of "all the webs and strings of association and life and death" around it. Her rituals could sometimes be quite "elaborate or formal", but must be local. Although *formal* ritual generally wasn't important, informal ritual practice was, and my participants enjoyed "spontaneous" expressions of spiritual feeling (Sally); Gordon created "whatever we need at the time" while Sekhara's rituals were "impromptu and [...] dr[a]w in all kinds of stuff".

The lack of formal ritual is not surprising given that urban Eco-Pagans are 'earth based' Pagans (Harris and Welch, 2006) who tend towards spontaneous, unstructured rituals. Eco-Pagan practice contrasts with Greenwood's ethnography of mainstream Pagans, which found that "there was more emphasis on ritual ... than a connection, or interest even, in the environment" (Greenwood, 2005: 175). A comment from Mary is apposite: "When I do ritual it's Wiccan. [...] That's what I do. But what I *feel* is more amorphous, Pagan, love of the Land". The practice that Mary designates as ritual comes from the Reclaiming form of Wicca, so emerges

from the esoteric current. Although Reclaiming have removed the "sexist crap" (Mary) from Wicca, the " 'unclean' heritage lines" (Salomonsen, 2002: 94) are not so easily cut. It is notable, then, that the amorphous - and embodied - *feeling* that underpins Mary's practice is more earth based than the more self-aware and formal ritual.

Dance and the Erotic

Dancing was part of Gordon's daily ritual practice and was fundamental to his spirituality:

> It's a really big part of who I am and how I express myself. And um, and, I'm [...] a very sort of sensual physical person. And, dance is the best way [pause] of expressing that.

Dance "draws you into a different sort of passion" that "fills you and it shakes you and um, [pause] makes you complete - makes me complete. Like the aftermath of good sex. It's that sort of- it's a deep sensuality".

For both Gordon and Zoe the erotic knowing of dance connected and communicated in a way words cannot. Gordon's communication with spirits and deities often used dance, which is an ideal medium for a being "who doesn't really communicate through words", and we have heard how linked dance and passion were for him. Powerful emotion runs like a stream through Zoe's interview. She explained that her connection to a place, animals or trees was in her heart and she thought it was "very important [...] to respond emotionally, really emotionally to [...] what's happening to our world [...] [a]s well as cerebrally". Later she described leaving a special place for the last time as "like leaving a lover or a good friend". She expressed how both feelings and connection come together in ritual dance:

> Adrian: Do you feel your body has a particular role when you're connecting to a place?
>
> Zoe: [...] If I'm in, ritual, the walking, the walking of the Circle. [Pause]. The movement that I choose to make. The offering of something. The movement in my offering. It's like, it's a dance - It's like - It is like making love to a place. It's a very, conscious, bodily, sensation of the way my body moves in that place. [...] it's like my body takes on, a different way of moving if I'm in a sacred place or, you know a landscape that I'm consciously trying to honour or make ritual in. Um, so it's like a dance. [Pause]. It's a different way of moving.

Mary seeks that same passion in her rituals, but unfortunately the local 'Erewhon Pagan Group'[41], who she occasionally worked with, "don't get it. They're not ecstatic pagans. They're cerebral pagans and they do this ritual

41 The name of the group has been changed to preserve confidentiality.

- that's sort of 'now we do this and now we do that and then we'll have a little reading about the meaning of the Circle'[42] and all that. But I want to get out of my head - it's the ecstasy, you're losing yourself in the dance in the chant, just being completely out of it". Her comparison of "ecstatic" and "cerebral" pagans correlates very well with the distinction made earlier between earth based and esoteric Pagans (Harris and Welch, 2006).

When Mary explains that ritual is "like sex" it becomes clear that this is more than a simple analogy. In ritual:

> "[y]ou build it up and you build it up, and there is a sense of the energy building and you have to peak it and you have to let it go, and when you let it go you know the ritual is over [...] [The 'Erewhon Pagan Group'] have these rituals where you get to the end of what's planned, and it's still unsatisfying. And it is a sense in you body of 'I'm not ready to finish yet'. It's like sex that's got half way and then you go off and make a cup of tea and come back and have another go but you never actually get to orgasm or you sort of half get there and then you lose it and you go away afterwards feeling sort of ... twitchy. A ritual that raises power without sending it off makes me twitchy [...] After a cone of power your body feels different to how it felt before and it's that post orgasmic, Ahhh! Now I can go home. Well, we can feast or whatever."

Jocelyn talked about the power of the "true erotic that's in the earth itself" and the importance of "pan-sexuality":

> Pan-sexuality being an ability to experience sexual energy and sexual connection with all kinds of beings, not just with the partner who you happen to be sleeping with. I think that's a very important part of of Eco-Paganism in a way, because it also means you can love nature, um, at an erotic level as well as at a heart level and a gut level.

Her words echo ecofeminist themes discussed in my Paganism literature review, especially Eco-Pagan Starhawk's injunction to "love nature ... carnally, with our meat, our bones" (Starhawk, 1982: 143). Jocelyn later explicitly ties this theme to my thesis:

> I suppose there's something about, not just being embodied wisdom and embodied knowledge that comes, um from other parts of the body, it also comes from the sexual, the sexual energy, part of the wisdom, part of the knowing.

Before concluding this section, I note that three of the four participants who spoke in terms of the erotic were women and the fourth is a gay man.

42 Mary later clarified that she meant the meaning of the Festival the circle was celebrating.

Even allowing for the slight gender imbalance of my interview group (six women and four men), this may be significant. I return to this topic in my fieldwork overview, ' A "sacred relationship with world" '.

Magic (Spell work)

Half of my respondents did not mention spell work at all, and those who did were often critical, like Jocelyn who spoke of those who practice "dressing up and [...] high magic." Mark also talked about spells in a critical context when describing people who do not grasp the ecological element of Paganism for whom "[i]t's more a concept of somebody, casting spells and um doing rituals and wearing the clothes as opposed to a Witch". He does do spells if the need arises, but they are "just part and parcel" of a wider practice. Mary provides the very cogent comment that it was Hutton's work (Hutton, 1999) that explained to her "why we're using an essentially magic tradition, to worship the Goddess and to express a, a spirituality that's to do with the land". Hutton explains how tightly the notion of magic is tied to esotericism, the same tradition of "high magic" criticised by Jocelyn, and how esotericism fed into contemporary Paganism via Wicca. Thus the earth based/esoteric model helps explain the initially surprising fact that magic (as in spell work) is hardly mentioned.

The magic that urban Eco-Pagans disparage is the "occult magic" (Pearson, 2007: 101) of "control and manipulation" (Gordon Melton, 2002: 173). But when they do practice magic it is usually the kind of " 'ordinary magic' " that enables a sense of connection (Pearson, 2007: 101). One recent example illustrates this well: Shortly after the announcement of a collapse in many honey bee colonies, a message was posted to the Dragon Network listserve suggesting members join in an "Appreciation of Honeybees". The message originated from Arizona Shaman Jade Wah'oo Grigori, who explains the spell:

> ... move your awareness into that of appreciation. Perhaps meditate upon someone for whom you have appreciation and gratitude, an event that stimulates a sense of deep gratitude. When this is a felt-sense, a palpable experience within your body ... [d]raw into this state the image of honeybees ... how they sound, their buzzing about, their beauty and grace, the wonders of honey as a food and as a wonderful sweetener of life! Feel that joy rushing through your body as you contemplate the honeybee (Dragon-network listserve, 2007).

Intrigued by Grigori's references to the felt sense, I contacted him and asked if he was using Gendlin's work. He replied that he didn't know of Gendlin or Focusing, but was "sure it is a form utilized by many, as it *works*" (Grigori, pers. comm., 2007; author's emphasis). Grigori's reference to the felt sense is significant, as I identify this technique as

fundamental to how Eco-Pagans connect with place. The power of this approach is apparent in my interview with Zoe: When I asked her about this spell she responded that "it was very fulfilling" and she "could really feel [...] a very full heart feeling - Wow! You know a sense of wonder and appreciation".

Meditation

All participants practised some form of meditation. For Barry meditation was a "primary process" for being self aware and "unconditioned", while Jocelyn found it enabled her to be more sensitive to "the energies of nature". Sally practised a lot of meditation during a year long Priestess training, and it really got her "attached to the earth":

> getting up really early and just sitting still, really focused my mind on what was happening outside and I would hear the crows, and they'd get up at a certain time every day and then when the clocks changed they weren't there any more 'cos obviously they were still doing the same thing weren't they, and it really disturbed me I thought, 'Oh I feel all' ... You know. It was that really. Doing that for a year, really kind of made me more aware of the web, I suppose I would call it the web of life. Made me really aware of that.

Once again we hear how our "being-in-the-world is bound up with the immediate environment" (chapter 4: 49). Meditation functions as a process of connection, as it focused Sally's awareness on the equivalent of Barry's threshold brook, fine-tuning her sensory awareness of the organic environment and fundamentally shifting her embodied relationship to "the web of life". Her training had a profound long term impact, and when Sally refers back to it later in the interview she suggests that it may have made her body much more sensitive to significant places (see *A Sense of Nature*).

The Felt Sense and Somatic Modes of Attention

Bado-Fralick claims that Wiccan training and initiation cultivates what she calls the "body-in-practice", a phrase she treats as equivalent to the 'somatic modes of attention' described by Csordas (Bado-Fralick, 2005: 130). Wiccan training enables the witch to "regain the body as a maker of knowing ... through engagement of the body-in-practice" so that they can learn to "how to listen to their bodies" (Bado-Fralick, 2005: 80). Given the link between Wicca and Reclaiming, it is not surprising to find similar processes in the training of Reclaiming Witches, who learn to "see, hear, feel, touch and taste with the inner senses" (Salomonsen, 2002: 177). By working with "inner pictures and feelings" Reclaiming Witches communicate with what the Tradition calls "Younger Self" (Salomonsen, 2002: 177), the emotional body/mind which operates largely outside conscious awareness (Salomonsen, 2002: 137) and parallels what I call the

deep embodied self in chapter 4. Druidry, which also has close links to Wicca (Shallcrass, 1996: 69), exhibits the same pattern: Druid Orders offer training in mediation and visualization, and work with the Awen,[43] which "go[es] thorough your whole body" (protest site Eco-Pagan Druid, Jo, 17/06/07). Many Shamans also learn to listen to the body: Gordon writes of how the physical ecstasy of dance connects him to a "world that thinks" (MacLellan, 1996: 147) while Barry explains that a "conversation with a tree is first and foremost a feeling in your body" (Patterson, 2005: 136). Shamanism however, is more diverse than Druidry or Witchcraft, and some practice, for example Sekhara's, is less embodied and more psychologized.

Notwithstanding Bado-Fralick's preference, Gendlin's theory is more useful than Csordas's notion for discussing this common process. I have already compared Gendlin and Csordas's models, and explained how we can describe Focusing as a somatic mode of attention that trains the practitioner to listen to the felt sense ('Embodied Cognition Literature' review and 'Research Design and Methodology'). I conclude that my participants, like Bado-Fralick's and Salomonsen's Witches, listen to their bodies and become aware of a felt sense, although none of them were familiar with Gendlin's work. The felt sense is a fundamental process of connection, as this form of embodied knowing plays a key role in how Eco-Pagans relate to place: In *Embodied Situated Cognition*, below, I explain how the felt sense enables Eco-Pagans to build these intimate relationships.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PRACTICE

Deity

Practice that involved deity[44] brought another surprise, as it was less significant than expected. My literature review suggested that most contemporary Pagans "devote themselves to one or more gods or goddesses" (Cowan, 2006: 179), but while most participants worked with or worshipped deity some of the time, it seemed to be a fairly marginal practice.

Michael said emphatically "I don't work with any gods or deities. I don't disrespect them, but I just don't ask them or call to them. [...] I work only with the Earth". Zoe "[r]arely" worked with deity and although she was "a bit intimidated by the idea of deity", she did "have a relationship with a

43 The Awen is a Druid term that refers to divine bardic inspiration and is often slowly chanted during Druid rituals (Bowman, 2002).

44 Mainstream Paganism - especially Wicca, my own background - often refers to "working" with deities and this was the terminology I used in my interview question. It was only when a site Eco-Pagan queried the phrase that I reflected on my usage and I now conclude that it may have emerged from the esoteric current discussed earlier, although this remains inconclusive. None of my urban respondents commented on my use of the phrase and most (7) spoke about "work" or "working" with deity or spirits so I continue to use these terms here.

couple of our native gods and goddesses". Sekhara said deity work "doesn't seem like a thing I need to put an emphasis on". She worked "a lot with local spirits" including the Thames as the "spirit of London", but not with "what you call your serious big scale deities". Brigid was Mary's "home deity", but she did "work with" others who she thought of "more as Saints. You have St. Christopher if you're going travelling and St. whatever if you need a parking space". Brigid, however, was quite different. Brigid was "not just [...] part of the pantheon", and in fact for Mary, Brigid was understood "not so much as a sort of person, but just as ... Land". Although Mary would sometimes anthropomorphize the Land "because it makes it easier", she was generally critical of this approach. As we heard above, Mary would sometimes celebrate with the the local 'Erewhon Pagan Group' who invoke the "Lord and the Lady" in their rituals. She noted that "there's a sense that they're invoking the Lord and the Lady as people [...] rather than the Land. For me, you don't have to anthropomorphize it like that." This "very anthropomorphic devotional stuff" was what Mary learnt when she started in the Craft, but this had become quite alien to her and it was the "Land as sacred that really informs my spirituality and my activism". Mark was eclectic but worked "[m]ainly with Egyptian" deities because Egypt had "deep significance". In a sense this is fairly arbitrary because for Mark, as for many Pagans, "[a]ll aspects of the Goddess are still the Goddess. All aspects of the God are still the God". Pagans "worship nature [...] and the Goddess and the God are physical and spiritual representations of what is actually there".

Urban Eco-Pagans tended to work with a few *local* deities who are not part of a pantheon, and while this is not true of everyone, it was a common tone across their spectrum of relationships to deity. Jocelyn's feeling that "the idea of worship is a bit hierarchical for most Pagans", although perhaps not accurate of mainstream Paganism, seems to reflect urban Eco-Pagan practice. I noted in my literature review that mainstream Pagans rarely refer to local deities except in the case of those related to 'sacred sites'. In contrast, urban Eco-Pagans not only often have a relationship with local deities, but don't especially venerate those places commonly designated as 'sacred sites'.

Uncommon Aspects

For the sake of transparency I note topics which were mentioned briefly by a few participants. Three people mentioned chakras in passing: Sekhara described how she would travel to the Lower world via her "base of spine Chakra", and Jocelyn suggested that loving nature "at an erotic level as well as at a heart level and a gut level" is like "letting the energy flow to all chakras". Two people mentioned entheogens, but they didn't play a significant role in their current practice. Sally noted that wherever we are in London we stand on bones, and this link to "ancestors and how people go back and back" was important, partly because she needed "to be able to tap into that to look at the future as well". Zoe also mentioned that she will sometimes get a "sense of, my ancestors or the ancestors of the

place being around me".

EMBODIED SITUATED COGNITION

Situated Embodied Knowing in Spiritual Healing

Although I adopt Gendlin's model overall, two of my participants gave clear examples of what Csordas calls somatic modes of attention. The spiritual healers Csordas researched would often get a feeling that provided information about the healing process (Csordas, 1999: 151-152), and Mark experienced the same phenomena in his Reiki practice:

> I would feel a physical effect in my body where that person was having their energetic problems [...] say I got a pain in my kidneys, because that person was having a pain in their kidneys - without me, obviously questioning them, knowing anything about them. My body world have a physical reaction to what it was experiencing on a energetic level from that other person.

Mary described the same kind of experience with "hands-on healing":

> if I've got my hands on their shoulders and suddenly my shoulders felt really sort of hunched and tight, then that's a sign to me to sort of move their shoulder blades back and free up their shoulders.

My methodology chapter described a Focusing psychotherapist using very similar experiences (Solomon, 2006: 9), and I noted in my 'Embodied Cognition Literature Review' how Focusing can train people to use somatic modes of attention. Mary was taught that the first stage of healing is to "tune in to the person", and to do this "[y]ou put your hands on their shoulder and just think 'What am I feeling?' ". The parallel with learning Focusing, which begins with gently asking yourself how you feel, is unmistakable (Gendlin, 1981; Cornell, 1996).

What is particularly interesting is that Mary uses the same process to "tune in to" trees and places:

> So that's how you do healing. You feel it in your own body - so I think in trees, I feel in my body a different feeling which I assume to be from that particular tree. And sometimes in places generally. Sometimes I just get a feeling of a place. The feeling is how it makes my body feel. [...] And this is the same as doing healing.

Mary repeatedly links her felt sense of trees with her healing, which suggests that learning hands-on healing helped her to learn to attend to her felt sense more generally, though Salomonsen's research (Salomonsen, 2002) suggests both may be grounded in her Reclaiming training.

