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Radical Environmentalism

Radical environmentalism most commonly brings to mind the actions of those who break laws in sometimes dramatic displays of “direct action” in defense of nature. Such action – which may involve civil disobedience and sabotage, some instances of which involve risks to people – have generated criticism and vilification of these movements. Radical environmentalists are sometimes labeled terrorists and believed to harbor, and hope to develop, weapons of mass death. The focus on their tactics, real and imagined, often obscures their religious motivations as well as their ecological, political, and moral claims.

Not all radical environmentalists engage in illegal activities, of course, and many specific tactics are controversial within these movements, especially those which might entail risks to living things, including human adversaries. While the embrace of direct action and support for extra-legal nature defense is an important common denominator in radical environmental sub-cultures, it is even more important to understand radical environmentalism as a cluster of environmental political philosophies, and corresponding social movements, which claim to understand the roots of the environmental crisis and offer effective solutions to it. In this sense radical environmentalism includes not only groups like EARTH FIRST! AND THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT, but also bioregionalists and green anarchists, deep ecologists and ecopsychologists, ecofeminists and participants in the feminist spirituality movement, Pagans and Wiccans, anti-globalization protesters and some animal-liberation activists.

Radical environmentalists can be recognized by their diagnoses and prescriptions regarding the environmental crisis. Their diagnoses generally involve a critique of the dominant streams of occidental religion and philosophy, which are said to desacralize nature and promote oppressive attitudes toward it, as well as toward people. Prescriptions generally include overturning anthropocentric and hierarchical attitudes (especially capitalist and patriarchal ones). Accomplishing this is generally believed to require “resacralizing” and reconnecting with nature (which is usually gendered as female, as in “mother earth” or “mother nature”), combined with direct-action resistance to oppression in all forms.

Reconnection and consciousness transformation can be facilitated in a number of ways. Most important among these is spending time in nature with a receptive heart, for the central spiritual episteme among radical environ-

mentalists is that people can learn to “listen to the land” and discern its sacred voices. Other means of evoking and deepening a proper spiritual perception include visual art (appearing in tabloids or photography presented in public performances), which appeal to one’s intuitive sense of the sacredness of intact ecosystems, and music, dancing, drumming (sometimes combined with sacred herbs or “ENTHEOGENS”), which can erode the everyday sense of ego and independence in favor of feelings of belonging to the universe, or even kindle animistic perceptions of interspecies communication.

Many radical environmentalists can accurately be labeled “nature mystics.” And many of them express affinity with religions they generally consider more nature-beneficent than occidental religions, such as those originating in Asia such as Buddhism and Daoism, religious beliefs or practices surviving among the world’s remnant indigenous peoples, or being revitalized or invented anew, such as PAGANISM and WICCA. Paganism and Wicca are considered to be (or to be inspired by) the Aboriginal nature religions of the Western world, which have been long suppressed by imperial Christianity and Islam.

Sometimes newly invented nature spiritualities, such as JAMES LOVELOCK’S Gaia hypothesis or THOMAS BERRY’S Universe Story (and the corresponding EPIC OF EVOLUTION), have become new, free-standing religious movements which promote radical environmental ideas. Other times, stories without an immediately apparent religious theme, such as ALDO LEOPOLD’S epiphany about the intrinsic value of all life, including predators, upon seeing the “green fire” die in the eyes of a she-wolf he had shot, have become mythic fables incorporated into poetry, song, and movement ritualizing. Regularly, newly invented songs, myths, or nature-related ritual forms are grafted onto already existing religious forms in the constantly changing religious bricolage that characterizes countercultural spirituality in general, and radical environmentalism in particular. Increasingly, nature-related spiritualities birthed and incubated at the margins of countercultural environmentalism are escaping these enclaves and influencing both mainstream environmentalism and institutional religion, and arguably, even institutions like the United Nations, and the UNITED NATIONS’ “EARTH SUMMITS.” In such ways radical environmental spirituality has, despite its marginality, become a significant social force.

Whatever the nature of the hybrids and new religious amalgamations, the religious alternatives to occidental

monotheisms that characterize radical environmentalism are thought to harbor environmentally friendly values and to promote behaviors that cohere with them. These alternatives promote not only a sacralization of nature but a kinship ethics wherein all life forms are considered family in the journey of evolution. Within this kind of worldview, all life deserves respect and reverent care.

Not all participants in radical environmental movements, of course, consider themselves “religious,” and this includes many scientists and CONSERVATION BIOLOGY pioneers who have supported certain radical environmental groups and initiatives. Participants who do not consider themselves religious usually say this is because they equate religion with the Western, institutional forms that they consider authoritarian and anti-nature, and have thus rejected. Nevertheless, such figures rarely object to and almost always rely on metaphors of the sacred to express their conviction that nature has intrinsic value (value apart from its utility for humans). They likewise commonly describe environmental destruction as “desecration” or “defilement.” Even though some participants in these movements consider themselves atheists, this generally means they do not believe in other-worldly deities or divine rescue from this world, not that they disbelieve that there is a sacred dimension to the universe and biosphere. And they often characterize as “spiritual” their own connections to nature and ultimate values.

Certainly religious studies scholars can identify features of these movements that are typical of what they call “religion.” They have myth, symbol, and ritual, for example. The myths usually delineate how the world came to be (cosmogony), what it is like (cosmology), how people fit in and what they are capable of (moral anthropology), and what the future holds. Whatever the variations may be, radical environmentalists share an evolutionary cosmology and cosmogony – they generally derive their view of the unfolding universe from cosmological and evolutionary science and their understandings of humanity from primatology and anthropology. Their apocalyptic

view of the present – namely that human beings are precipitating a massive extinction episode and threatening life on Earth – are gathered from contemporary environmental science. They differ widely over whether, how, and when there might be a reharmonization of life on Earth, based on differing perceptions about human beings and their potential for changing in a positive direction.

Toward the envisioned, needed changes, radical environmentalists have invented new forms of ritualizing, such as the COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS, to promote proper spiritual perception. Such ritualizing functions in a typically religious way, drawing devotees and intensifying commitment. Moreover, movement stories and rituals express ethical mores and social critiques that are essential to the action repertoires of the movement.

Although such stories and ritualizing promote solidarity and ethical action, radical environmentalism is plural and contested, both politically and religiously; it is characterized by ongoing controversies over strategies and tactics, as well as over who owns, interprets and performs the myths and rites. Nevertheless, certain core beliefs, values, and practices make it possible to speak of “radical environmentalism” in the singular, as a complex and plural family; for there are some critical ideas and beliefs that unify these groups, at the same time that there are penultimate ideas and practices that produce various and different tendencies, priorities, and practices.

Views generally shared by radical environmentalists are depicted in the chart below, “Binary Associations Typical of Radical Environmentalism” (adapted from Taylor 2000: 276).

Shades of Radical Environmentalism

Differing stresses on the relative importance of such elements lead to differing priorities and factions among radical environmentalists. Among the most militant and best-known branches of the radical environmental tree are EARTH FIRST! AND THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT, which are discussed separately in more detail elsewhere in this

Binary Associations Typical of Radical Environmentalism

<i>Good</i>	<i>Bad</i>
Foraging (or small-scale organic horticultural) societies	Pastoral and agricultural societies
Animistic, Pantheistic, Indigenous, Goddess-Matriarchal, or Asian Religions	Monotheistic, Sky-God, Patriarchal, Western religions
Biocentrism/Ecocentrism/Kinship ethics (promotes conservation)	Anthropocentrism (promotes destruction)
Intuition	Reason (especially instrumental)
Holistic worldviews	Mechanistic & dualistic worldviews
Decentralism	Centralization
Primitive technology	Modern technology
Regional self-sufficiency	Globalization and international trade
Anarchism/Bioregionalism/Participatory democracy	Hierarchy/Nation-states/Corruption/Authoritarianism
Radicalism	Pragmatism

encyclopedia. They tend to be among the most apocalyptic in their view of the human role in causing species extinctions and the most insistent that political systems are corrupt, dominated by corporate and nation-state elites, who cannot be reformed and must be resisted. Other branches of radical environmentalism have their own distinctive emphases, but in reviewing these branches it is important to recognize the extent to which they are engaged in a reciprocal process of mutual influence, often sharing religious and ethical ideas, political perceptions, and tactical innovations.

Green Anarchism, Daoism, and Paganism

Green anarchists and social ecologists focus on hierarchy as the chief cause of social and environmental calamity. Anarchists exposed to radical environmental thought rather easily adopt environmental and animal liberationist concerns, as anthropocentrism and “speciesism” are obviously oppressive, hierarchal value systems. (Speciesism is a term coined by Richard Ryder and spread widely by the Animal Liberationist philosopher Peter Singer to liken the oppression of animals to racism or sexism.) Moreover, because small-scale, indigenous societies are viewed as more ecologically sensitive and less- (or non-) hierarchal, they and their supposedly animistic nature religiosity are often held in high esteem. Indigenous societies are therefore viewed, and increasingly so, as religious and ethical models for a post-revolutionary world.

This is a remarkable development given how much anarchist thought was birthed in Europe and has long had a decidedly anti-religious ethos. In European anarchist thought, religions have often been viewed as the instrument of rulers used to legitimate and maintain oppressive regimes. Early in the emergence of radical environmentalism, figures like the social ecologist Murray Bookchin were harshly critical of the nature mysticism he believed typical among radical environmentalists; this was an unsurprising critique given anarchist history.

Increasing numbers of anarchist thinkers, however, such as John Clark, have countered that religions such as Daoism, and many minority sects within larger religions, have promoted environmentally sensitive forms of anarchism. Meanwhile other anarchist thinkers, such as John Zerzan, who promotes a type of anarcho-primitivism, express increasing openness to considering non-hierarchal, nature-spirituality as an important resource for the struggle to overturn industrial civilization (telephone discussion with Zerzan, October 2003). And this kind of anarchism has become increasingly influential within the radical environmental milieu, including within Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front. Moreover, certain streams of Paganism and Wicca have adopted anarchist ideology or had members promoting it enthusiastically, from the DONGA TRIBE and DRAGON ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK in the United Kingdom to the CHURCH OF ALL WORLDS in

Northern California. Perhaps best known in this regard has been the Wiccan priestess and author STARHAWK, whose RECLAIMING collectives by early in the twenty-first century had spread beyond the San Francisco Bay area, gaining adherents and sponsoring events at a wide variety of locations throughout the United States and Western Europe. Indeed, Starhawk’s long-term work within the anti-globalization movement has both drawn Pagans and Wiccans into it while also exposing other anti-globalists to this kind of anarchistic, radical environmental Paganism.

Bioregionalism

BIOREGIONALISM is a rapidly growing green political philosophy that by the turn of the twenty-first century boasted over a hundred regional organizations in the United States, and conservatively, at least several thousand adherents. Jim Dodge, an early proponent, explained in an early treatise that the term comes “from the Greek bios (life) and the French region (region), itself from the Latin regia (territory), and earlier, regere (to rule or govern).” A bioregion, therefore, as “life territory” or “place of life,” can mean, “perhaps by reckless extension, government by life” (1981: 7).

The three tributaries to bioregionalism are thus, according to Dodge: “regionalism” (with regions defined by one or another set of ecological criteria), “anarchism” (meaning “political decentralization, self-determination, and a commitment to social equity”), and “spirituality” (with its key sources being, “the primitive animist/Great Spirit tradition, various Eastern and esoteric religious practices, and plain ol’ paying attention”) (Dodge 1981: 7–9).

Put simply, bioregionalism envisions decentralized community self-rule (“participatory” or “direct” democracy), within political boundaries redrawn to reflect the natural contours of differing ecosystem types. Its goal is the creation (some would say “remembering” or “borrowing”) of sustainable human societies in harmony with the natural world and consistent with the flourishing of all native species.

Bioregionalism is animated by two central convictions: 1) people within a given ecological region can, by virtue of “being there” and “learning the land” (its climate patterns, native flora and fauna, water systems, soils, and even its spirits), better care for and build ecologically sustainable lifeways than can people and institutions placed further away; and 2) if local communities are to revision and construct sustainable and just lifeways, a fundamental reorienting of human consciousness is needed – at least this is the case for modern, industrial humans. As with other branches of radical environmentalism, this reformation of consciousness includes a “deep ecological” valuing of the natural world for its own sake. Usually this deep ecological conviction is tied to a perception that the land is sacred and its inhabitants are kin to whom humans owe reverence and care giving. Moreover, we should listen to

and learn from the land and its inhabitants. As the bioregionalist poet Gary Lawless put it in *Home: A Bioregional Reader* (1990),

When the animals come to us,
 asking for our help
 will we know what they are saying?
 When the plants speak to us
 in their delicate, beautiful language,
 will we be able to answer them?
 When the planet herself
 sings to us in our dreams,
 will we be able to wake ourselves and act?
 (in Taylor 2000: 50)

Not only Lawless and Dodge express affinity with animism or Gaian spirituality; so have most of the pioneers of the bioregional movement. Some of them wrote books that convey such spiritual perceptions which, they believe, have affinity with the spirituality of indigenous peoples – for example GARY SNYDER in *Turtle Island* (1969), David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996) and Freeman House in *Totem Salmon* (1999). Snyder's book was especially important, breaking ground by promoting both animistic spirituality and a bioregional sensibility, thereby significantly contributing to another wave of America's countercultural BACK TO THE LAND MOVEMENTS. And *Turtle Island* was one of the first books to use the term “biological diversity” (1969: 108) and to champion its importance, placing Snyder among the earliest proponents of deep ecological and radical environmental thought.

Although bioregionalists share the ecological apocalypticism common within radical environmental sub-cultures, they tend to be somewhat more hopeful than their more militant brethren that the worst of the suffering brought on by environmental degradation can be avoided. Instead, they generally tend to take a longer view, believing that by working on alternative visions and models for spirituality, livelihoods and politics, they can point the way toward a sustainable future.

Ecopsychology

ECOPSYCHOLOGY is both a distinct enclave within radical environmentalism and a significant contributor to its spirituality and religious practice. Ecopsychology can be traced at least as far back as the publication of *Nature and Madness* (1982) by the influential ecologist and environmental theorist PAUL SHEPARD. Gary Snyder and Shepard are probably the most influential scholars of radical environmental and deep ecology theory in America. In their own ways they both provided critical spadework for bioregionalism, ecopsychology, and neo-animism, all of which are closely related, and reinforce a radical environmental worldview.

Put simply, ecopsychology considers human alienation

from nature as a disease born of Western agriculture and its attendant monotheistic religions and dualistic philosophies. It offers as a prescription diverse therapeutic and ritual strategies, including WILDERNESS RITES OF PASSAGE and RE-EARTHING processes, as well as workshops in BREATHWORK and Spiritual Activism.

Interestingly, ecopsychology has had increasing intersections with the psychodynamic therapy of Carl Jung and the therapeutic schools known as Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. James Hillman, one of the leading figures in Jungian, archetypal psychology, for example, took a surprising ecological turn with the publication (with Michael Ventura) of *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse* (1993). This complemented a growing number of books (for example by Theodore Roszak, Warwick Fox, David Abram, Roger Walsh, Ralph Metzner, and Andy Fisher) promoting earthen spiritualities, therapies, and ritual processes – pantheistic, Gaian, animistic, indigenous, and shamanistic – as antidotes to human alienation from nature and as a means to foster an environmental renaissance.

On-the-ground evidence of the blending of ecopsychology with a radical environmental-style deep ecology was evident in 1993 and 1995 at two conferences sponsored by the International Transpersonal Association, the first in Ireland, the second in Brazil. Both conferences included an eclectic mix of proponents of New Age spirituality and transpersonal psychology. The Ireland gathering featured figures known for working at the intersection of consciousness, spirituality, and New Age spirituality (Ram Dass, Stanislav Grof, and Roger Walsh), radical environmentalists, especially those who had worked with indigenous peoples (David Abram, Alastair McIntosh, and Erik Van Lennep) and indigenous environmental justice advocates (Winona LaDuke, Millilani Trask, and others) and the Indian ecofeminist and anti-globalization leader Vandana Shiva.

The psychologist Ralph Metzner, who was the driving force behind these two conferences, labored to build bridges between these therapeutic, New Age, and radical environmental sub-cultures. His own nature-spirituality began with his participation with Timothy Leary in some of the earliest LSD experiments at Harvard. But he found in the 1990s that his bridge-building efforts had limits. A number of Transpersonal Association Board members felt he had taken the organization too dramatically in a radical environmental direction. Nevertheless, he continued to work toward the transformation of human consciousness that he considered a prerequisite to environmental sustainability, including helping organize a conference in San Francisco in the year 2000, this time sponsored not by the International Transpersonal Association, but by the California Institute of Integral Studies. Titled “Ayahuasca: Shamanism, Science and Spirituality,” the conference was devoted to the use of entheogenic plant medicines (and in

particular to the Ayahuasca plant used for spiritual and medicinal purposes by a number of Amazonian peoples). Metzner had come to believe that, if taken in proper spiritual and therapeutic contexts, sacred plants like Ayahuasca can play a positive role in transforming human consciousness in ways that promote deep ecological spirituality and ethics.

The suspicion of some transpersonal psychology advocates (like those on the International Transpersonal Association board) toward radical environmentalists is reciprocated by radical greens who view with suspicion the emphasis on personal experience that is prevalent among ecopsychologists. Many radical environmentalists feel the critical thing, once one understands the environmental crisis and the accelerating rate of species extinction, is to resist the destruction. Such activists may be sympathetic to and even influenced by the nature spirituality in ecopsychology but critical of what they take to be its self-indulgent tendencies. Such mutual suspicion is likely to be long-standing and keep these groups from forming strong strategic alliances. Nevertheless, there is substantial worldview agreement, and significant mutual influence, between ecopsychologists and other radical greens.

Ecofeminism and Feminist Spirituality Movements

This general worldview agreement is true also for ECO-FEMINISM, which, like green anarchism and bioregionalism, is especially critically of hierarchy, but stresses a particular kind, patriarchy, as the most fundamental cause of environmental decline and interhuman injustice. Some ecofeminists have been harshly critical of at least some radical environmentalists, particular in the early years of the Earth First! movement, viewing it as led by boorish and sexist men. But generally speaking, these criticisms have come more from individuals outside of these movements than inside of them. Radical environmental groups are so deeply influenced by both anarchist and feminist ideals and individuals that they are vigilant against behavior that appears to be hierarchal or sexist, indeed, to the point that some activists believe this and other anthropocentric concerns have distracted the movement from its biocentric mission.

The basic proposition of ecofeminism, that a "logic of domination" is at work in modern civilizations which subjugates women and nature, is quite widely accepted within radical environmental sub-cultures. This provides a solid ground for collaboration between ecofeminists and other radical environmentalists. It may be that it was the affinity for such ideas within radical environmental sub-cultures that drew ecofeminists to them in the first place. It is certainly true that aggressive environmental campaigns were looked upon favorably by many ecofeminists, drawing many of them and their ideas into the movement. Whatever dynamics were most responsible, ecofeminist per-

spectives have been influential and sexism has been taken seriously within the radical environmental milieu.

Animal Rights and Animal Liberationism

In their most influential, early articulations, "animal rights" and "animal liberation" philosophies, as articulated by Peter Singer or Tom Regan, were not articulated in religious terms. These ethics have not, generally speaking, been considered close kin to radical environmentalism in the philosophical literature. Yet there are interesting intersections both religiously and ethically between animal-focused and radical environmental activism and ethics, as well as significant differences. As explained in ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, the apprehension of the value of animals, and the affective connection to them, can be understood in spiritual terms by participants in these movements and such spirituality sometimes leads to the development of ceremonies to express and deepen such perceptions, as is the case with Tom Regan.

The key to understanding whether animal liberationists fit in a radical environmental camp, of course, depends on how one defines radical environmentalism. One prerequisite seems clear: radical environmentalism must be biocentric or ecocentric; the good of whole ecosystems and well-being of habitats must take precedence over the lives or well-being of individual sentient animals. As unfortunate as it may be, there are many cases where a moral agent cannot have it both ways. With animal rights or liberationist perspectives, there is no reason to value organisms which there is little reason to believe can suffer (plants or amoebas for example), or to prefer the lives of individuals essential to the survival of an endangered species over those who are not. Radical environmentalists but not animal liberationists approve of hunting, for example, in cases where killing is the only effective means to reduce the populations of animals threatening endangered species. These are intractable differences.

