



# LOGOS

- the journal of CAPSR, the Community Association  
of Pacific School of Religion

February 2008

## Reflections from Africa by Catherine Lauber

*We witnessed traditional ritual dances of the Achole tribe, dances which had been in danger of being lost forever.  
We broke bread with and laughed with a former LRA soldier.  
We danced and sang with orphans and widows.*



*For more about the immersion trip to Uganda and Rwanda, see pages 6 and 7. For the scoop on the intersession Border Immersion trip, see pages 8 and 9.*



*We heard testimony from and gave hugs to those abandoned members of society suffering from HIV/AIDS.  
We saw God reflected in the beautiful faces and smiles of everyone we met.*



Next month's issue will turn a spotlight on THE ARTS. We invite submissions of poetry, paintings, photography, drama, fiction, film reviews, art reflections, or anything else artistic that fits on a page. Come on out, all you CARE fans! The priority deadline for the issue is March 8. More submission guidelines are listed on page 2.

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*Please Note: LOGOS is a publication by and for the Community Association of Pacific School of Religion (CAPSR). The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Pacific School of Religion, CAPSR, or CAPSR Council. This newsletter exists to encourage and continue the dialogues happening elsewhere on campus, and so we invite submissions from all community members.*

## **Logos Submission Guidelines**

### Who can submit

All members of the Pacific School of Religion community are invited to submit to Logos: students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, family members, and supporters of PSR.

### What to submit

Original work of interest to the PSR community:

- Opinion pieces, news, feature stories
- Reviews: books, movies, concerts, albums, lectures
- Poetry, Prayers
- Event and group announcements
- Drawings, Sketches
- Photography: artistic, news-related, social events

### How to submit

Email: [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu)

### When to submit

Upcoming Priority Deadline: **March 8**  
**Spotlight on the Arts**

**Also, submit to and look for the  
Special Poetry Section Insert**

### More guidelines

- Please limit submissions to 1,000 words.
- Publication is subject to the needs of the newsletter and the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and Logos Editorial Board. The Editor-in Chief and Editorial Board reserve the right to edit submissions for publication.
- If you have any questions about submissions, feel free to talk with the Editor-in-Chief or email her at [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu).

From the Editor,  
Audrey deCoursey

This week, you may have noticed, is "V Week," a celebration of all things vaginal. There are a wealth of reflections on the week included on pages 10-12 of this very issue.

The (ahem) seminal event of the week is the performance of *The Vagina Monologues* on Tuesday night. And all of you in attendance there will get to see me leave the page to traverse the stage.

Director Kelly Williams invited me to present the monologue, "Reclaiming Cunt." As she pointed out, I might be an apt choice for the piece, because of my intimate yet complicated relationship with language. The motivation to reclaim the term 'cunt' is respect for words and the power of language, coupled with the re-prioritizing of the bodies those words exist to represent.

I have discovered that, sadly, I am unique in having grown up sheltered from the word, from either its liberated or oppressive incarnations. When I first really heard the word 'cunt,' I heard it in my college's liberatory, feminist context, where it was a word of empowerment. I wasn't exactly reclaiming the word, but claiming it for myself for the first time.

It made sense. The word 'vagina' originates in the Latin word for 'scabbard' or 'sheath' (i.e. for a sword). It's named not for its crucial function of birthing babies, not for its function as an 'out hole' for monthly blood, not for its potential to provide its bearer with sexual pleasure. No, it's

named for what it does for the penis.

'Cunt,' on the other hand, is a cognate with such happy words as 'cunning,' 'kind,' and 'kin.' It has resonance in the names of goddesses like Kunda and Cunina. According to Barbara G. Walker, it was a title of respect for wise women in pre-modern times. And, yes, it sounds a bit more empowering to have a 'cunt' on your body than a 'vagina.'

To step back another level, though, we can use *cunt* to explore the power of words themselves. Why does this one little word, this simple collection of four innocuous letters, have so much power in our societies? Is the word 'cunt' used as a slur because of its own connotations or because it equates the one called a 'cunt' with female genitalia – and if the latter, why is that a bad thing?

Words might not break bones, but they can leave lasting damage in subtler ways. The contexts in which words are used matters. Who it is speaking the word matters, too. There are plenty of spaces I don't need to reclaim the empowering essence of a word like 'cunt;,' there are plenty of people who don't need to 'reclaim cunt;,' and this is crucial discernment to engage in.