A Sense of Nature

Nearly all my participants described experiences of a felt sense in their spiritual practice. Gordon notes that rather than following the traditional dates of the Pagan Wheel of the Year[45], he senses the "changing pulse" of the seasons, while Jocelyn senses the very subtle "vibrations of the tree". Emily likewise has "quite a strong sense of tree species" and some plants give her a feeling with a very specific meaning. She describes how "if I meet ivy I have a kind of a sense of that's a question to me to reconnect with my motivation". Barry has a highly developed felt sense of plants: During one section of the interview Barry explained his animist "pattern of consciousness", and I asked if there was a physical sense associated with this pattern:

> Barry: Definitely. Absolutely definitely. [....] when you said the physical sense, and I focused there and I went there, I moved into that, I turned the volume up on that and I put my awareness into that, and what I got was a sense of embodiment which was much richer and more strange than your normal body awareness. Um, and so in a sense what happens is the hawthorn buds about to burst into May blossom became a physical sensation within my body [...] You know what I mean?
>
> Adrian: Kinda. Whereabouts in the body?
>
> Barry: OK. I'll do hawthorn buds. Oh, yeah, there is a practice I do that's related to this locating it in the body. Hawthorne buds are very much in my upper arms, and my chest. [Pause]. My shoulders. Like a kind of - You couldn't call it a buzz, I'm not talking about a buzz - I'm talking about a kinda, something, delicate.

Two respondents provide examples where a felt sense is a reaction to environmental destruction. Mary recounts an occasion when she watched a small patch of ground that had been left "wild" being dug up by a mechanical digger, and said she "hurt physically" as the machine cut into the earth. Zoe explained how she got "a feeling in my body, when I make a connection with something or somewhere that's being damaged". There are similar examples amongst protest site Eco-Pagans (see 'The Power of Place: Protest Site Eco-Paganism'), where the same process of attending to a felt sense is apparent.

Relationship to the land or to specific places is a key theme in interviews, and again this is often understood thorough a felt sense. Sally has a particularly interesting physical reaction to significant places:

45 The 'Wheel of the Year' consists of eight evenly spaced festival dates that mark the changing seasons.

> Sometimes I find that when I go to places that resonate with me [...] I get diarrhoea or something. Like my body cleanses itself. [...] And I always think 'Oh, that's my body doing its reacting to the land, to the ground that I'm on'. It's an odd thing, and I've only really noticed that since I did that year of kind of ... [Priestess training]. I think I didn't think about it before. Probably it was happening and I just didn't notice. I think it's that probably that I notice now.

Sally's embodied awareness is tuned to the point where her body acts like a barometer that can sense the spiritual pressure of place, and although the role of her Priestess training remains ambiguous at the very least, it enhanced her bodily awareness.

Situated Embodied Knowing in Trance

Greenwood's model of magical consciousness (Greenwood, 2005) applies Bateson's model of an ecology of mind (Bateson, 2000 [1974]) to understand the way Gordon uses dance to communicate with the other-than-human world:

> Gordon's dance is about participating in such an interconnected system as an inspirited pattern - a web of wyrd - whereby the act of dancing enables spirits, energy and people to meet in a world that is alive (Greenwood, 2005: 97).

Bateson suggested that dance could serve as an "interface between conscious and unconscious" (Bateson, [1972] 2000: 138), offering a means of understanding messages that the dancer is consciously unaware of. This does not involve a Freudian unconscious but one built on an ecology of mind and is therefore consistent with the enactive process model. This process is apparent in Greenwood's description of an occasion when she watched Gordon dance with his spirit family:

> As the drumming increased, it was evident to me that there was a participatory communication between Gordon and the spirits in process, the other than human was coming into the human form. At times there seemed to be a non-verbal discussion going on as Gordon's body appeared to act out questions and answers in a swirling profusion of expressive movements (Greenwood, 2005: 94).

This is a perfect example of how trance functions within the enactive process model; Gordon shifts his awareness to a deep embodied self that melts the boundaries between subject and object, enabling communication with the "other than human".

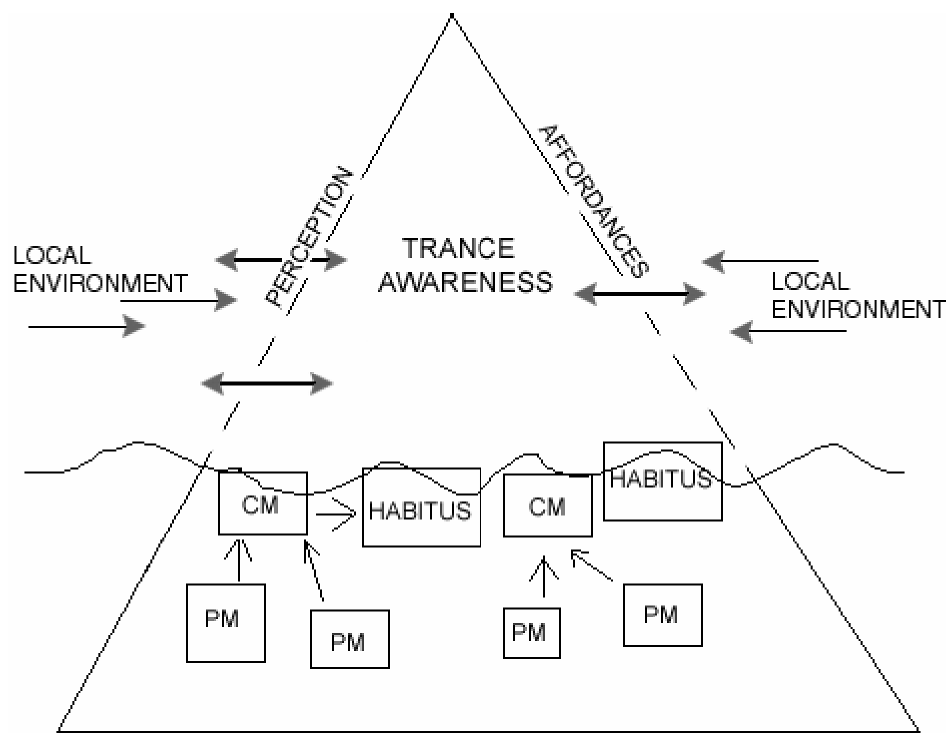

Figure 4: The Trance State
(Reproduced from chapter 4)

Greenwood raises the question of "whether the spirits are 'real' or whether they are a part of Gordon's ... imagination" and concludes that we must understand the process within its own terms, thereby "by-passing the issue" (Greenwood, 2005: 96-98). While this is an appropriate emic position, it appears problematic given my philosophical stance, as the spirits Sekhara and Gordon describe appear to have no physical form and it is not clear how an incorporeal being could exist on my current model. There is also the question of Shamanic journeying: When a Shaman - or any Pagan - journeys some believe that their 'spirit' is, in some sense, focused *beyond* the body.

We can move the discussion forward using the enactive process model. The first point to note is the apparent lack of consistency in the experience of different Shamans: Barry described how he could pragmatically shift his belief paradigms to suit the situation, allowing his consciousness "to fall into [...] patterns". On one occasion his consciousness could "fall into an animistic pattern", on another "consciousness will fall into a more monotheistic pattern", or perhaps, he suggested, "I contain all this and it is a virtual reality". Each mode of consciousness was treated like "game rules" with the option of asking "[w]hat game am I going to play today, because they're all just games". All these modes are embodied states of consciousness:

> Each different trance state means you experience your body in a different way, just as each differ trance state means your experience the world - the sensory world - in a different way. The sensory world

> is a creation of the body [...] The real world is out there [...] but our experience of the world is a creation of the body and the brain and the mind. And so each trance state means that you experience the body differently and you experience the world differently.

Barry's world view is compatible with the enactive process model, and he described obtaining knowledge through heightened sensory acuity and via the extended cognition of what I call the deep body. Mark's experience of obtaining knowledge through Shamanistic trance also fits this model. When I asked where information obtained in trance came from, Mark suggested it was ultimately from "a higher state of consciousness" or the "Gaian super mind". For Gendlin the body "is an ongoing interaction with its environment" that potentially has access to "a vast amount of environmental information" (Gendlin, 1992: 349). Although not a "Gaian super mind", such a body could access a profound amount of local knowledge. Although Mark did not discuss the role of the Shaman, both Barry and Gordon emphasized that it is a "path of service to the community" (Barry), so the Gendlian body could readily supply the kind of information a Shaman would seek. For Mark the body is fundamental in accessing this information because "you can't separate that [the role of the body] from anything". Although a trance state means the Shaman is working with "non-ordinary states of reality", the body remains a key source of information:

> Any effect you have on the physical body will effect you emotionally, mentally and spiritually. [...] Anything that effects one of those will effect all of them to some degree. [...] So that physical reaction you're having [...] is actually a response to what's going on in every other level of your being.

When Mark goes on a Shamanic journey he becomes "almost super aware" of his physicality "because you work on, on every sense of the body really, um, particularly sort of intuitive senses." As a result

> it's the emotions, it's where it effects me in my body - that plays just as much a part as what I'm seeing or experiencing in my mind or what have you, if you want to call it that [...] So in one way you're completely *out* of your body but at the same time being more in your body than you are normally, really.

Sekhara initially describes what sounds like a quite disembodied experience:

> I think the feeling is that I'm not so much conscious of my body at all, which is good 'cos I end up doing stuff in a lot of extremely uncomfortable places. Getting cold or whatever. When I come back into my body from doing a journey, even though my body's been conscious of the time that I've been here, I'm not [...] I think a lot of

> it is about not being in my body in a sense. Not in a way that I don't want to be but that's the state to be in to do these things.

But she later describes the experience as much more like a change in embodied awareness:

> I think it's focused attention really, like you know when your typing you're not aware of what's going on around you or you're reading and you're lost in your book. People can talk to me when I reading and I don't hear then so it's that very focused kind of attention [...] It's kind of a shift of awareness.

When I probed on this subject she unpacked her understanding that "to some extent your soul manifests your body". That aspect of her being that manifests her body can shift "into something else rather than being taken out of it and put into something else". Her metaphor makes this clear: It is "[k]ind of like a cathode ray tube projecting onto a screen, and the screen's the body but the projector kind of pulls a step back and projects somewhere else". This clarification leads her to explain that "[t]hat's why in a sense, I wouldn't say out-of-body".

Some of Gordon's Shamanic communication can be understood in a similar way as it "often" comes "out of a physical contact or connection, but not always". In such cases "it's usually feeling [...] that can be very precise". Similarly, though Gordon does visit the Otherworld, it "isn't separate from this world". This world and the Otherworld are "kind of the same place, but looked at - perceived from a different point of view", but "when you're operating in the Otherworld, you're not operating in our - this current physical world". The distinctions between - or identity of - this world and the Otherworld are subtle, but comprehensible on the enactive process model without resorting to reductionism.

When I explained this model of trance earlier using my cognitive iceberg, I hypothesised that as a practitioner moves into deeper trance states and conventional maps of 'reality' break down, the Shaman would use familiar cultural maps to make sense of their experiences. Obviously different cultural maps provide different shamanic worlds, and even the few interviews I have undertaken illustrate Vitebsky's point that "there are many shamanisms (Atkinson 1992), just as there are many monotheisms" (Vitebsky, 2000: 55).

Although I follow Greenwood's lead in understanding these experiences in context, I develop the discussion by applying the enactive process model. My enactive process model of trance awareness is based on the "established results" of current cognitive neuroscience research (Varela, 1999: 71) and correlates with the experience of dissociation. Furthermore it helps makes sense of the experiences described by participants, and can explain why Shamans from different cultures describe their Otherworld

journeys differently. However this remains no more than a hypothesis, and at this stage in the development of cognitive neuroscience and ethnographic research it would be absurd for me to try to develop an 'explanation' what spirits might - or might not - be. It remains unclear how an incorporeal spirit could exist on my current philosophical model, but this is understandable given the complexity of human consciousness, which Dennett describes as "the most mysterious feature of our minds" (Dennett, 1987: 160).

Situated Embodied Knowing in Ritual and Dance

We saw above how dance can speak a language beyond words, and this reveals two interrelated aspects of embodied cognition: First, dance allows a place or spirit to communicate to the dancer, and second, the dance can serve as a bridge between the dancer's deep embodied knowing and their conscious awareness. These aspects work together when a place or a spirit communicates with the dancer through a deep embodied knowing that must be expressed in dance to become conscious. This process becomes apparent in the interview with Zoe when we read how her body has "a different way of moving" that is "like a dance" when she is connecting to a place. When Zoe's "body moves then something is able to move" and this dance enables "inspiration and the expression" to "flow through". The "something" that moves is "[i]nspiration. The Awen. The - What the place is trying to tell me", which can be "an insight" or "a sense of, my ancestors or the ancestors of the place being around me". The *movement* of the dance is fundamental and without movement there is no contact: "If [...] I'm frozen in some way physically, then I can't hear. I can't listen. Nothing will flow through me. So I have to move in some way with it, how ever simple it is, I have to move physically in some way".

Although a felt sense is usually carried forward by a word or phrase, a gesture or movement can be more appropriate (Gendlin, 2000: 263), and this is often how Zoe's dance functions. Her embodied knowing is often expressed with a typical felt sense:

> if there's something difficult that's trying to speak, then there will be a lump in my throat, um, grief will be further down my body, will be quite heavy round my hips and belly.

At other time she will use "dance and movement as well [...] [l]istening to what's there and seeing how it wants to move. So, kicking out or swirling or just rocking or something like that to bring that out of my body so that I know what it is". The movement helps her to understand what a sensation is about:

> I'll get an idea, of what it's about. 'Oh, this is about grief'. But I won't necessarily understand the depth of it or how that moves until I move. [...] there are patterns that my body makes repeatedly. Um.

> Ways in which my body moves that I'm getting used to that indicate that something's going on. You know, something needs to rise to the surface and come out. So that I can understand it a bit better.

Zoe experienced a similar sense when working ritually with a particular site:

> half way up the hill, there's an old hawthorn tree. So I would always stop there as I felt she was the guardian of the outer, ring. I've no idea if anyone else ever felt this, but I would have to stop there [...] ask her permission, and then wait for the answer. And the answer would come in a bodily sense. [...] It's like a sense of permission in my body.

This permission was sensed as a slight pressure on her back: "It was like a propelling forward motion from behind. Like 'Yes!' You know. Pushing me gently forward". Once past this stage Zoe would come to "the inner level" where she would often

> receive a 'no'. That would be like a frontal sense - like a closing down. I could feel it, yeah, it's definitely a front of body closed down. [Holds her open palms in front of her body]. Like someone's just drawn a curtain or shut a door in front of me.

The way that place communicates with Zoe within a ritual via a felt sense also occurs more generally in the process of thinking with the land.

Thinking with the Land

The enactive process model claims that we think with our immediate environment, and several instances in my interviews can be interpreted as thinking with place. As we heard, Sally often visits Cross Bones cemetery, a prostitutes graveyard in South London. Her sense of the place is not simply historical or cultural, and she is clear that "if I intellectualize it, I think it should be a sad place, it should make me angry". But Cross Bones is much more than that: It provides "a connection with the city" and "an idea of the ancestors and how people go back and back. I feel I need to be able to tap into that to look at the future as well". It also "taps into [...] feelings about the way women are treated and feminism and eco-feminism and the way the Earth's treated and all those things." Cross Bones thus offers a powerful pattern for emotional and spiritual understanding.

Mary's experience of tuning in to trees and places using the felt sense, discussed above, offers another example. Mary explains how she sometimes experiences feelings which she assumes are from a particular tree or place: "The feeling is how it makes my body feel". She is unsure whether these feelings necessarily originate from the spirit of the tree or place, so interpreting this in terms of thinking with place does no violence

her own understanding. Zoe's experience can also be understood as a process of thinking through an issue using the mind/body/environment, although she understands it purely in terms of spirits of place. This need not be as reductionist as it at first appears: Enactivism illustrates the artificially of subject/object distinctions, and extended cognition proposes that the mind reaches beyond the "skin-bag", so it is by no means clear where Zoe's mind ends and the spirit of place begins. This complex way of understanding 'thinking with place' challenges our conventional notions, but can be understood as a meta-level equivalent to communication with the spirit of place.

Thinking with place involves specific locations, so helps explain why many urban Eco-Pagans felt a special attachment to a particular place. Often such special places serve as a "threshold brook" that provides a "deepening sense of place" (Patterson, n.d.) for Eco-Pagans, who often listen to its voice using the felt sense. As Barry explained, when the threshold brook speaks, the hearer's world changes forever because it reveals our "sacred relationship with the world" (Zoe): Thus one place can pattern a sacred relationship to the world. With this point in mind, I close with Barry's discussion of thinking with place, which he has developed out of over 20 years of practice. He has concluded, in general accord with enactivists like Varela, that we are a "kind of [pause] panoramic unconditioned presence", part of a system "rather than an object or a subject". At times "the system that generates the virtual image of Barry and the system that generates the virtual image of the Genius loci [...] engage with one another and they become one system. And there's no limit to what that could be". When this happens "you become one facet of awareness in a vaster and bigger and wider and richer and deeper kind of reality than the one we usually inhabit" and this is one way in which Barry understands Shamanic experience.