Yet in the cross-fertilizing milieu of radical environmental and animal liberationist sub-cultures, there are many causes in which collaboration is not only possible but common. Such encounters rarely if ever cause a narrowing of ethical concern among the radical environmentalists to an exclusive concern for sentient animals, although environmentalists often adopt a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle out of revulsion for the ways animals raised for food are treated. Such encounters more often facilitate the broadening of ethical concern among animal liberationists toward an ecocentric perspective. Moreover, as animal liberationists move toward greater collaboration with radical environmentalists and become engaged with them, those who continue in such collaborations tend to shift their activist priorities toward issues that have more to do with the protection of wild, endangered animals than with protecting domestic animals. Animal activists rarely, however, abandon entirely their activism on behalf of

Rodney Coronado and the Animal Liberation Front

The Animal Liberation Front (ALF), which was founded in the United Kingdom in 1976 and has spread to many other countries in Europe as well as having a strong presence in the United States and Canada, can be considered, in many but not all ways, to be a radical environmental group. One of the ALF's most notorious activists, Rodney Coronado, has worked hard to build bridges between radical environmental, animal liberationist, and anarchist sub-cultures, especially in North America. His activist career illuminates the affinities and limits to the fusion of the Animal Liberation Front and radical environmentalism.

Moved and angered by the suffering he witnessed when viewing a television documentary about the Canadian harp seal hunt when he was 12 years old, Coronado immediately contacted and sent money to Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepard Conservation Society, who was featured in the film directly resisting the sealers. Seven years later, in 1985, Coronado volunteered as a crew member, and a year later in a Sea Shepard-supported mission, he helped destroy a whale-processing station and sink two whaling ships in Iceland.

After this Coronado became a spokesperson for the Animal Liberation Front, and in 1988 attended the national Earth First! Rendezvous. There he flew anarchist and ALF flags, which helped to escalate already present political and ethical tensions, which showed the fault line between the animal liberationists, like Coronado, and biocentric activists including meat-eating ones like Earth First! co-founder Dave Foreman, who took pleasure in grilling steaks near these vegan activists.

Coronado would soon launch an aggressive campaign against the fur industry, infiltrating it to capture images of the suffering animals, releasing minks from their cages (with ceremonial blessings from a Blackfoot medicine woman who "smudged them off" as they were sent "into the wild world for the first time"), and beginning in 1991, torching the facilities of a number of industry-affiliated researchers. Coronado eventually served four years in prison for a 1992 arson attack on the office of a Michigan State University researcher for which the ALF had claimed responsibility. After his release from prison Coronado worked periodically for the *Earth First!* journal, contributing significantly to its increasingly militant and anarchistic character, and began to travel regularly to promote radical environmental and animal liberationist activism at university campuses and other venues. He became a visible and charismatic activist working at the intersection of animal liberationist and radical environmental sub-cultures.

Coronado considers himself an indigenous and spiritual natural rights activist, promoting freedom both for domestic and wild animals, as well as indigenous and other oppressed peoples. An activist of Pascua Yaqui Indian ancestry from the Southwestern United States, he believes that the destruction of life comes from the same, dominating mindset of the European conquistadors; consequently the liberation of nature, animals, and human beings, are mutually dependent:

I never became first an environmental activist, then an animal rights activist and then an indigenous rights activist. I always was a natural rights activist because I believe everything in nature has a right to exist (Wolff 1995: 24).

Moreover, Coronado claims that spiritual power depends on its connection to the power of Earth, its spirits, and animal relations:

As an indigenous person, I've had to relearn that fighting for the Earth as Earth First! does is a very old, sacred and honorable duty. It's one where I've learned that we can be the most effective when we take advantage of the knowledge and power our enemies know nothing of. They have laughed at this kind of thing for hundreds of years, and I'm glad they don't get it. They never will, but I've seen the Earth spirits. I pray to them and have had them help me carry out successful attacks against the Earth's enemies. I know that when I was out there on the run, it was they who protected me and warned me of danger . . . Spirituality [is] . . . a kind of road map one uses to successfully navigate through life . . . When who you are and what you are is about the Earth, you learn that your own true power can only come from the Earth. That's what Geronimo and other great warriors knew. Only when we believe in our own power more than that of our enemies will we rediscover the kind of power the Earth has available to us as warriors. My power comes from the very things I fight for (interview in *Earth First!* 23:3 (2003), online).

Indeed, "Anarchism" itself, Coronado believes, "is grounded in spirituality, in listening to the Earth and her creatures" (public talk, the University of Florida, March 2003). And thus for Coronado, anarchism, animal activism, and Earth liberation are all grounded in an animistic episteme, a religious thread common to radical environmentalist groups.

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Despite his efforts to fuse animal, anarchist, and Earth activism, Coronado believes that if a choice must be made between an individual animal (*including a human animal*) and the health of an ecosystem or the survival of a species, he would prioritize the latter (author's interview, Fresno, California, February 2003). He would insist, however, that while such a concession might occasionally be a tragic necessity in the short term, the long-term struggle is to make such tragic choices

unnecessary and a thing of the past. Even so, Coronado's viewpoint suggests that while radical environmentalists, anarchists, and animal liberationists will often find common cause, the difference between spiritual holism and empathetic individualism will prevent these groups from a thoroughgoing fusion.

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domesticated animals and generally retain their lifestyle choices, such as veganism, even if they become more biocentric in their overall ethical outlook.

In addition to a biocentric outlook, radical environmentalism also involves a political ideology harshly critical of current political arrangements if not of nation-state governance itself. Here, participants in animal liberation movements are as diverse as other radical environmentalists, from those who retain hope that their movement of conscience will precipitate effective political reforms, to anarchists who believe the entire system must be torn down.

Animal rights and liberation movements, then, prompt some radical environmentalists to add to their array of concerns, sentient, domestic animals, and in a reciprocal way, often provide new activists for biodiversity protection campaigns. And they are often influenced by the religious metaphysics of interconnection and kinship ethics often found in the increasingly global environmental milieu. Nevertheless, a philosophical line between individualism and holism limits the extent to which animal liberationist sub-cultures belong to radical environmental ones, despite the efforts of some activists, such as Animal Liberation Front activist Rodney Coronado, to unite these sub-cultures.

Criticisms and Responses

There are as many criticisms of radical environmentalism as there are differing ideas, emphases, factions and priorities within these movements and adversaries to them. Some of the criticisms come, of course, from those who profit from resource extraction of various sorts, who sometimes label vandalism, verbally abusive behavior, or even civil disobedience as "ecoterrorism." But criticisms also come from other environmentalists as well as a wide variety of religious actors, social justice advocates, and political theorists.

Some of the typical arguments are not directly or obviously related to religion. For example, environmentalists and liberal democrats Martin Lewis and Luc Ferry, claim that these movements are atavistic, primitivist, and Luddite; offer no realistic way to live in the modern world; and are anti-democratic, refusing to abide by decisions

arrived at through democratic processes. Others argue that these movements are counterproductive to building sustainable societies because they do not value and support science, which is a critical foundation for environment-related public policies, but is already assailed by religious conservatives and hardly needs its credibility further eroded in the public mind by radical greens.

Some in the less developed world, such as Ramachandra Guha, have criticized the effort to protect wilderness and biodiversity as elitist, misanthropic, and callous to the needs of the poor. As radical environmentalism turned its attention to globalization, some multinational corporations piggybacked on such criticisms, arguing that the aversion of radical greens to biotechnology and free trade reflected a pernicious elitism that is callous to the needs of growing human populations.

Meanwhile, religious conservatives from the Abrahamic traditions often view these Pagan or quasi-pagan movements with suspicion or worse, as agents of dark, demonic forces. It is not uncommon for corporations, perhaps especially in rural communities with religiously conservative workers, to fan such fears among them in order to galvanize support during resource-related controversies. Some writers on radical environmental movements contribute to such fears. In *Earth First!: Environmental Apocalypse* and subsequent articles, Martha Lee asserted that some radical environmentalists represent violence-prone forms of religious millenarianism. Gary Ackerman, Deputy Director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, concluded even more chillingly that the likelihood is increasing that one or another radical environmental group will deploy weapons of mass death to promote their cause.

Social scientists and political theorists sympathetic to environmental causes have, more judiciously, focused on radical environmentalism's typical presuppositions, diagnoses, prescriptions, and tactics. They often find these simplistic and counterproductive.

Radical environmentalists widely presume, for example, that a transformation or "resacralization" of consciousness is necessary for radical action to occur. But scholars who have studied grassroots environmental

movements globally have found that direct-action resistance to environmental degradation has also been undertaken by those whose religious traditions are Abrahamic or whose value systems are anthropocentric. Moreover, the common radical environmental belief in the importance of consciousness toward a spiritual biocentrism and away from monotheisms does not fully appreciate the extent to which all religions are malleable and change in response to changing and exigent circumstances.

The radical environmental prescription to decentralize political arrangements by abolishing nation-states has also been sharply criticized by a number of political theorists, including Andrew Dobson, Dan Deudney, and Paul Wapner. Another critic, Andrew Bard Schmookler, criticized green anarchism not only in general in *The Parable of the Tribes*, but also right in the pages of the *Earth First!* journal. He asked how good people can prevent being dominated by a ruthless few, and what will prevent hierarchies from emerging if decentralized political self-rule is ever achieved. One does not have to believe all people are bad to recognize that not all people will be good, he argued, and unless bad people all become good, there is no solution to violence other than some kind of government to restrain the evil few; moreover, those who exploit nature gather more power to themselves, and therefore, there must be institutions to restrain that growing power. While Schmookler agreed that political decentralization could be beneficial, it must be accompanied by a "world order sufficient [to thwart] would-be conquerors" and "since the biosphere is a globally interdependent web, that world order should be able to constrain any of the actors from fouling the Earth. This requires laws and means of enforcement" (1986: 22). There is no escaping government or the need to deal with power, Schmookler concluded, because "our emergence out of the natural order makes power an inevitable problem for human affairs, and only power can control power" (1986: 22). Schmookler's analysis challenged not only the decentralist social philosophy of radical environmentalism and much green political thought, but also the prevalent hope that a return to small-scale, tribal societies, with their nature-based spiritualities, would solve our environmental predicaments.

Radical environmentalists would or could respond to the battery of criticisms they typically face along the following lines. To environmentalists who assert that they hurt the environmental cause they could point out, accurately, that many mainstream environmentalists, even some who denounce them publicly, share their sense of urgency and feel that radical tactics contribute significantly to the environmental cause, in part by strengthening the negotiating positions of "moderate" environmentalists. To those who call them terrorists they could ask them to produce the bodies or document the injuries that would prove the charge. To those who use anthropocentric and monotheistic environmentalism to dispute their insistence

that a wholesale change in the consciousness of Western peoples is needed, they could offer the rejoinder that spiritualities which consider nature sacred and displace humans as the center of moral concern provide more consistent and powerful motivations for environmental action than other religious ethics. And to those who criticize willingness to break laws, they would certainly respond that reformist, politics-as-usual, and centralized nation-state governance have not slowed environmental degradation and species loss, and would accuse their critics of complacency and of promoting anemic responses that promise nothing but more of the same.

The more thoughtful among them acknowledge that they do not have all the answers and that some of the criticisms need to be taken into consideration. But they would nevertheless insist that the primary moral imperative is to halt the human reduction of the Earth's genetic, species, and cultural variety. And they would claim that direct-action resistance is a necessary, permissible, and even morally obligatory means in the sacred quest to preserve life on Earth.

Bron Taylor

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Raëlian Religion – See UFOs and Extraterrestrials.

Rainbow Family

In the summer of 1972, while hippie back-to-nature idealism was still in full bloom, a crowd of some 20,000, mainly young counterculturists, gathered near Granby, Colorado, for a several-days-long "gathering of the tribes" inspired by some of the legendary hip music festivals (especially the Vortex Festival near Portland, Oregon, in 1970), the San Francisco "Be-In" of 1967, rural hip communes, and other such countercultural phenomena. The gathering would have no central stage, no paid or featured entertainers, and no fee for admission. It would be free-form and self-defining, although the original organizers did proclaim that the fourth and last day would feature a silent meditation for world peace. A remote wilderness location was chosen to emphasize close contact with nature and rejection of contemporary urban life.

Although there were no initial plans for a second gathering, one was held rather spontaneously the following year in Wyoming, and by the third year (in Utah) the Rainbow Gathering had become an annual event. In 1976 the Rainbow Family, as participants were by then calling themselves, decided to have the festival always occur on the first seven days of July. That time-period remains the heart of the festival, although participants, including those who volunteer to provide set-up and clean-up, are typically at the site for at least two months.

The Rainbows, whose core principles are egalitarianism and non-hierarchical organization, insist that the Family have no leaders and no formal structure. Decisions, for example, are made at the Gatherings by consensus by a council consisting of anyone who wants to attend. No one is excluded from joining. Some dedicated, long-term participants, however, have devoted considerable energy to

perpetuating the Gatherings. Over the years they have published various newsletters and now maintain several Rainbow websites. In the absence of leaders, “focalizers” help provide direction and continuity for Rainbow activities. A Magic Hat passed at gatherings as a collection plate gathers funds that are used for publishing Rainbow manuals and periodicals, providing necessary supplies for the Gatherings (including, in some cases, trucked-in water), and other miscellaneous expenses. Rainbows, however, are generally expected to bring all of their own supplies, including food, to use and to share. Money is disdained at the Gatherings, although a lively barter economy flourishes.

Although there is no official theology or ideology among the Rainbows, many of them espouse neo-pagan or other nature-based spirituality. Admiration and appropriation of American Indian spirituality is widespread. The use of entheogens or natural psychedelics (psychoactive mushrooms, peyote) is common and held to be a natural way to explore ultimate reality. Nature-affirming ceremonies are believed to foster human interdependence and deeper respect for the Earth. Although most Rainbows explicitly disavow political activism, Earth First! and other radical environmental groups are represented and often draw new recruits from those attending.

Rainbow Gatherings are always held on public land, and the Rainbows have steadfastly refused to seek official permission for their events, which attract tens of thousands of participants. That refusal has led to repeated confrontations with public authorities. Colorado Governor John Love ordered that the road to the first gathering be blocked, but a crowd of some 4000 marched up to the roadblock chanting and singing, insisting on their right to gather peacefully on public lands. Finally Love relented and the Rainbows walked several miles to their chosen site. Opposition from local residents and public officials typically precedes each year’s Gathering, although some rural towns appreciate the influx of business that 20,000 or more visitors bring. Nudity is common at the Gatherings, and it spawns both denunciations from local residents and crowds of voyeurs.

Nudity is just one facet of the oneness with nature that Rainbows have always considered central to their quest. Although the large Gathering crowds would be expected to take a heavy toll on wilderness resources, elaborate advance preparations seek to minimize any damage. A month or more before the Gathering begins an advance guard shows up to prepare the necessary facilities, including carefully contained latrines. Others remain at the site for several weeks afterwards systematically erasing nearly all traces of human impact. During the gathering participants are exhorted to observe basic rules of cleanliness and sanitation and to protect streams and lakes from contamination. Even the critics of the Rainbows concede that their land stewardship has been exemplary. During the

1994 Gathering near Big Piney, Wyoming, a forest fire broke out nearby, and thousands of Rainbows joined bucket brigades that helped extinguish it.

Some critics, however, maintain that no gathering that large can fail to have a serious adverse impact on the environment, and the open nature of the gatherings means that some who attend will engage in destructive behaviors of various kinds. Although marijuana is the substance of choice at the gatherings, alcohol and other more destructive drugs sometimes lead to problems.

The large, national Gatherings in July have led to a variety of other Rainbow events, mainly Gatherings in other countries and smaller regional Gatherings in the United States. Dozens of such events now take place annually.

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- See also: Entheogens; Hippies; New Religious Movements; Radical Environmentalism.

Rainbow Serpent (North Wellesley Islands, Australia)

The Lardil and Yangkaal people are coastal hunter-fisher-gatherers who occupy the North Wellesley Islands of the southern Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Australia. Their cosmological and cosmogonic belief system has developed and evolved from their dependence upon the sea for their survival. They employ the classical elements of Australian Aboriginal religions combined in a culturally distinctive system of knowledge with a strong marine environmental basis.

A body of Lardil and Yangkaal sacred knowledge deals with the Dreamtime histories that tell of the creation of the North Wellesley environment by Ancestral Beings. *Maarnbil*, *Jirn Jirn* and *Diwal Diwal* were the human colonizers of the country and seas, and all subsequent Lardil and Yangkaal people descend from this trio. The coastal systems and various offshore features were all physically made by *Maarnbil*, *Diwaldiwal* and *Jirn Jirn*, and contain a wealth of geography, resource places, campsites and religious sites. The perimeters of the islands, although consisting of natural components, are seen from the Lardil and Yangkaal viewpoint to be artificial.

Of the different coastal place types, “Story Places” have

the most complex set of properties. They are marked neither by artifacts nor structures, and even their natural characteristics are not necessarily outstanding visually, yet within local cosmology, their invisible properties are very powerful. The ancestors *Maarnbil*, *Jirn Jirn* and *Diwildiwil* were the original creators of these sacred sites, but further properties have been added by subsequent supernatural beings. Each Story Place is believed to be inhabited by a separate spiritual entity that generates energies at the site. These beings reproduce at these sites, whether they are inside the ground or under sea. Aboriginal people are able to catalyse processes of reproduction or fertility by performing simple ritual actions or songs at these places. Some sites are said to generate plant or animal species, while others produce meteorological phenomena. The energies of the spiritual occupants of each Story Place are supplemented by the energies of *Thuwathu*, the Rainbow Serpent. The domain of the invisible energies of *Thuwathu* and his agents is in the marine and littoral systems. Changes in the health of humans and in environmental activity (cyclones, storms, lightning, waterspouts and strong winds) are believed to be caused by activating energies in this saltwater environment. The spiritual entities act as agents for *Thuwathu* by monitoring the actions of humans and inflict *markirii* sickness upon those who do not adhere to specified behavioural rules.

Story Places are also believed to connect into another time dimension. According to Lardil belief, the Dreamtime is a second spatial universe that somehow split away from the material world of everyday human existence at some time in the remote past. The Dreamtime coexists in time with the material environment, but is situated in a separate space dimension that is not visually accessible under normal circumstances. Although there are believed to be two separate universes, there are places where the properties of one overlap with the properties of the other. Connections between these two universes occur via dreams and Story Places.

The aggregate of Story Places are the geographical sources of Lardil sacred knowledge. By frequenting a Story Place, individuals may receive gifts of knowledge via dreams from unseen people in the Dreamtime dimension. The nature of this knowledge appears to be qualitatively different at each particular Story Place. Knowledge received in a dream at such a place is likely to deal with the nature of the local Story Place inhabitants. The Lardil believe that to maintain a balanced system of communal knowledge, it is essential to have contributions of knowledge imparted in dreams in the vicinity of each and every Story Place. The basis of knowledge, and hence social authority, can be seen to lie in social geography, through the association of patrilineal groups to Story Places.

The spiritual inhabitant of each Story Place is regarded as possessing some human qualities, and these entities are

also associated with the unseen people of the area (reincarnated ancestral spirits). The local residents of the area (the patrilineal) are also said to share the energies of the Story Place being. These energies are also transmitted from the Story Place to humans who are born or conceived near the Story Place, or who preside over and regularly occupy the local area. These humans then possess a close identity with their Story Place and its occupants. The totemic entities thus provide personal subjective links into a coexisting religious world, and render everyday life experience both profound and personalized.

The system of religious knowledge has thus evolved to explain marine environmental changes and transformations. This belief system involves a configuration of human and environmental elements that are believed to be interconnected in a variety of ways, often via systems of environmental signs and indices, as well as through a spatio-temporal model of the universe and notions of visible and invisible phenomena. In addition the model carries with it, codes of behaviour or "laws," providing preferred norms of social and territorial behavior. Identity is defined within a cognitive domain of place-specific knowledge and invisible properties of place.

In Lardil cosmology, people, places and natural species are seen as interdependent, each with a set of beliefs consistent with the other. The Dreamtime universe forms a fourth interdependent domain, and links into this world can be found in the landscape.