But we must also prioritize in our care the bodies those words refer to. I get a little worried when debates start focusing on what words we call certain people, instead of the ways those certain people are being treated in the flesh. The uplifting of bodies should run alongside, not counter to, the liberating of our language. Reclaiming words can be part of the process of increasing respect for the beings those words represent. For example, the phrase 'running like a girl' shifts from insult to praise when we break out of the assumption that girls are less athletic than boys.

And so I choose to claim (or reclaim) 'cunt,' while playwright Eve Ensler reclaims 'vagina.' And I hope our feminist work can be done together, whatever we call our body parts, for our common goal of ending all violence against women's bodies.

I have an interesting relationship with the Monologues. I performed in them twice at my college (which dates me, I know). And I was never completely comfortable with them – not because they were too edgy for me, not because they went too far in their feminism. Rather, I thought they were a little mild, and I was disappointed that they have come to be THE feminist event a community must perform. They are limited in that they are, despite their origins in interviews with various women, filtered through the voice of one woman: mono-authored monologues. And, come on - why bother getting so smitten with 'vaginas' when it's c-u-n-t CUNTS! that we should be celebrating?

But my conversations with folks of all genders involved in the show reminds me how needed the Monologues' message still is. One (ahem) fellow Vagina Warrior shared some of the responses she got when she tried to sell tickets to the show to colleagues: two men offered her money just to STOP saying 'vagina,' while another bought a ticket for his wife to see the show, making sure to have the excuse of babysitting that night so that he wouldn't have to attend the performance himself. And I am reminded that just last year, a performance of the Vagina Monologues was billed as "The Hoo-Haa Monologues" because of the theater's squeamishness about the show's eponymous focus. If some folks still haven't gotten from 'hoo-haa' to 'vagina,' the move from 'vagina' to 'cunt' may be a long way coming.

As we know at PSR, everything has its own context. 'Hoo-haa' might seem a preferable, respectful term when the alternative is a derogatory use of the word 'cunt.' But usually, the joking phrase of 'hoo-haa' would be better replaced by the physiologically accurate word 'vagina.' And for many of us, both of these would be better replaced by the reappropriation/reincarnation/resurrection of the honorific veiled within the curse word 'cunt.'

Some day, the body parts that birth new generations and stimulate sexual delight will be fully honored, along with the body parts that watch for trouble and see visions of the future, the body parts that knead bread and cradle dying loved ones, the body parts that tread miles and are washed by a Messiah who stoops down with towel and basin.

Some day, we will see that just as humanity cannot thrive while any member of it suffers, neither can a human body thrive while parts of it are disparaged. Some day, when cunts are honored, all members of the body will rejoice together with them.

And it will be the work of bold feminists, such as those bringing V Week to PSR, who will birth that new day into being.

# A Swedenborgian All Saints' Day

By Michelle Mueller

On Tuesday, October 30, the Swedenborgian House of Studies led PSR in an All Saints' Day service. Cathy Lauber's sermon clearly dictated the history of All Saints' Day, with implicit Swedenborgian teachings. Cathy and I unpacked the values over lunch. (If you attended, recall your experience of the service while reading this article.)

In preparation for the All Saints' Day service, Cathy selected the scripture reading and songs. Cathy followed the PSR chapel lectionary, which recommends Luke for All Saints' Day.

Cathy claims that an awareness of the spiritual connection between the living and the dead differentiates the Swedenborgian church from others. Especially at All Saints' Day, the dead are present. Cathy went so far as to state, "...they are not dead." Swedenborgians have a unique understanding of death. When a person passes on, the spirit does not migrate to a distant land and remain silent. The spirit is active and participates in the living world.

To further contextualize Swedenborgian ideas, I asked another Swedenborgian, Lissa Dirrim, to review my first draft of this article. Lissa agreed with Cathy on several points. She also noted intersections between Swedenborgianism and other cultural traditions. Lissa wrote,

"What I find unique about Swedenborgians is the fact that while Halloween commemorates the linkage between this world and the next, every day is Halloween for conscientious Swedenborgians....Although it's rarely discussed, I see that Swedenborgian spiritual growth is much about reconciling the inner and outer selves so that transparency results. We are more heavenly minded than most Protestants today because we talk about the afterlife - it is an active part of our faith."

The reconciliation of inner and outer selves reminds me of alchemical principles.