Because our consciousness is tightly woven into the wider system, Barry concludes, as do extended cognition theorists like Preston (2003), that "our sense of meaning and our sense of value is actually conditioned by our surroundings, so if we're constantly surrounded by human artifacts then we're being conditioned by that". Unfortunately, for most Western people the local environment is a "poverty stricken" "sensory desert". The "world of human artifacts and symbols, is very charged with meaning, but if that's the only meaning we're exposed to then we lose contact with the bigger world. 'Cos I think that's a very narrow frequency range". But if "we get out into the dirty, messy, tangled, luxuriant, deep, smelly world that is commonly designated the natural world [...] we start feeling things we don't usually feel". This is because the natural world has a "[s]ensory data richness" that we don't get "in most human environments". It takes time to become sensitive to this data richness, but given time and the right intention we can develop our awareness and thereby our connection to place. This returns us to a major theme of my interviews; *connection*. Barry's "threshold brook" symbolises the subtle power of that sensory

richness, and if "we spend enough time by the threshold brook, and listen to it we hear more and more". As Barry - and all my participants - understand, this is a deeply healing process: "If I've got a bit of a headache or I'm feeling down and depressed I'll go for a walk in the woods, and I'll feel a hell of a lot better for doing that, mate. And we all do that". This one refrain can be heard in every interview: Connecting to the other than human world brings spiritual healing and understanding.

Conclusion

Most urban Eco-Pagans experienced a powerful childhood recognition of their connection with the organic environment that inspired an earth based spirituality grounded in an embodied knowing. Nearly all urban Eco-Pagans experienced some disillusionment in their interactions with other Pagans, many of whom do not share their enthusiasms. However many urban Eco-Pagans benefited from the training they received in mainstream Traditions, typically becoming more sensitive to their bodies in general and their felt sense in particular. The felt sense served as a key process of connection: By learning to become aware of how we think *with* and *through* the embodied situated self, urban Eco-Pagans enhanced their embodied communion with places, flora, fauna and spirits, thereby enriching their practice and nourishing a life-long spirituality. As well as being profoundly healing, these intimate local relationships - this listening to the threshold brook - patterned a sacred relationship to the world. It is the recognition of our connection with the organic environment that ignites and feeds the fires of urban Eco-Paganism. In the next chapter ('The Power of Place: Protest Site Eco-Paganism') we will see the impact of spending extended periods of time in the organic environment, and I draw these threads together in 'Eco-Paganism: A "sacred relationship with the world" '.

Chapter 9: The Power of Place: Protest Site Eco-Paganism

"[K]nowledge of spiritual phenomena without understanding its physical context is like making love with a man who does not know himself, because he has lost his connection to the earth ..."
(Syme, 1997: 217).

The relationship between spiritual experience and the organic environment is an ancient theme (Bernstein, 2005) that is increasingly voiced today (Fox, 1996; Taylor, B., 2005). However, although the significance of this intimate connection has been pondered by many, few have considered its deeper roots: By applying the enactive process model to my ethnography, I demonstrate that this connection is grounded in embodied situated cognition.

My 'Eco-Paganism Literature review' identified two fluid groups: urban and protest site Eco-Pagans. Having considered the role of embodied situated cognition for the former, I now turn to the latter. My autoethnography (Chapter 7), described my own experiences and now serves to frame a more analytical view. Although urban and protest site Eco-Pagans crossover to some extent and are similar in many ways, this chapter unearths significant differences, and continues to piece together a pattern of the power of place.

Although many site Eco-Pagans practice a spirituality without labels, it is deeply felt and emerges from an embodied knowing of connection gained through powerful processes that include meditation and ritual. Training helped urban Eco-Pagans to articulate the felt sense and although site Eco-Pagans eschew formal training, the felt sense remains significant, though less well articulated. The most important process of connection for site Eco-Pagans is the wilderness effect, which catalyses a sense of spiritual connection, increases personal empowerment and can alter the sense of self. Amongst other things, this helps explain site Eco-Pagan's "very strong self identification with the land" (Plows, 2002: 45), which is seen "as sacred" (Worthington, 2005: 214). The processes of connection can blur the boundaries between self and other, enabling a powerful communion with the genius loci which empowers activism, inspires spirituality and informs site Eco-Paganism.

Introducing the Research Participants

I interviewed a representative sample of thirteen protest site Eco-Pagans from various of backgrounds. They included two Druids (John and Jo), one Heathen (Oak) and six eclectic Pagans whose practice was influenced by a variety of traditions including witchcraft[46], Druidry, Shamanism, Heathenry, Wicca and Buddhism (Adam, Dave, Ian, Jan, Millie and Rob).

46 I deliberately do not capitalise the term witchcraft to distinguish this eclectic set of practices from any Craft Tradition.

Dave, Debbie, Lauren, and Ray felt drawn to Paganism at the time of my interviews but the latter three were ambivalent about labelling their spirituality.

At the time I interviewed them, eight participants lived on site B (Ray, Dave, Jake, Debbie, Jan, Jo, Lauren and Millie), while Oak lived in woodland not far from the site and was a regular visitor who often stayed overnight. The interviews with Oak, Debbie, Jan, and Millie[47] took place during the pilot phase but I have included them as there was no major change in my research agenda. John, Rob and Ian were itinerant and Adam[48] lived in a caravan in the West Country. Nine of my participants had lived[49] on more than one protest site and most of those nine had been involved for several years (John, Dave, Debbie, Ian, Jan, Lauren, Oak, Ray, and Rob). By the conclusion of my fieldwork only Jake and Jo were still living full-time at site B, as the rest had moved on to other protests (Ray), settled woodland communities (Oak, Jan and Lauren) or more conventional homes (Dave, Debbie and Millie). Participants ages were between nineteen and early sixties, with the overall age range slightly more in the twenties. Although given the size and distinctiveness of the protest community complete anonymity is impossible to guarantee, in all cases names have been changed.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

Protest site Eco-Pagans I met had a great deal in common with their urban counterparts, notably in that they all emphasised connection with the land or place. Everyone related this connection to their spiritual experiences, and in some cases it resulted in profound - sometimes life changing - experiences. This sense of connection was encouraged by a strong preference amongst most participants (9) for intuitive, embodied ways of knowing: Such knowing of the heart (John) or stomach (Adam) was considered to be far more important than "head" knowing. For some this was reflected in a reluctance to "give names to stuff" (Debbie), especially labelling one's spiritual path (4). None of this reluctance was due to disappointment with any perceived lack of environmental awareness in mainstream Paganism, although some participants (6) knew of Pagans who lacked ecological awareness. Most who adopted the name 'Pagan' didn't identify with mainstream Paganism, so had less of a sense of disappointment than the urban Eco-Pagans (7). However, for John and Jo, both Druids, it was a source of considerable anger and even confusion, and they frequently complained about the situation. Both remained active within their Tradition and energetically promoted environmental

47 My interview with Millie was truncated and lasted about half as long as other interviews on site B. However, given that I lived on-site with Millie for about a month I am confident that I my understanding of her practice is sufficient.

48 Circumstances required me to interview Adam using the ethnographic interview technique described in my methodology.

49 I define living at a site as having your own personal sleeping space on the site for at least a month.

awareness.

Finding a Name

In common with their urban counterparts, many site Eco-Pagans (7) had explicitly taken the name "Pagan" and two felt it fitted them, but several participants (4) resisted names because they felt their spirituality was evolving and labelling it was limiting. Ian's spirituality was "inseparable" from the rest of his life:

> It's a way of life. [...] I don't like to focus on saying 'Oh this is my spirituality' 'cos that's only what other people call it. [Short laugh]. [...] Not much is separable, it's humans that create the separations. [...] I see things are all part of each other.

Rob spoke in similar terms, though he accepted the name fitted:

> Neopaganism - that's probably what someone would call me, the way I synergize that ... spiritual aspect of my anarchism and the fight to defend nature and things like that. [...] so it's all quite connected [...] spirituality kind of gives me the energy for [direct action], keeps me going, and it's not just a raging against the system or whatever, its also a celebration of life as well.

Jan, Lauren and Debbie also gave the impression that spirituality was an integral part of life that did not require any specific practices.

"Paganism" was the name Jo found in her early 20's for her "love of the land, a love of nature, and a lot of history". She began with a Wiccan approach as it was the one of the Farrars' books (e.g. Farrar, J., and Farrar, S., 1981) that introduced her to Paganism, but after a few years she moved on:

> it took a long while for me suddenly think 'OK, I think my path is more nature based', and that's how I sort of moved towards Druidry. [...] the Druid path seemed to go more towards the ancestors, and nature and the trees.

However she had been struggling as she felt her path lacked depth, and was emphatic that moving on to a protest site was "*definitely* part of [her] Journey" because "as a Pagan [...] I have to fight for the land because, the land is what I hold as sacred". Jo's experience is typical of the more traditionalized site Eco-Pagans, and is echoed by Motherwort, a Wiccan I met at Lyminge Forest protest in 1998:

> I do not pretend to talk for the pagans living at Lyminge, but for me protesting is definitely part of my spiritual growth. It reconnects me to my mother, the earth and helps me to sort out what is really

> important in my life (Roberts and Motherwort, 2006. Capitalization as in original).

Like some other site Eco-Pagans, and many in the urban group, Jo found it:

> very disheartening that, the majority of Pagans don't see it that way. [...] I do despair a lot of the time that a lot of them aren't [pause] in it because they really care about the land and the Earth. It's more themselves. It's something they want to do and their egos and they like the dressing up, but they don't wanna get their - don't get their velvet dirty is what I always say! [Laughs].

She suggested this might be because "they spend too much time indoors" and wondered if other Pagans "see it as part of the same thing? I mean a lot of people just see it as, 'I do magic, I do spells, I do ritual' ". Her comments were the most eloquent, but were typical of several site Eco-Pagans, significantly the six who are closest to the Traditionalized end of the scale on my quadrant diagram in 'Section II: Introduction': Jo, Jan, Oak, Jake, John and Millie.

For detraditionalized site Eco-Pagans spiritual growth was often part of a life changing activist experience: Dave explained that he had become "drawn towards Paganism" while at site B, so had made himself a Pagan staff and attended "a fair few Pagan ceremonies" [50] (interview and field notes, 24/05/06). In comparison with other Eco-Pagans, his path had been unusual: From age 17 to 28 Dave "was a full on boy racer with the second loudest car stereo in the country", and had worked in factories for 22 years. He hadn't spent much time in the organic environment as he was always "[s]tuck in a factory or in a vehicle!" But he had been involved with the local Greenpeace group for six years before coming to site B, and soon after arriving gave up his factory job, which changed everything:

> Actually giving up your paid job to do activism full time is a very big thing. If your job goes, pretty much your house, flat or whatever goes, and if that goes what do you do with your stuff? Your possessions go, so that's a huge thing to do protesting and environmental stuff full-time, to actually live it every single day of your life. [...] It's been the most amazing years of my life.

Dave was attracted to Paganism because he had met Pagans who were very "caring about the environment, about nature", but a "powerful energy and a very powerful presence" on the site was a significant factor in his spiritual emergence.

Spirituality Without Labels

50 Dave was handfasted at a Pagan wedding ritual in November 2007.

Jo tried to create rituals that were suitable for "people that follow a nature path and don't call it Paganism". Some of those whom I identify as site Eco-Pagans resisted adopting the name 'Pagan', so prompting the question of why I still designate them as such. Participants like Rob and Ian felt that because "words carry great preconceptions" (Ian) naming something tended to limit it, but given the vagueness of the term they would acknowledge Paganism as a suitable label for core aspects of their spirituality. Debbie was aware of her ambivalence towards Paganism but her resistance was not to Pagan practice, which she enjoyed, or Pagan beliefs, which reflected her own. However, she didn't want to define her spirituality:

> I have been, like 'Oh you are a Pagan', an all that, but I'm not putting a name to myself. [...] I don't put names to stuff. [...] I believe in Mother Nature, not as a God or a Goddess.

Debbie had known about Paganism from friends for well over a year when I met her, but for Ray it was still very new and the site B Land Blessing in October 2006 was his first such experience:

> I'd never experienced anything like that before, we're all stood there in a circle, which meant something really big I know, the whole circle thing, standing in a circle with everyone, feels quite powerful [...] I cried at that one.

Ray had "always been spiritual, about the love for the Earth" but he didn't "particularly have a religion" although he added that "Paganism is the closest that I've seen". His spirituality had become "deeper" since he first came to live on a protest site partly, he suggested, because he had "lived outside now, near trees" and through meeting "people that are more spiritual" and getting "involved in some of the Pagan ceremonies". Many Pagans find a name for a spirituality they already have, and Ray had "felt a very strong connection with the Earth" for many years, but had no name for the spiritual dimension of that feeling.

Lauren's experience was more complex, as for most of her life she'd avoided religion and had "decided there wasn't such a thing as spirituality". But when she began to visit the Twyford Down protest in the early 1990's, this began to change:

> it was the first time I'd ever done chanting and drumming round a fire and I just loved it. Drumming and dancing and chanting round a fire! So fantastic, and spirit days and all that sort of stuff.

Although she later came to understand that these were spiritual feelings, at the time she "didn't want to know what it was, because it was something that I couldn't comprehend". But her sense of discomfort grew as a "sort of

spirituality was waking up" and she became "really scared because I didn't know where to go with it [...] because the only thing I knew was Church of England or Catholics or whatever, and I'd really just dismissed the whole lot of it".

Lauren's spirituality grew out of a series of profound encounters with the organic environment which began at Twyford Down:

> Twyford was such a *wonderful* piece of land. As you stepped onto it you just thought, 'What's happening to me?' And it was - I suppose it was in a way what first started it all but I couldn't cope with it. [...] the reason I think I had the breakdown was because it presented the real me to me and I just didn't recognise it or was able to cope with it.

Her experiences at Twyford were "just all too much" and she had a breakdown, but her spiritual sensibilities were to return over 10 years later when she arrived at site B:

> When site B started it was to me exactly like Twyford Down. [...] I really wanted to go down there, and be part of this, [pause] but I didn't go because, I was scared. I was scared the whole thing would happen again.

Inevitably perhaps, Lauren started to spend time at the new site and one night her spiritual development "really crystallized":

> I was in a bit of a funny state anyway, because I'd had this really chilled out, sitting at B [pause] and learning, I don't know, learning about the land again. Learning the power of the land? Something like that? And then, everyone had gone to bed - at least I thought they had - And I went down to the loo - the compost loo. [...] at night sometimes I didn't bother to drop the curtain 'cos I was usually in a hurry [laughs]. And as I sat there, I saw what I thought was a man. And I didn't realise it was anything at the time - I just thought it was somebody peeping at me while I was weeing, and my immediate thought was absolute annoyance and anger that somebody could look at me [...] so when I stood up and then I realised that it wasn't, and it was just as though it was this figure - there was this man. It led out of the afternoons talking, so I was in that frame of mind and it was just this vision of this Green Man looking at me and it was as though it was just *calling* me, and I just felt [pause] frightened - shaky. [...] This huge figure, and I can only call it the Green Man [...] it had never really happened except that night when I sat at Twyford Down, [pause] I kind of had it. I call that one of my deep spiritual experiences sitting there that night when I knew I'd never be back there, just looking across that land, and I couldn't cope with that being destroyed.

As I was the only other person awake on site Lauren asked me to come and see the "figure in the tree by the toilet":

> We went back there together and she saw the figure as not frightening but protective. She said she believed the Earth is drawing people to protect Herself. Bit like the 'Rainbow Warriors' (her phrase). I laughed as she said in the same breath that she isn't spiritual! (Field notes, 05/07/06, site B).

After Lauren and I talked about it the next morning, I noted that:

> For her the figure represents a spiritual presence defending site B and crucially somehow bringing her a message. She was more freaked out that it *wasn't* a human and that it was a spiritual experience. [...] When she came to see me in the communal [space] she was quite shaken. [...] [But not by the thought of a peeping tom.] It was actually the idea that there was a spiritual dimension. She admitted to me that she was afraid of the whole idea of the spiritual (field notes, 06/07/06, site B).

Lauren later told me that it was this experience "that really kicked me off with this whole spirituality Earth bit", and inspired her to write a poem linking activism with "ancient" wisdom and the power of the Earth. A few weeks after the interview, Lauren told me that she had been to a political conference and found herself to be so sensitive to the space that she had to leave. Her rational mind had said "Oh, come on Lauren - You don't get affected by atmospheres", but she felt it so strongly she had to go. She explained this as the most recent example of a heightened sensitivity to place that had emerged since the night of the Green Man experience.

Given their practices and beliefs, it is appropriate from a religious studies perspective to count Debbie, Ray and Lauren as Eco-Pagans, even though they may not adopt that title themselves. We might call them 'proto-Pagans', but that implies that they will become 'full' Pagans when their spirituality matures, so is inadequate to describe this often carefully considered position. I use the alternative term 'edge Pagan', which more accurately describes this slightly uncomfortable place on a border away from the centre ground facing an intimidating option, and carries the sometimes appropriate connotation of critical sharpness. The term edge Pagan can also be appropriately applied to several of the urban Eco-Pagans in the previous chapter who have moved through the centre ground of Paganism to somewhere nearer the edge.

PROCESSES OF CONNECTION

In his survey of wilderness spirituality, Ashley found that a sense of connection was most commonly cited as fundamental (Ashley, 2007), while my Eco-Paganism literature review noted a “sense of connectedness” amongst activists (Plows, 1998: 168). My fieldwork confirmed this research: Rob explained that his “connection with the earth” had become “a major part” of who he is, while Jan expressed it very explicitly: “That’s what Paganism is all about – connection with everything” (field notes, 11/10/05, site B). A comment made by an activist at site E tied the sense of connection with the theme of alienation discussed below (*Attitude to Urban Life*):

> Sitting round the fire pit [...] explaining my research to Ian. Others chipped in. Ben said (approx):
> "It's blatantly all connected. If you can't see that it's just because you're closed down - conditioned" (field notes, 06/09/06).