In the late 1990s, marine Story Places and their religious properties were presented as evidence in the Federal Court of Australia by the Lardil and Yangkaal in order to win claim of rights to their seas under the *Native Title Act 1993*. This claim stems from their concern about threats to the marine ecology by mining projects and commercial fishing practices and the need to enforce indigenous environmental management practices.

Paul Memmott

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See also: Aboriginal Dreaming (Australia); Australia; Cihuacoatl – Aztec Snakewoman; Serpents and Dragons; Snakes and the Luo of Kenya; Weather Snake.

Rainforest Action Network – See Hopiland to the Rainforest Action Network.

Rainforest Information Centre – See Radical Environmentalism; Re-Earthing; Seed, John.

Rainforests (Central and South American)

In the neotropics, the interrelationships between religion and nature are appreciated by many people, but especially by indigenes. This entry first surveys the forests including the correlated cultural diversity as the context of indigenous religions, next discusses the Maya as an illustration of spiritual ecology, and concludes by considering the disruption to both indigenous religions and nature from European colonization to globalization.

After four billion years of evolution on Earth, life reached its greatest diversity and complexity in tropical rainforests. Half of all life on the planet is in these rainforests, whether measured by number of species (biodiversity) or sheer weight (biomass). This is remarkable because tropical rainforests are concentrated on only 6 percent of the Earth's terrestrial surface. About half of the world's rainforests are in Central and South America.

Tropical rainforests are the most luxuriant plant communities on Earth. They are found where climatic conditions are ideal for plant growth; that is, high mean monthly temperature (>26°C) and mean annual rainfall (>1,800 mm) throughout or during most of the year. They contain up to ten times as many species in the same area as temperate forest. Beyond the Equator plant communities are susceptible to greater stresses like seasonal drought or cold.

Diversity in its manifold expressions is the single most important characteristic of tropical rainforests. They exhibit diversity in plant structures, such as lianas (vines), epiphytes (plants that grow on top of other plants), and large roots that buttress the trunks of giant trees up to 50 m tall which emerge above the forest canopy (top). Diversity occurs as well along the vertical microclimatic and microenvironmental gradients from the forest floor through the strata (layers) of vegetation into the canopy, as sunlight, temperature, and wind increase upward while humidity decreases. Gaps created by natural tree falls allow the penetration of sunlight which stimulates heavy new plant growth on the ground. Collectively, forest gaps produce a mosaic of patches of vegetation at different stages of succession or development. Thus, tropical rainforests are also dynamic ecosystems that vary through space and time.

In general, in regions where biodiversity is high, so is the diversity of cultures (including religion), and vice

versa, something called the diversity principle. This correlation is probably more than coincidental. Diversity within and among tropical rainforests offers more opportunities for niche differentiation; that is, different adaptations to the wide variety of habitats and resources, although the natural environment is not the only factor in cultural and associated linguistic and religious creativity and variation. In the neotropics there is a multitude of local variations in indigenous technology, economy, customs, religion, and language reflecting variations in geography, environment, history, and other factors. It is estimated that at the time of European contact more than a thousand distinct cultures existed in South America and more than a hundred in Central America. Neotropical countries that contain both large areas of rainforests and unusually large indigenous populations are Belize, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Many of these indigenes retain at least some elements of their traditional religion.

On the surface the relatively uniform traditional technology of indigenous peoples throughout neotropical rainforests appears simple, principally bow-and-arrow hunting; hand gathering of wild plants and small animals; fishing with bow and arrows, spears, and plant poisons; and swidden horticulture. The latter involves cutting a small section of forests with axes and machetes (large bush knives); burning the debris after it has dried out during the dry season; and then planting crops in holes made with a pointed stick. However, technological sophistication cannot be judged on the basis of tools or material culture alone, but also involves knowledge and skills which can be complex, especially in a natural habitat with such high diversity. With low population density, high mobility of sub-groups, and a rotational system of farming and foraging (including trekking), most of these indigenous societies are sustainable, with any environmental impact allowing natural regeneration to proceed at a normal rate. Furthermore, these highly adaptive techno-economic systems allowed ample free time for the elaboration of complexity in other aspects of culture, especially in ceremonies, rituals, oral literature, arts, and symbolism. Thus, the neotropical rainforests have provided inspiration as well as habitat and refuge for numerous and varied indigenous cultures, including their religion.

In particular, animism, a belief in multiple spiritual beings and forces in nature, is an integral component pervading indigenous daily life as well as the socio-cultural system and its ecology. Moreover, the basic holistic principles of a viable spiritual ecology are apparent in most traditional indigenous societies, including those in neotropical rainforests. These principles variously emphasize that the arenas of humans, nature, and the supernatural comprise a functional, spiritual, and moral unity through their interconnectedness and interdependence. The

awesomeness, mysticism, and powers of an enchanted nature require appropriate respect, reverence, and reciprocity. Humans are embedded in nature's kinship and spirituality, and this they affirm and celebrate through cycles of ritual as well as myths and symbols. Accordingly, traditionally for most indigenous societies, religion promotes and maintains the dynamic equilibrium within and between the social and ecological systems. Whenever disequilibrium arises it is treated as much if not more spiritually than otherwise.

These and other sound principles of spiritual ecology are reflected in many traditional indigenous cultures, including those residing in neotropical forests. For instance, collectively the Maya are the second largest indigenous population in the Americas with some 7.5 million people. They live in the northern sections of the lowlands of the Yucatan peninsula and in the central highlands of the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico as well as in portions of the Central American countries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. There is also a Mayan diaspora in North America. Some 28 different Mayan languages are spoken. Mayans range from lowland into the highland wet and dry forests with tremendous variation in their ecology, cultures, languages, and histories. However, the core religious principles which are more or less common to most Maya are outlined in the sacred text called *Popol Vuh* which was written down after initial contact with the Spanish. For the Maya, the natural and supernatural realms are intimately interconnected and interdependent. For instance, animals and plants were created first by the supreme deity, and thereafter the animals helped create humans from the sacred corn plant. Consequently, the relationship between humans, animals, and plants is supposed to be one of respect, caring, and cooperation. Many Mayans demonstrate profound reverence and compassion for animals and plants in their habitat through their daily activities as well as sacred stories, rituals, chants, and prayers. When trees are cut down to clear an area for a swidden, for example, the farmer requests pardon from the guardian spirit of the forest. Spirituality permeates the beings and things in the forests; nature is far more than merely a resource or commodity. However, many Mayans simultaneously embrace the Christian religion, especially Catholicism, blending it with their native religions.

Lacandons of Yucatan remain the most traditional Maya, but in the 1990s in Guatemala and elsewhere a movement arose to revitalize Mayan cultural and religious beliefs, values, and practices, including the use of sacred sites for rituals such as particular caves, hills, or mountains. However, Mayans also have to struggle with the disruptions created by Western influences which are often contrary to their traditions and ecology, including civil wars in most countries of Central America during the

1960s–1980s. The 1994 Chiapas rebellion is just one recent symptom of their continuing struggles.

Indigenes surviving in neotropical rainforests as sanctuaries as well as habitats are descendants of some of the original spiritual ecologists. Many maintained relative balance and harmony within their society and between their society and the ecosystems in their habitat, despite political, economic, and other depredations of up to five centuries of Western colonialism. The neotropical rainforest as a whole was not endangered 500 years ago, but it has progressively become so as a result of Western abuses, especially in the last half of the twentieth century. This is not to assert that all indigenous societies are always in ecological equilibrium. For example, there are some Mayan areas where overpopulation and over-exploitation led to deforestation and other problems prior to European contact. Also some portions of Mayan forests are anthropogenic, with unusual concentrations of useful trees like ramon, breadnut, sapodilla, and avocado. However, the net trend for most indigenous societies has been toward balance and harmony with nature. It is unlikely to be otherwise, given the awesome depth of their environmental knowledge and their intimate daily interaction with their habitat combined with their nature religions. Only when their circumstances change substantially and they have no economic alternatives are they likely to deplete resources and degrade land irreversibly, especially under Western influences. But indigenous spirituality is antithetical to the generally anthropocentric and ego-centric environmental ethics of colonial and industrial societies which usually attempt to segregate, objectify, and commodify nature as merely a material resource.

Because of the intimate interconnections among the rainforest ecosystems and the indigenous societies which reside in them, any threat to one is likely to be a threat to the other as well. Moreover, these generally adaptive systems are being endangered by maladaptive ones, first with European colonialism, then after national independence with internal colonialism, and in the most recent decades with economic globalization. Because native religion is often the most crucial factor promoting social as well as ecological harmony and balance, missionization can be most disruptive spiritually, culturally, and ecologically.

Indigenous societies likely to survive colonial contact possess these attributes: geographical and economic marginality; balance between separation and integration (not assimilation); attachment to ancestral lands, self-sufficiency, and self-determination allowed by a democratic state respecting multi-ethnicity; a stable or increasing population; memory of pre-contact and contact history in combination with a conscious countercultural strategy opposing colonials; common identity with meaningful and resilient traditions including their own religion; and political organization and mobilization as well as networking with other indigenous organizations and rele-

vant environmental and human rights non-governmental organizations.

The Kogi provide a case in point. They are descendants of the Tairona culture who survived the incursion of the Spanish in 1514. The Kogi have persisted in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia because of their tenacious determination to maintain their own cultural autonomy as well as the geographic protection of the rugged terrain of their mountain habitat. This habitat varies ecologically with increasing altitude from tropical rainforest to savannah to alpine meadows and glaciers, a microcosm of the climatic zones of the world in some respects. The Kogi envision themselves as living at the heart of sacred Mother Earth. They practice environmental stewardship through a series of material and ritual cycles of exchange conducted from the sea coast to the mountain top which are supposed to maintain the vitality and fertility of their diverse ecosystems. Much of this exchange is directed by their priests who also determine which elements from the outside world are accepted or rejected. The Kogi are also alarmed by what outsiders, who they call younger brother, are doing to the detriment of the ecology of the planet. For example, they see one result of global warming in the melting of glaciers high in their mountains. They attempt to address these threats through their cosmology and rituals as well as by warning outsiders.

Economic, social, spiritual, and environmental health are all interrelated and interdependent. The indigenous societies remaining in the refuge of the rainforests of Latin America and elsewhere provide alternative heuristic models or adaptive repertoires for others to consider in designing sustainable, green, and ecocentric economies, societies, and spiritualities if they are to have any healthy future.

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See also: Andean Traditions; Ayahuasca; Ethnobotany; Ethnoecology; Huaorani; Incas; Indigenous Activism and Environmentalism in Latin America; Indigenous Environmental Network; Kogi (Northern Colombia); Maya Religion (Central America); Maya Spirituality (Eustanda Highlands); Reichel-Dolmatoff, Gerardo – and Ethnoecology in Colombia; Rubber Tappers; Shamanism – Ecuador; Shamanism – Traditional; Traditional Ecological Knowledge; U'wa Indians (Colombia); World Conference of Indigenous Peoples (Kari Oca, Brazil); Yanomami.

Ralegan Siddhi

Ralegan Siddhi, a village in a drought-prone region of Ahmednagar District in the Indian state of Maharashtra, is the setting of one of the most successful programs of ecological, economic, and social restoration known in India in recent years. It is a key example of the application of Hindu religious teachings to social and ecological reform. The transformation was the result of the leadership of Kishan Baburao Hazare (b. 1940), a local villager known affectionately as Anna (elder brother) Hazare, and the influence upon him of the religious thinker and reformer, Swami Vivekananda (1862–1902).

Before 1975 the village of about 1500 people was stricken with poverty and social disintegration. Sources of irrigation had dried up. Agricultural production was inadequate and drinking water was scarce. Lack of sanitation afflicted villagers with water-borne diseases. Villagers borrowed heavily from lenders in neighboring villages. Unable to repay, their debts increased, leading to hopelessness, alcoholism, and violence. Social barriers isolated

the 16 Harijan families. The village survived on profits from the sale of illegal alcohol to neighboring villages. Few children attended school. Religious life in the village had lost all meaning. Villagers had removed wooden parts of the temple to fuel the liquor stills.

Anna Hazare came to Ralegan Siddhi as the child of a family whose fortune had been dissipated by relentless economic pressures. As a young man, he joined the army where he began to question the meaning of life. Uncertainty over whether life was worth living eventually drove him to despair. He had fully decided to end his life when in a railway station bookstall he encountered a short collection of the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. He testified later that here for the first time he discovered the meaning of life: that life is meant for service to God through service to others. While Hazare spent his annual leaves in Ralegan Siddhi and witnessed the continuing degradation of his village, the works of Vivekananda gave new direction to his life. While driving a military truck during the 1965 war with Pakistan, an attack by enemy aircraft left most of his colleagues dead. He believed that God had given him a new life and the opportunity to put the thoughts of Vivekananda into practice. He took a vow not to marry but to remain in the army until he was eligible for a pension. He returned to Ralegan Siddhi on his retirement in 1975.

Because he believed the restoration of the village could not proceed without a moral and spiritual awakening, Anna Hazare began with an effort to renovate the dilapidated Yadavbaba Mandir, the village temple. With Vivekananda, he believed that God is everywhere, but that the temple is crucial to village life because it is here that children first learn the important values of life. Because he used his own retirement fund for the restoration of the temple, his work attracted the attention of villagers. The temple became his venue for teaching the religious ideas of Vivekananda, and the application of these ideas to community problems. Preaching purity of mind, purity of action, and the value of self-sacrifice, Hazare's teaching addressed the hopelessness and apathy that immobilized the village. He also related the villager's received sense of the sacredness of land and water to an understanding of the material benefit these provide when cared for with conscientious effort. Hazare's most influential teaching was that selfless work is worship. Impressed by his initiative, the people gradually began to contribute their labor to the project. As work progressed, Hazare brought singers and storytellers to the temple who supported his teachings with songs and stories from the religious tradition. Such temple meetings became the foundation for the Gram Sabha, or village assembly, that eventually became the principal decision-making body of the village.

By means of the organization of voluntary labor as service to God, the villagers undertook a watershed management plan to restore irrigation and agriculture, and

provide drinking water at the village level. During the process, the temple became the focus of the restoration effort. It was at a meeting in the temple that the villagers collectively resolved to close the liquor dens and impose a ban on alcohol consumption in the village. Because the decision of the village had been made in the temple, it had the force of a religious commitment.

The restoration of the moral fabric of the community brought about significant results. With wells viable throughout the year, irrigation dispersed to productive fields, and drinking water distributed to a faucet in every household, the village now exports more agricultural products than it imported in the days before the restoration began.

Following the thoughts of Vivekananda, Anna Hazare holds that nothing has fractured Indian society more than the caste system and the practice of untouchability. With Hazare's leadership, social barriers were removed and people of all castes came together to celebrate community life. Villagers have built houses for the Harijan families, and helped them repay their debts. For the past several years, the honor of leading the procession in the village bullock festival, once the subject of bitter contention, has been given to the Harijan community, integrating them within the religious life of the village.

The restoration of Ralegan Siddhi is now being replicated in other villages in Maharashtra and beyond. Young people selected from these villages undergo training at Ralegan Siddhi to provide leadership for similar programs in their own villages. Hazare challenges them with the analogy of the grain of wheat that has to sacrifice itself to give birth to a swaying field of grain. The transformation of Ralegan Siddhi was the result of the mobilization of a village through a religious and moral awakening that empowered the people to address conditions of material, social, and ecological decay.

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See also: Hinduism; India.

Raphson, Joseph (1648–1715)

Cambridge intellectual Joseph Raphson originated the terms pantheist and pantheism. Historians know little of Raphson's life; not even an obituary has been found. Born

in Middlesex, England, he attended Jesus College Cambridge and graduated with a Masters degree in 1692. Raphson gained membership in the prestigious Royal Society in 1691 on the strength of his first book, *Analysis Aequationum Universalis* (1690). Raphson also wrote a mathematical dictionary (1702), and other works, including *De Spatio Reali seu Ente Infinito* (1697) in which he penned the words “pantheos” and “pantheismus.”

Many sources name John Toland as the originator of the word pantheist. But Raphson’s citation predates Toland’s first recorded use of the term by eight years. Toland had read Raphson’s *De Spatio Reali* and commented upon the book, which strongly suggests he picked up the word from Raphson. (Toland still deserves notice for the first use of pantheist in an English-language publication.)

Stephen H. Daniel, Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, discovered Raphson’s terms and made the connection between Raphson and Toland in 1994. According to Professor Daniel, “it is now clear that Raphson, not Toland is the person who coined the terms pantheist and pantheism; he just happens to have been writing in Latin at the time” (personal communication with author).

De Spatio Reali delineates two pantheistic outlooks. In one, God comprises nature, the material cosmos, as ultimate reality. Raphson labels adherents of this view panhyl-ists (from the Greek pan = all + hyle = wood, matter) because they believe everything derives from matter. He equates panhylism with atheism. In the other, God comprises space, the overarching element, as ultimate reality. Raphson calls followers of this view pantheists (from the Greek pan = all + theos = god) because they believe in “a certain universal substance, material as well as intelligent, that fashions all things that exist out of its own essence” (Raphson 1697).

The noted Jewish philosopher Benedict Spinoza (1632–1677), who wrote perhaps the most rigorous exposition of pantheism in all philosophic literature, never employed the terms pantheism and pantheist because they had yet to be conceived. He died just twenty years before Joseph Raphson contributed these valuable and now universally used words to posterity.

Gary Suttle

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See also: Pantheism; Spinoza, Baruch; Toland, John.

Rappaport, Roy A. (“Skip”) (1926–1997)

Roy A. Rappaport, one of the leading ecological anthropologists of the twentieth century, was born in New York City. Known as “Skip” to his friends and colleagues, he earned his undergraduate degree in hotel administration from Cornell University and during the 1950s owned and operated an inn in Lennox, Massachusetts. In 1959 (at the age of 33) Rappaport sold his inn and enrolled at Columbia University where he studied anthropology under Marvin Harris, Harold Conklin, Margaret Mead, Conrad Arensberg, and Andrew P. Vayda. Rappaport always insisted that the anthropologist who most influenced his thought was Gregory Bateson, who he first met in 1968. Bateson introduced Rappaport to systems theory and encouraged him to look at evolution and adaptation as informational processes.

Between 1962 and 1964, Rappaport conducted fieldwork among the Maring of Papua, New Guinea, primarily among the Tsembaga clan cluster. His most important contributions to ecological anthropology are tied to his minute observations and precise measurements of the activities of 204 Maring speakers during 1962 and 1963. In 1964, Rappaport presented a seminal paper “Ritual Regulations of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People” at the Detroit meeting of the American Anthropological Association. The paper was later published in the journal *Ethnography* and has been widely reprinted. It contains, in abbreviated form, almost all the ideas that were to occupy Rappaport throughout his professional life. Rappaport’s 1966 Ph.D. dissertation served as the basis for *Pigs for the Ancestors*, which set new standards for the collection and presentation of anthropological and ecological data. Rappaport’s goal in *Pigs* was to transcend cultural materialism and functionalism by focusing on the adaptive value of ritual in maintaining carrying capacity, the persistence of species, human nutritional well-being, and the frequency of warfare in small-scale societies. He identified ritual as the major mechanism for regulating peace and warfare among the Tsembaga Maring. *Pigs* is one of the most cited books in the history of anthropology and is required reading for graduate students. It is cited in almost every introductory text.

Pigs for the Ancestors is a wide-ranging work. It covers ritual and its effects, human population and ecosystems, information and meaning, and introduced the use of sys-

tems theory to ecological anthropology. Rappaport suggested that ecological systems regulate themselves through feedback – like a thermostat. All parts (pigs, humans, yams) within a system are subject to the regulatory forces of the whole. In the case of warfare among the Maring, the *kaiko* ritual – a ceremonial slaughter of pigs to ancestral guardians – serves as the major regulator. Rappaport postulated that the Maring would not go to war as long as their accumulated debts to the ancestors remained unpaid. Instead, they spent their energies and resources amassing more and more pigs. But eventually the number of pigs (and the labor required to tend them) became intolerable, and a *kaiko* would be held to restore the ratio of pigs to people. *Kaiko* also provided much needed protein and facilitated the distribution of “pig surpluses in the form of pork throughout a large regional population” (Rappaport 1968: 18).