Alchemists aimed to transform common metals into gold. They tried to find "the elixir of life," a cure for all diseases and a life-sustainer. The philosopher's stone was also an interest for alchemists. The literal goals of alchemists included the transformation of metals. Metaphorically, alchemists hoped to maximize their intellect, magical powers, and successes. The production of gold symbolizes general achievement. When developed together, intelligence and spiritual strength assist each other. Alchemists desire harmonious integration of many skills. Tools associated with alchemy are the philosopher's stone and elixir of life.

I have described the alchemical process because

it shares characteristics with Swedenborgian goals. Swedenborgianism and alchemy are very different theological systems, yet someone familiar with alchemy might understand Lissa's "reconciling the inner and outer selves." Cathy and Lissa have distinguished Swedenborgianism from other forms of Protestantism. An analysis of alchemy contextualizes Swedenborgianism in a wider inter-religious comparison.

Cathy's selected songs reflect Swedenborgian principles. In "Sing with All the Saints of Glory," the chorus invites the congregation to sing with the saints. Living congregants, the dead, and the saints worship God together. Why not? In many traditions, death is a dirty word. Good Christians do not want to surround themselves with death. Swedenborgians welcome the wisdom and guidance of dead souls.

I asked Cathy to imagine a Swedenborgian service for a different day of the year, say Palm Sunday to determine which practices were unique to Swedenborgianism and which were specific to All Saints' Day. I learned that the form of worship differs among Swedenborgian churches, but that the "Opening of the Word" is a constant element. The words might change, but a Swedenborgian service always starts there. Hymns, Bible readings, preached sermons, and prayers are also regular features.

Cathy and I discussed Swedenborgian symbolism. Many traditions attach significance to a burning candle or flame. For Swedenborgians, the flame represents God. In other cases, a candle might be used to light spirits' way. In a Swedenborgian church, when a liturgy leader lights the candle, God is present. During the Ritual of Remembrance, spiritual people rose from the pews with lit candles and wrote names of loved ones for the altar. At All Saints' Day 2007, the PSR community learned many observances. Swedenborgian values were at the center of this service.

Finally, All Saints' Day appears in the Wiccan calendar as Samhain. The word Samhain derives from Gaelic, meaning "for the feast." Lughnasadh (Aug. 1), Autumn Equinox, and Samhain are Wiccan harvest festivals. At Samhain, also known as the Witches' New Year, the veil between the worlds is at its thinnest. The colliding *cosmoi* lead to communication with ancestors and spirits. Like Swedenborgians, Wiccans believe in the reality of the dead. Wiccans often follow guidance from otherworldly spirits. If at Samhain, an ancestral spirit requests a Wiccan to perform a certain task or resume an activity, the Wiccan will most likely do so before Yule (the following Sabbat). As Cathy described, the dead are present and active. A Wiccan might add *wise* to the description.

## WHAT LEGACY WILL YOU LEAVE AT PSR?

What kind of legacy do you want to leave at PSR? I'm sure it will be important and meaningful, but I want to talk with you about the kind of legacy I hope you WON'T leave here at PSR: your mail! I recently had the great pleasure of working at the reception desk for one week and I can't tell you how much we should be appreciating these workers!!!

PSR students, staff and faculty receive A LOT of junk mail. Let me use myself as an example. I got an oil change at Firestone once and now receive monthly coupons from them. I signed up for free discount cards at Borders, Elephant Pharmacy, and Blick and now receive bi-weekly updates and coupons from those company's. Three years ago I switched auto insurance from Geico to AAA, so now I receive AAA's monthly magazine but I also receive regular letters from Geico trying to win me back as a customer. Two years ago I did my taxes with H&R Block so I receive mail from them, and last year I did my taxes with TurboTax and their letters have been appearing more frequently now in my box since tax season has begun.

Now imagine; I graduate in May, but unless I do something about this unsolicited mail, it will be the paper-trail legacy I leave behind me after I walk across that stage. According to "The Consumer Research Institute's Stop Junk Mail Page" Americans receive almost 4 million tons of junk mail a year. About 44% of the junk mail is never opened. Every person in the United States receives junk mail that represents the equivalent of one and a half trees a year. If only 100,000 people stopped their junk mail, we could save up to 150,000 trees annually. If a million people did this, we could save up to a million and a half trees.