Several factors contributed to this sense of connection, including meditation, ritual, entheogens and the wilderness effect. Greenway claims that "both the psychedelic and meditation experiences ... closely parallel" the experience of the wilderness effect, and that such awareness seems to have the "capacity to open consciousness to Mind - that is, to the more natural flows of information from nature" (Greenway, 1995: 132).

Meditation

Many (7) participants used some form of meditation or contemplation. Rob learnt techniques from Vipassana meditation that showed him how "your environment shapes the way you think". He also used a less formal approach:

> just spending time out in nature, just listening. Just looking. Not really thinking too much. It’s good to kind of not think, just become, just let it flow though you I guess.

Jo described a very similar practice:

> you just sit there and you just - if you give it a moment, peace - it will just come in and, it's like a wash that floods through you.

Debbie tried to explain the sense of connection that comes to her when she spends time in the organic environment:

> you look up and look around you and you understand. I feel very honoured that fact that I’ve been allowed to understand it and I’ve been allowed to see.

This understanding remains as she walks home afterwards:

> I'm walking down the road and I've got a smile on my face. I understand everything, and other people walking past, and I'll have an even more of big smile and I'll go 'I understand this world we live in and you really don't have a clue do you?' [Laughs].

Debbie explained that this understanding could come from "[j]ust sitting" in any "[n]atural places, beaches wherever", but especially from "living in the woods".

When I asked Adam where he learnt his spiritual understanding, he told me that it was from "the land", sitting quietly and "the stone masons and wood workers". He added that if mediation means "doing without thinking" then he did "what you might call meditation all the time when I'm with the land".

Eco-Pagan Letcher also recommends "solitude, stillness and sensitivity" as a means of reconnecting with an organic environment (Letcher 2001c), and this simple technique of spending time quietly "sitting out" has a long history in Heathen practice (Blain 2001: 61-62; Richardson, 2007). Both popular literature (Ferguson, 1980) and academic accounts confirm my participants experience that meditation enhances sensory awareness, and thereby enables a deeper sense of connection. According to Greenway "[p]ractices such as mediation, when seriously undertaken, are explicitly designed to facilitate the arousal of nonegoic awareness" (Greenway, 1995: 133), while Braud states that:

> Entering a state of relaxation and quietude helps reduce bodily and other distractions that ordinarily prevent the efficient deployment of attention [and allow us] to be fully aware and attentive to everything that happens with a 'beginner's mind' (Braud, 1992: 3).

Ritual

Six participants found ritual valuable (Jo, John, Oak, Dave, Ray and Debbie), but it was not very important for Ian, Adam, Jan, Rob, Jake or Millie, and Lauren disliked it. Simple rituals were much preferred by everyone, and even Lauren didn't mind something "very very basic". Nearly all the protest site rituals I observed took place at site B and were most often facilitated by Jo, who was also the one who found ritual most important. Jo found rituals important for "marking the Seasons [...] to appreciate where we are at in the year" and felt it was important to "keep it natural, and have the sort of natural things on the altar".

Most of those who were fairly new to Paganism found ritual very significant (Debbie, Dave and Ray). The first ritual at site B was a Land Blessing facilitated by Oak and Jan which Ray found especially powerful, and it was

> probably the first time I connected properly with the - realised no actually, realising this bit of land is here and we're actually protecting it and saving it and loving it.

For Ray the ritual was a process of connection with both those in the circle and the place itself. Millie likewise noted that it was "[n]ice because of the sense of us all being there in the community. Sharing something. [Were all] connected. The land and us were connected".

Jan facilitated the ritual purely for the benefit of other people as she found it unnecessary:

> I don't differentiate between what we did in the circle and what I do on a … quite a regular basis, so … Just talking to whatever's out there. So I felt glad for everyone else. I didn't feel too different in myself, because I think I earth myself quite well, and I don't find it that different really.

Jan's daily practice consisted of a contemplative walk

> I have a little walk up and down everyday to kind of keep the energy … [...] I'm feeling quite cut off 'cos of the road, so I like to keep in touch with what we have got here, and so there's all the little things under the ground and they form a little network of energy or life or whatever you want to call it, and all little creatures, the grass and the plants, and there's different things out there and they're all alive in their own way and it's nice just to walk past them and say hello.

Ritual seemed to be largely irrelevant to those who, like Jan, integrated their spiritual practice so tightly with their everyday lives that specific rituals become superfluous. Rob and Millie only mentioned ritual briefly in interviews, while neither Ian nor Adam mentioned ritual at all. This attitude is exemplified by the experience of Motherwort, a "member of a local coven" who went to Lyminge forest during the protest of the late 1990's:

> I asked them how they would feel about joining our circle to raise energy to protect the forest. Most were favourable, but one turned round and said very pointedly to me "we don't need your rituals, we live it every day, working to save the forest right here and now, if you want to help us come and live here too" (Roberts and Motherwort, 2006).

Protest site rituals were less varied than the urban variety, tending to use the simplified Wiccan structure that is common in public rituals, and were facilitated by experienced practitioners for a mix of Pagans, non-Pagans and edge-Pagans. This was true of a ritual at the G8 protest, facilitated by Starhawk, one at Climate Camp, facilitated by a Reclaiming Witch and all

the group rituals at site B. My Paganism literature review suggested that protest site rituals emerged spontaneously and were often ecstatic (Letcher, 2002: Plows, 2001), but although I took part in such rituals at Twyford Down during the early 1990's, I found no evidence of them now. Pending further research to explain this change, I suggest that the comparative remoteness of sites like Twyford Down and Newbury encouraged ecstatic ritual. This has brought some positive changes: Letcher noted that the Eco-Pagans rituals at Newbury “trampled the flora ... and scared off the fauna" (Letcher, 2001c), but all those I participated in during my fieldwork took care to minimize any adverse ecological impact.

Entheogens

Plows and Letcher refer to the use of entheogens by site Eco-Pagans to facilitate contact with nature spirits (Letcher, 2005: 557; Plows, 2005: 505), and four participants had found entheogens useful. Ian described himself only half jokingly as "a trainee medicine man", and said he did "lots" of meditation using entheogens like "ayahuasca, extracted DMT, planted rue seeds [and] corn with ergot on it". Jake explained how his early experiences with "hallucinogens" changed his "perception of reality as such and the way I thought about things". These experiences presented him with a "beautiful [...] vision" that he had kept at "the back of my soul or whatever and it's sort of driven me [...] that is what we're trying towards". Lauren sometimes smoked cannabis, and felt that "when you've got so much to learn and move away from this patterning that's happened in your life, all your life, you actually need something like that". Entheogens had also been important in Rob's spiritual journey:

> magic mushrooms [...] open these channels up and let you connect with nature in a way that, [...] perhaps you never knew existed before and er, gives you a real sense of how you’re connected with it [...] I can’t sort of underestimate the importance that that’s had on my, connection with nature. LSD as well, is particularly important. [...] Using substances to enhance your perception of the world is very important [...] [but are] by no means necessary - I’ve had these experiences without taking drugs at all [...]

As we saw with the two urban Eco-Pagans who had worked with them, entheogens can act as stepping stones that catalyse a deeper level of connection that makes them unnecessary. This was true for Jay who said he no longer used entheogens: "They're my drugs now - birds, wild animals, trees ..." (field notes, 21/07/06, site D).

Life Experiences

Childhood play in the organic environment was very significant for many urban Eco-Pagans, and most site Eco-Pagans (10) described similar

experiences: Rob's sense of "connection with the earth" originated from childhood trips to the countryside while Ray said much the same, adding that he "always loved going to the beach or going to the woods". This confirms existing research into activist motivation discussed in the *Ecopsychology* section of my 'Embodied Cognition Literature Review'.

Other people had life experiences later in life that helped create a sense of connection. Jo said that childhood play in the garden was where "seeds were planted for my future love of the land" which later bore fruit: In her early 20's Jo gave up her job to grow her own vegetables, and it was this experience of "sowing the seeds and working with the land, and in weather and the environment" that inspired her Paganism. John had a long term physical connection with the organic environment because he had a "nomadic" lifestyle, and would often "just sleep out". Such experiences are widespread: Newbury activist Jim Hindle explained in his autobiographical account of the protest "how long walks on the South Downs ... brought about an awakening within", and a similar shift drew his friends Tami and Ceilidh to Newbury:

> We had both awoken to the land around us and felt the calling ringing in our ears, as though we'd been asleep a very long time ... It was the same with Ed, who had had some kind of experience with the oak at Fairmile[51] and had known, once he'd returned to his hometown, that he had to go back. Once you'd felt it, there was no mistaking it (Hindle, 2006: 100 - 102).

The effect of these processes of connection on an individual's being-in-the-world can be profound, and in some cases life changing. It is significant that the two participants who made the most marked life changes had also had the least prior exposure to the organic environment: Dave and Lauren experienced dramatic shifts that culminated in both of them selling up their homes and adopting a more nomadic lifestyle. Neither had experienced much opportunity to 'play' in an organic environment - as children or adults - before arriving at a protest site, so we might expect a greater impact from such an intense and unfamiliar encounter with the power of place.

The Felt Sense

Many urban Eco-Pagans became more sensitive to their felt sense through training in mainstream Traditions, so given that most site Eco-Pagans are detraditionalized, we might expect a less developed awareness of the felt sense. However, almost everyone sometimes recognises a felt sense, even if it is just 'butterflies' in the stomach, and site Eco-Pagans often refer to meaningful bodily feelings. Debbie described how she felt during the Land Blessing ritual at site B:

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51 The Fairmile road protest site in Devon was evicted in January 1997.

> And [pause] you know when if something's so overwhelming if you got it in your stomach, and it's like [pause] I take a breath, and like 'Wow!', and I got really really emotional [...]. Overwhelming really. Really really overwhelming. I could feel it in here, in my stomach.

Oak has similar feelings during the ritual, especially when he invites Odin - the God he is dedicated to - into the Circle:

> Like a fantastic beautiful shining light in your soul, sort of. [...] everything is just wonderful and great and it's just *in* you. Rather than, you know ... It's not an external experience. You're not viewing it and not feeling it. It's a very internal experience.

Although this feeling is felt "all over the place", it is a more focused in the chest, and "it's not a head sort of experience, it's a chest sort of experience". I then invited Oak to explore the meaning of this felt sense:

> Light, energy, power. Um. Charged, fully charged, and light standing in a beautiful light, fully loved, completely safe and that sort of thing. Full on experience.

As we have seen (*Gendlin*, Chapter 3), the felt sense can often carry information that is not immediately accessible to conscious awareness, and this is apparent in Lauren's description of her last night at Twyford Down:

> I knew that I would never be back at that place until it was all over and something was wrong. I didn't know what was going to happen but I knew I'd never get back there. And I cried almost all the way home, from Twyford Down to Winchester station to [home].

These examples are typical of Gendlin's description of a felt sense (inter alia, Gendlin, 1981), where someone experiences a meaningful bodily feeling and is - sometimes at least - able to become consciously aware of its significance. But in the previous chapter we saw many examples of a more complex process where urban Eco-Pagans 'tune in to' or 'communicate' with places, plants or trees using the felt sense (*A Sense of Nature,* Chapter 8). Lauren spontaneously experienced the same process when she saw a shaft of autumn sunlight illuminate a small Scottish waterfall:

> And there was this one little waterfall, and when it started it was nothing but, suddenly the sun, just caught it, and it was just so alive with colours. It was pink, and then there was white - the middle central stream was absolutely white, this shining whiteness out of this dark water, dark and inky, on the other side there was this sort of brown and then round the sides a very deep blue - sometimes when you get a very deep brown it's almost blue - and then there

> was this green on the other side of the moss.

The waterfall was not only beautiful, but also eloquent:

> And I just looked at it, and had this amazing feeling of just, sort of talking to the Earth. I can't describe it any other way - It was as though the Earth was just talking to me.

This is clearly a felt sense that she could understand consciously:

> But standing on there, I also - you know - got this message about all sorts of things - I really kind of got sorted out. I just stood there, and my head just went through things, and it was as though logically, I knew what I had to do about X and me, and I knew what I had to do about the woodland and, I knew what I had to do about Y and Z and it was all there coming to me. And it was a feeling more than words. It was just - You know, my mind was making words out of the feeling. It was fantastic.

Her sense of "a feeling more than words" that her mind could make "words out of" is a perfect description of the process Gendlin calls Focusing, which some people do without training (Gendlin, 1981: 4), and can be life changing. Lauren's experience was indeed profound and powerful:

> It was just, um, the only way I can equate it is like being, when I first found out I was pregnant - I just wanted to run down the hill and tell everyone saying 'I've just been spoken to by the Earth!' I mean I really felt that connected with this one site.

As Merleau-Ponty says "[i]t is the body which points out, and which speaks" and this "immanent or incipient significance in the living body extends, as we shall see, to the whole sensible world" such that we can "discover in all other 'objects' the miracle of expression" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002 [1962]: 230). Gendlin, who develops Merleau-Ponty's work, is clear that a felt sense can be one of recognition, and that symbols, which "includes anything that may have *the role of a* symbol (including things, persons, behaviors, and whatever)" (Gendlin, 1997: 91; author's emphasis), can evoke felt meanings.

Several researchers opine that intention is important to spiritual experience in wilderness (Stringer and McAvoy, 1992; Greenway and Taylor, 2006), and this is clearly the case here. Lauren explained the importance of her attitude, which includes an openness to spiritual experience:

> I think it was because I was there all on my own, and I was the only person in the *whole* world that was sharing and was looking at it at

> that moment, and it was this uniqueness. [...] I thought 'This is just for me. This is just for me because I can't get anyone else. No-one else can share it. I've got to take this in me and tell other people about it'. [...] I liked it because it was a nothing bit of Scotland, it was an ordinary waterfall, but that particular moment it was just *so* beautiful, And it might do it everyday, but I'm not there everyday. But I was that day. And it was the going to Coulport, sitting there, getting wet, walking up there at that *precise* moment, and that's what I mean about feeling guided and doing stuff.

We can continue to unpack this experience by applying the enactive process model: Lauren has lived a long full life, so on my model her deep body - the source of Gendlin's implicit - will have a very rich sense of the world. This is inarticulate, and perhaps better understood as a source of *potential* knowing (see Chapter 5). The understanding that is implicit in this richness may never become explicit if it is not evoked by experience, but in the case of Lauren's waterfall a particular place at a particular moment *does* evoke some of that deeply embodied potential knowing: One day Lauren stands before a waterfall and its beauty, in that particular moment, calls forth an implicit knowing into explicit awareness. In an important sense she *is* "talking to the Earth", because the explicit knowing is co-created by Lauren and that particular place. Lauren is thinking with the place, and the ambiguity of that phrase is fortuitous: In a sense she is *using* the place to evoke her embodied knowing, but on a more sophisticated reading Lauren and the place are thinking *together*, through the process of extended cognition. Both perspectives oversimplify somewhat, as to some extent they use the subject/object paradigm which this thesis problematizes, and it is clear from the enactive process model that at a more fundamental level 'Lauren' and 'the place' are aspects of one ongoing process. My embodied philosophy chapter could only began to tease out the threads of this complex enactive co-creation of the world, but it is clear that it is intrinsic to the Eco-Pagan understanding of the sacred. We can never fully articulate this mystery because it is implicit, and thus we gain understanding of spiritual communion with the other than human world without diminishing it: A sense of the ineffable remains because the ultimate source of understanding will always remain implicit and mysterious, and yet it can be evoked by ritual, poetry or experiences in the organic environment. Because it relates to the experience of both urban and site Eco-Pagans, I discuss this complex relationship between the felt sense and spiritual understanding again in the next chapter, 'A "sacred relationship with world" '.

The Wilderness Effect

Greenway argues that "civilization is only four days deep" (Greenway, 1995: 129) and that even such a brief time away from 21st century life is deeply transformative. To date the wilderness effect has only been noted in the context of extended wilderness trips, but ecopsychologists agree

that “simply spending meaningful time communing with nature” (Shaw, 2006) is beneficial, and the full effect is a difference of degree rather than a difference in kind (Greenway, 1995: 132). We would then expect that long periods in less than pristine wilderness would have a similar impact to short, intense wilderness exposure. My fieldwork shows not only that the wilderness effect occurs at protest camps, but that it catalyses a spiritual experience that leads some protesters to describe themselves as ‘Pagans’. As we have seen this experience can be "a heavy shake-up: one's perception, dreams, perspective, awareness vividly and rapidly changes" potentially "to the point where people become more or less incapacitated when they return to their normal lives" (Greenway, pers. comm., 2006).

Although the effect was first noted on North American wilderness treks, there are many correlations with felt experience at a road protest camp. Although such spaces may have been culturally mediated, they retain certain aspects of true wilderness: Relative openness, no advertising, absence of most 21st century technologies (flick-switch lighting, hot running water, instant heating, t.v. etc.), low tech. living spaces, etc. Before I pursue the connection, it is important to note that wilderness trips are generally focused on personal therapeutic goals and any human-nature connection is a bonus (Baillie, 2006). Further, as Shaw points out, there “is no guarantee that this process will lead directly or indirectly to environmental action” (Shaw, 2006). However, I am not suggesting that spending time in an organic environment inevitably makes us more environmentally aware, but that the wilderness effect helps explain many key aspects of protest site Eco-Paganism.

