

NARRATIVE REPORT

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Paper Presentation:

***Mimēsis* and (eco)Logical Design: the Cosmotheistic Basis of Sustainable Architecture**

Third Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture
Amsterdam, Netherlands, 23-26 July 2009

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC) is a multi-disciplinary group and the one scholarly venue I have discovered that actually combines my interests in the historical, theoretical and practical background of environmental design. Surprisingly, whether we consciously recognize it as such, environmental design is deeply rooted in religion, nature and culture because it is based on the simple fact that the sun rises in the east every morning, which also forms the basis for many religions (Eastern and Western) and the foundation of culture. Historically, the correlation between nature and cultural practices has determined the form of our buildings; it is especially important with current environmental awareness to understand historical relationships between architecture, culture and nature in order to build more sustainably today.

Attending the ISSRNC conference has been a beneficial complement to my research in sustainable design, alternative energy systems, and interactions between sustainability and social, religious and cultural systems. The new knowledge gained from attending the conference will be a great benefit to future courses I will be teaching such as the multi-disciplinary course in sustainable water resource engineering I will be co-teaching this fall with a colleague in the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering. Attending the conference gave me a new understanding of ecological, cultural and spiritual attitudes toward water—a metaphysical conception of how water and the built environment can work together in ways that go beyond mere water conservation. The new knowledge I gained from the ISSRNC Conference will also be useful for a new course I am developing called Metaphysics of Sustainability in the Department of Architecture + Interiors. As a result of this conference, I have been invited by the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture to give a public talk to the American Institute of Architects here in Philadelphia.

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture is a group of scholars with whom I hope to maintain a continued relationship. In addition to meeting faculty from the USA, I have newfound colleagues in international universities such as York University, UK; Free University Amsterdam, La Tobe University, Australia; University of Queensland, Australia; University of Lyon, France; Bath Spa University, UK; and the University of Amsterdam. I hope to network in the future with these newfound colleagues as a co-Director of the Drexel Engineering Cities Initiative (DECI), a multidisciplinary group comprised of all colleges across the university dedicated to the engineering of cities and the creation of environmentally sustainable urban habitats that function for people and society.