In the one week that I worked at the reception desk I sorted through pounds upon pounds of solicitations addressed to students who graduated here four years ago when I was a first-year student. I know that sometimes we want these IKEA catalogues and Target coupons, which is fine. But, it's so simple to take care of those other pieces of mail that you don't want. Just call the phone # on the solicitation and ask to have your name and address removed from their distribution list. It doesn't take longer than five to ten minutes (I know, because I removed about 100 PSR alums from our 1798 Scenic Avenue mailing list). When you graduate, you can have your mail forwarded to you for one year, but PSR cannot forward solicitations so they are simply recycled. However, this unwanted mail is heavily carried around by our postal workers, transported in trucks which use oil, and is sorted by our beloved mail room workers. Please do your part to eliminate your unwanted mail.

### **For more information: De-list your name**

Most senders of unsolicited junk mail get your name and address from one of three sources: Abacus Catalog Alliance (catalogs), Direct Marketing Association (fliers, brochures, etc.), or the credit bureaus (credit card and insurance offers), says Paul Stephens, a policy analyst with Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, a consumer advocacy group. If you do nothing else, take the time to wipe your name from these lists. "That'll get rid of most of your junk mail," he says. Here's how to do so: Abacus Catalog Alliance: Signing up permanently halts the catalog mailings from association members. Email [optout@abacus-direct.com](mailto:optout@abacus-direct.com) with your full name and current address. (taken from <http://www.smartmoney.com/dealoftheday/index.cfm?story=20070206>).

Peace & Green Love,  
Kayla Bonewell

P.S. Also, while sorting the mail I noticed that MANY students do not have box numbers on their mail and MANY students have their physical address on their mail. Please, for the love of the mail workers, contact those who send you mail and tell them your correct mailing address, which includes your box number.

## *PSR Visits Uganda and Rwanda!*

Essential to Ugandan culture is making sure your visitors receive a warm welcome. We were greeted in multiple communities with processions, music, dancing and even chickens! To the left, Robyn Morrison and Paige Rawson are led out with song by women of Banda, an urban displaced people camp in the slums of Kampalla.

Over 80% of the population of Northern Uganda has been displaced as a result of the war which has lasted over 20 years in the area. Residents hope that the current cease fire and peace talks will successfully end the war and enable them to return home.



Michelle Harris-Gloyer photographs Paige Rawlson, David Ofumbi and Brooks Berndt at Uganda's Bujagali Falls – while Sonja Ingebritsen looks on.

As a way to earn money, young men throw themselves into the water to swim over the falls to the entertainment of tourists. Given that most Ugandans and Rwandans survive through subsistence agriculture, there are few opportunities for employment outside urban areas.

Brooks Berndt, Michelle Harris-Gloyer, Paige Rawlson, David Ofumbi, Christine Holcomb, Audrey DeCoursey and Laura Engelken following a soccer match against children of police officers of the Ugandan police force. Unfortunately, the PSR "Tigers" lost the game 2 goals to 1.

The youth soccer league is one of many projects supported by LEADIA (Leadership Development Initiative Uganda), the organization serving as our host in East Africa.

LEADIA sees Africa's challenges (e.g., poverty, HIV/AIDS, war) created and amplified by a crisis in leadership. It hopes to transform the culture primarily through equipping and empowering Christian leaders. (See [www.leadia.org](http://www.leadia.org) for more information.)



*Photos courtesy of Catherine Lauber and Laura Engelken, who mercifully selected the best shots out of the thousands we could show you. Captions by Laura Engelken, except for the one about rabbits, which is by Audrey deCoursey. It just wouldn't be the same without the rabbits.*

Ugandan & Rwandan Immersion Participants

From left to right, back row: Audrey deCoursey, Sonja Ingebritsen, David Ofumbi, Michelle Harris-Gloyer, Laura Engelken, Brooks Berndt  
Front Row: Aeri Lee, Akiko Miyake-Stoner, Christine Holcomb, Nicole Harris, Catherine Lauber, Joan Pell, Robyn Morrison.  
Front Center: Paige Rawson  
Not Pictured: Phil Palmer



The initial names recorded at the Kigali Genocide Memorial (Rwanda). Unlike the U.S. Holocaust memorial which primarily focuses upon that event, the Kigali memorial devotes significant space to educating about other genocides -- showing the links with other mass killings (e.g., Cambodia, the Herero in Nambibia, Muslims in Bosnia). Currently, there are 258,000 people buried at the Kigali memorial with more being added. Over 800,000 people were killed in April 1994 - most within the first two to three weeks.