There are many obvious similarities between a wilderness trek and life on a typical protest camp. Most significant of these is the practical connection with the elemental forces of nature. In my site B field notes of 27/10/05 I write:

> Simplicity of life on camp allows us to attend more closely to our embodiment. It’s also highlighted by the life itself – physical work, need to keep warm and attend to physical well-being[52].

As Letcher says: “The very act of living out, however dependent on wider society for food and so on, puts one in touch with nature in a way that is real, not virtual” (Letcher, 2000). Living in a bender provides a much more intimate connection with the immediate environment which is why Ray doesn't "want to live in a house, ever again":

> in a house [...] you're just sealed off [holds hands up palm to palm in front of his head] from any - anything that could possibly connect with outside of it you know? Other than probably another box which is the television. Like you don't realise it until - well I didn't realise

52 I lived for three months (over winter) at this particular protest camp (‘site B’) and spent approximately another six months there part-time.

> until I had the opportunity to live outside in a bender. [...] you hear the birds when you wake up in the morning and that's nice, [...] Sometimes you'll hear a wasp fly by or something [...] you kind of connect with what's outside of it, a bit more than you would in a normal home.

I asked Ian if it felt different when he was in the woods. He smiled and said:

> Does it feel different? No, it feels different when I'm not - when I'm in a box or on a street. That's when it feels different.

Similar experiences are described in autobiographical accounts of road protest life. Newbury activist Jim Hindle describes how he

> became accustomed to the sound of the wind in the trees at all times. It wasn't a thing I necessarily listened to, but the silence that fell whenever I stepped inside a building was eerie and disquietening. ... It was like being connected to a great river, the source of all life ... and years of separation between us and the Land were falling away like an old skin (Hindle, 2006: 70-71).

Research reviewed earlier concluded that the wilderness experience enhanced sensory acuity (McDonald and Schreyer, 1991; Beck 1987; Harper, 1995; Sewall, 1995) and this is apparent in Rob's interview. In the city he has to engage sensory filters to "block out information, to block out noise, to block out the chatter of things [...] going into you mind, because if not you'll go absolutely insane because there's just so much going on ..." On returning to a more natural space he would find the silence overwhelming and "it was so goddam quiet it almost hurt", but this passed:

> And it was only when you actually started to listen that you realised it wasn't quiet at all but the river was flowing, the wind was in the trees, the birds flying. All of these things were going on which we weren't hearing because we had these filters on. And I keep repeating it but it's an important point, because people do live their entire lives in an urban environment and they just don't get the connection, um they don't get that connection with nature.

We hear later that several participants were similarly critical of urban life, and Greenway comments that the wilderness effect can place "the individual in more or less severe conflict with [urban] culture" (Greenway, 1995: 128). Greenway doesn't discuss why, but a heightened sensory acuity and the sense of connection described above are likely factors.

Protest site life has one significant extra factor which a wilderness trek lacks: Those who live on site are protecting it, and this enhances the sense of connection. As Jo explained:

> you're giving your life over to try and protect that piece of land, so you have a more intimate relationship than you would, somewhere else [...] you've got that bond that you're trying to protect it, and I think it knows that you're trying to protect it, and it's your land because it's your home as well, and it's the home of the people that you share you life with.

Most of the key aspects of the wilderness effect (see Chapter 3) correlate closely with lived experience on a protest camp: a sense of connection, well-being, major life changes, contemplative practice and community. There are clear explanations for those that do not strongly correlate: Social drinking is common on site, so I would not expect alcohol addiction to be alleviated; my participants were not on a trip with a fixed period, so major goals will be stated in different terms but were similar; sadly, there was never the opportunity to go "climbing a ridge or peak in order to greet the sun"; finally, dream patterns were not considered in my research (Greenway, 1995: 128-129).

The Wilderness Effect: Freedom

Greenway describes the sense of freedom felt by those on a wilderness trek: “For many the wilderness experience means release of repression – release of the inevitable controls that exist in any culture” (Greenway, 1995: 128) and protest site campaigners commonly describe a feeling of freedom. My site B field notes of 12/12/05 attempt to put it into words:

> I can’t quite describe it, but have an image of Camp [site B] as like a bubble, an enclosed safe, crazy-sane place. It’s a bit like ELFS[53] actually – that same feeling of liminality, of freedom to be who you are, of safety and possibility.

Visitors often referred to a camp as a place “of freedom” as opposed to the world outside (quote from a visitor, field notes, 12/03/06, site B) and Merrick, a protester at Newbury, explains how that feeling of freedom allows for self-expression:

> Not all far-gone behaviour is actually craziness; a lot of it is the release of tension that, in the outside world, people would be too inhibited to express (Merrick, 1996: 80).

Again my ethnography bears this out. In a discussion over breakfast, Jan, who had previous experience of camp life and had lived at site B for about two months said: “I feel free here. I’m back to being myself”. Debbie, who had been at site B for about a month and who had also lived on site before, responded that being there allowed her to “be who I really am”. She commented that her partner had ruefully said she had “the site bug again”. Jan went on to say that on site she did things she didn’t normally do

53 ELFS is a annual week long Wiccan camp. I have changed the name for ethical reasons.

because she's otherwise too shy, and added: “I don't know who I am. When I'm here everyone knows who I am and it's really affirming” (field notes, 14/11/06, site B).

The Wilderness Effect: Connection
For Greenway connection – or reconnection – is fundamental to the wilderness effect: “When entering the wilderness psychologically as well as physically, participants most often speak of feelings of expansion or reconnection” (Greenway, 1995: 128). As we have already seen, a sense of connection lies at the heart of Eco-Paganism and is common to both urban and protest site groups, so I need not repeat my discussion of its importance. However it is clear that the wilderness effect is closely related the other processes of connection I discussed above, and like them is grounded in embodied knowing: Shaw explains the sense of connection at the heart of the wilderness effect as “an embodied visceral knowing that transcends the distinction between the inner and outer landscapes” (Shaw, 2006).

The Wilderness Effect: Community
A strong sense of community is another key characteristic of the wilderness effect that is also fundamental for some protest site Eco-Pagans. Jo had "always wanted to experience community living" and thought "the community thing" was "excellent" while Ray told me that living on site was the first time he had lived in a "community" and had realised that "it's a better way for people to live". My field work noted that the alternative sustainable community aspect of protest camp living was central for Jan (field notes, 27/11/05, site B) and she and Oak later moved to a woodland community. Lauren sold her house in the Autumn of 2007 and bought land to set up something similar.

The Wilderness Effect: Sense of Self
The wilderness effect creates a distinct sense of self:

> People often are quite explicit about how their minds feel 'open' and 'airy' in the wilderness, as contrasted with 'turgid,' 'tight,' and 'crowded' in urban culture (Greenway, 1995: 132).

Anderson's field notes describe how it felt to live on site: "I get a slowed down, rhythmic feeling in the woods and on the meadow, relaxed" (Anderson, J., 2004: 51). Site life gave him "a sense of possibility, a blast of fresh air, oxygen rushing to the brain. These protests ... are like stepping into a parallel universe" (Anderson, J., 2004: 51). My field notes regularly express very similar feelings: "Feeling about being on site: Lightness, sense of openness” (field notes, 1/12/05, site B: also see Chapter 7). I became especially aware of this sense when I left camp for a couple of days for a trip to London:

> On the tube I feel more enclosed, less emotionally open, more

> restricted. We talk about urban congestion. It's not just roads that are congested – it's psyches (field notes, 4/11/05, site B).

Later I expressed a similar feeling as I left camp to travel by train to London:

> As I sat down in this warm, enclosed space I felt odd – slightly shocked somehow. Now a few minutes later, it still feels strangely alien. Straight lines hard consistent surfaces. Ordered space. I feel shut away. I remember sensing a similar difference between cycling and being in a car: on a bike you're connected, part of the space you move through. In a car you're enclosed in a discrete space. I think that's the key to the difference. [...] the inside and outside are less defined. Even in my bender it's very obvious what the weather is like! There are no doors, very few straight lines and no order. The space is more open, inconsistent, and fluid. Sometimes it has an organic quality inspired by the materials; my bender is a dome, shaped purely by the relationship between bent hornbeam and the space (field notes, 14 /11/05, site B).

Tuan (1974) noted how physical setting influenced perception, and suggested that the straight lines of conventionally constructed space requires different skills of perception than the organic complexity of a natural landscape. Given the complex relationship between perception and sense of self discussed in my literature review of embodied cognition, the phenomena Tuan observed will contribute to the wilderness effect.

The Wilderness Effect: Spiritual Dimensions

All research into the wilderness effect concurs with Greenway that it has a "spiritual" dimension (Greenway, 1995: 128), and Key points out that there are "many examples" of spiritual experiences catalysed by wilderness (Key, 2003: 65). In fact the development of Eco-paganism amongst UK environmental protesters living in liminal temporary encampments is just the most recent manifestation of the spiritual power of place.

My literature review noted the importance of a sensual relationship with nature to some Pagans, and the wilderness effect helps achieve what Letcher described as "an embodied sensitivity to nature" which is essential if we are to "come to know the 'genius loci' the spirit(s) of a place" (Letcher, 2001c). All my participants linked their sense of connection with the organic environment with their spiritual experiences, and the main difference between site Eco-Pagans and their urban counterparts was in their relationship to cities. For most site Eco-Pagans the organic environment was essential to spirituality. This is apparent in much of what I have already reported, but Rob is typical:

> I find it quite difficult to connect with my spirituality when I'm in an

> urban environment - It's only when I get out into nature ... and feel the energy flowing through me and I have that connection [...] the only way to understand it is to be out there and experience it.

Exceptions
Not everyone on protest sites showed as much respect for the places they lived as the Eco-Pagans, nor did everyone develop a nature based spirituality. Clearly the processes of connection do not influence everyone and other factors must come into play. Although I did not interview activists who lacked a sense of connection, some of these factors were apparent, notably the influence of alcohol at sites D and E:

> It's great here right now, but Bob tells me it can change in a moment if the 'brew crew'[54] turn up. This is a major factor influencing any wilderness effect (field notes, 21/07/06, site D).

On more established camps there is often very little that needs to be done and boredom often leads to alcohol abuse. This was also apparent at site E:

> When I arrived I heard [reports] of a lot of drunkenness on site. This confirmed when I went over on Sunday morning to see 6-8 people drinking cider at 10 am. General reports of fighting, drunkenness and noise in the evenings. [...] Then in Sunday [night] things turned round: a fiddle player turned up and it was folk songs and tea round the main fire! Since then I've seen much less booze so things may be turning round (field notes, 05/07/06, site E).

Stringer and McAvoy noted four factors that inhibited spiritual experience in wilderness: Not enough time alone, not enough time in general to "see, feel and/or experience processes", "too large a group" and simply "not looking for spiritual experiences" (Stringer and McAvoy, 1992: 69). All these would be inhibiting factors at protest sites which are often chaotic, sometimes include large groups and attract people with no interest in spirituality. Greenway opines that *intention* - a factor closely related to this last point - is the key to how powerful the wilderness effect is and observed that many people "carry" urban culture into the wilderness, meaning that they resist entering into it psychologically (Greenway, pers. comm., 2006).

The Impact of Processes of Connection

Spiritual Emergence
Three of my participants became increasingly drawn towards Eco-Paganism during the period of my research. Ray followed the typical pattern of finding a name described in the previous chapter: He always

54 The 'brew crew' refers to mostly itinerant alcoholics who typically drink Carlsberg Special Brew lager which is 9.0% alcohol.

had some sense of a spirituality that was rooted in a "love for the Earth", and had recognised Paganism as a way to express that feeling. Dave and Lauren are atypical in that this spiritual awareness emerged later in life, perhaps because they had very little opportunity to play in the organic environment as children. Although my fieldwork sample is too small to claim that this is more than a plausible hypothesis, it correlates with existing research discussed in my embodied cognition literature review.

The wilderness effect had a fundamental influence on the emergence of an Eco-Pagan spirituality for these three people, and although wilderness researchers have noted individual spiritual experiences, this is the first time a fieldworker has observed the emergence of a complex 'nature based' spirituality in participants in any location. I arrived at site B within weeks of it being set up, so witnessed all the gradual changes that marked the spiritual growth of Dave, Ray and Lauren, and the latter's 'Green Man' epiphany. Because I was experiencing the spiritual influence of the wilderness effect myself during the same period, I had an embodied understanding of the process that I could interpret within an academic context. This unique combination of embodied understanding, thick ethnography and theoretical analysis has provided significant original insights into site Eco-Paganism. My research not only bears out Harvey's opinion that site Eco-Paganism tests “our understanding of what ‘spirituality’ might mean” (Harvey, 1997b: 3): It also demonstrates how spiritual experiences catalysed by processes of connection have helped create the sub-culture I call site Eco-Paganism. Letcher claimed that Eco-Paganism emerged from new-age traveller culture (Letcher, 2005), and my literature review describes philosophical, religious and political influences, but the wilderness effect is the real power that underlies all these subsequent social influences.

This dramatic example of the power of place helps explain several key characteristics of Eco-Paganism, including participant’s tendency to adopt the name because it reflects their existing spirituality, the emphasis on orthopraxy and eclectic spiritual practice. Furthermore, although UK site Eco-Paganism emerged from the 1992 Twyford Down protest (Letcher, 2005: 556), it is found amongst environmental protesters in other countries, notably those spending time in wilderness (Shaw, 2006; Taylor, B., 2001). Given existing evidence of the power of the wilderness effect to catalyse spiritual experiences, it offers the most plausible explanation for the emergence of site Eco-Paganism on different continents. Cultural influences are far less significant: Although Starhawk's work is influential amongst urban Eco-Pagans, it is largely absent from protest sites, which remain dismissive of mainstream Paganism.

Blurring Boundaries

I found extensive evidence that processes of connection encouraged a recognition that “organism and environment enfold into each other” (Varela et al. 1991: 217), as described by the enactive process model. Rob

described how he felt one evening in the woods when a deep realisation of environmental destruction came to him:

> I felt like Gaia was really screaming out through me, saying please help me. Please help me, and like I started screaming myself and started saying these words. I felt so connected, so at one with the earth that this violence was being done towards me. Um, not me personally, any ego or anything like that, but me as in life, as in this whole unity which I'm connected with.

His identification with a sense of life itself, which is emphatically not his ego, is particularly striking and recalls Greenway's conclusion that processes of connection "facilitate the arousal of nonegoic awareness" (Greenway, 1995: 133). As we have seen such experiences are not uncommon. Taylor found that "no small number of activists report profound experiences of connection to the Earth and its lifeforms" (Taylor, B. 2005: 47) while Eco-Pagan Jodie concluded that site life constructed "a different form of consciousness whereby a person felt a part of nature" (Greenwood, 2005: 107).

Motivation

Environmental campaigners are already committed to activism before they arrive on a protest site and this may have little or nothing to do with processes of connection. However, many activists who arrived on site for rational reasons soon became influenced by the power of place. Although all embodied cognition involves emotional engagement (inter alia, Damasio 1994 and 2003), Plows suggest that it is especially important for activists:

> This is a crucial point in activist narratives as will be evidenced time and again in this chapter, the emotive, personal response - the facts are *felt* rather than merely understood (Plows, 2002: 173).

Plows notes four aspects of this powerful emotional motivation, all of which tie in with my own research findings: First, "[s]ome kind of emotional, spiritual and/or aesthetic connection to *place*, for example, is often peoples' first action trigger" and as we have already seen, place is fundamental to Eco-Paganism. Plows found that a respect for "nature, for animals, for people" were also key motivation factors and this often "had a spiritual dimension". Relationships with other activists, "ties formed under (often) extreme conditions" were also important (Plows, 2002: 208, author's emphasis), and this correlates with research findings on the close relationship between place and community noted by wilderness researchers.

Some activists are initially driven by rational reasons, but develop the kind of feeling for the facts that Plows describes. Kate, a Newbury activist quoted in Merrick's autobiographical account of the protest, is a good

example:

> I am starting to forget myself why I first went down, but I know it was rationalised by well thought out arguments against the Car Culture. Now these arguments have been replaced by a belief system, an irrational commitment to the land, to the trees and to the people who fight to save them (Kate in Merrick, 1996: 128).

Lauren's experience is very similar. Her involvement with environmental activism began when she watched David Bellamy's television series *Turning the Tide* (Bellamy, 1987):

> I watched and I thought if only half of what he's saying is true, why the fuck isn't anyone doing anything about it? [...] I just could not believe it and that's when I started getting active with Friends of the Earth, CND - people like that.

Given that Lauren is a retired teacher and "a very logical person" this rational rather than intuitive approach is to be expected. But, as explained above, the influence of protest site life changed her outlook dramatically and after her meeting with the Green Man she concluded that:

> what was at Twyford Down is living on - it's turned up at [site B]. This feeling, this love of the land, is growing so much in people now. And that is what will win through in the end.