The 1968 edition of *Pigs* generated tremendous controversy among anthropologists, biologists, and ecologists. Some early critics faulted Rappaport for what they saw as his *naïve* functionalism, while others accused him of reductionism and/or environmental determinism. A major issue of contention was Rappaport’s rejection of “culture” as the primary unit of analysis. Rappaport’s model, borrowed from the biological sciences, focused on human populations – not cultures. He saw humans as a part of nature. This did not set well with a number of social anthropologists (notably Marshall Sahlins and Robert F. Murphy) who argued that instead of studying human activities as a part of nature, human activities should be studied apart from nature. Marxist anthropologists (notably Eric Wolf and Jonathan Friedman) accused Rappaport of ignoring cultural change among the Maring. Rappaport’s approach, they asserted, could only work for a closed system, but the Maring in 1962 had already been very much influenced by contact with outsiders – including missionaries and anthropologists. Were an anthropologist to observe a *kaiko* ceremony in 1954 or 1968, would he or she have come to the same conclusions as Rappaport (cf. Friedman 1994)?

Rappaport took these criticisms to heart, but never altered his basic systems approach. A second edition of *Pigs* appeared in 1984 to answer critics. It is nearly twice the length of the first edition and includes ten appendices of raw data. Rappaport’s goal in the 1984 edition was to allow other scientists to view and critique his observations. He also deposited his personal papers (including his New Guinea field notes from 1962–1963 and 1981–1982) in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California-San Diego (MSS 0516). *Pigs* introduced one of Rappaport’s key findings in human ecology and religion; most notably, what he saw as an occasional contradiction between “operational” and “cognized” environments. By contrasting the “operational” environment – which he saw as being governed by the immutable

laws of the physical universe – and the “cognized” environment – which he defined as “the sum of the phenomena ordered into meaningful categories by a population” (Rappaport 1979: 6), Rappaport greatly advanced the study of both rituals and ecology. He emphasized that the “cognized” environment differed from the “operational” environment because “cognized” environments are less bound by physical laws. Rappaport argued passionately that the relationship between culturally constructed meanings and values and organic well-being should be the central concern for all ecological anthropologists.

In 1979, Rappaport published a collection of his papers entitled *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*. This collection gives an indication of Rappaport’s catholic interests and highlights his desire for their integration. He recognized early on that *Pigs for the Ancestors* was only a “beginning” since it represented treatment of the relationship between ritual and ecology from only one of many possible perspectives. An important essay “On Cognized Models” (included in the 1979 collection) attempts to go beyond what Rappaport saw as his earlier, crude attempts to establish the relationship between religion and ecology in *Pigs*. He felt that his earlier efforts had overemphasized organic and ecological functions to the exclusion of cultural understandings. This signaled a dramatic shift in his thought from functional to structural concerns.

Another pivotal essay in *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*, “The Obvious Aspects of Ritual,” outlines the consequences of ritual’s outwardly distinctive features; especially, how stereotypical behaviors counter the human potential for lying and deceit. According to Rappaport, two obvious aspects of ritual are that: 1) it constitutes an invariant sequences of acts and utterances; and 2) its participants are required to perform according to these invariant sequences. Ritual thus imposes standards of conduct which go beyond the will of individual participants and demonstrates participants’ clear and public acceptance of conventions as they literally “act” them out. For Rappaport, ritual constitutes the foundation of all convention and is the basic “social act.” Ritual establishes the possibility of trust and truth, and it provides a place where “the unfalsifiable supported by the undeniable yields the unquestionable, which transforms the dubious, the arbitrary, and the conventional into the correct, the necessary and the natural” (Rappaport 1979: 217).

Rappaport’s work articulates a middle ground in which he attempts to give equal weight to evolutionary processes and the constraints of convention. He was not an idealist. But he did not see himself as a cultural materialist either (e.g., Marvin Harris). He situated ritual precisely at the juncture between embodied acts of individual behavior and the disembodied meanings of sacred symbols, but refused to grant priority to either.

In 1965, Rappaport joined the Anthropology Faculty at the University of Michigan where he remained for over

thirty years. He served as chair of the Department of Anthropology and was President of the American Anthropological Association from 1987 to 1989. As AAA President, he attempted to bring anthropological findings to bear on social issues of the day. Ecology was always a major focus. Rappaport served as a consultant for the State of Nevada on the advisability of storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain and was a member of the National Academy of Sciences Task Force dealing with the leasing of off-shore oil rights.

From 1991 until his death, Rappaport was head of the Program on Studies in Religion (PSIR) at the University of Michigan. He regularly offered the course Anthropology 448/Religion 452: "Anthropology of Religion: Ritual, Sanctity, and Adaptation." Many of his Anthropology 448 students have themselves made important contributions to ecological and anthropological studies of religion; notably, Ellen Messer, Susan Lees, Fran Markowitz, Peter Gluck, Melinda Bollar Wagner, Michael Lambek, Aletta Biersack, and Jim Greenberg.

While heading PSIR, Rappaport embarked on what was to be his last major study published as *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. He began writing the book after having been diagnosed with lung cancer. It was published posthumously. In *Ritual and Religion*, he attempted to establish a new set of categories for the study of religion and provided a comprehensive and erudite analysis of ritual forms. *Ritual and Religion* has been favorably compared to Emile Durkheim's classic *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* published in 1912. Both Durkheim and Rappaport were deeply concerned with the issues of social order and persistence. Critics have pointed out that Rappaport's theory is incomplete because he pays scant attention to religious pluralism or religious conflict. But what sets Rappaport's study apart from other studies is that it is not only "about" religion but is in itself also a profoundly religious book. *Ritual and Religion* makes a strong case for religion's central significance in human evolution and argues convincingly for the reconciliation of religion and science. Rappaport boldly asserted that human survival depends on developing a postmodern science thoroughly grounded in ecology, and concluded that ritual should be the major focus of religious studies because ritual is the "ground" where all religion is made.

Rappaport was not a religious man in the usual sense; indeed, he was distrustful if not hostile toward many forms of organized religion. Nevertheless, he was sympathetic toward religion, perhaps because he so adamantly "believed" his own findings concerning ritual among the Maring. Ultimately for Rappaport, the primary question was not *if* religion is true, but *of what* is religion true?

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- See also: Anthropologists; Bateson, Gregory; Domestication; Ecology and Religion; Ecological Anthropology; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship; Harris, Marvin; A Religio-Ecological Perspective on Religion and Nature; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm; Traditional Ecological Knowledge; Wonder toward Nature.

Rastafari

Rastafari originated in the 1920s and 1930s in Jamaica, especially among poor black men migrating into Kingston from Jamaica's rural regions. From there it expanded into a global movement with a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices. Generally, Rastafari do not identify themselves according to doctrinal positions. Furthermore, the central ritual of the movement is "reasoning" – a process of ongoing talking and thinking out concerns. "Reasoning" is relatively amorphous and lends itself to a fluid range of intellectual positions and practices. Additionally, the social locations and characteristics of Rastafari vary tremendously. Consequently, the relationship of Rastafari and nature is best seen not in doctrines or practices, but rather in a range of themes running through diverse strands of the movement. The themes that best reflect where nature and ecology fit into a typical Rastafari worldview are "Babylon/Zion" and "Ital."

Babylon/Zion

The Rastafari symbols Babylon and Zion express a difference between the world as it is generally experienced and the world as it truly is and could be experienced. At the same time, Babylon and Zion concretize this worldview by symbolizing geographical locations: Babylon is the city,

the West, the colonized world, the U.S. and Britain, and other locations of suffering; Zion is the countryside, the forest, Africa, and other places where one is free. Babylon in particular is also used adjectivally to refer to problems corrupting the world (e.g., the system of forces in society that conspire to maintain humankind in captivity might be called the “Babylon Shitstem” – that is, the Babylon System).

Babylon is seen to be rife with corruption and injustice, greed, competition, jealousy, racism, war, and death. Babylon chokes out life by killing or blinding us to the “I,” the divine within. Zion is a world of promise, the world as it could and will be: harmonious, flourishing, natural. The more concrete connotations of Babylon and Zion remain stamped by the early Rastafari experiences of transition from countryside to city, and the radical revaluations of blackness, African heritage, and colonial oppression that continue to undergird the whole movement.

Life in Babylon disconnects man [sic] from one another and nature through “downpression” (oppression). Thus, nature is invisible in Babylon except as it is reintroduced through positive lifestyle choices that undo “downpression.” Life in Babylon is a constant struggle, perhaps best expressed through cultural images, such as the descriptive song titles of the late Jamaican reggae singer and Rastafari, Bob Marley: Babylon is a “Concrete Jungle,” a “Rat Race,” and a “War.” “War” sets to music a speech (dated by some to 1968 and by others to a 1963 speech to the UN) by the late Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie, whom some Rastafari regard as divine. In it, Selassie warns that man’s condition will be perpetual war until the time that “the color of a man’s skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes.” Racism is endemic in Babylon, and the true horror of racism is that it hides the divine within from all men.

In Zion a man [sic] can be a man, true to the “I” in himself, in others, and in the world. In Zion, interactions are guided by truth, not deception, and they renew and rejuvenate rather than destroy. In Zion, no man suffers because of his skin color, and blackness can be embraced.

For some Rastafari, Zion necessarily implies a return to Africa (or Africa’s metonymic representative, Ethiopia), where an Ital life is possible. For others in Babylon, Zion is approached as best as can be through an Ital lifestyle marked loosely by behaviors ranging from vegetarianism to working solely for oneself. For others again, an Ital life is lived by retreat to the bush or forest, or in communes, of varying size, or alone, growing one’s own food, organically, in communion with the natural environment. At the furthest extreme, some Rastafari (e.g., “higes knots,” “earth men” or “Nomn Te”) totally reject anything associated with Babylon, going so far as to refuse to touch money, to wear shoes or Western clothes (wearing grass clothes or sacks instead), to eat anything processed, to step on pavement, or to participate in any way with the world.

Selassie, Haile (1892–1975)

Any exploration of Rastafari inevitably leads to the enigmatic former Emperor of Ethiopia, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie, whom many Rastafari venerate as the Supreme Creator (i.e., God or “Jah”). The name Rastafari is a combination of his early title, Ras (“Prince”), plus Selassie’s given name (Tafari).

Selassie lived from 1892 to 1975. He was the son of Ethiopian Prince Ras Makonnen, and his lineage is said to be traceable to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Though not directly in line for the throne, in 1930 Ras Tafari took control of the Ethiopian Empire. It was in ascending to the throne that he assumed the title Haile Selassie (“*Might of the Trinity*”). One consequence of his ornate coronation was a photo essay in *National Geographic*, which many scholars link to the growth of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica. Many Rastafari saw Selassie’s coronation as fulfillment of an apocryphal saying by pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey, to look to Africa for the crowning of a black king.

Selassie’s rule was autocratic, but he was also a modernizer, interested in developing Ethiopia economically. In 1966, Selassie traveled to Jamaica, where he was unexpectedly met at the airport with throngs of Rastafari worshippers. Despite his own disavowals of divinity (he was Ethiopian Orthodox Christian), many Rastafari continued to worship him.

Selassie’s death is controversial among Rastafari, some of whom claim that, as Creator, he could not have died.

Richard C. Salter

It is important to note that these ways of experiencing, apprehending or approaching Zion are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and many Rastafari understand and participate in Zion in various ways at different times in their lives.

Ital

The Ital lifestyle can be understood as the ethos of Zion, and it is this ethos that shows the most direct connections of Rastafari to nature and ecology. The basic characteristics of an Ital lifestyle are a reverence for life and a belief that human beings are at their best when connected to nature. For example, an Ital diet is typically vegetarian, grown organically, with minimal processing. Rastafari tend to reject chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically engineered crops because: they destroy life in the long-run, they are ultimately unhealthy for humans, they promote economic dependence on corporations and first-world nations, and they dismantle traditional relations with the land and traditional knowledge of crops, crop cycles, lunar planting and harvest cycles. Rastafari farmers tend to value traditional modes of planting and

cooperative farming because they preserve the relationship of the farmer to the land and to tradition.

For similar reasons, many Rastafari primarily use “bush medicine,” or traditional herbal cures, when sick. These bush herbs are given by the Creator as food and medicine for humans, a claim supported with biblical references (e.g., Gen. 1:29, giving plants to people for food; Rev. 22:2, suggesting ganja (marijuana) as the “healing of the nations”). Significantly, many Rastafari prefer to grow their own ganja, or buy only from other Rastafari, and reject on principle the extra-potent hybridized varieties, especially when these are understood as having been developed in North America.

The characteristic Rastafari hairstyle, dreadlocks (matted hair), also reflects reverence for life. According to many Rastafari, one ought not cut one’s hair or shave one’s beard because the growing hair signifies life and strength, and life cannot be stopped and ought not be hidden. Among many Rastafari, contraception and abortion are rejected for similar reasons.

Ecological Ethic

Rastafari frequently read and are influenced by the Bible,

especially the Hebrew Bible. Yet the ecological ethic among most Rastafari cannot be said to be based on a dominion theology or a stewardship model of ecology. Moreover, though many Rastafari do long for Zion, and experience profound renewal from sojourns in Zion, the use-value of land for agriculture and the value placed on self-determination among Rastafari, mitigate against an ethic that values land for recreation.

In general, the tendency of Rastafari to see the divine throughout the natural world leads to the strongest affinities between Rastafari and those ecological ethics which see inherent value in all of nature. Yet these ecological affinities will also continue to exist with a certain amount of tension, for Rastafari history tells us of the special value Rastafari place on human self-determination and liberation. Nature is valuable, but the value of nature cannot be imposed on humans from outside or it will ring false; attempts by first-world nations to impose an ecological ethic on Rastafari will be rejected simply because they come from outside, regardless of profound affinities at the level of content.

Richard C. Salter

Rastafarian Activism

Rastafarian beliefs have directly inspired activism within the green movement. Rastafarians have been involved in Green Parties and a range of environmental groups, especially those concerned with animal liberation. In Britain the Rastafarian poet Benjamin Zephaniah has written verse promoting a vegan diet and raised funds for groups such as Friends of the Earth. In the United Kingdom the Jamaican poet Brian Wilson founded Friends of MOVE to support the Philadelphia-based radical group. Friends of MOVE mobilized green activists, anarchists and Rastafarians to campaign for the release of U.S. political prisoner and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal. They also took part in direct-action protest with Earth First! on a range of issues including road construction.

Perhaps the best-known Rastafarian green activist is the New Zealand Member of Parliament, Nandor Tzancos. Elected in 1999 for the Green Party, he has pioneered the campaign for the legalization of cannabis in N.Z., spearheaded the Wild Greens direct-action group who famously raided laboratories growing GM crops and is a leading advocate of multicultural ecology. His activism started in the 1980s in Britain and included a stay at Molesworth peace camp. Nandor’s spiritual beliefs are closely linked to his anti-capitalism. Nandor argues that the Rastafarian principle of *Ital* provides an alternative to capitalism,

It begins with private ownership – the idea that people can own the Earth, as if fleas could own a dog . . . *Ital* is the opposite of that. *Ital* is natural livity. I&I say that the land is from the creator, creativity is from the creator, life is from the creator. So how can a person own any of that, in any true sense?

He conceptualizes *Ital* as a means of opposing consumerism, noting, “Capitalism is also built on self-hatred. Consumer society depends on us being unhappy with who we are . . . Natural hair, natural smell, natural living – that is *ital*, that is dread. Babylon hates this, because it cannot be commodified.” Nandor argues that there is an affinity between his religious beliefs and his activism, “So I am a Rasta. I am also an MP for the Green Party. Both these ways of being are about natural law, about social justice, ecological wisdom, peace and true democracy.” Indeed the links between Rastafarianism and green political activism are based on a shared sense of nature as sacred and the pursuit of social justice as morally obligatory.

Derek Wall

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See also: Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; MOVE; Radical Environmentalism.

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- See also: Caribbean Cultures; Entheogens.

Raves

From the late 1980s in Britain and subsequently elsewhere around the globe, youth have danced *en masse* to the syncopated rhythm of electronic "house" or "techno" (or "tekno") musics, which, with the assistance of psychotropic lights, hypnoblobic video and alterants (especially the entheogen MDMA, or "ecstasy," LSD and nitrous oxide), have enabled altered states of consciousness. In what are arguably crucibles of contemporary youth spirituality, all-night endurance dancing within the context of these "raves" is variously claimed to facilitate transcendence of the self, communion between participants and/or a deep somatic relationship with the natural environment.

A clandestine pleasuredscape, the rave has been described as "an overwhelming yet depthless barrage of the senses that transforms the dancefloor into a magical megasurface" (Hutson 1999: 58). While consistent with experiences occasioned by traditional underground or even "club" events, the description becomes especially applicable to "raves" celebrating celestial events and seasonal transitions (e.g., moon cycle, solstices) held in outdoor locations (where dance floors are positioned in bushland, forest, beach or desert), facilitated and attended by Pagans, travellers and other practitioners and affiliates of earthen spirituality. This is certainly the case for "Trance Dance" or "psytrance" (psychedelic trance) events, themselves influenced by traveller's full moon parties held in Goa, India, during the 1980s. Trance Dance rituals may incorporate fluorescent décor, fractalized mandala projections, altars, chai tents, totemic installations, sacred geometry, earthworks, large speaker stacks positioned at the cardinal points and "trance" music – a metronomic four-quarter beat overlaid with exhilarating arpeggios, infused with "ethnodelic" samples (e.g., didgeridoo, djembe, sitar). Sonorous and sensual, such events are celebrated as "no spectator" style odysseys with a celebrated climax ("rebirth") at sunrise.

While raving and techno-music culture became subject to commercialism and government regulation from the early 1990s, anarcho-spiritualists have consistently advo-

cated the interfacing of *technology, ecology* and *spirituality*. Editor of *Evolution* magazine (originally *Encyclopedia Psychedelica*) and founder of the London dance club Megatripolis, Fraser Clark, was particularly influential in articulating this convergence. Having coined the term "zippie" (Zen Inspired Pagan Professional) to describe "a new kind of hippy who rejected the sixties Luddite pastoralism and embraced the cyberdelic, mind-expanding potential of technology," Clark evangelized rave as "the expression of a new Gaia-worshipping eco-consciousness" (Reynolds 1998: 167). The idea that Britain would be revitalized by a fusion of the House and Green movements was articulated on Clark's compilation album *Shamanarchy in the UK*. Not inconsistent with the view that raves are "programmed" by digital technicians (DJs and other cyber-engineers) possessing "techno-shamanic" qualities, Clarke optimistically viewed the rave as a contemporary form of "tribal shamanism." Similarly, for influential scholar of ethnopharmacology and radical historian Terence McKenna, as shamanic dance ritual, raving was part of the natural psychedelics-led "archaic revival" which will end alienation from the "Gaian supermind" (McKenna 1991).

The work of anarcho-mystic Hakim Bey (aka Peter Lamborn Wilson) has been heavily drawn upon in forging the primitivist-extropian alliance at the heart of such a worldview. Throughout the nineties, Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (1991), or TAZ, was the poetic benchmark in conceptualizing an appropriate horizontal, non-commodified dancescape for the exploration of psychedelic spirituality. The free outdoor rave-TAZ became a new tech-savvy anarcho-liminal utopia wherein inhabitants claim to achieve that which resembles a peak experience, or union, with co-liminaries *and* nature. Throughout the nineties, numerous inspired *techno-tribes* emerged in Europe, North America and Australia to pursue the desired "revival" through the facilitation of such events. A future-primitivism was early exemplified by London "terra-technic" sound system, Spiral Tribe, who believed they were connected to prehistoric nomadic tribes and that techno was the new "folk music." The Spirals believed free parties were

shamanic rites, which using the new musical technologies in combination with certain chemicals and long periods of dancing, preferably in settings with spiritual significance, could reconnect urban youth to the Earth with which they had lost contact, thus averting imminent ecological crisis (Collin 1997: 203–4).