Rwanda is known as “The Land of A Thousand Hills,” or the “Switzerland of Africa.” The patchwork fields dotting the hillside are each cultivated by hand with a rudimentary hoe. Some of this labor is performed by convicted perpetrators of the 1994 genocide who have been allowed to return to live in their communities on work release.



The PSR travelers had the chance to visit with several families in their homes. These Rwandan children were eager to show off their pet rabbits, kept in the hutches made of thatched clay, which are behind them in the picture.

Puedes: El Paso/Juarez  
Observations of Bridges and Walls  
by Tai Amri Spann-Wilson

The Chamizal National Park is a place where El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, have followed the will of many of the families split by borders, and decided that there will be no divisions between them. This park seeks to bring together cultures through creative expression.

This January I visited Chamizal while on PSR's Border Immersion. I stood before the painting "Gracias A Dios" and witnessed an artist's rendition of the world that is the border. The back drop of this world was the Native people, standing in equal height with the mountains that surround both El Paso and Juarez, transparent so that through them one can see the ends of the earth. Down through the mountain passes, the conquistadors, led by the devil, march towards the villages of Mexico. Two children wander through the dark valleys, while Our Lady of Guadalupe walks protectively behind them. And from the mouth of the Olmecs, The River flows into the blue robes of Jesus.

When I tell people that I've been to El Paso/Juarez, I find that it tends to conjure up thoughts of the femicide there. It's understandable: depending on who you ask, the current death toll of unsolved female murders in Juarez between 1991 and the present ranges from 75 to 4000. My own call to the border began almost six years ago when I first watched the documentary *Senorita Extravidad* about the femicide. But actually being in El Paso/Juarez, I realized that, similar to observing communities of color, one cannot begin with the worst conditions of a people; one must view the root causes and recognize and honor the places from which a people have come from.

While in Juarez I saw, in the actions of those who are fighting for life and justice, the beauty and divinity of a people and a culture that is under the heel of globalization. I could see it in Annunciation House and Casa Vides, places that have sheltered approximately 90,000 undocumented peoples who would otherwise have been left on the streets by our social services. I saw it in the Sin Fronteras Organizing Project, that works tirelessly to get stolen wages for the 100,000 farm workers employed to grow food that sustains U.S. families and also provides shelter to the many farm workers who aren't even treated with the decency of the availability of water at many of the farms that employ them.

I especially saw it in *Mujeres Obreras*, easily the most impressive non-profit organization I have ever seen. It was built by some of the women who lost their jobs at a Levi's factory in El Paso during the period when NAFTA brought about the outsourcing of tens of thousands of jobs almost overnight. *Mujeres Obreras* has their own restaurant (with the finest mango cheesecake you'll ever have, I might add), operates an arts, crafts and clothing store that sells

fair traded goods with villagers throughout Mexico, and has a dedication to uplifting the Mexican people and the Mexican culture that I believe we all would do well to emulate.

This beauty is what I hold onto in order to face the uncanny pain that is the border reality. While it would be my wish to believe that everything that is being done is enough, the truth is that every single one of us is needed in justice making. Sitting with one of the founders of Annunciation House, the prophet Ruben Garcia,



I was reminded that every single one of us is responsible for the world that has been created, and none are as responsible as the wasteful and over-consumptive American. Speaking with a worker in a maquiladora/factory that left in the middle of the night, taking with it goods, a Christmas bonus, and two weeks pay, I am reminded that the labels on those packages (Walmart, Bed, Bath and Beyond, Marshall's, Martha Stewart) were being bought in the U.S. Every time I take a shower I am reminded that in El Paso estimates say that in about 15 years there will be no more water; in Juarez, the estimate is 5 years. I am reminded when I eat an onion that "guest workers" are getting paid \$.65 for every 60 lbs. they pick, and that many citizens hate them for it. On multiple sides migrants (both documented and undocumented) are under full attack from Homeland Security to a man with a bat.

All the while so many of us remain silent and do nothing. When crossing from El Paso to Juarez, one gets the impression that Mexico is extending a hand in the form of a bridge to its neighbors in the U.S. - you don't even need a passport. When crossing from Juarez to El Paso, one feels the walls that are the U.S. that keep millions out, that even keep families divided. Even with a passport you feel like an enemy.