Her rational, logical motivation has been transformed into faith in the power of love for the land. Rob made the same transition, and described the process explicitly:

> I tried for a long time, kind of getting up every morning and sort of reminding myself of the ethical issues that were at stake here and you know, trying to each day re-establish my conviction to do something, and I find that trying to do that on a rational level was insufficient to to - you know - to fulfilling my aims and giving me that energy. And over the past kind of year - couple of years I guess - I've really discovered how much energy one can invoke from nature, on a very intuitive level, [pause] and that I believe that is far more powerful and far more, um, deeply ingrained within oneself than simply rationalising it, and that's fundamentally based on experience and based on living essentially, yeah.

For Rob, Kate and Lauren reason becomes replaced by something ultimately far more powerful; an embodied spiritual understanding of connection to place. This experience may be far more common that we realise: Jane, one of Shaw's informants, was on an anti-uranium blockade near the Kakadu National Park[55] and explained how she "loved to observe

55 Kakadu National Park is situated 250km east of Darwin, in the Northern Territory of

the way the protesters from the cities down south would fall slowly into the rhythms of the land and be captivated by them" (Shaw, 2006). It is this embodied knowing of connection that inspires and motivates the 'folk' spirituality I've described as protest site Eco-Paganism.

Attitude to Urban Life

Many of my participants (6) contrasted the connectedness they felt in the organic environment with what they perceived as the alienating effect of urban life. Lauren compared her old lifestyle with how she lived now:

> It is very difficult when you come from this world, of time and meetings and writing things down. You get right out of touch with yourself.

After over a year living on sites, Dave concluded that when we "shed all [the] stuff" of conventional life "it definitely lets the spiritual side of yourself come out". Ray concurs with Dave's conclusion:

> in this day and age it's just taken away from you [...] your mind's just filled with so much other stuff - well, crap basically [...]. No-one's really in touch with what they actually are or anything, or life. [...] And if you start talking about, you know, the wind and the earth and the fire and the stars people just start laughing at ya [chuckles].

Ian and Adam believed that this lack of understanding is endemic to Western life: Ian lamented that "We are bred not to get it", while Adam told me that we are taught "from the womb" that "this is the way to live", and social reinforcement is all around us "like smoke". Adam contrasted this "psychic pollution" with a sense of "peace" that comes from being "grounded" in the embodied way of knowing that he feels in his stomach.

The sense of connection Adam describes often had a practical expression. Previous ethnographies described different degrees of environmental sensitivity amongst site Eco-Pagans, contrasting the respectful "practical paganism" of Twyford Down (Plows, 2001) with the insensitive rituals Letcher observed at Newbury (Letcher, 2001c). My own ethnographic research, which was more extensive than Letcher's, concurs with Plows, and I observed elements of Permaculture, extensive recycling and considerable sensitively to local ecology amongst protest site Eco-Pagans.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PRACTICE

Magic (Spell work)

Some typical aspects of mainstream Paganism are less apparent amongst site Eco-Pagans, notably magic and practice that involves deities. Magic was only mentioned in two interviews: Jo explained that part of the reason she drew away from Wicca was that "magic was never really [her]

Australia.

thing", while Jake commented that it was not part of his practice. Only three protection spells were cast by site Eco-Pagans throughout my fieldwork, including one by me and one which caused considerable disagreement. Again the earth based/esoteric model helps explain fieldwork findings, especially in the context of Pearson's differentiation of "occult" "ritual magic" from the " 'ordinary magic' of everyday life", which is concerned with "a connection to the Earth" (Pearson, 2007: 101). Her clarification is useful: Whereas "occult" magic is rarely practiced and often disparaged amongst Eco-Pagans, the 'ordinary magic' of connection is fundamental to both urban and site Eco-Paganism. It is this latter understanding of magic which Greenwood uses in her discussion of "magical consciousness", which as we have seen describes a form of embodied knowing (Greenwood, 2005).

Deity

Very few of my participants worked with deity at all, and only Oak honoured a named pantheon deity. Jan did not like talking about *working* with a deity, and has quite a sophisticated understanding of the whole notion:

> Well, I wouldn't call it work. It's, I just like to say hello, and you know. I don't know. Whether it's Her, or something else, or just the land breathing maybe, I don't know, but it's the same kind of feeling. But, I can call Her the Goddess to other people because they understand.

I asked her what she meant by "the land breathing", she explained:

> it's the mushrooms underneath, and all the roots, and the trees intertwining underneath. I mean, in a wood all the trees have joined together and then you've got all these layers of different ecosystems - I think the whole thing makes a complete breathing creature, almost. Which is why, you know, land clearance is so dreadful [...] that is the whole breathing entity of which we should be a part, a symbiotic part, and we're not. That's where it all goes wrong, horribly wrong, isn't it? That's the Goddess, that's who I try and, I don't know, communicate with, talk to, sense, um. Yeah, but I felt wonderful when I was calling Her in and I think people understood what I was trying to say.

Jan was not particularly concerned with naming this phenomena as Goddess or ecosystem or both, partly perhaps because she thought that "we construct our own realities". What was important was her relationship to the breathing land and to her community. It is significant that when Jan invited the Goddess to the Circle at the Land Blessing ritual, she did not call to an unnamed universal deity - *The* Goddess - or a pantheon Goddess, but the local Goddess of that specific area.

John was emphatic that the power of the Awen came from an external force, but did not specify any name:

> It's coming from the great God, the great Goddess, the Universal Architect, whichever tradition you come from, it's external. [...] It's not coming from you, it's coming from something you tap into and work through.

Jake was not "called to certain deities" and Jo had "never really done deity", though she added "to me it's the Old Gods and they're there, they're everywhere". Ray didn't relate to deity because he didn't identify as Pagan and none of my remaining participants mentioned deity, although they did talk about spirits, the Fairy Folk (Ian and Adam), or more diffuse notions of 'energies'.

Ancestors
The ancient burial at site B was very significant for some participants, and ancestors were important for Jo and Dave. John's ritual focused on the burial, but significantly he did not mention it in his interview, while both Jake and Ray only mention the burial in passing. In contrast, the burial and ancestors dominated my interview with Dave, who repeatedly mentioned the spiritual importance of the burial:

> The whole area is a burial site so how can you not be spiritual? How can you not be? You're living on a site of *ancestors*, you know [...] You know, you're living on top of this sacred part of the earth, how can you not be spiritual here? It it draws you in whether you like it or not, you know. They call out to you - our ancient dead.

Jo felt a similar affinity, and felt it was "an honour to work, I think, with [...] this burial place of an ancestor". The place in general was also important:

> you build up that relationship with that land and [pause] and I feel now that that what keeps me here is that bond, with the ancestors and with the spirit that is around us here all the time.

Jo and Dave's fight to protect the site is inspired and supported by the ancestral spirits as well as the nature spirits of place, and as both are inherent in the land this relationship ties in strongly with the main theme of connection. In the previous chapter Cross Bones cemetery illustrated the importance of the cultural aspects of place, and it's significant that a burial site evoking a sense of the ancestors once again becomes a powerful place to think with. Sack's work explored this process by which places "draw together the natural, the social, and the intellectual" (Sack, 1997: 12), and he opines that this complex weave of cultural and physical features "enables place to draw together the three realms, and makes place constitutive of ourselves as agents" (Sack, 1997: 33).

The Erotic
The erotic emerged as a theme amongst urban Eco-Pagans and was important for Rob:

> I've also discovered the importance of like, sexual energy that pervades everything as well, it [...] but that's something as well that channelled and used for empowerment [...] I think it's everywhere, and it's a natural force that um, one can hook oneself up to.

No-one else mentions the erotic but there is an obvious correlation with the themes of connection, energy and empowerment.

EMBODIED SITUATED COGNITION AND THE WILDERNESS EFFECT

We have repeatedly heard how embodied situated cognition uses the immediate environment to think with, notably in the case of Lauren's waterfall. Trocco, who led educational field trips into the Everglades National Park, described an example that illustrates how this process operates in a typical wilderness context. The group leaders found that the wilderness effect alone was rarely enough to shift the student's "years of cultural conditioning". But "when we associated a student's community, and eventually their individual identity, with planetary ecosystems, a kinship between the human community and wild ecosystems developed, and the student's bond with the earth was strengthened". The power of this approach became an "even stronger tool when the explication was able to touch an individual's psyche - as the similarity moved beyond metaphor" (Trocco, 1997). Trocco describes just such an occasion. Carolyn, one of the students on the trip who had some "tense emotional issues", was scared of entering the swamp. Trocco suggest that going into the swamp would be like going into her "psyche or consciousness": "perhaps understanding the swamp, can help you understand yourself". Carolyn agrees to "just think about it as a metaphor" and give it a try, but Trocco comments "I'm not totally sure it's a metaphor" (Trocco, 1997), hinting at a blurring of person and place similar to that described by the enactive process model.

Eco-Paganism typically draws on symbols grounded in "the earth and the seasonal cycles of the natural world" (Salomonsen, 2002: 14), like Jan's description of the Goddess as "the land breathing". That is to say, Eco-Paganism is structured around practices that associate "individual identity, with ... ecosystems". It is thus equivalent to the techniques Trocco used to shift cultural conditioning, so on Trocco's evidence we would expect Eco-Paganism to enhance the wilderness effect. I discussed the impact of belief systems on cognitive extension in Chapter 4,

suggesting that the work of Stepp et al. (Stepp et al., 2003) explained why it was easy to resist the wilderness effect (*Metaphors as Scaffolding*). But their work may also help explain why Eco-Paganism would favour the wilderness effect: If belief systems can "interrupt feedback ... from the sociocultural and biophysical environments" (Stepp et al., 2003), then presumably they can also enhance that feedback, strengthening the cognitive extension described in enactive process model.

The experiences Trocco describes exemplify how the enactive process model works in practice, as do those of Eco-Pagan Rob's. Rob finds it "difficult to cope" in urban environments partly because "in an urban environment everything is constructed um, everything is based on ideas". His difficulties are reminiscent of those described by other participants who found urban life alienating (see *Attitude to Urban Life*), and echo Barry's comments in Chapter 8. Embodied situated cognition in an environment Barry called a "sensory desert" drives Rob "a bit mad", but in a more natural environment, his thinking is very different, and he "can kind of connect and open up those channels again". In each case cognitive extension uses the local environment to make sense of the self and this may be life enhancing, as with Carolyn in the Everglades or difficult, as it is for Rob in the town.

Trocco and his colleagues utilised the powerful "kinship between the human community and wild ecosystems" (Trocco, 1997) and this relationship is clarified by my fieldwork and existing research. First, we know the wilderness effect can contribute to both spiritual experiences and help create community; second, studies show that "social dynamics" and "camaraderie" catalyse spiritual experiences in wilderness (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999: 36; Stringer and McAvoy, 1992: 69); finally, we saw above how important intuitive, emotional ways of knowing - one aspect of embodied situated cognition - are for site Eco-Pagans. Trocco used this dynamic to break through the "years of cultural conditioning" (Trocco, 1997) and it works in a similar way on protest sites.

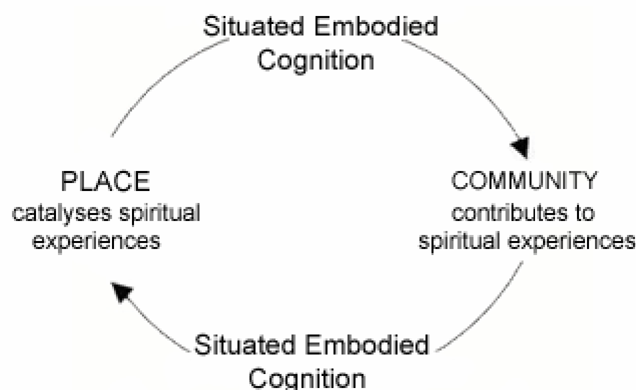

Fig. 8: Place and Community

The synergy of these findings is illustrated in fig. 8: the wilderness effect (place) catalyses spiritual experiences and helps create community which in turn reinforces those same experiences. I do not want to imply that place necessarily comes first: As we saw in the examples of the site B ancestor burial and Cross Bones cemetery (previous chapter), community reinforces the significance of place, thus contributing to its spiritual power. Of course belief and associated practices will be influential too, as discussed above (Stepp et al., 2003). All these interacting factors operate though interwoven processes of embodied situated cognition and are, ceteris paribus, in a self-reinforcing positive feedback loop.

Living on a protest site - or wilderness trekking - will also have significant effects on what Jackson describes as the "body-mind-habitus" (Jackson, 2006: 328) thus contributing to changes in one's being-in-the-world. Jackson claims that changes in our habitus can free "energies bound up in habitual deformations of posture or movement produce an altered sense of self" (Jackson, 2006: 328), which is exactly what the wilderness effect does. A fundamental aspect of this change in habitus is a deepening sense of personal embodiment which I describe above in terms of shifting awareness down the cognitive iceberg, shown in fig. 1 below, which is copied from chapter 4. I explained there that shifting consciousness down the triangle takes us into what Greenwood calls magical consciousness (Greenwood, 2005) which blurs the distinction between self and other, shown in the graphic by the gaps appearing in the side of the triangle, and thus enhances our sense of connection.

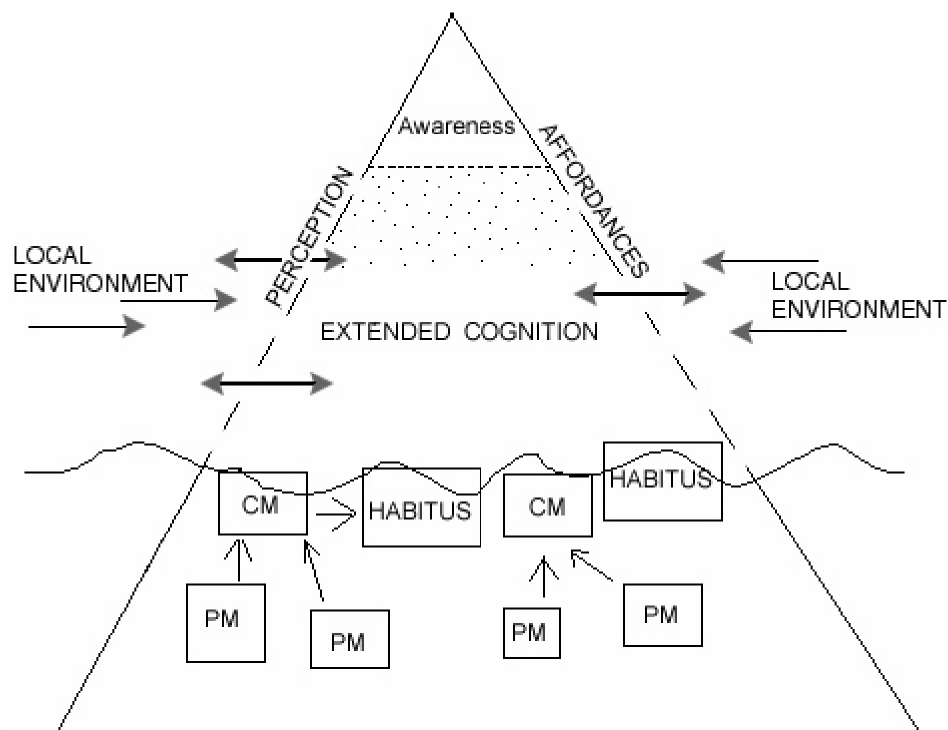

Fig 1: The Cognitive Iceberg
(Reproduced from 'Embodied Situated Cognition: A Synthesis')

It is this slide down the cognitive iceberg that explains the power of all the interrelated processes of connection I have discussed. As Greenway and others have noted, the wilderness effect brings "a shift from culturally reinforced, dualism-producing reality processing to a more nondualistic mode" (Greenway 1995, 131). Although "consciousness remains", it is no longer dominated by "the need-crazed egoic process (especially the making of distinctions)". As noted above (*Processes of Connection*), what remains is "a simpler, 'nonegoic' awareness" which can "open consciousness ... to the more natural flows of information from nature" (Greenway 1995, 132).

Conclusion

I have identified several processes of connection that inform and inspire site Eco-Paganism, each of which functions through embodied situated cognition. All these processes tend to deepen our sense of connection with the organic environment, can enhance a sense of community and personal empowerment and often alters our sense of self: They thus enable a communion with the genius loci which empowers activism, inspires spirituality and informs site Eco-Paganism. Meditation, ritual, entheogens and the felt sense sometimes facilitate site Eco-Pagans in gaining considerable personal insights from 'communication' with the genius loci within which they are enactively enmeshed. All of these processes can shift awareness down the cognitive iceberg making the enactive process of co-creating reality described in chapter 4 more transparent.

All the processes of connection were significant, but the wilderness effect was particularity important, catalysing a spiritual emergence for several people, and playing a fundamental role in the development of site Eco-Paganism. This dramatic example of the power of place helps explain several key characteristics of Eco-Paganism including its origins, emphasis on orthopraxy, and eclectic spiritual practice. Trocco's work suggests that the practices of Paganism will enhance the wilderness effect (Trocco, 1997), and considerable evidence suggests that the processes of connection are mutually reinforcing (inter alia, Berger and McLeod, 2006; Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999; Greenway, 1995).

Greenway's evocative phrase that "civilization is only four days deep" (Greenway, 1995: 129) comes back to me, and I suspect it is even more fragile than that: Removing just some of the trappings of the 21st century can profoundly shift our awareness and that powerful process inspires the spirituality at the heart of the protest movement. In the next chapter I weave together the strands of urban and site Eco-Paganism to reveal the full tapestry of spirituality grounded in embodied situated knowing.