These strands impacted upon the development of a global "techno-pagan" or cyber-spirituality movement for whom the rave assemblage would facilitate the return to "forgotten tribal roots." It was well received in San

Francisco, where experimentation into the psychedelic-spirituality-technology interface was particularly advanced. There, Full Moon parties and events operated by the New Moon collective and other rave communities were prevalent throughout the nineties.

In Australia, "bush doofs" were early facilitated by the likes of Electric Tipi on the northern coast of New South Wales, and later GreenAnt in Victoria and Dragonflight in Queensland. In a proactive and reconciliatory atmosphere, Australia has also seen a strengthening alliance between radical environmentalism, ecospirituality and rave culture manifested in *dance activism*. Popularly dubbed "Free NRG," this post-rave movement has seen youth rise to challenge mining and forest industries, and defend sacralized landscape ("country") threatened by natural-resource developers. Emerging in 1995, anarcho-spiritual techno-tribe Ohms not Bombs, became alarmed by current levels of non-renewable energy consumption and patterns of Earth destruction. A key objective of "Free NRG," they argue, is "tuning technology with ecology, DJing our soul-force into the amazing biorhythms of nature" (www.omsnotbombs.org). Furthermore, with "co-created magic," they have declared

this land is returned to the ancient and magical indigenous chain of wisdom. If we unite our purpose a massive healing can be set in motion . . . Help institute a sound system for all, join the Earthdream, support Aboriginal sovereignty, and help dance up the country in rave-olution (www.omsnotbombs.org).

An annual "tech-nomadic" carnival of protest touring through Central Australia, Earthdream (www.beam.to/earthdream) emerged in 2000 as the proactive millenarian event of the techno-spiritual movement. Over a period of four or five months during the winter, a series of free party "teknivals" and intercultural anti-uranium mining protests are held on Aboriginal lands – with the full cooperation of traditional owners – including a major event held on the winter solstice. Exemplifying a contemporary strategy of reenchantment, Earthdreamers actively participate in native landscapes.

Earthdream exemplifies the immanent *communing* potentiated by the geo-dancescapes of the rave/post-rave. Participating in the dancescape – through dancing, through *ecstasis* ("raving") – is a means of temporary inhabitation, rendering possible an enduring relationship with place. Commentators expound upon the spiritual potential of Trance Dance as a ritual of communion. For instance, psy-trance pioneer Ray Castle asserts that outdoor trance events "celebrate an experiential celestial electro-communion – a participation mystique – with the numinous oneness and interconnectivity of all creation" (Castle 2000: 146). According to proponent of Chaos Mag-

ick, Kathleen Williamson, while sounds produced by the likes of Castle constitute "the new epic poetry," Trance Dance "is the 'coming of age' ritual which Western culture has long forgotten." According to Williamson, "tekno anarcho-activists" understand "the power of the gnosis of trance," using techniques to "direct the energy of the dance." While music is significant in achieving "transcendence" or "inner-knowledge" in such contexts, trance artists have also "buried crystals under dance areas" and have investigated "the symbology and iconography of ancient magickal and spiritual traditions." Moreover, in "reviving lost traditions," the dance rite constitutes an answer to modern distancing from natural world rhythms:

Our convenient industrial cultures have practically negated our direct relationship with the earth and its seasons and cycles, and it seems that there is less and less reason to rely on, let alone investigate our instinctual being. Our experiences with sound, psychedelics and the dance ritual are the stirrings of communicating via the ebb and flow of the earth's rhythms and letting it seep into our collective emotions (Williamson 1998).

In tracing the collective paroxysm of Trance Dance to its putative Pagan or "tribal" origins, Australian fluorescent "rainbow warrior" Eugene ENRG (aka DJ Krusty), reveals a chthonic dimensioned dance philosophy. Characteristically, it is believed that "energy," located in and channeled from the Australian landscape, is responsible for the ecstatic states associated with Trance Dance. For Krusty, a dancer's body can "become a conduit for energy":

I think there's a sense of the spirit of the land. [For instance] this land we now call Australia has a real spirit to being stomped. And if you've ever watched Aboriginal dance, its very much about stomping the earth . . . And if you watch techno . . . It's very much about stomping the earth . . . [It] brings energy into the body, Earth energy into the body (interview with the author, 30 December 1997).

Moreover, within contemporary trance discourse, beyond the "homeopathic" consequences for the individual and the community said to derive from both sound and landscape, it is believed that such dancing performs a somatic connection to, and enables a spiritual relationship with, the natural world.

Graham St John

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- See also: Anarchism; Dance; Entheogens; Ferality; Radical Environmentalism.

Raymo, Chet (1936–)

Chet Raymo was born 17 September 1936 in Chatanooga, Tennessee, and became Professor of Astronomy at Stonehill College in North Easton, Massachusetts. Beginning in 1985, Raymo wrote a weekly science column for *The Boston Globe*. He has also published more than a half dozen books addressing the connection between spirit and science.

Although Raymo's upbringing was religious, he found himself increasingly drawn to the beauty of science, finding the features of the universe more readily understood in terms scientific than religious. As a child, he was often wakened in the middle of the night by his father. They would go together into the dark yard to study the starry night skies; he would later characterize these midnight excursions as having a profound influence on his life as his youthful scientific curiosity came into conflict with his religious upbringing. Yet while science offered him knowledge and understanding, it did not offer the comfort and tradition he had found in religion. Only through his exposure to such mystics as Julian of Norwich, Thomas Merton, and Teilhard de Chardin was a world revealed that allowed both science and religion a place.

Place is central in Raymo's books, beginning with *The Soul of Night* (1985). By 1999 he had come to understand that the teachings of science could not contradict his religious faith; that faith is based not on dogma but on love; and that "knowledge is a prerequisite for love" (1999: xv). Further, he argues, science allows us "to

participate in an evolutionary drama larger and richer than ourselves, in which the human soul awakens in the course of deep time to a new season of consciousness and intelligence" (1999: 46). He notes, for instance, that as a trained astronomer he fully understands the make-up of a comet, can plot its course around the sun, its trajectory across the sky. But none of that knowledge can diminish his spiritual joy in the presence of the comet. "Knowledge and wonder and celebration," he writes, "went hand in hand in hand: the archetypal religious experience" (1998: 239).

Raymo writes of his life as a continual process of "re-learning how to pray" (1999: ix). Rejecting the self-centeredness of his childhood prayer – "the vain repetition of 'me, Lord, me'" (1999: xiv) – he prefers to meditate upon natural phenomena as a catalyst for his spirituality. His is not a ritual-bound spirituality, though; Raymo lives well outside the New Age. Nor does he follow Stephen Jay Gould's imperative that science and religion ought always to remain entirely separate realms of understanding. In the world as Raymo understands it, God and nature serve one another; the kind of knowledge offered by science does not impede, but rather enhances, a religious or spiritual experience of nature. Both in his books and in many of his weekly columns, Raymo seeks to show the mystery of the natural world; thus while he does not write explicitly about "the environment," he guides readers into that natural mystery in the understanding that by doing so they will come to value nature for its own sake.

In exchanging the dogma of his childhood religion for a mature vision of spirit as an elemental part of the natural world, Raymo echoes two writers with whom he is most often compared: Loren Eiseley and Annie Dillard. Raymo speaks, though, with a unique voice, one informed by the ancient stars in the night sky, the differently ancient stones of the Irish coast and the long traditions they represent – a voice content in the knowledge that science and religion have equal roles in the cosmos and in his own life.

Richard Hunt

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- See also: Dillard, Annie; Eiseley, Loren; Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre.

Reclaiming

“Reclaiming” is an ecofeminist Witchcraft community and spiritual organization. While the Reclaiming *tradition* is a specific feminist branch of contemporary American Pagan Witchcraft, the Reclaiming *community* refers both to the local Witchcraft community in the San Francisco Bay Area of California and to the women and men, primarily in North America and Western Europe, who identify with this tradition. The tradition arose from a teaching collective within the San Francisco community, founded in 1979 by the Jewish author, feminist and activist Starhawk and her circle of friends. In 1980 the collective, which by then ran an ecofeminist “school” in Witchcraft, decided to name its work *Reclaiming – A Center for Feminist Spirituality*. Within a few years Reclaiming became a well-established institution on the Pagan scene in Northern California. Twenty years later, Reclaiming has recruited more than fifty teachers/leaders and probably has adherents in the tens of thousands.

According to Reclaiming Witches, the values of their tradition stem from an age-old “magical consciousness” that sees all of life as sacred and interconnected, and any living being as a dynamic composition of matter, energy and spirit. The natural world is venerated and ultimate spiritual authority is believed to reside within each and every person. Reclaiming works with both female and male images of the divinity, although the goddess symbol is usually preferred. To name life-generating powers “Goddess” is meant to be a continual reminder of what they value the most, namely life brought into the world, and not an act in which gender narrowly is attributed to divine reality.

Reclaiming’s deep spiritual commitment to the Earth and to the well-being, justice and equity of all people has attracted people to the community who seek to combine spirituality with political activism – often with a strong ecological mission and a desire to convert Witchcraft into green activism. Although a “metaphysics of interdependence” is manifest in this Witchcraft community, there are aspects of their worldview that also are critical of much green “deep ecology” spirituality and activism. They do, for example, claim a radical notion of power that includes both ecological and social structures: even though all beings have a share in the same life-generating powers and therefore are equally valuable in terms of their “power-from-within,” people are valued as having a higher worth than worms. Also, political action is regarded as impossible without rating and choosing one alternative before another. To take the name “Witch” is itself an act of choosing, of ethically separating out from immanent reality an identity more preferable than another. Furthermore, religious devotion involves more than political activism to a Witch: there are mystical and initiatory aspects of practicing Witchcraft that challenge every person to mature and grow.

In 1994 Reclaiming incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization and in 1997 it reorganized to accommodate its membership that had grown by then to several thousand followers in the U.S., Canada and Europe. The San Francisco Reclaiming collective dissolved itself and was replaced with a local “Wheel” and a transnational “Spokes Council.” A statement of core values, the “Reclaiming Principles of Unity,” guided the process of reformation. A Reclaiming *tradition* was thus defined for the first time, not in terms of a theology, but in terms of a worldview and methodology. By this careful move, Reclaiming came to augment the position that feminist Witchcraft is not necessarily a new religion, but perhaps rather a new spiritual (and magical) practice.

Even though the old Reclaiming community in San Francisco has a new organizational heart, the ideological continuity between 1980 and today is clear. When Reclaiming was founded, Starhawk and friends interpreted Witchcraft in terms similar to those of Z Budapest: as the claiming back (re-claiming) of an ancient, goddess-worshipping religion in which nature was viewed as sacred and women believed to hold honorable and powerful positions. But unlike Budapest’s lesbian and separatist *Dianic* interpretation, Starhawk wanted to introduce a feminist version of Witchcraft to both genders and emphasize its environmental and political implications. From the very beginning and in alignment with their brand of feminist-anarchism, the collective decided to organize in independent working cells in order to teach classes or publish a newsletter, and to make all decisions through a consensus process. They also decided to teach within the structure of ritual and always keep at least two teachers in every class. This was meant to give the students an ideal experience of how a small ritual unit, a coven, might function and to make transparent how a community of equals ideally might work.

The primary work of Reclaiming is to empower individuals and communities with visions of a new culture and new magical-practical tools to help bring it forth by means of classes, workshops, summer programs (“Witchcamps”) and public rituals. They are announced regularly in the *Reclaiming Quarterly*, Reclaiming’s own magazine for Witchcraft and magical action (printed in 2000 copies). Three core classes have been taught since 1980. The first class, “The Elements of Magic,” teaches how humans are interconnected with the natural world and how ritualizing basically means interaction with the four elements (air, fire, water and Earth) in terms of moving energy. In the second class, “The Iron Pentacle,” the students work with a notion of the human body as a microcosm mirroring a larger macrocosm and how bodily energies can be used for healing purposes. In the third class, “The Rites of Passage,” the students learn to see the human life-course as a sacred manifestation of birth, growth, initiation, repose, death and decay. In all Reclaiming classes, students also learn

about Goddess spirituality, the ethical foundation for the practice of magic, and how to create their own rituals. The three core classes are a prerequisite to become initiated – an event which in Reclaiming is customized to the individual seeker. A hallmark of the Reclaiming tradition is that initiation does not lead to any sort of entitlement. Neither is it required for teaching, running a coven or officiating at public rituals.

Reclaiming offers public rituals to celebrate the Witches eight high holidays (sabbats) in a so-called Reclaiming-style – ecstatic, improvisational and with many priests and priestesses that take different roles at rituals – and the community has in particular become famous for the annual *Spiral Dance* ritual. Starhawk wrote the ritual script herself to celebrate and promote her first book (with the same title) in November 1979 and the event has, since then, become a permanent institution. The ritual celebrates and mourns the intertwining of life and death, and the ritualists pledge to remember those who have died from violent deaths in order to fight for peace and justice. The *Spiral Dance* is regarded as Reclaiming's annual gift to the larger San Francisco Bay Area Pagan community, and draws 1500–2000 celebrants.

A major reason for the growth of the Reclaiming community both inside and outside of San Francisco has been Starhawk's influential writings – in particular *The Spiral Dance* (1979), which in 2000 had sold more than 300,000 copies – and the spread of "Witchcamps." These have been offered to students outside San Francisco since 1985 and their curriculum is usually a condensed version of the three core classes mentioned above. Issues such as community building and sustainable living may be raised, as well as training for nonviolent direct political action. Reclaiming tradition Witchcamps are today organized throughout the U.S. (Georgia, California, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia), Canada (Vancouver) and Western Europe (Germany and England). Between fifty and a hundred people attend each one of these Reclaiming-identified camps. This means that more than a thousand people go through Reclaiming's "educational system" every year without becoming members of the San Francisco community, being part, rather, of radical environmentalism's diverse sub-cultures.

Jone Salomonsen

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See also: Anarchism; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Environmental Ethics; Hundredth Monkey; Magic; Radical Environmentalism; Paganism – Contemporary; Starhawk; Wicca.

Reclus, Elisée (1830–1905)

Elisée Reclus, a leading nineteenth-century French intellectual, was one of the foremost geographers of his age and a major figure in anarchist political thought. He is most widely recognized for his *New Universal Geography* (1876–1894) a massive 19-volume, 17,000-page work that has been called the greatest individual achievement in the history of geography. His final work, *L'Homme et la Terre* (Man and the Earth) (1905–1908), a 5-volume, 3500-page synthesis of geography, history, anthropology, philosophy, and social theory, is perhaps his most enduring contribution to modern thought. Beginning with the statement "Humanity is Nature becoming self-conscious," [my translation] it is a sweeping account – a kind of anarchist "Grand Narrative" – of the history of both humanity and the Earth, and shows Reclus to be one of the most important precursors of contemporary ecological thought, and of social ecology in particular. Reclus is most widely known today for his place in the history of both geography and anarchist theory. However, through his influence on Kropotkin, another famous anarchist geographer, and on later thinkers such as Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford, he has remained a significant figure in regionalist, decentralist and communitarian thought.

There are two sides to Reclus' story of humanity and the Earth. One is his depiction of the process of human self-realization in dialectical interaction with nature. He showed how the natural world shaped human development as humanity transformed and contributed to the unfolding of nature. Reclus contended that historical progress has resulted from mutual aid and social cooperation. Accordingly, he believed that the full self-realization of humanity will depend on a social revolution that embodies such practices in a free, egalitarian, anarcho-communist society. Moreover, he held that the fate of the Earth will hinge on humanity's ability to establish social institutions that express a deep concern for the natural world and for all living beings on the planet.

The other side of Reclus' narrative focused on the long history of domination that has impeded human progress, alienated humanity from nature, and increasingly devastated the face of the Earth. Although he devoted much attention to the domination of human beings through such institutions as the centralized state, capitalism, patriarchy, and racism, he was unusual among social theorists of his era in making the human domination of nature one of his central themes. He was an early critic of the ecological devastation resulting from ruthless industrialization and

technological rationalization, he decried the destruction of ancient forests as early as the 1860s, and he was a tireless advocate of ethical vegetarianism and of the humane treatment of animals.

Reclus' survey of human history included extensive discussion of religion and its effects both on society and on humanity's relationship to nature. He traced the origins of religion to tribal societies in which the shaman was both a teacher who conveyed knowledge based on observation of the real world and also a priest who expressed fantasies concerning an illusory world. He contended that as a result of this heritage, society's traditional outlook has been a confusion of myth and reality, truth and falsehood. He held that as knowledge of society and nature progressed, science and religion increasingly diverged, and in the modern period entered a period of war with one another. Reclus believed that in this struggle science must ultimately triumph and reveal religion to be a relic of past ignorance and superstition.

Reclus stressed the influence of nature on the development of the great world religions. In his view, the monotheism of the Ancient Near East reflects in part the austere character of that region, with its geographical uniformities, its hot, dry climate and its harsh sunlight. He contrasted this unifying vision to the unity-in-diversity expressed in Indian religion, contending the latter reflects the sub-continent's vast ecological diversity of forests, mountains, and rivers, and its extremes of climate. The history of religion is thus for Reclus a clear expression of the dialectic between humanity and nature.

Reclus believed the founders of the great religions often had metaphysical and moral insights that conflicted starkly with later religious institutions. He argued that throughout history, religion has been transformed into an ideology at the service of forms of domination such as patriarchy, statism, militarism, capitalism, racism, and repressive morality. He saw Buddhism as the classic case of such a transformation. He contended that the Buddhist teaching of compassion for all sentient beings had revolutionary social implications, and that the Buddhist appeal to direct experience was a radical challenge to all ideologies and institutions. These liberatory dimensions of Buddhism were lost, however, when its practice was reduced to a code of personal morality, the Buddha was declared a god, and the dharma became an official state religion. A similar process, he said, was used later by Constantine to "kill" Christianity. He noted an even more extreme conflict between ideology and practice in the case of the Jains, observing that their respect for nature, and indeed for all forms of life (which would today be called "biocentric egalitarianism") did not prevent them from becoming an elite group that exploited the masses.

Despite Reclus' professed atheism and secularism, there is an implicit, but very significant, religious undercurrent in his work. He sometimes wrote in a pantheistic vein of

the experience of nature as involving a loss of the ordinary sense of selfhood and a merging with the surrounding environment. In some works (for example, his *History of a River*, 1869), he expressed not only an intense love of nature, but also something close to the experience of union with nature typical of nature mysticism. Furthermore, at times he referred to his own philosophy as a kind of humanistic religion based on the pursuit of the good of the whole. He held that such a commitment to a larger good was the positive core of ancient religions, and that, although it has been largely betrayed by institutionalized religions, it is still put into practice by their more enlightened and compassionate adherents of these traditions.

Reclus thus saw religion as significant in three areas. First, he looked upon institutionalized religion as a negative social force insofar as it has been a powerful ideological support for systems of domination of humanity and nature. Secondly, he held that religions have had a positive dimension to the degree that their founders and some of their followers have expressed values based on feelings of solidarity and a concern for a greater whole. And finally, Reclus himself expressed a certain religious impulse founded both on his ethical concern for the larger good of humanity and nature, and on his immediate experience of a kind of spiritual union with nature.

John P. Clark

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See also: Anarchism; Kropotkin, Peter; Radical Environmentalism; Social Ecology.

P Redwood Rabbis

The redwood forest of America's Pacific Northwest is one of the ecological and spiritual treasures of the world. In the 1820s, settlers of European descent encountered two million acres of dense forest and pristine waterways. At the turn of the millennium, only 4 percent of that primeval ecosystem remained, islands of old-growth reserves in a vast sea of second- and third-growth timberland frequently subjected to clear-cutting, burning and herbicide use.

Jewish settlers made their way north from San Francisco to remote Mendocino and Humboldt Counties in the early nineteenth century, and by the 1980s the region had become home to a small progressive Jewish community, culturally predisposed to environmental activism. Many of the region's environmental organizers, scientists and attorneys are of Jewish descent.