And still, I can't stop thinking about the painting "Gracias A Dios." The one thing that I think is missing is the fact that today in El Paso/Juarez, The River has been placed in concrete chains, to keep it from its ever-shifting pattern, confusing those who want the border to stay in its place. The reason that this distinction is so important is that everything else has so much meaning to me. While I'm undecided about what I think about the devil, his role gains more meaning for me when I rename him, "Profit." And perhaps Jesus and The River are one in the same, for, like The River, Jesus has been restricted by our artificial materials and we throw all of our toxins into Him; instead of Jesus being the sustainer of life, He becomes that which divides us.

## Vaginal Wonder at PSR

by Abby King-Kaiser, V Week Co-organizer and Space Designer

At first, it seemed to me that it was no big deal that we were producing the Vagina Monologues at PSR. I mean, no bigger deal than doing it anywhere else. I have seen it before: at my undergrad, it was preformed every year. Yea, it is cool that it is a part of a global movement to stop violence against women, but nothing about our performance was special.

Was I ever wrong.

Yesterday, I had the privilege of enjoying the run-through before our final dress rehearsal. It finally dawned on me, sitting in the chapel, with a giant stained glass portrait of Jesus over my head - where I first met the PSR community, where I practiced preaching, where I worship with my professors, where I have been transformed by worship - that in this place, in this house of God, it was significant to perform this piece. There were women screaming cunt from the pulpit. There were women who may preach and not be heard in some churches because of their vagina. There were women discovering a new artistic part of themselves that God created them to enjoy right up there on the altar. There were women standing under the cross, telling the story of women in flesh, just as Jesus told the story of God in the flesh.

If ever I am in ministry and I find myself feeling lonely, quiet, or small because I am a woman, I will stand taller remembering that moment in the PSR chapel when I witnessed more than two dozen women strongly being who God made them to be, telling the story of God's children in a new and exciting way.

## Talking Vaginas...

by Royce Tevis

*Vagina monologues? Why? Why here? Why now? What's it all about? Why do we need to do a show about that? What if our donors find out?*

*These are just some of the questions I've heard regarding our upcoming presentation. And I am glad to hear this conversation. Some of us are deeply offended by this entire conversation. Some of us are pissed off because people are deeply offended. Some of us have been raped or tortured in insidious ways, and bear very real wounds from our life experiences around vaginas. Some of us are over-joyed that we attend a seminary that will dare to give space to this series of vaginal vignettes. And some of us are just curious what the fuss is all about.*

*And this is my question and challenge: how do we welcome and embrace the "other?" We have a chance to experience and model the justice that we demand of the world in the name of Christ. How are we going to have these conversations? Are you curious what would cause someone to think that the Vagina Monologues is an appropriate presentation? Do you wonder what someone might find offensive or hurtful? If you have a strong feeling about this subject, where does that come from for you? Have you shared your experience, trusting in the Spirit that animates and gives life to this penis and vagina wearing Body?*

*We are sharing a very special part of our life here together at seminary, and in these moments, we have the chance to experience vulnerability and intimacy as we share our stories and experiences. Do we have to stop being offended, pissed*

## Interplaying with Vaginas

by Kelly Williams, V Week Director

**CAPSR  
SCHOLARSHIP  
ARTICLE!**

*off, hurt, or over-joyed? This question I will answer: No! My question is not about these feelings, but about how we relate to each other when we are feeling such strong feelings. What are we modeling and embodying regarding justice-filled conflict in our beloved community?*

**So, in the Spirit of authenticity, I share part of my story: The deepest source of fear and pain for me in this whole thing is that I believe our 6-year-old child has already learned to think that her vagina is dirty, smelly, and nameless. Our Phallused Cult(ure) has already begun to indoctrinate her. The deepest source of joy for me is that I hope that maybe she will discover that there are places where she can speak authentically about her vagina. Places that won't treat her vagina as dirty and smelly or make her use euphemisms to dis-member and dis-cuss a member of her body that is very mysterious and wonder-filled to her. And I am speechless with joy that the place that might help her learn about welcoming her vagina is the very same place where she learns about and experiences God.**

**Amen. Amen. Selah.**

Last fall a scholarship from CAPSR enabled me to attend the SECRETS I weekend, the first stage of the leadership program for InterPlay. As their website ([interplay.org](http://interplay.org)) explains,

"InterPlay is a set of practical tools and ideas to help individuals and communities thrive. It was developed by Cynthia Winton-Henry and Phil Porter over the last twenty years and has spread around the world. InterPlay helps us reclaim our lives and get more of what we want, whatever that might be."

