

Call for Papers
Special Issue on Religion, Disability and the Environment, Fall 2014
Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology
Guest Editors: Julia Watts Belser & Sharon V Betcher

We invite papers for a special issue of *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* on “Religion, Disability and the Environment” to be published Fall 2014. This issue will examine the ethical, religious and/or spiritual implications of “crippled” or disabled embodiment upon ecotheology, while simultaneously considering how the environmental crisis shapes our conceptions of disability.

By considering ecological discourse from the locus of critical disability studies, we seek to ask how disability can be for ecological thought something more than a scare tactic for rectifying ecosystemic ingress. Working at this nexus invites questions: How does the specter of disability haunt environmental activism? How might disability be reimagined as a vital, provocative element of sustainable culture or eco-spirituality? What thought does postapocalyptic literature, wherein the cripp becomes the pivotal figuration, now make possible? How can disability studies draw our attention to the despised or rejected body, highlighting the ethical and theological injustice of sacrifice zones? What would it mean to think of earth itself as cripp as we transition through the Anthropocene?

Yet disability is an increasingly prevalent experience of the Anthropocene era owing to the eruption of what Rob Nixon has termed the “slow violence” of off-loaded ecological risks. The geopolitics of ecoinjustice as well as the uncontrollable circulation of ecological contaminants and/or of ecological “accidents” predetermine susceptibility to life-time disability. As new epidemics and catastrophes blur distinctions between culture and nature, we must begin to think of disability as human on human injustice, especially where disability intersects with race, gender, and class injustice to compound environmentally marginalized and minoritized communities. How do these dimensions of social injustice resulting in disablement change our understanding of disability? Where do these dimensions of social precaritization and the positive appreciation of cripp difference intersect?

Critical disability studies recognizes the positive, creative dimensions of disability, an awareness that disability can school us—in the words of Rosemarie Garland-Thompson—“to abide the unexpected, to live with dissonance, to rein in the impulse to control.”¹ These insights are strikingly parallel to ecological ethicists’ call to relinquish our quest for the domination of nature and teachings regarding the spiritual virtues. What impact might this interface between ecology and disability have on religious, ethical and/or spiritual discourses? How do spiritual virtues help us think differently at this intersection of ecology and disability?

Please submit your paper of no more than 6000 words by November 1, 2013. We ask authors to email paper submissions simultaneously to Sharon Betcher at betcher-rice@comcast.net and Julia Watts Belser at juliawattsbelser@missouristate.edu. If you are interested in submitting a paper, we encourage you to be in touch with us in advance of the deadline.

¹ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” *Bioethical Inquiry* Vol. 9 (2012): 342.