In 1985 MAXXAM Corporation of Texas acquired Pacific Lumber, a timber company whose 200,000-acre holdings included nearly 20,000 acres of virgin old-growth, the largest remaining unprotected stands of ancient redwoods, among them the Headwaters Forest. MAXXAM tripled the rate of logging ancient groves, rapidly felling some of the largest and oldest living things on Earth to make luxury products – premium lumber for siding, decking and hot tubs. For nearly twenty years the redwood forest has been the locus of public demonstrations, litigation, legislative initiatives, and direct-action civil disobedience. Public concern extends beyond loss of the majestic trees themselves to degradation of the ecosystem caused by loss of forest canopy and root strength, leading to increased soil erosion, landslides, aggradation and pollution of streams, and destruction of fish habitat. In 1997 a mudslide originating on MAXXAM clear-cuts destroyed several homes downslope and numerous residential wells have been befouled by sediment; lawsuits brought by residents have been settled out of court.

Working together as the Redwood Rabbis, the three Jewish religious leaders in the region invoked the Talmudic principle of *bal tashchit* that forbids destruction of resources. In rabbinic legend Adam is told: “Do not spoil and desolate My world, for if you do, there will be no one after you to repair it” (*Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 7:28).

In September 1996 Rabbis Lester Scharnberg and Naomi Steinberg addressed approximately 8000 people rallying at the edge of Headwaters Forest; the rabbis were among over 1000 people arrested for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience.

In January 1997 Rabbis Margaret Holub and Naomi Steinberg organized *Tu BiShevat in the Redwoods*, an observance of the midwinter full moon New Year of the Trees. Over 250 people braved rainstorm and flooding to gather at a local Grange Hall to hear environmental presentations and a teaching by eco-theologian Rabbi Arthur Waskow. A break in the storm allowed participants to travel to a nearby park to celebrate the traditional New Year of the Trees *seder* (ritual meal) of tree-borne fruit while seated on the ground beneath ancient trees. As the ritual ended, the rain resumed and more than ninety participants drove to the outskirts of Headwaters Forest for the holiday custom of planting trees; redwood saplings were planted on creekside timber company property as an act of peaceful civil disobedience and effort to stabilize the stream bank.

Through ongoing public speeches, articles, lobbying

and direct action, the Redwood Rabbis attempt to inform the public and influence political developments toward the protection and restoration of the redwood forest. The Redwood Rabbis' efforts have been reported in Jewish and non-Jewish press in the United States and Israel.

Jewish ethics include the obligation of *tokhechah*, delivering rebuke to wrongdoers. The Talmud states that the obligation of rebuke extends not only to individuals, but also to the community, and even to the whole world; if one does not fulfill the commandment of rebuke, one accrues the guilt of those that might have been reformed (Shabbat 54b). In this spirit, the Redwood Rabbis have engaged in years of effort to communicate with MAXXAM owner Charles Hurwitz, a generous donor to the Jewish community in his native Houston, Texas. The rabbis have appealed to the timber tycoon through correspondence, telephone, private and public meetings. In an open letter in California and Houston Jewish press, the Redwood Rabbis called on Charles Hurwitz to make a *t'shuvah sh'leyimah*, a complete change of direction, and dedicate himself to sustainable forestry practices and restoration efforts. The rabbis added words of encouragement from nineteenth-century Chassidic master Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav: “If you can spoil, you can fix.” Although Pacific Lumber has been cited for approximately 400 violations of the Forest Practices Act since 1995, MAXXAM absorbs the minimal fines and has not acknowledged responsibility for environmental damage. In *The Jerusalem Report* columnist Gershon Gorenberg observed,

... the Redwood Rabbis are right to treat their cause as a Jewish one. Arguing “I own it,” Charles Hurwitz posits the absolute sovereignty of the individual, and the complete license of private ownership, limited at most by the law of the land but not by ethical demands. But in Judaism, the individual is not sovereign. God is. He owns the earth. Human beings have, minimally, the duty of tenants to care for the Landlord's property. More stringently, they bear the obligations of caretakers, put in this world – as is said of Adam and the Garden of Eden – “to till it and guard it.” A caretaker doesn't destroy the Landlord's rarest treasures, doesn't stand and watch it happen (*The Jerusalem Report*, 14 November 1996).

In September 1998 an Earth First! activist was killed near Headwaters Forest when an irate logger felled a tree in the young man's direction; one of the Redwood Rabbis delivered a eulogy at the young man's funeral. Two other lives have been lost in “tree-sit” accidents in the bioregion.

In addition to drawing attention to the plight of the forest and streams of northern California, the Redwood Rabbis bring forward the following questions in Jewish and interfaith discussion: are religious communities morally obligated to take an active role in environmental

protection and restoration? Are products derived from non-sustainable practices ethically acceptable? Do religious communities and leaders have a responsibility to deliver rebuke to co-religionists who contribute to pollution and environmental destruction? And, how can we acknowledge natural resources as spiritual resources?

Naomi Steinberg

See *also*: Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Jewish Environmentalism in North America; Judaism; Waskow, Rabbi Arthur.

Regan, Tom – See Environmental Ethics; Radical Environmentalism.

P Re-Earthing

Awakening to the Earth

As I look back, I see two waves, spirit and the Earth, that have sculpted my life. Or are they perhaps just two sides of the same wave?

Spirit emerged from a life-transforming LSD session in London in 1972 which blasted me out of the life I had been living up till then, out of a failed marriage and my job as a systems engineer at IBM. Suddenly the life I had been living lost all its meaning and appeal and I followed an overwhelming urge to start afresh with a clean slate. The following year found me on the road in India for the first time, studying Tibetan meditation with Lama Yeshe and Zopa at Kopan monastery in Nepal and vipassana meditation with Goenka at the Burmese Vihar in Bodhi Gaya.

I arrived back in Australia in August 1973 after a five-year absence. The 1960s didn't really reach Australia until the early 1970s. Lots of young people went back to the land then, especially around the small town of Nimbin in northern New South Wales and I immediately gravitated there upon my return.

My friends and I started offering meditation retreats to the burgeoning New Age community, and by 1976 we had built the Forest Meditation Centre. Then, twenty of us bought 160 acres of forest nearby, sloping down to Tuntable Creek, and started Bodhi Farm. We dedicated ourselves to caretaking the meditation center, organic gardening, social action, and looking after each other. It was a beautiful time. Before a hole in the sky made us fear the sun, we worked naked in the gardens and bathed in the pure water of our creek. We planted fruit trees, delivered our own babies, and built our dwellings. We shared vehicles. One day a week we sat in silent meditation together, one day we met in council. My son Bodhi was the first born there in 1977, quickly followed by seven or eight

others, including two sets of twins, and so we became known in the district as Baby Farm.

My awakening to the Earth took place four or five miles from Bodhi Farm, at Terania Creek, in 1979, when a couple of hundred hippies staged what was, as far as I know, the first direct nonviolent action in defense of the rainforests anywhere in the world. This was the biggest turning point in my life. I think now that we were successful because we were so naive and innocent and unaware of precedents. A film from that period shows a policeman with a happy smile on his face sitting by the forest having his bald head massaged by a young hippie woman. Another shot shows a band of tie-dyed minstrels standing in front of a bulldozer in the rainforest singing songs of love and peace. People climbed high into the trees and lay on the ground in front of the dozers. Hundreds were arrested, but there was not a single incidence of violence.

Perhaps it was all the sitting in meditation. But I felt as if the rainforest could speak to me and was asking me to give it voice. It was as if I had been plucked from my human throne and suddenly found myself a commoner, a plain member of the biota as Aldo Leopold called it, with a burning desire to awaken humanity to the folly of sawing off the branch that we are sitting on, unraveling the biological fabric from which we too are woven. If we enter the rainforest and allow our energies to merge with the energies we find there, I found, a most profound change in consciousness takes place. As I wrote in *Thinking Like a Mountain* (a book I wrote with Joanna Macy, Arne Naess and Pat Fleming in 1986), I realized that our psyche is itself a part of the rainforests. "I am protecting the rain forest" becomes "I am part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking."

It took a number of years, countless demonstrations, press conferences, leaflets, and many people willing to sit in front of bulldozers and go to jail. But eventually 70 percent of the people of New South Wales came to agree with us, and the government established a series of national parks. To protect the remaining rainforests in 1981 we formed an organization, the Rainforest Information Centre (RIC).

From the Rainforest Information Centre to Earth First!

In response to our success, however, Australian logging companies began to look offshore, and in 1983, community representatives from the Solomon Islands contacted RIC for aid in resisting the same logging companies we had fought, as well as Malaysian and Japanese companies. In the years that followed, RIC volunteers provided technical, financial, and political support to defend forests and communities in the South Pacific, Asia, South America, and Russia.

In 1981 North American poet Gary Snyder visited Australia and we took him for a walk through Terania Creek.

As he learned about our actions in defense of the rainforests he said he was reminded of a new group that had formed in the United States called "Earth First!" Armed with Gary's introduction I contacted Earth First! Founder Dave Foreman and was soon writing for their journal.

In 1984 I was invited by Earth First! activists to the U.S. With Foreman and another of Earth First!'s founders, Mike Roselle, we spent two months bouncing around in the back of an old Volkswagen bus, conducting "road show" performances made up of music and storytelling, promoting our biocentric vision and direct-action resistance to deforestation. We ended our tour in San Francisco at a venue where Gary Snyder read a poem about Terania Creek and Randy Hayes announced the formation of a new international organization, the Rainforest Action Network.

The years that followed were full of activity: direct action to save forests and wilderness, boycotts of Mitsubishi and other transnationals, support for indigenous people in their struggles. Yet it was clear that the planet could not be saved one forest at a time. For each forest we were able to spare, a hundred were lost. The Earth is not a rock with resources growing on it; the Earth is alive, and to try to protect it by preserving a tiny patch of wilderness here and there is something like trying to keep humans alive by preserving representative samples of skin here and there.

Consciousness Change and Re-Earthing Ritualizing

To protect the Earth, to protect ourselves, we had to change the way we saw both the Earth and ourselves. We had to change our consciousness. Unless we could address our underlying spiritual disease, no forests would be saved for long. But how, I wondered, are we to identify and understand the spiritual malaise that leaves modern humans so lonely and isolated and no longer able to hear the glad tidings of the Earth which is our home? How are we to heal the great loneliness of spirit that finds us unable to feel loyalty and gratitude to the soil, which has fed and nourished and supported us without pause for 4000 million years?

Searching for an answer, I turned to the indigenous people who lived more or less in harmony with the Earth for hundreds of thousands of years. When we look at indigenous cultures, we may notice that without exception ritual affirming and nurturing the sense of interconnectedness between people and nature plays a central role in the lives of these societies. This suggests that the tendency for a split to develop between humans and the rest of nature must be very strong. Why else would the need for such rituals be so universally perceived? It also suggests the direction we must search for the healing of the split: we need to reclaim the ritual and ceremony which were lost from our culture a long time ago, and to our amazement we find that this is incredibly easy to do. Working with the Buddhist activist Joanna Macy, we

developed a ritual to address our contemporary situation. The Council of All Beings, as we called it, began with mourning for what has been lost, the acknowledgement of rage and anger. Using guided visualization, movement, and dance, we reexperienced our entire evolutionary journey. We made masks to represent our animal allies and give voice to these voiceless ones, invoking the powers and knowledge of these other lifetimes to guide us in appropriate actions and empower us in our lives. We see that the pain of the Earth is our own pain and the fate of the Earth is our own fate.

The Council of All Beings was just the first of the "re-Earthing" rituals that we developed in the years that followed, searching for processes that resonated for modern humans while fulfilling the function that such ceremonies had done for all indigenous cultures without exception since the beginning of time.

In the Council of All Beings we remember to speak on behalf of the animals and plants and landscapes with whom we share the Earth. In another of our new processes, "The Timeline of Light," we recapitulate our entire evolutionary journey, the five billion years since the Earth was born and before that, the eight or nine billion years since the birth of the universe itself. When we enact this story as our very own creation myth, when we recall that every cell in our bodies is descended in an unbroken chain from the first cell that emerged on the Earth, then a wonderful new perspective opens up in our lives and a fierce loyalty for life may arise that cuts through the conditioning and habits that trap us, and empowerment may blossom to serve the Earth.

Staying Connected

It takes a certain discipline, of course, to stay connected, to continually hear the Earth's voice. For many years, it had been my custom to seek guidance from the Earth. I would lie down in the forest and cover myself in leaves and say, "Mother, I surrender to you," and then I would deliberately allow all my energies to sink into the Earth. In 1992, the instructions I received in response to my prayers and meditations changed, and from that point onward, all that I received went like this: "John, finish what you've started. Don't start anything new. Leave space for me, Gaia," Sometimes this message would come while I was sitting quietly in nature. At other times, at the end of a weekend workshop, the last exercise would be for each of the participants (including myself) to write a letter to themselves which started "dear (your name), this is your mother, Gaia," after that the instructions were just to keep writing without stopping, without thinking and just see what came out. Previously I had received all kinds of practical advice about projects to undertake, or new directions for my work. Now, this was all that came through: "John, finish what you've started. Don't start anything new. Leave space for me. Gaia." I felt that Gaia was telling me to take time to

seek deeper answers to my questions about how the perennial spiritual thirst of humanity could be aligned with the need to address the ecological crisis. It was time to purify myself. It was time to visit some of the projects that I had helped initiate and support but had never seen with my own eyes. It was time to visit my beloved India and weave once again the spiritual warp and ecological woof of my life.

With all the projects that were underway, it took me about three years to hand over the last pieces of my work and return to India, my spiritual home, in search of nourishment and vision. Meanwhile, all the psychological aches and pains, which had mysteriously vanished when my Earth service was all-consuming, now returned. I finally had time on my hands again.

So I returned to India in 1995 searching for some resolution to the spiritual crisis that had begun for me a few years earlier. I decided to spend some time with the 86-year-old Advaita teacher, Poonjaji. I was hoping that meditation and *satsang* dialogues with him would help me to understand the connection between my work to save the planet and spiritual work. I felt a great need to join my activist side with my contemplative side, and I hoped Poonjaji could help me. He had found enlightenment fifty years before as a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, perhaps the greatest Hindu sage of his century, on the sacred mountain Arunachala in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Poonjaji, or Papaji as he was affectionately known, had many Western devotees who believed that he was also a fully enlightened master. Some 200 of us from all over the world crowded the hall Satsang Bhavan four mornings a week. Behind him on the wall were portraits and photos of Ramana. We handed him letters (his hearing was failing) with our spiritual questions which he would read and answer. I was interested in exploring with Papaji the relationship between the human spiritual quest and the ailing Earth. I had been wondering how, as long as people look on the Earth as *maya*, illusion, and as an obstacle to realization, as is generally the case in religions originating in the East, we could find the intense spiritual will necessary to make the tremendous changes in our values, lifestyles, and institutions, and in our very consciousness, that would prevent the continued destruction of the Earth?

Lucknow seemed an unlikely place to search for enlightenment. Noisy, highly polluted, and hardly conducive to a spiritual quest. Still, some of my closest friends had reported that a great opportunity existed there while this great sage was alive. There I would hang out with the other seekers, listening to stories from people from around the world. Once I visited the sad remnants of a forest nearby and prayed for direction, for renewal, for Gaia to call me once again, but I felt frustrated and full of doubt.

I found myself fascinated by Shiva, the Hindu god of creation and destruction, and tried to find out as much

about him as possible. For Shivaratri, the anniversary of Shiva's wedding, I caught the train to Varanasi where that wedding had taken place. Millions of pilgrims crowded the festive city, and I watched the *naga babas* naked, ash-covered, dreadlocked *sadhus* carry their tridents down to the Ganges to purify themselves.

While there I came across an interview with Vandana Shiva, the Indian feminist ecologist and writer, who spoke about the river goddess Ganga and Shiva. She said that the power of the goddess was so strong that if she landed on Earth she would just destroy. It is symbolic of the way we get our monsoon rain. It comes so strong, that if we don't have forest cover, we get landslides and floods. So the god Shiva had to help in getting the Ganges down to Earth. And Shiva laid out his hair, which was very matted, to break the force of the descent of the Ganga. Shiva's hair, Vandana concluded, is seen by many in India as a metaphor for the vegetation and forests of the Himalayas.

When I returned to Lucknow three days later, I wrote to Papaji twice about these concerns. The first time his answer was mostly mysterious to me and left me unsatisfied. So I plucked up my courage and wrote again a couple of weeks later:

Dear Papaji, Lakshmana Swami once said that, since God had chosen to manifest as the world and everything in it, one could worship God by having respect for the world and all the life forms it contains.

For many, many years, Papaji, it has been my privilege and joy to worship God in this manner, to feel the living Earth play my life like a musical instrument. A couple of weeks ago, when I first wrote to you at *satsang*, you said this: "To the man speaking of Mother Earth I say: To help Mother Earth means you stand and shout at the top of your lungs."

I have shouted long and hard, Papa. I shouted in front of bulldozers and was thrown in jail. I made films and a book, which was translated into 10 languages, and conducted workshops around the world, donating the proceeds to the work, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the protection of Nature from the Amazon to New Guinea.

For the last 15 years Papa, the Earth worked through me and I was tireless and full of joy, but eventually the impurities of ego and the conditioned mind began to rise again until, a couple of years ago, the Earth asked me to hand over what I had been doing to others and purify myself for the next task that she has for me. And here I am.

This time Papaji looked directly at me and said in his deep voice:

When you take care of your mother then you will get

some prize. When you are helping the Earth, then you are helping everybody who's living on the Earth – plants, animals, and men. And now you have a reward: that the work will carry on. You may now sit quiet, and she will give you something in the way of peace. So, my dear friend your work is very good. I bless you for this task that is in hand, and let me tell you, both sides can happen simultaneously: Work for the good of the Earth and the people. And for your own good do something else. They needn't interfere with each other. Stay for some time before sleep and in the morning and sit quietly for five or 10 minutes. The rest of the time you may give for the world, help those who need your help.

What a blessing it was to feel Papa rekindle the flame inside me which had been wavering and doubtful. I could not yet know how, but I knew that from this turning point it would begin to flare forth once more.

And indeed, over the following years my work was renewed: fundraising on behalf of activists and cutting-edge projects around the world; in Ecuador to protect the Amazon headwaters from the ravages of the oil industry; a film I produced with David Attenborough and Olivia Newton-John to help protect the endangered forest species on New South Wales and the reforestation of Arunachala.

Shiva's Mountain

My retreat with Papaji was drawing to a close, but there was still one place I had to visit: the great mountain Arunachala, in Tiruvanamalai, 18 hours south by train.

Nearly ten years before, in 1987, I had received a letter from Apeetha Arunagiri, an Australian nun residing in the Sri Ramana Ashram at the foot of Arunachala. She wrote that when Ramana had arrived there, the holy mountain was clothed in lush forest and one might even meet a tiger walking on its flanks. Now little grew there but thorns and goats. Terrible erosion trenched Shiva's sides, and torrents of mud attended each monsoon. She had heard about our work for the forests. Could we please help her to reclothe the sacred mountain?

I had composed a reply to Apeetha, encouraging her in her efforts but pleading that we had no competence in reforestation or the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes – our mission was the protection of intact ecosystems. But it was no use, I couldn't send the letter. Ramana's smiling face, which I had first seen smiling from the back of his book *Who Am I?* in London in 1970, kept popping up before me. So we raised some money and sent it to Apeetha. Through her efforts a local NGO was born, the Annamalai Reforestation Society. The following summer solstice I was facilitating a Council of All Beings workshop at John Button's shack at Sundari community in northern New South Wales. John was a permaculture designer and

tree-planter who was heading for the deserts of central Australia to become involved in a tree-planting project. For some reason I asked him if he would like to try this in the deserts of Tamil Nadu instead. He asked for details, and when I mentioned Ramana, his face turned pale and he told me that he was a long-time devotee of Ramana.

Since that time, John and his partner, Heather Bache, helped organize the rehabilitation of Arunachala. The space between the inner and outer walls of the vast 23-acre temple complex has been transformed from a wasteland into the largest tree nursery in the south of India. Hundreds of people had received environmental education, and a 12-acre patch of semi-desert was donated to the project and transformed into a lush demonstration of permaculture and the miraculous recuperative powers of the Earth.

Hundreds of Tamil people have now been trained in reforestation skills – tree identification, seed collection, nursery techniques, watershed management, erosion control, sustainable energy systems. Shiva's robes are slowly being rewoven. Furthermore, hundreds more have been trained in the techniques of permaculture, inspired by the Annamalai Reforestation Society's model farm.