InterPlay provides exercises and life practices to find the joy and play in anything. Since my return, I have continued in their leadership program and will move into Level 2 of the program, enabling me to teach and facilitate InterPlay gatherings around the world.

Most recently, I have used InterPlay methods in my work directing The Vagina Monologues production at PSR on February 12. Our cast ranges from women with absolutely no theatre experience (self-proclaimed "virgins of the stage") to NYU musical theatre graduates, and everyone in between. We rehearsed many of the monologues as one would rehearse a well-prepared sermon. Improvisational forms allow us to find out what we may not realize we already know about something, whether it be teeth or Christian Martyrs. InterPlay provides us with access not only into our own "Body Knowledge," but into the larger community wisdom.

InterPlay also opens up the choices we have in life but often forget, like allowing ourselves to just witness a situation without participating in it, or to just have an experience without analyzing every moment of it. In our recent rehearsals for The Vagina Monologues, we used some of InterPlay's voice forms such as "Babbling" and "I Could Talk About..." to find natural speech pattern for characters.

Babbling is an example of an InterPlay form you can try on your own. First, pick a topic (or, better yet, have someone give you a random word) then just speak without thought for about 30 seconds. This is helpful to test a microphone, get comfortable speaking in a space, to get the mind juices flowing for a paper, or to just let off some of that clutter on the brain so that we can focus or not focus. Babble for 30 seconds about the ministry of Paul or mustard, see what your unconscious spouts off, and follow it to a term paper.

If any of this interests you, join us at InterPlayce in Oakland or register for one of Cynthia Winton-Henry's spring courses, provided by the kind support of the Center for Art and Religious Education (CARE).

## **Meet the Man-on-the-Street Vagina in the Chapel**

Collected by Audrey deCoursey, *The Vagina Monologues* (V Day) actress

### **What would your vagina wear?**

“Silk velvet, red and purple.” -Patricia Wood,V Day actress

“Something pink and sparkly.” - Erin Moore,V Day costume designer

“Penny loafers with dimes in the slots.” - Laura Anderson,V Day actress

“Tights and a tool belt.” - Amy Shoemaker,V Day dancer

“A deep, dramatic velvet cloak, like the one Meryl Streep wears in French Lieutenant’s Woman, out on the ocean jetty. Standing there, in the salty spray, she would turn to you mysteriously, and pull back her cloak, revealing a mass of curly hair and say, ‘I knew you’d come.’” - Joyce Parry Moore,V Day actress

### **What would your vagina say?**

“Come inside.” - Ronda Jackson,V Day actress

“Open!” - Erin Moore,V Day costume designer

“Pass the champagne.” - Laura Anderson,V Day actress

<sigh> - Patricia Wood,V Day actress

### **Further Vaginal Dialogue from V Day Actresses**

Joyce Parry Moore: I wonder more, though, about vaginal conversations. For example, what would my character in *The Vagina Monologues*, Hermione Mistlethwaite, a 52 year old organist and vestry member at her Anglican church, would say to Molly’s character, a 72 year old woman from Queens who had never looked at her vagina? No doubt, she’d give her a hand mirror and invite her to a vagina workshop, and afterward they would go to a dog show, or do some antique shopping! Likewise, I wonder if Paige’s character should encounter the little coochie snorcher who could, or if Gayle’s character, who refused to shave her vagina again, could help arrange a healing group visit to the Vagina Village. As important to me as what our vaginas say, is that we talk to other vaginas, and keep the dialogue going, or coming, or continuing.

Angeli Raven Fitch: Playing the part of a transgender woman in *The Vagina Monologues* has been a deeply profound and transformational experience for me. My character is an incredibly brave and courageous ex-Marine who dared to live out her truth as a bold and beautiful woman! Tragically, one of the consequences of living out her truth resulted in the brutal murder of her beloved soldier and love of her life. In the middle of the night, as he slept, he was beaten to death with a baseball bat by fellow soldiers. This kind of hatred and bigotry directed to the transgender community deeply pains me but it only adds more passion and purpose to my work as an attorney/advocate for my transgender brothers and sisters!

*More wisdom of vaginas on pages 10-11.*