Chapter 10: Eco-Paganism: A "sacred relationship with the world"

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour".
Auguries of Innocence, William Blake

All participants found a "sacred relationship with world" (Zoe) through embodied communication with the spirit of place or "honour[ing] the little weed in the garden" (Jocelyn), a practice Barry described as listening to the threshold brook. Some protest site Eco-Pagans described similar experiences, while others explained how simply living in the woods catalyzed "deep spiritual experiences" (Lauren) that could be life changing. Although there is much common ground, those in each group engaged with place in different ways, and applying the enactive process model can clarify the dynamic relationships between these experiences.

The last three chapters provided a thick ethnography of Eco-Paganism and introduced a complex weave of related themes. Eco-Pagans from across the range identified in my typology (fig. 7) interacted with the processes of connection and thinking with place in different ways. Before turning to my final conclusions, I apply the enactive process model to explain these intricate patterns in detail, and demonstrate the correlation between the threshold brook and the wilderness effect. I thus demonstrate how urban and site Eco-Pagans find a "sacred relationship with world" through various means in very different places.

Reflecting on my autoethnography helps illuminate the overall shape of my fieldwork. This is especially apparent when I unpack my embodied experiences of the processes of connection. From this context I then explain the relationship between these processes and thinking with place using my enactive process model, and identify the importance of intent. In 'Sacred Ecology' I opined that embodied knowing empowered environmental activists (Harris, 1996), and I can now consider that claim more carefully.

Although the erotic wasn't talked about much in interviews, I consider its significance as a subtext, noting the influence of ecofeminism on Eco-Paganism. This influence may help explain the lack of gender differences in participants' ways of knowing, but I offer an alternative hypothesis based on recent research. I conclude by presenting the pattern that has emerged from my fieldwork that shows how my enactive process model explains the Eco-Pagan's "sacred relationship with the world".

Reflection: Autoethnography

My experiences are notable not only because I lived in both worlds during my research, but because

> I *am* the field and at the heart of my research methodology lies a heightened reflexive awareness of my life world that enables me to sense the process of embodied knowing ('Autoethnography: “You’re not just studying then - you’re *living* it”').

Thus, I truly know this sacred relationship - both inside and out. My autoethnography, which was written before the bulk of interviews took place, helps illuminate the patterns of my fieldwork from within. My use of the felt sense is apparent on several occasions, as when "I 'felt' a strong 'energy' while I held 'Mr. Pointy' [Oak’s antlered stag skull]" (thesis: 107). Later, when sitting in the tree, I "can sense anger at the intrusion", and then "get a sense of understanding from the tree" (thesis: 108). I wondered if listening to my intuition was "the most important thing I’ve learnt from Paganism" (thesis: 107), and indeed my training meant that I could easily listen to the felt sense. Being aware of the felt sense requires an embodied reflexivity that enhanced my awareness of my own process, and this is apparent when I was looking for bender poles. On this occasion I needed to open up "my senses to the woods", and recognised that the "the knack" of seeing potential bender poles requires:

> a particular sensory acuity that feels like I'm relaxing into it and opening myself up to the space (thesis: 106).

This sounds like - and felt like - I was shifting my awareness down the cognitive iceberg into a light trance state that both increased my feeling of connection to place and my sensory acuity. Several participants describe similar experiences, notably Rob and Barry.

The impact of the wilderness effect is also apparent when I describe my "feeling of lightness" and "sense of openness" (thesis: 109), and in my ambivalence about returning to an urban life. Although my autoethnography concludes shortly after I returned to London, my practice changed significantly. While on site I wrote:

> When I lived in London I used do a brief ritual to greet the Elements. Why aren’t I doing my Elements ritual anymore? ‘Cos it’s all here! Everyday I go and collect water, everyday I light a fire; I walk on the bare earth and spend most of the day under the open sky. In London I needed to make an effort to stay connected – here it just happens (thesis: 108).

I did indeed have to "make an effort to stay connected" on my return to urban life, and soon began to practice my "ritual to greet the Elements" again.

PROCESSES OF CONNECTION

I identified six related processes which can catalyze a sense of connection or be used intentionally to enhance an existing relationship. One of the most complex of these processes is what Barry called the "threshold brook ... experience". This is a moderated wilderness effect which focuses on specific, perhaps apparently insignificant aspects of the local environment. The power of a classic wilderness like the Grand Canyon can become apparent within days, whereas the less than pristine wilderness of a protest site works its magic over months. In an urban location the influence of the organic environment is diminished even more, hence the need to listen carefully for the quiet voice of the threshold brook. Such subtle embodied communion with place requires an intentional effort which may involve meditation. However, simply taking time to fine-tune our awareness of the organic environment opens us to the sensory richness available in intimate local relationships. As with more typical experiences of the wilderness effect, the threshold brook is deeply healing and can inspire a spiritual sensibility.

The processes of connection are closely interrelated and interact in significant ways, but identifying them individually has heuristic value. Although the significance of each will vary for individuals and across a lifetime, they have recognizably different degrees of importance in my fieldwork overall: In that order, they are the wilderness effect and similar intimate experiences of the organic environment, the felt sense, ritual, trance, meditation and entheogens. I have already detailed how these processes of connection impact on urban and site Eco-Pagans, so focus here on common threads and how my own experience can illuminate the emerging pattern.

All of these have influenced my sense of connection, although different processes have been significant at different times. As I moved between urban and protest site status during my research, I include myself in whichever column (see table below) was appropriate when a given process had the greatest impact. Again my experience is illuminating. The wilderness effect has had a profound effect, and has made me much more attentive to the threshold brook, which suggests this will be a lasting influence. The felt sense has been significant for me in both urban and site situations, and as I have trained within a Tradition, I would be expected to find it easy to use. I now realize that I have been using my felt sense in a fairly ad hoc way for years, in that it is fundamental to many aspects of my Pagan practice, and again my experience echoes that of participants. In addition, the way a Focusing interview can reveal an "embodied understanding" of an "interbodied experience" (Todres, 1999: xx [2007: 39]) parallels the experiences described by participants of the role of the felt sense in healing and spiritual connection (inter alia, Mary and Mark).

Processes of Connection	Urban Eco-Pagans	Site Eco-Pagans
The wilderness effect/threshold brook	Adrian, Barry, Emily, Gordon, Jocelyn, Mark, Mary, Michael, Sally, Zoe	Adam, Adrian, Dave, Debbie, Ian, Jake, Jan, Jo, John, Lauren, Millie, Oak, Rob, Ray
- *Childhood play*	Adrian, Barry, Emily, Gordon, Jocelyn, Sekhara, Sally, Zoe	Adam, Debbie, Ian, Jake, Jan, Jo, John, Oak, Rob, Ray
- *Gardening*	(Adrian) [56]	Jo
The felt sense	Adrian, Barry, Emily, Gordon, Jocelyn, Mark, Mary, Michael, Sekhara, Sally, Zoe	Adam, Adrian, Dave, Debbie, Ian, Jake, Jan, Jo, John, Lauren, Millie, Oak, Rob, Ray
Ritual, including dance and similar practices	Adrian, Barry, Emily, Gordon, Jocelyn, Mark, Mary, Michael, Sekhara, Sally, Zoe	Adrian, Dave, Debbie, Jan, Jo, John, Millie, Oak, Ray
Deep trance	Barry, Gordon, Mark, Sekhara. (Adrian)	
Meditation or contemplation including 'sitting out'	Adrian, Barry, Emily, Gordon, Jocelyn, Mark, Mary, Michael, Sekhara, Sally, Zoe	Adam, Dave, Debbie, Ian, Jan, Jo, Rob
Entheogens	Adrian, Barry, Mark	Ian, Jake, Lauren, Rob

Table #1: Processes of Connection

When I first became involved with Paganism, formal ritual was very significant as it was my main practice. Over time such ritual became less important, and in this my experience parallels that of most participants. I practiced ritual on site and in my urban life, and like other Eco-Pagans found simple, personal rituals much more significant than formal ones. Trance has had a significant influence on my spiritual path, although I do not practice as regularly or - I estimate - as deeply, as Barry, Gordon, Mark and Sekhara, and not at all while on site. I can only guess why deep trance practice is entirely absent from my site fieldwork, but practical difficulties seem to be the most likely factor. Meditation has become more important for me over the last few years, but I meditated much less on site for purely practical reasons, and this may help explain why fewer site Eco-Pagans do so. Although we might expect meditation to be more common amongst Traditionalized Eco-Pagans, reference to my 'Typology of Eco-Paganism' diagram (fig. 7) shows that the opposite is the case, which further suggests that circumstances rather than temperament limits

56 I worked as a part-time gardener for a few month several years ago and found it significant.

meditation on site.[57] Entheogens have had an occasional and often profound influence on my spiritual path. Because I have only used entheogens in an urban context, I make that practice almost as common in both groups.

Processes of Connection and Thinking with Place

The processes of connection are intimately braided with thinking with place, and in teasing out this complex relationship I need to clarify the different ways in which each can operate. There is far less distinction between processes of connection and thinking with place that this analysis might imply, but it remains a useful exercise. Processes of connection can function in two modes: Some - notably the wilderness effect and some similar experiences - work mainly in the background to enable an embodied awareness of connection. Others, like the felt sense and trance, enable us to be aware of specific instances of connection, while the threshold brook, ritual, meditation and entheogens can function in both ways. Thinking with place has two similar modes: It operates in the background all the time for everyone but can become more palpable. We think with place much the time although we are rarely aware of it (inter alia, Clark: 1997; Preston: 2003), and how Eco-Pagans are influenced by the places they occupy is apparent in both the power of the wilderness effect and in the discomfort some report when in an urban environment (inter alia, Barry, Emily, Ian and Rob). But all Eco-Pagans sometimes use processes of connection like ritual, trance, meditation, entheogens and the felt sense to think with a place more explicitly.

These facets describe similar phenomena from different perspectives, as they all depend on the relationship between the tip of the cognitive iceberg and the rest of that triangle: The wilderness effect and related experiences are background thinking with place that can disrupt "culturally reinforced, dualism-producing reality processing" (Greenway, 1995: 131), while the felt sense, trance, meditation, entheogens and aspects of ritual, operate by shifting awareness down the cognitive iceberg. As Greenway notes, the "nondualistic" mode of consciousness produced in extreme instances of the wilderness effect is similar to some states produced by meditation or psychedelics (Greenway, 1995: 131-132). In each case an awareness can emerge that organism and environment are enfolded (Varela et al., 1991: 217) and our "cognitive identity" is created by a "communion with ... landscape" (Preston, 2003: 100).

Intent plays an important role throughout. Although background thinking with place proceeds below conscious awareness, we can resist the wilderness effect (Greenway, 2006; Taylor, 2006), and listening to the threshold brook requires attention. Trance and the felt sense are usually

57 This remains a moot point. It may be that site Eco-Pagans have less of a need to use meditation as a process of connection because of the impact of the wilderness effect, but other factors like the availability of entheogens ('magic mushrooms') and cultural influences complicate any such conclusion.

deliberately used to increase our awareness of connection, while the influence of ritual, meditation and entheogens depends on the practitioner's intent, and can be used to enhance a specific relationship or encourage a more general sense of connection. In practice all these processes are fluid, simply because the intentional 'self' that is thinking is always *woven into* place, but in each case:

> The environmental experiences that structure cognition will be different depending upon where the agent of knowledge is located, what practices the agent engages in, and what cultural values the agent possesses (Preston, 2003: 72).

For site Eco-Pagans the steady tone of the wilderness effect is the primary source of an embodied sense of connection, while for urban Eco-Pagans it is the more subtle voice of the threshold brook, but in each case it inspires and empowers activism.

Motivation

In his study of environmental philosophy, Hay emphatically states that "*the wellsprings of a green commitment ... are not, in the first instance, theoretical: nor even intellectual. They are, rather, pre-rational*" (Hay, 2002: 2; author's emphasis). This is an important insight, with which I concur. However, he then claims that this pre-rational impulse springs from an "instinctual and deep felt horror" at "the scale of the destruction wrought" on our environment, and lists diverse thinkers whose "observations rub shoulders" with his own (Hay, 2002: 3). In fact there is little common ground between the thinkers Hay lists, beyond an agreement that the impulse is pre-rational in some way: Shepard diagnosed a dislocation from nature (Shepard, 1982) and Wilson hypothesized an innate "biophilia" (Wilson, E.O., 1993: 350), while the poet Snyder wrote that the inspirational power of the organic environment is "rooted in the belly" (Snyder, 1980: 3). Although each diagnosis is helpful, none have the explanatory power of the insight common to ecopsychology, the cognitive science of enactivism, Bateson's anthropology and the philosophy of Clark and Preston, that "[t]he physical environment is not just a site in which mind operates; it is a characterful place that influences the products of the mind" (Preston, 2003: 88).

By integrating these insights into the enactive process model and applying it to my fieldwork material, I have revealed how place provides activists with a powerful inspiration that they interpret as spiritual. The processes of connection I have mapped offer a solution to the dislocation Shepard saw, clarifies Wilson's notion of biophilia and fleshes out Snyder's metaphor.

Both thinking with place and the processes of connection are "pre-rational" in the sense that they do not involve consciously thinking

through propositions. They are grounded in a more fundamental embodied cognition that operates largely outside conscious awareness. However, we must be cautious, as 'pre-rational' hints at dualistic notions of 'reason' as opposed to emotion. In fact Damasio's explanation that emotion is integral to cognition (inter alia, Damasio, 1994; 2003) is borne out in Plows' discussion on emotional knowing amongst activists:

> It is not that there are rational responses (sound) and emotional responses (faintly spurious) ... rational appreciation is symbiotically connected to the emotional experience (Plows, 2002: 173).

With this caveat, Hay's claim that the source of environmental commitment is pre-rational is confirmed by my research, but the consensus I identify is more useful than his vague invocation of "instinctual ... horror" (Hay, 2002: 3).

Sex, Gender and the Erotic

The Erotic

Although my Eco-Paganism literature review highlighted the influence of ecofeminism, there was little explicit evidence of it in my interviews. However as noted in that review, the influence of both feminism and ecofeminism pervades the movement, and it's apparent in Eco-Paganism's appreciation of embodied knowing. Several ecofeminists discuss erotic embodied knowing (inter alia, LaChapelle, 1992; Starhawk 1982), and the sensual body is important for many Pagans, while five participants - two men and three women - spoke in terms of the erotic. The erotic is a complex concept involving far more than genital sexuality, and ties in with the main themes of this thesis. The "sensual connection" of the erotic engenders "mutuality and empowerment" and draws on passionate, embodied ways of knowing (Isherwood, 1996: 53). These themes are apparent in the interviews: the erotic body as a source of knowing and connection (Gordon, Jocelyn and Zoe), ecstatic ritual (Mary) and erotic power as a source of "energy [...] for empowerment" (Rob). In fact, as I suggested in 'Sacred Ecology', the erotic is process of connection (Harris, 1996: 152). Given that sexual ecstasy is a dramatic example of a shift in awareness down the cognitive iceberg, and is our most familiar experience of deep connection, we might be surprised that the erotic wasn't more significant. However, "ours is not an erotic culture" (Harris, 1996: 152), so perhaps this is to be expected.

Gendered Ways of Knowing

There were no obvious gender difference in preferred ways of knowing amongst Eco-Pagans, with women and men showing equal sensitivity to their embodied knowing. The influence of ecofeminism may be a factor, but recent research emphasizing the role of social context in determining preferred modes of cognition offers a more grounded possibility. Ryan and David question the idea that there are "stable, gender-related

differences" in how "people acquire and process information", and conclude that "individuals can utilize varying degrees of connected or separate approaches to knowledge ... depending on the demands of the social context" (Ryan and David, 2004: 699). Their research suggests that men and women tend to use "connected knowing" within a group they identified with (Ryan and David, 2004: 693), and given the close bond amongst Eco-Pagans - especially on a protest site - we would expect a predominance of approaches which emphasize embodied cognition. It also seems likely that processes of connection can overcome some of the more obvious aspects of socialization, but without comparative research this remains no more than a plausible hypothesis.

Conclusion: A Model of Spiritual Understanding

This chapter used the enactive process model to explicate the overall patterns of my fieldwork material. I analyzed the dynamics of the processes of connection and their intimate relationship with thinking with place, clarifying the different ways in which each can operate. I explained how the power of place can inspire activists, unpacked the significance of the erotic in Eco-Paganism and clarified the lack of gender difference in preferred ways of knowing amongst participants.

My fieldwork touched the individual threads of many lives, and my writing has woven them into a tapestry with a distinct pattern: By various means we slip down the cognitive iceberg to become aware of "a larger Mind of which the individual mind is only a subsystem" (Bateson, 2000 [1972]: 467). This plunge into the deep body awakens us from the dualistic dream that we are separate from the "wisdom of the body" (Harris, 1996: 152). We experience this psychological shift phenomenologically as a sense of spiritual connection that allows us to "attune ... to the natural world", and can feel

> [l]ike being in a great big dream, relevant messages are being spoken everywhere, telling me things I need to hear, and to which I need respond (Fisher, 2006: 103).