The train finally rolled into Tiruvanamalai and I was able to visit Arunachala myself and see the tremendous work that had been done to revegetate the sacred mountain. Upon my arrival I discovered that many people there believe that to walk around the base of Arunachala is the fastest way to enlightenment. Each full moon, tens or hundreds of thousands of devotees and pilgrims do so. It upset me to see the indifference with which most of these folks regarded our work. Most were oblivious, but some even complained that the newly planted trees interfered with their view of the sunset. A great deal had been accomplished by the Annamalai Reforestation Society, but how much more could be achieved if only the pilgrims would realize the unity of the spirit and the Earth!

What if their worship of Shiva included devotion to his physical body, Arunachala? Imagine if they lent a hand to the planting and maintenance of the trees as part of their devotion? The greening of the mountain would be accelerated. I was giving talks and lectures in the town and I began to challenge the ecological indifference I found and to propose to the pilgrims that surely the act of worship and respect of watering the young saplings that were weaving themselves into robes to cover his nakedness was an even faster route to liberation than circumambulating the mountain.

A week later I was stricken with remorse. How could I be so presumptuous as to make such claims without having even asked Shiva? So one morning I climbed the mountain and found a quiet place among the trees to meditate and pray and apologize. After some time I opened my eyes to a noise. Some monkeys had appeared from the young forest. Slowly they filed past and stood

guard while scores of their tribe came into view, and then they began to relax.

They groomed each other, they made love, mothers breast-fed their babies, children played and cavorted, utterly unself-consciously living their everyday lives in my astonished and grateful presence. I saw a new-born infant cautiously explore the ground, leaving the safety of her mother's body for what seemed to me the first time, and leaping back and climbing her fur at the slightest noise or disturbance. I had never felt more accepted by the nonhuman world. I knew that Shiva had answered my prayer, had acknowledged my efforts, and was giving me his sign of approval.

It doesn't really matter what symbols we use – Shiva, Gaia, Buddha, God. What we need now is for the followers of all faiths to turn their allegiance to the Earth. What matters is that we refuse to be drawn to one or the other of the great polarities: spirit and Earth. We must neither reduce everything to spirit, from where it appears that the material world is some kind of illusion, nor reduce everything to the material, so that it looks as if spiritual seekers are abdicating responsibility to care for the creation.

John Seed

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- See also: Biocentric Religion – A Call for; Council of All

Beings; Deep Ecology; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Entheogens; Epic of Evolution; Hopiland to the Rainforest Action Network; Macy, Joanna; Paganism – Contemporary; Psychonauts; Radical Environmentalism; Seed, John; Shiva, Vandana; Snyder, Gary.

Reichel-Dolmatoff, Gerardo (1912–1994) – and Ethnoecology in Colombia

Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, anthropologist, ethnographer, archeologist, ethnoecologist, ethnohistorian and ethnoastronomist, carried out extensive research in Colombia (South America) among the Amerindians of the Amazon (Vaupes), Caribbean coast (Uraba, Guajira, Sierra Nevada), Pacific Coast (Choco), Andean and inter-Andean areas, and in the savannah area of the Llanos.

Reichel-Dolmatoff was one of the founders of Colombian anthropology and archeology. As an ethnographer he lived for decades among indigenous peoples and was a staunch defender of Amerindian peoples. The author of over 20 books and 300 articles on prehistoric and contemporary Amerindians, Reichel-Dolmatoff also was a member of scientific institutions such as the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, the Academy of Sciences of Colombia, the Third World Academy of Sciences, and the Linnean Society of London, among others.

Reichel-Dolmatoff's anthropological work contains detailed ethnographies on dozens of Amerindian cultures and contributes significant theories and methodologies. For example, he analyzed indigenous shamanism, cosmologies and worldviews as templates for socio-environmental analysis and conservation, and related these to specific religious systems, modes of subsistence, socio-political structures, medicine, art, philosophies, and ethics that are used by communities to achieve long-term environmental and social well-being. He largely documented this among the Tukano Indians of the Northwest Amazon (Vaupes) and among the Kogi Indians of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast.

Reichel-Dolmatoff pioneered archeological research in many Colombian regions and produced the first interpretive overviews of the millenarian cultural evolution of Colombia. He discovered, among others, early formative sites in the Caribbean area, which documented the (then) most ancient pottery of the Americas that was related to the origins of sedentary subsistence and agriculture tribal societies 6000 years ago.

In addition, he analyzed the symbolism of material culture, and particularly of goldwork, crystals, basketry, ceremonial items, and vernacular architecture – such as the Amazon *maloca* communal longhouse or the Kogi temple – advancing new theories on the shamanism and the cosmologies underlying such objects and artifacts of memory. His work emphasized the great values of

indigenous cultures for their wise, respectful, and ethical modes of balancing community well-being with socio-environmental sustainability. He contrasted these to ecocidal and ethnocidal non-indigenous cultures and insisted that they halt the destruction of Amerindian societies.

Life and Work

Reichel-Dolmatoff, who became a Colombian citizen in 1941, was one of the founders of Colombian Anthropology in the 1940s under the direction of French ethnologist Paul Rivet. During the 1940s and 1950s Reichel-Dolmatoff was a member of the National Institute of Ethnology, creator and Director of the Magdalena Ethnological Institute, a professor at the University of Cartagena and founding member of the Colombian Institute of Anthropology. During those two decades he carried out ethnographic research among the indigenous groups of the Guahibo, Pijao, Yuko, Chimila, Chami, Kogi, Ika, Sanka, Embera, Noanama, Cuna and Guajiro, among others. He also engaged in archeological excavations in the Andean, Atlantic and Pacific regions and lower Magdalena area.

In his two-volume monograph, published in 1949 and 1951, of the Kogi Indians (Chibcha speakers) of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and a series of other publications, he investigated Kogi spirituality from an emic (insider/folk/vernacular) perspective through concepts such as "sewa," "yuluka," and "aluna" that indicated the profound indigenous understanding of nature and society in cosmological context and their application for sound socio-ecological management. Because the Kogi hold that their society is part of a world that lies between four skies and a netherworld of four underworlds in a multileveled and interconnected cosmos created by the Great Mother, he analyzed how the use of natural resources involves ritually "asking permission" to the supernatural Guardians, Owners or Lords of the resources, as well as an effective "payment" in "Thought" and in action to restore ecosystem balance. Reichel-Dolmatoff underlined how the "Mama" shaman-priests guided these agricultural mountain individuals and collectivities to reach a "balanced" life within nature, and he described Kogi life as sober, dignified and respectful of the environment and communal conviviality. He studied dozens of other indigenous cultures which shared many of these features, though the struggle of the Kogi to maintain their traditional cultures he found unique.

Linking his archeological, anthropological and ethno-historical investigations of the Sierra Nevada region, Reichel-Dolmatoff made the first regional and diachronic analysis of the area to investigate biocultural dynamics among indigenous peoples and mestizo (1961) peasant communities. He contrasted the modes by which they conceived, used or abused nature. Indians respected nature, underused resources or replaced them, and balanced resource extraction with population control or sustainable

conservation, while making material and spiritual "payments" to the Guardian "Owners" of nature. Non-Indians, he found, generally exploited and destroyed nature and other peoples, and specifically despised Indians and their forms of resource management.

Reichel-Dolmatoff not only made the first stratigraphic excavations in the area, but also established chronologies and typologies and interpreted the cultural dynamics occurring in mountain, desert, rainforest and coastal ecosystems of northern Colombia. He created and directed a museum in Santa Marta where he highlighted the great value of the prehistoric and contemporary Amerindian cultures and their social and ecological wisdom. This was unprecedented in Colombia.

In 1963 he founded and chaired Colombia's first Department of Anthropology (Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota). During the 1960s he engaged in fieldwork in the Vaupes area of the Amazon among the Desana Indians (Eastern Tukano speakers) and other Amazon peoples. His publications on Desana cosmology, shamanism, social organization, ethnoastronomy, ethnobiology, art, narcotics and hallucinogens (or entheogens), vernacular architecture and the symbolism of "maloca" longhouse; and on native concepts of territory and ecosystem, pioneered a new era of Amazonian structuralist anthropology.

In 1973 he became affiliated with the University of California Los Angeles as Adjunct Professor. Between the 1970s and 1990s he continued ethnographic research and developed ethnoecology as a category of interpretive anthropology requiring intercultural and interdisciplinary research. Among the Kogi and the Desana (Tukano) Indians he expanded analyses on socio-environmental management, ethnoecology, shamanism, cosmology, worldview, ethnoastronomy, mythology, art, material culture, ritual, and on neurocognition, ethnopsychology, ethnomedicine, pharmacology, and environmental anthropology. He studied the role of hallucinogens and narcotic plants in shamanism (1978b, 1975) within their social and religious contexts to reinforce ecological decision making, and he analyzed the myths, rituals, and altered states of awareness they engaged. He examined the hallucinatory imagery during the ritual intake of *Banisteriopsis* and indicated how the visualization of phosphenes (universal optical perceptions) were interpreted with shamanic cultural codes to correct socio-ecological malfunctioning. He made exceptional analyses of the modes by which shamans guided communities in their use of narcotics, hallucinogens, altered states of awareness and experience of the sacred in order to reenchant biosocial existence within a grander cosmic context in such a way as to promote respect for all forms of being and sentience.

Based on a paradigm that Reichel-Dolmatoff termed "Cosmology as Ecological Analysis" (1976) in the Huxley Memorial Lecture, he examined Amerindian cosmologies as templates that are used to generate updated ecological

analysis and accountability, and which are applied for sustainable resource use. He related cosmologies to subsistence patterns, environmental management strategies, population density, dispute-settlement mechanisms, and to an ethos of shared responsibility among neighboring cultures to control socio-environmental imbalances and lead a peaceful coexistence. Portraying the Desana as pragmatic peoples and profound thinkers who are efficient planners with highly adaptive behavioral rules to manage rainforest ecosystems, and who recreate effective institutions and coherent belief and value systems to do so, Reichel-Dolmatoff explained the importance of their ecological eidos and ethos, indicating the importance of the coherence of their socio-political, economic and religious systems.

Between the 1970s and 1990s Reichel-Dolmatoff developed the field of ethnoecology and demonstrated the importance of indigenous ecological knowledge and traditional ecological skills. He emphasized the importance of apprehending the Indians' own concepts and understanding of their ecological practices and beliefs.

He demonstrated how Amerindians consider their universe or cosmos to be composed of a network of skies, Earth, and underworlds which are interconnected by common forces of energy, "Thought," spirit, or matter, deemed to exist in a finite quantity and which require permanent and careful management. Each of these levels of the universes is believed to have supernatural Guardians who are "Owners" of parts of nature and of resources with whom shamans negotiate human existence by exchanging, or not exchanging, quotas of these finite forces. Thus, for Reichel-Dolmatoff, the conceptual dualism or opposition between nature and society is not extant among Amerindians such as the Kogi and Desana, and this cultural awareness that echoes the laws of nature, he concluded, is common wisdom among other indigenous societies in spite of their threatened cultures and territories.

Reichel-Dolmatoff conducted his research in collaboration with his Colombian wife, anthropologist and archeologist Alicia Dussan. He died in Bogotá in 1994 after dedicating more than fifty years to studying the religious and ecological values of Amerindian peoples, and to disseminating the relevance of the indigenous cultures of Colombia.

Nature and Society among the Kogi and Desana

Reichel-Dolmatoff's research among the Kogi Indians of the Sierra Nevada mountains, and among the Desana and Tukano Indians of the Amazon rainforest, pioneered research methodologies and theories of relevance for ethnoecology, shamanism, cosmology and worldviews, and he indicated how their communities used these to live balanced lives based on sound social and environmental management. While analyzing how these Amerindians consider that their society is embedded within nature, the

world, and the cosmos, he explored the relevance of the indigenous ethics of care and respect for all forms of existence. He highlighted that this awareness was the result of acute observations and millenarian experimentation upon the ecosystems and of human activity within these.

Reichel-Dolmatoff held that the Desana's beliefs and practices are grounded in their cosmologies and worldviews. He demonstrated how cosmologies are used by shamans to monitor human activities in particular rainforest ecosystems in the Amazon and he analyzed the indigenous concepts, terms, symbols, principles, practices, and socio-ecological codes to do so. Interpreting how shamans seek to make calibrations between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos in rituals throughout the year and in individual rites of passage, as well as in subsistence practices such as foraging or agriculture, or in medicinal practices and in conflict management, Reichel-Dolmatoff showed how Desana shamanism correlates seasonal socio-ecological dynamics within the larger ecological, climatic, meteorological, astronomical and cosmic referents to monitor the place of human agency within. These cosmic linkages engage a three-leveled universe (sky, world, underworld) composing a closed system that is connected by circuits of limited energy, spirit and matter where the birth or death of one being affects others. In the shamanic geography and topography, these linkages are projected in sacred sites (hills, caves, rapids, spaces demarcating founding acts in cosmogenesis and ethnogenesis), in the borders and centers of ethnic territories, and in sacred spaces in each maloca longhouse.

Desana Indians reiterate their care of and respect for the beings and forces that compose the world and cosmos. Through shamans and elders they "ask permission," and pay the Masters (Jaguar-Shamans) or "Guardian Spirits" of the animals, plants, soils, winds, waters, and of seasons, skies, earths, and underworlds, to use resources and to harmonize their lives with new seasons, years and eras.

Thus before the Desana Indians hunt tapirs or deer, for example, the shaman "asks" the Guardian Spirits or Master of the Animals for "permission" to hunt. The shaman ritually negotiates with the Master in their abodes deliberating how to replace the predatory activity, though it is termed also as a form of courtship and exchange. The shaman, consuming coca, tobacco, or hallucinogens, also "flies" across the different levels of the cosmos and across diverse ecosystems as a bird, or may roam as a jaguar or some other predator to negotiate with the Owners of nature and the universe in order to "retrieve" lost souls of sick or dying people, or to punish other humans for overutilizing resources.

The shamans "repay" the Owners of nature for any resources that are to be exploited, and they seek to replace the "energy" or "spirit" in exchange for human lives of people who are to be sick or die, while promising to

prevent the future overutilization of resources by all the people of his community who are held to constitute a single unit of socio-ecological responsibility. The shamans continually induce the community, which lives together in a maloca longhouse, to respect the limited availability of matter, energy and spirit, and they permanently seek to solve conflicts over resource use, while collectively men and women do so along gender lines. According to Reichel-Dolmatoff, the symbolism of the maloca communal longhouse also reflects the architecture of the interconnected three-leveled cosmos to remind each community that it is a sentient part of the world and universe. The Desana thus consider their societies to be a part of nature, and that all ecosystems are embedded within the planet and the cosmos, according to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971, 1976, 1978a, 1979, 1986, 1989, 1981, 1990, 1996a, 1996b, 1997).

All ecosystems are correlated to grander cycles of the world, skies and underworlds, deemed to be affected not only by the energy of the sun and by climatic and astronomical changes, but by the forces of ancestors and spirits. The territories that belong to ethnic groups are also categorized in cosmological terms, and their rivers, mountains, and sacred sites, have cosmological connections to the skies and underworlds.

The different neighboring groups who share environmental responsibility are likewise inscribed into the symbolism of their territories, and the structure of pan-tribal organization and of marriage alliances and of reciprocal exchange of goods and services are reflected in the symbolism of the landscape to engage kin and allies in joint resource management.

The Desana's own categories and classificatory codes pertaining to ecosystem structure and function are coded according to energy levels and to sensorial categories such as color, smell, shape, or such, and through the imagery of a sexualized polarity, according to Reichel-Dolmatoff. Territorial boundaries that refer to the six phratries (kinship groups) that compose the twenty Tukanoan tribes, and the three exogamic units (one is the Desana) are related to the imagery of hexagonal crystals that correlate to the sky, Earth, and underworld, and to astronomical referents (delimited by Pollux, Procyon, Canopus, Achernar, T3 Eridani, and Capella with Epsilon Orion in the center). Altogether this shamanic topography codifies specific cultural behaviors in demarcated spaces to avoid socio-environmental malfunctioning, though the cosmology implies an enchanted universe. Using these shamanic references, the Desana men and women manage resources at local and pan-regional scales, recreating their semi-sedentary life as foragers and shifting cultivators through the concerted conservation, use or redistribution of goods, services, or marriage partners among allied groups intent on enhancing communal coexistence, restricting the mismanagement of natural resources, reducing social vio-

lence and fomenting environmental conservation for future generations.

Among the Kogi of the Sierra Nevada mountains, Reichel-Dolmatoff analyzed how their cosmology and worldview permeates both ceremonial and daily life and their wise and austere use of natural resources. He investigated their concepts of the universe to understand the overall scheme through which they managed biocultural resources within their religious systems, and the symbolism of cosmogenesis and ethnogenesis.

The shape of the Kogi cosmos is believed to be composed of nine layers (four skies above, four underworlds below, and this world in the middle – the latter is the flat disc of the spindle used by the Great Mother to demarcate Kogi territory). The skies, Earth and underworlds are believed to be affected by the path of the sun between solstices and equinoxes, and by the path of the moon and other astronomical phenomena, as well as by meteorological, climatic, hydrological and other environmental dynamics which the Kogi monitor while alluding to their communication with the Lords, Masters, Fathers and Mothers of the universe, resources, and to their ancestors.

This model of the cosmos is reiterated in the symbolism of the Kogi territory, and it is also expressed in the layout of villages, in lithic astronomical observatories, in the architecture of their village temples, as well as in certain objects of material culture and in the symbolism of the human body. These mnemonic devices are used by the Kogi as “polymetaphoric thought patterns,” according to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987: 78), to interpret how to achieve a life of “completeness” or to achieve spiritual depth and high-ranking. “Mama” priests and elders use them as references to counsel individuals and communities to achieve a transcendental existence. With ritual ceremonies, dream analysis, divinatory practices, pilgrimages, confessions and meditation, they guide people toward an austere and balanced life.

Reichel-Dolmatoff analyzed how the model of the Kogi cosmos is projected in the symbolism of the architecture of their temples. The four skies are represented in the four rafters of the roof, and the world is represented in four hearths that indicate a sacred square that is delimited by the path of the sun between solstices and equinoxes (since the temples are also used as astronomical observatories). According to lineage affiliation, each Kogi sits by one of the four hearths to discuss the “laws of the ancestors,” changing places throughout the year. A series of invisible and inverted temples are held to exist in the dark underworlds (with a black sun), which represent invisible but important realities.

Reichel-Dolmatoff demonstrated that this symbolism projects the form of the cosmos with key features of astronomy, geography, ecology, and social and political organization, linking past, present and future generations. According to Reichel-Dolmatoff, the symbolism of the

Kogi weaving loom corresponds to that of the temple, linking the structure of the cosmos to that of Kogi territory within the Sierra Nevada mountain environment and to the intermarrying Kogi lineages, and past with present and future generations, reminding the Kogi to reject material accumulation and promote the acquisition of wisdom, and the goal of socio-environmental sustainability in the short, mid- and long term.

The deep religious tradition of the Kogi and their quest to master the “balance” of mind and spirit and a balanced life, and their self-reference as the “Elder Brothers” who are the custodians of the world and universe because the white peoples or “Little Brothers” have forgotten their responsibility toward nature, led Reichel-Dolmatoff to investigate the many lessons the Amerindians have for the contemporary world. He urged Colombians and international forces to respect the cultures, lands, spiritualities, cosmologies, and modes of life of Amerindians such as the Kogi who are truly engaged in sustainable development and in concert with the laws of nature. According to Reichel-Dolmatoff, the “ideological foundations of Kogi culture and society” (1987: 75) are exemplary and he states

I truly believe that the Kogi, and many other traditional societies, can greatly contribute to a better understanding and handling of some of our modern dilemmas, and that we should consider ourselves fortunate to be the contemporaries of a people, who, perhaps, can teach us to achieve a measure of “balance” (1987: 112).

Reichel-Dolmatoff's last three books, *The Forest Within* (1996a), *Yurupari: Studies of an Amazonian Foundation Myth* (1996b), and *Rainforest Shamans* (1997) offer an overview of his understanding of the Amazon Indians in relation to nature. For the Kogi Indians, this overview appeared previously in his monograph on the Kogi and notably in articles such as “The Loom of Life: A Kogi Principle of Integration”; “Some Kogi Models of the Beyond”; “The Great Mother and the Kogi Universe”; and “Cultural Change and Environmental Awareness.”