Such messages were spoken by Lauren's waterfall and the threshold brook, and we heard of their power to change lives. In as much as the immanent sacred is that which enables communion with the world and offers spiritual knowing, its source is the deep body which blurs into our organic environment. However deeply we drink from this source - a threshold brook perhaps - the depth of potential implicit knowing will never be drained and the experience of connection remains ineffable.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

" 'What has changed, now that this book has been written?' "
(Milton, 2002: 147).

I began this thesis with a reference to how my 1995 paper made an initial foray into the territory of embodied knowing. That excursion opened new vistas, and further exploration has revealed rich potential. My initial aims and objectives, (see Appendix 1), have now been met: I have determined the primary roles of embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism, though further complexity remains; I identified appropriate theories of embodied knowledge and developed a hermeneutics of embodiment that enabled my fieldwork. To a great extent, then, I have answered the questions I implicitly asked in my 1995 paper, and have clarified the process of embodied knowing and its role in Eco-Paganism.

To conclude, I present and then discuss the argument that has emerged from my research. My argument notes several original contributions to research, which I discuss in detail. Before closing, I consider the relevance of my work to related debates and make suggestions for further research.

THE ARGUMENT

In summary, I make the following claims:

1) Existing research shows that key aspects of cognition are situated and embodied (inter alia, Varela et al., 1991), such that we often think with cultural artifacts (Burkitt, 1999: 26) and place (inter alia, Preston, 2003).

2) This process involves such an intimate relationship between the skin enclosed body and the local environment that conventional notions of 'self' and 'other' are revealed as, at best, partial.

3) Because our cognitive processes are intimately bound up with our surroundings, place has a profound influence on our being-in-the-world. Place operates in the background all the time but we sometimes think with place more explicitly.

4) My fieldwork showed that many Eco-Pagans use an enhanced sensitivity to embodied knowing in their spiritual practice. This has been identified in other contexts as using somatic modes of attention to attend "to and with one's body" (Csordas 1993: 138) or as a sensitivity to a felt sense (inter alia, Gendlin, 1981).

5) I identified six processes which create a sense of connection to the organic environment. Some of these processes are used intentionally, while others operate in the background. Although these processes of connection had been discussed before, their significance to Eco-Paganism had not been fully recognized.

6) Eco-Pagans sometimes use these processes of connection to think with a place.

7) Living on a protest site can catalyse the emergence of a complex 'nature based' spirituality that many come to identify as Paganism. This results from a type of wilderness effect (Greenway, 1995:128) and can be explained by reference to points (1), (2) and (3).

8) Urban Eco-Pagans experience the same process less intensely through their intentional connection to a specific place - a "threshold brook" - that provides a "deepening sense of place" (Patterson, n.d.).

9) Training in spiritual practices enables urban Eco-Pagans to use the felt sense - a process of connection - to commune with flora, specific places and (less often) fauna. Similar experiences amongst untrained site Eco-Pagans are facilitated by the wilderness effect. These experiences were profound and spirituality significant.

I conclude that:

10) The processes of connection and thinking with place are fundamental to embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism, and help explain many of its distinctive aspects.

Discussion

Claims 1, 2 and 3 are based on existing research discussed in my embodied cognition literature review (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I integrate this research into a model of embodied knowing I call the enactive process model, which I graphically illustrate with the cognitive iceberg diagram. Because our cognitive processes are intimately bound up with our surroundings, place has a profound influence on our being-in-the-world. This influence is apparent in research correlating childhood play in the organic environment with heightened adult environmental awareness (inter alia, Cobb, 1977) and extensive evidence of the wilderness effect (inter alia, Greenway, 1995).

Claim 4 is original and significant. Bado-Fralick opined that Wiccan training can be understood in terms of Csordas's somatic modes of attention (Bado-Fralick, 2005), but I develop her discussion by showing that Gendlin's theory is more useful (inter alia, Gendlin, 1981), and then illustrate how the felt sense is used in Eco-Paganism.

Claim 5 is original and significant. My fieldwork identified six processes which enhance a sense of connection to the organic environment: These are the wilderness effect and similar intimate experiences of the organic environment, the felt sense, ritual, trance, meditation and entheogens. All these processes have been widely discussed, but in most cases their

significance in Eco-Paganism has not been recognized. Several researchers have noted the role of ritual in Eco-Paganism (inter alia, Letcher, 2002; Plows, 1998a; Taylor, 2001), while Plows and Shaw noted the significance of childhood play in the organic environment for environmental activists (Plows 1998b: 136; Shaw, 2004: 132). However, no previous study has noted all six processes of connection or analyzed how they function in Eco-Paganism. My application of the enactive process model to theorize these processes is also original and significant.

While some of the processes of connection operate in the background, some can be applied intentionally, and my fieldwork showed that Eco-Pagan practice enhances the power of the wilderness effect and thinking with place (claims 8 and 9). As the wilderness effect and thinking with place contribute to Eco-Pagan motivation, this finding has significance for motivation research.

My fieldwork identified participants who developed a complex 'nature based' spirituality while living on protest sites, which some came to identify as Paganism. The evidence supports my claim (7), that such spiritual emergence is at least partly catalyzed by the wilderness effect (Greenway, 1995), and is best explained by reference to claims (1), (2) and (3). Although researchers agree that the wilderness effect can catalyze spiritual experiences, this had never been observed on a protest site or been explicitly associated with a specific spiritual identity.

Given the considerable power of the processes of connection and thinking with place within Eco-Paganism, I expect their influence to be apparent elsewhere. In as much as this is the case, my research findings will have widespread relevance for several disciplines, including religious studies, anthropology, sociology and ecopsychology.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

I have highlighted several original and significant contributions made by my research. My enactive process model, set out in chapter 4, is an original synthesis that develops existing research. The model has been a valuable tool for interpreting Eco-Paganism and it is capable of explicating all the processes of connection. Given that the enactive process model has explanatory power in both religious studies and ecopsychology, it is likely to prove valuable in other contexts.

Although all the processes of connection have been subjected to considerable research, discussion of their role in Eco-Paganism was minimal prior to this thesis, and my identification of the significance of place and the wilderness effect is original. My application of the enactive process model to provide a detailed analysis of how these processes interact is entirely original and has considerable significance beyond this thesis. The main concern of ecopsychology has been to find means to

overcome what is perceived as a widespread alienation of western people from the organic environment (Roszak, Gomes, and Kanner: 1995). Thus, my identification of fundamental processes of connection, which can be further theorized using the enactive process model, makes a significant contribution to ecopsychology.

One of the most personally significant experiences of my fieldwork was observing the gradual emergence of a deep spiritual awareness in several participants (Chapter 9; *Spiritual Emergence)*. This was the first fieldwork discussion of the emergence of a complex 'nature based' spirituality in participants in any location. My observation demonstrates that Eco-Paganism is a spirituality of place, which in turns means that place is more important to religious studies than usually presented.

My research explains many of the distinctive aspects of Eco-Paganism (claim 10) and moves beyond published work on the subject. Letcher claimed that "the language spoken and by the myths and narratives shared around the campfires, the hearths of the protest camps” (Letcher, 2001b) was the driving force behind Eco-paganism. Although my research illustrates that this kind of social bonding is significant, it functions in tight co-operation with the processes of connection, notably the wilderness effect (Chapter 9). Taylor emphasizes the role of formal ritual (Taylor, B., 2005b) in US Earth First! Eco-Paganism, and although my research is exclusively based in the UK, it seems unlikely that the US movement would be unaffected by the processes of connection I identify. My research shows how profound spiritual experiences can be catalyzed by processes of connection and that those processes have helped create the entire spiritual sub-culture I call site Eco-Paganism.

While Campbell and McMahon discussed the role of Focusing in spiritual practice (Campbell and McMahon, 1985), they don't explore spiritual training or Paganism. My research is the first to identify the use of the felt sense by Pagans, and uniquely explores its role as a process of connection to commune with place, flora and fauna (claim 9). By identifying that many Eco-Pagans use the felt sense, I have provided a new and powerful approach to understanding similar practices. Given that at least some Eco-Pagan healers use the felt sense, it seems likely that healers in other religious movements will do, too. At the very least this insight will provide Eco-Pagans and the wider Pagan community a better understanding of their own practice. By explicitly integrating Focusing into Pagan training we can learn to use the felt sense even better.

In addition to the original contribution of these descriptive and theoretical conclusions, my methodology develops existing work in original ways. My embodied hermeneutics builds on existing research to provided a powerful and flexible means of researching embodied knowing. Although Todres (2007) has developed a similar approach, my methodology has several original features, notably the Focusing Interview. My chosen

methodology was very effective in accessing the embodied knowing of my participants, a tacit knowledge which Nonaka and Takeuchi note is "hard to formalize and communicate" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995: 56). My methodology is effective and can be applied with minimal training, so it can be usefully applied elsewhere.

WIDER RELEVANCE

My research is significant for research into Paganism, New religious movements, embodiment, cognitive neuroscience and religion, religion and nature, spirituality and social change, and ecopsychology. I am engaged in all of these areas, in some cases proactively. It is impractical to discuss the relevance of my research to all these areas, so I shall focus on several key topics.

Relational Epistemologies

Many of participants explain their intimate relationships with aspects of the organic environment in terms of spirits of place, and I use a situated embodied epistemology to understand this process. Both take my work close to the discussion of relational epistemologies and ontologies (Bird-David, 1999). Harvey explains that contemporary animists are concerned with "particular ways of being related to the world" that challenge "discourses that divide spirit and flesh, soul and body, subject and object ... people and environment, and so on" (Harvey, 2005: 83). Ingold's work on the "poetics of dwelling" is grounded in a relational notion of personhood where the self inheres "in the unfolding of the relations set up by virtue of its positioning in an environment" (Ingold, 2000: 11). Exploring how my work engages with this "new animism" (Harvey, 2005: 83) lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but fruitful discussions remain to be had.

Re-enchantment Theory

Several theorists of Eco-Paganism - including myself - use the language of enchantment (Letcher 2001a; Chaper 7). Although such use is not intended to engage with Weber's re-enchantment hypothesis, it does raise the question of whether Eco-Pagans are 're-enchanted'. Ruckbie defined Weberian re-enchantment as using "non-rational modes of knowing, a reevaluation of mystery, mythologization, magical practice and the seeking of magical salvation, the belief in personal gods and in a living, spiritual world in which everything is interconnected, an individual perception of empowerment, a high level of the extent of re-enchantment in everyday life and attitudes (saturation of the life-world), the objectivisation of culture, of 're-' enchantment (a perceived change in beliefs and attitudes) and a resistance to disenchantment" (Ruckbie, 2005). Ruckbie's research into mainstream Pagans concluded that they were re-enchanted, because the majority of his sample showed all these traits. A few of these traits are apparent amongst Eco-Pagans, who typically believe in an interconnected world and emphasize personal

empowerment. There is some mythologization amongst Eco-Pagans, but I found less than Letcher (inter alia, 2001b, 2004) or Butler (2003), which suggests that the movement has changed over time. While one could argue that "non-rational modes of knowing", are apparent amongst Eco-Pagans, this dualistic characterization implies that mind is to rational as body is to non-rational, which this thesis disputes. (See, inter alia, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

I conclude that most of the're-enchantment' traits are not found amongst Eco-Pagans, and those that are - a sense of connection and personal empowerment - are adequately explained by the processes of connection and the enactive process model. In contrast to my approach, Weber's theory is quite disembodied and ignores the power of place, but without engaging in a extended critique of the re-enchantment hypothesis, it simply doesn't explain Eco-Paganism as well as my alternative.

Further Research

Embodied Situated Cognition and Religious Practice

My research shows the importance of embodied situated cognition in Eco-Paganism, yet this remains almost uncharted territory for religious studies, so the potential for further research is considerable. To my knowledge, no research has been done into the impact of different physical spaces, understood as a whole sensorium, on religious practice. This approach could be applied to practice in the organic environment, in homes, and in religious buildings, either those built for the purpose or adapted by worshippers. This is such a huge field that further suggestions remain beyond the scope of this thesis, but I have identified Cross Bones graveyard, discussed in Chapter 8, as my next research project.

Motivation

Research, notably my own, shows that the processes of connection have a positive effect on activist motivation (inter alia, Cobb, 1997; Plows, 2002; Wells and Lekies, 2006). This in itself deserves further research, but my fieldwork also strongly suggested that Eco-Pagan practice can enhance the wilderness effect, and thus increase motivation (Chapter 9). Anderson found it difficult to sustain his activism when he no longer lived on a protest site, finding that "in normal/civil society other aspects of the self re-emerge, themselves encouraged and strengthened by the norms, prohibitions and customs of these spaces" (Anderson, J., 2004: 53). My research suggests that Eco-Pagan practice could have ameliorated that situation, but this remains no more than an enticing possibility. Given the importance of the topic, the question of the role of embodied situated cognition in human motivation is a key area for future research.

The Felt Sense in Religious Practice

I noted in chapter 4 that although my research is historically and

culturally situated, there is clear potential in exploring to what extent my theory works in other contexts. Most of the participants in my research used the felt sense in their practice, and previous research suggests that the same is true of other contemporary Pagans. (See Chapter 8: *The Felt Sense and Somatic Modes of Attention*). It seems at least likely that the felt sense plays a key - and unrecognised - role in contemporary Pagan practice, and this would benefit from further research.

Cross Cultural Eco-Paganism
My research focused on UK Eco-Paganism, and although my findings are consistent with work done in the USA (inter alia, Salomonsen, 2002; Taylor, B., 2001), there is evidence of significant differences. Taylor reports the kind of ecstatic ritual practice at US protest sites once found in the UK (Taylor, B., 2001: 228), and discovering whether such practice still occurs would help explain its current absence here. It is less clear how the US equivalent of urban Eco-Paganism would compare with the UK form. The differences between US and UK Paganism are under-researched, and a comparative study of Eco-Paganism would prove valuable. Very little research has been undertaken into Australian Eco-Paganism, but urban and site based forms exist, notably the 'feral' eco-activists who St John compares with the Twyford Donga Tribe (St John, 2000: 208). One key question would be to what extent Eco-Paganism in other countries emerged from a relationship to place, and how influential cultural factors, like Starhawk's books, are: In essence, are the findings of this thesis cross-cultural?

Conclusion

My argument set out the main findings of my research, and concluded that the processes of connection and thinking with place are the keys to understanding embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism. I presented my contributions to research, which I outline in my closing paragraph. The interdisciplinary nature of my work makes it relevant to a number of fields, so I only consider its relationship to key debates before making suggestions for further research.

So, to answer the question posed at the start of this chapter, what has changed, now that this thesis has been written? This thesis presents the first detailed ethnography of Eco-Paganism and highlights its importance. In doing so, I show how place, often neglected in religious studies, is fundamental to spiritual experience, thus encouraging new approaches to research. I offer a new model of embodied situated cognition and demonstrate its practical application to religious studies: given the relevance of the enactive process model to ecopsychology, I suggest it has wider explanatory potential. Furthermore, I show how the felt sense, previously absent from Pagan studies, can provide a new approach to the field. My methodology has contributed to the development of Focusing as a tool of phenomenological research. Finally, my theorization of the

processes of connection has considerable potential, notably for religious studies and ecopsychology, and I, for one, will continue to explore their powerful influence.

Appendix 1: Original Aims and objectives of the project as registered with the University of Southampton, February 2004

Primary aim:
To determine how notions of 'embodied knowledge' can be used to interpret the practice of Eco-Paganism.

Major sub-aims:

1. To survey notions of embodied knowledge in religious studies, cognitive science, bodywork, psychology, psychoanalytic theory and philosophy.

1. To establish which theories of embodied knowledge can be applied to researching the practice of Eco-Paganism.

1. To apply these theories to a relevant case study group, using ethnology, participant observation and interviews, to evaluate methodologies and orientate further research.

1. To develop a 'hermeneutics of embodiment' methodology based on the work of Strobel and Halprin

5. To research a range of Eco-Pagan practice utilising this methodology.

Appendix 1: Focusing - Short Form

1. Clear a space
How are you? What's between you and feeling fine?
Don't answer; let what comes in your body do the answering.
Don't go into anything.
Greet each concern that comes. Put each aside for a while, next to you.
Except for that, are you fine?

2. Felt Sense
Pick one problem to focus on.
Don't go into the problem.
What do you sense in your body when you sense the whole of that problem?
Sense all of that, the sense of the whole thing, the murky discomfort or the unclear body-sense of it.

3. Get a handle
What is the quality of the felt sense?
What one word, phrase, or image comes out of this felt sense?
What quality-word would fit it best?

4. Resonate
Go back and forth between word (or image) and the felt sense.
Is that right?
If they match, have the sensation of matching several times.
If the felt sense changes, follow it with your attention.
When you get a perfect match, the words (images) being just right for this feeling, let yourself feel that for a minute.

5. Ask
"What is it, about the whole problem, that makes me so _________?
When stuck, ask questions:
What is the worst of this feeling?
What's really so bad about this?
What does it need?
What should happen?
Don't answer; wait for the feeling to stir and give you an answer.
What would it feel like if it was all OK?
Let the body answer
What is in the way of that?

6. Receive
Welcome what came. Be glad it spoke.
It is only one step on this problem, not the last.
Now that you know where it is, you can leave it and come back to it later.
Protect it from critical voices that interrupt.
Does your body want another round of focusing, or is this a good stopping place?

Gendlin, 2003