Conclusion

Reichel-Dolmatoff pioneered anthropological, archeological and ethnoecological research in Colombia. He analyzed the modes by which Amerindian social, political, economic, religious, philosophical, medical, artistic, and ethical systems were used by diverse indigenous societies to sustainably manage biocultural resources and live in community-based bands, tribes and chiefdoms. He indicated how Amerindians planned resource use, demographic density, land and water use, and managed residence and subsistence patterns for sustainable resource conservation, and he indicated that these dynamics could

only be understood within their cosmological and shamanic contexts.

According to Reichel-Dolmatoff, Amerindian conservation of resources is calculated within short-, mid- and long-term frameworks, and engages collaboration between local, regional and pan-regional contexts that are sentient of the interdependent linkages among all living beings and forms of existence across humanity, the biosphere, world, and cosmos. The Amerindian calibration of resource-use follows a millenarian shamanic tradition that avoids ecocide and foments communal conviviality, and these practices echo the Amerindian understanding that they form part of nature, and explain why they deem ecosystems to be linked to forces in the skies, Earth, and underworlds in order to foster sustained resource conservation. Reichel-Dolmatoff demonstrated that among traditional contemporary indigenous cultures there is no concept of a separate existence or opposition between nature and society nor motifs to dominate or exploit a subordinate domain of nature and peoples, and he analyzed the role of these lessons of Amerindian shamanism, cosmologies and worldviews in the making of the biological and cultural diversity in Colombia, while defending the indigenous peoples' rights to their cultures and lands.

Reichel-Dolmatoff was one of the first scholars to recognize and interpret what is now called “Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” “Indigenous Knowledge Systems” and “Ethnoecology.”

Elizabeth Reichel

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- See also: Amazonia; Anthropologists; Anthropology as a Source of Nature Religion; Ecology and Religion; Entheogens; Ethnobotany; Ethnoecology; Kogi (Northern Colombia); Rainforests (Central and South America); Shamanism – Ecuador; Shamanism – Traditional; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm; Traditional Ecological Knowledge; Tukanoan Indians (Northwest Amazonia); U'wa Indians (Colombia); Yanomami.

SP A Religio-Ecological Perspective on Religion and Nature

If the study of religion is a science, as the German term *religionswissenschaft* posits, then some of its methods should allow a degree of predictability. One such approach is that of religio-ecology. The method was developed by the Swedish scholar, Åke Hulkrantz, who pioneered a social scientific comparative study of religion. The

approach was stimulated by the anthropological method of cultural ecology, developed by William Sanders, as a means to study the evolution of Mesoamerican urbanism from its earliest roots.

In essence, religio-ecology is an approach to the study of religion that considers religion in the context of a culture's ecological *gestalt*, including the various relationships between humans (social, economic, political, etc.), as well as the relationships of humans to animals, plants, climate, terrain, geography, etc. Although religio-ecology was initially used to examine Native American religious traditions, especially those in gathering-hunting and horticultural-hunting situations, if the methodology is valid, then it should be applicable to all cultures in all stages of development, including contemporary societies. To demonstrate this hypothesis, as well as the possibility of generalized predictability, a half-dozen religio-ecological paradigms will be briefly examined with regard to the religious and other understandings of nature, with a focus on animals: gathering-hunting, horticulture-hunting, herding, agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial cultures.

Among contemporary humans maintaining gathering-hunting cultural traditions, the entire cosmos is understood to be numinous (having an aura of sacredness), including animals and plants, particularly those on which human life, in various ways, depends. These understandings may, to a degree, be read back into the earliest human cultures, as they accord with Paleolithic art in their representation of animals and, rarely, humans. Such cultures understand that the world is a family in which humans are inferior members. Every encounter with a nonhuman being is with an entity that is simultaneously a natural and a spiritual being. Sought after animals and plants, gifts of the Earth mother, in various guises, must be supplicated to offer their individual lives so that pitiable humans may live. Every act of hunting larger animals, as well as gathering plants, sea creatures and smaller animals is ritualized. Predatory animals are spiritual models for the human hunters, and the dog is a hunting companion, whose sacrifice, as well as that of the human-like bear, is essentially a substitute for human self-sacrifice to the numinous realm. Shamanistic trance enables humans intimately to interact with theriomorphic spirits (spirits in animal form).

When plants are domesticated with the development of horticulture, the gathering-hunting religious understanding of the cosmos continues. The domesticated plants, however, understood as daughters of Earth, gain ritual preeminence over animals, as do the roles of females, who primarily carry out the gardening. Those animals that are domesticated are no longer understood to be spiritual entities superior to humans, but members of the human community ranging from quasi-children to pets, whose every slaughter is a ritual sacrifice. Hunted animals continue to be supplicated and treated with considerable

respect as in the gathering-hunting religio-ecological niche. But the shift from semi-nomadism to semi-settled living-patterns leads to a closer relationship with the matrilineal-matrilocal family and clan dead. This begins a transition from theriomorphic and plant spirits to anthropomorphic spirits (spirits in human form). Outside of the Americas, this led to a shift from shamanism to mediumism, as the living members of the clan sought the advice of the clan dead.

Semi-nomadic gathering-hunting cultures that domesticate migratory herding animals, most recently occurring among reindeer hunters of northern Eurasia, underwent a major shift in the religious conception of the particular animal or animals on which their economy depends. No longer individual numinous entities, the domesticated herds as a whole are understood to be a gift from their female numinous superior. Gifts of sacrificed animals from the herd are in turn offered to her. The human hunter shifts to the role of the "good shepherd." Animal predators are no longer spiritual role models for human hunters but enemies of the herded animals, for whose welfare humans are responsible. As hunting activities shift to herding, those ritual activities associated with shamanism are no longer generalized among the population as an essential aspect of hunting and gathering but become concentrated among ecstatic religious specialists.

The horticultural-hunting religious understanding of animals and plants continues with the rise of agriculture, but there are significant socio-economic transformations. The majority of males shift from hunting-raiding-trading roles to farming, while females continue their gardening-nurturing roles. With the average male no longer expert with hunting weapons, warrior specialists supported by surplus agricultural productivity tend to become the hereditary elite of a stratified social order, and the matrilineal-matrilocal pattern tends to shift toward a patrilineal-patrilocal pattern in consequence of the increased importance of the male roles. When warriors become the rulers, this patrifocal pattern tends toward patriarchy. Warriors also become ritual specialists, or a separate caste of female and male priests develops. The spirit realm now consists of ancestors, divinized ghosts, and/or anthropomorphic deities who were not previously human. These deities are understood in hierarchies modeled on the now-stratified human socio-political structures. An offshoot of this development, which occurred in one culture, becoming the basis for Western civilization, is for the male chief of the divinities to be considered the sole divinity of the culture, the "king of kings."

With a patrifocal social stratification between elite males who use weapons and the majority of males who wield farming implements, hunting of large animals becomes the prerogative of the elite as ritualized practice for warfare, also ritualized. Hence, undomesticated animals are treated as respected human enemies. Domesti-

cated animals continue to be slaughtered solely in sacrificial rituals, but these rituals tend to be carried out by professional ritual specialists who are separated from the raising of the animals, no longer understood as quasi-children. Save for the Religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), aristocrats play a major role in these sacrifices, which comprised primarily the offering of food and alcoholic beverages to the spirits. But the aristocrats tend to distance themselves from the actual slaughtering of the animals for the meat dishes; the killing and butchering being left to professionals. Remnants of this pattern continue in Western culture in the Jewish and Islamic ritualized slaughter of animals by religious specialists.

The concentration of hunting activities among the elite as an avocation serves to create a disjunction among the general populace from the undomesticated world, leading to the concepts of wilderness and wild animals. Culture distinguishes humans from animals, as well as humans of different cultures, now understood as "wild" humans or barbarians. Humans no longer relate to wild animals as sacred beings but as savage beasts to be tamed and/or killed. Spanish culture maintains a resplendent version of both these archaic perspectives – taming and killing – in the highly ritualized *corrida des toros*, although the modern ritual in itself is not of great antiquity.

With agriculture, the relationship between humans and animals falls into four distinctive categories. For the elite, animals are 1) pets, either playthings or facilitators for human hunting; 2) working domesticants, particularly the horse, used for warfare and hunting, that become romanticized along with warriors toward the ends of these periods; 3) domesticated animals for ritualized consumption; 4) or wild beasts, often found in royal hunting parks, ritually hunted with the same weapons used in warfare. The peasants raise the domesticated animals, ritually slaughtered and eaten by the elite, although peasants rarely have the opportunity to eat these animals themselves. As they are responsible to the elite for their welfare, predatory animals are feared by the peasants for their predations and killed when possible. Game animals (notice our language in this regard) are forbidden to them, being reserved for the elite; peasants who are caught hunting these animals are liable to be executed. The middle class fall somewhere in between, of course, depending on their status.

In the transition from horticulture to agriculture, the understanding of plants changes from revered spiritual relatives to desired entities whose sole purpose is the nourishment or other use of humans, or undesired entities, such as weeds, which hinders the growth of the farmed plants. Similarly, animals also change from revered spiritual relatives to entities whose sole purpose is to feed or be of other use to humans, entities who threaten those animals, or entities that can be killed for practice in preparation for

warfare. Of course, there are many cultural variations and moderate exceptions to this pattern.

In India, for example, cows became a special case, due to the unusual, virtually exclusive, dependence on them for animal protein (milk and milk products), edible oil (clarified butter), traction (draft animals) and fuel (dried dung). Hence, the concept of cows in India is closer to the understanding of animals in horticulture-hunting traditions than agricultural societies. But in India, hunting still tends to be reserved for the hereditary aristocracy or the new aristocracy modeled on the former British colonizers, save for remnant pockets of horticultural-hunting villages in the interior mountains.

Further changes in socio-economic structures leads to increasing distance from the earlier human patterns in these relationships. As industrial manufacturing desacralized metals, clay and wood, so the spread of industry over agriculture led to the desacralizing of Earth, plants and animals in every regard. It is to be noted that this process begins in Christian cultures that had long since limited the numinous to the male Sky and understood the female Earth, as well as human females, to be the locus of evil. Industrial manufacturing and the spread of industrial practices to agriculture also led to the increasing urbanization of the population, further distancing the average person from an intimacy with domesticated plants and animals, save for pets, which tend to be understood as quasi-humans rather than animals, and ornamental plants. Agribusiness factory production of meat and grain leads to animals and grain plants no longer understood as beings, let alone as relatives or gifts from the sacred realm. Undomesticated animals now are neither sacred entities nor respected enemies but anthropomorphized, desacralized fantasies: the "Bambi" syndrome.

Only among the anachronistic remnants of the European aristocracy or their industrial-era replacements (factory owners, etc.) does hunting continue combined with respect for and acknowledgement of a special nature of hunted animals (who cannot be accorded numinous status in monotheistic traditions). Non-urbanized Euroamericans, lacking a hereditary aristocracy, maintain hunting as a ritual of Americanism which renews their connections with a mythicized "pioneer" past and wilderness onto which is projected a sacred aura of pristine purity.

In the post-industrial world, where virtual reality is increasingly replacing normative reality, the traditional real world is becoming transformed into a realm of fantasy, and experience in nature *qua* nature is being replaced by actual (e.g., dirt bikes and "personal water craft") and vicarious thrills. Animals become valued with no understanding of their life cycles and ecological situations and are understood to be utterly divorced from food. Cellophane-wrapped meat is not understood, from either the emotional or the religious standpoint, to come from living animals, just as factory-manufactured, cellophane-

wrapped bread or pasta is not understood to come from living plants. The various traditional ritual relationships with animals and plants completely disappear to be replaced by concepts of "cuteness"; wild animals are perceived no differently than non-working pets. Hence, campaigns are mounted against hunting in general, regardless of potential disastrous consequences for non-competitive herbivores in terrains where natural predators have been exterminated, and hunters become the epitome of evil.

The distancing of humans from animals, plants, and Earth in post-industrial cultures becomes absolute. Theriomorphic and plant spirits, once replaced by anthropomorphic spirits, are for an increasing number of contemporary Westerners now replaced by alien spirits from cosmically distant sacred realms. The North American spiritual journey into romanticized wilderness has been superseded by fantasized alien abduction.

Jordan Paper

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See also: Ecological Anthropology; Ecology and Religion; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm; UFOs and Extraterrestrials.

Religion and Ecology Group, American Academy of Religion – See Religious Studies and Environmental Concern.

Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation

The Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation (RCFC), established in 1998, is a coalition of religious persons primarily identifying themselves as members of Christian or Jewish faith traditions who seek a "right relationship" with forests and the promotion of "religious values" in regard to forest conservation. The campaign is coordinated by Fred Krueger in Santa Rosa, California and is managed by a steering committee of members associated with local congregations in many parts of the United States and with

prominent environmental, religious, academic and commercial institutions, such as the Commission on Environment and Jewish Life, Christians Caring for Creation (Los Angeles, CA), the Religion, Environment and Economics Project (London), the Franciscan Environmental Network, Department of Earth Literacy of St. Mary of the Woods College (St. Mary of the Woods, IN) and Larand International, to name a few.

"Right relationships" are said to entail an apprehension of responsibility understood as the exercise of "correct dominion" in regard to forests specifically and the whole of creation generally. "Rightly understood," the RCFC argues, "dominion binds the person back to God and requires justice, humility, stewardship, wisdom and concern for Creation's ultimate end. To understand dominion as an unbridled right to domination is wrong." "Correct dominion" is further appreciated as an embodiment of one's duty to God. As the RCFC summarizes, "The forests belong first to God; we are its stewards" (creationethics.org, 9 January 2002). In this regard, the definition of "correct dominion" follows closely several other elaborations, particularly those offered by James Nash and Eric Katz, among others.

The RCFC argues that the "excessive material and financial focus," which is prevalent in Western society at large and which has promoted forest degradation, corresponds to a "deadening of spiritual sensitivity" that has become embodied as a failure to exercise "correct dominion." It argues that this "deadening of spiritual sensitivity" has become increasingly prominent since the Enlightenment. Further, "commercial activity," primarily logging, is said to be "unraveling the integrity of forest systems."

The RCFC insists that while wood products are clearly needed, harvesting of timber should not occur "at the expense of the integrity of Creation [or] the health of its life support systems." To this end, the RCFC advocates harvesting timber on private property and rejects doing so on federal lands and in state forests. It calls for the reform of management practices on private lands by advocating an end to the cutting and harvesting of old-growth forests, an end to clear-cutting, an end to logging in riparian zones and on "steep or unstable slopes" and an end to practices that convert natural forests to "monoculture plantations." It also calls for the use of 100 percent post consumer recycled paper, a reduction in packaging and modifications in construction methods so as to ease the demand for forest products. Justice is seen as working toward "not only corporate profits, but also decent, health-giving jobs and the long-term survival of our biodiverse forests" (Krueger 2000a: 15) in a manner consistent with "correct dominion."

The RCFC emphasizes and values the role that forests play in regard to the maintenance of clean water, the regulation of carbon dioxide levels and climate, the opportunities forests provide for eco-tourism and the spiritual/

psychological benefits that are provided to persons by forests. Moreover, forests are seen as a source of "wisdom" and inspiration.

The RCFC has made significant contributions in regard to forest conservation. It has actively supported various legislative initiatives and has engaged in extensive lobbying campaigns, both in Congress and with senior administration officials particularly at the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. Additionally, the organization coordinates a program titled "Opening the Book of Nature," a series of retreat experiences held at various locations designed to assist participants in experiencing and articulating the spiritual significance of forest conservation. The RCFC also reports that its own intensive work with World Bank officials has resulted in the granting of a significant loan to Mexico for reforestation. As a result of its efforts, the RCFC anticipates additional World Bank reforms that are consistent with forest conservation. Assessments of the reasons for the organization's success are a matter of speculation, but it can be said that its appeal to tradition plays a major role.

While the RCFC affirms a sense of "interconnectedness and interrelatedness" (Krueger 2001: 35) within the whole of creation, the notion of "correct dominion" is nonetheless maintained as an integrating paradigm. Consistent with the conception of "correct dominion," the RCFC emphasizes, "Wilderness is a system of knowledge by which we are led deeper into an understanding of God's truths" (Krueger 2001: 34). Given that forests are then appreciated instrumentally as a vehicle for the apprehension of wisdom by human persons, an affirmation of natural law, in some sense, seems to be implicit in their work. If so, this affirmation suggests a reformulation of how natural law can be conceived, perhaps in a manner akin to that which has been recently suggested by Nash, a reformulation that entails moving away from anthropocentrism and, correspondingly, involves the understanding that "moral responsibilities are discovered by reflecting not only on human nature but also on our interactions with the whole of nature" (Nash 2000: 228).

The RCFC has clearly met with success as an activist organization in regard to the conservation of forests. To this end, its apprehension and articulation of "correct dominion" has played a central role. That conception, however, invites important questions which relate to how "right relationships" can be understood among persons in relation to God, to nonhuman entities in the created realm and to one another. As Elizabeth Johnson suggests, differing paradigms may effectively incorporate an awareness of past understandings within the Christian tradition in both positive *and* negative ways so as to prompt a rejection of hierarchal paradigms that, following Johnson, limit the apprehension of "another kind of godly order structured according to genuine interdependence and mutuality" (2000: 12), a structural understanding that as she suggests,

seems more consistent with the certain observations from contemporary science. Johnson's emphasis on "genuine interdependence and mutuality" is consistent with contemporary understandings such as the "partnership ethics" of Caroline Merchant (1995: 217) and ecofeminist philosophical insights such as those expressed by Val Plumwood among others. Differing paradigms of this sort may also provide an effective platform from which to engage in Christian environmental activism and may prompt further investigation in regard to the notion of "right relationships" within the whole created realm as well.

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- See also: Evangelical Environmental Network; Krueger, Fred; National Religious Partnership for the Environment; North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology [and the] North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology; Sierra Treks; Wise Use Movement.

The Religious Environmentalist Paradigm

In environmental studies it has commonly been assumed that there exists a fundamental connection between a society's management of natural resources and its perception of nature. With the publication of "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (1967) Lynn White was among the first to focus more narrowly on the relationship between the state of the environment and religion, postulating a direct linkage between the two. He blamed mainstream Christianity – in particular Judeo-Christian cosmology of man's mastery of nature – for the environmental ills facing the world today.

Since the publication of White's paper it has become fashionable to read ecological insight into religious dogmas and practices. Within much of the environmental movement there has been a tendency to appeal to traditional, religious ideas and values rather than to ecological science and technology in the face of environmental problems. Religious ideas and values have come to play prominent roles in environmental discourse. The Danish anthropologist Poul Pedersen has termed this approach the "religious environmentalist paradigm" (1995).

One early example of this approach was the meeting held in Assisi (Italy) in 1986 to mark the 25th anniversary of the World Wildlife Fund (later renamed the World Wide Fund for Nature), ending with the Assisi Declaration (WWF 1986). More recent examples are the series of conferences on religion and ecology held at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University, the associated "Forum on Religion and Ecology" as well as many entries to this encyclopedia.

Two sources have particularly inspired scholars and laymen alike in the construction of the religious environmentalist paradigm, namely East and South Asian

cosmologies (particularly those of Daoism, Buddhism and Hinduism) and indigenous traditions (first of all American Indians). These have given fuel to the images of “noble oriental” and “noble savage,” respectively. What religious dogma has been to the construction of the former, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) – alternatively indigenous, folk, local or practical knowledge – has been to the latter. But, unlike a narrow, scientific understanding of “ecology,” TEK is intimately connected with religious beliefs and values. For good reasons the human ecologist Fikret Berkes called his book on TEK and indigenous resource management *Sacred Ecology* (1999).

Asian and indigenous concepts of nature are not less complex than their Western counterparts, and it is therefore dangerous to generalize. Nonetheless, whether looking at indigenous traditions or Asian religious creeds, scholars of such worldviews have almost invariably stressed that they are what Christianity allegedly is not, namely, ecocentric and monistic, promoting a sense of harmony between human beings and nature. Christianity in contrast is portrayed as anthropocentric and dualistic, promoting a relation of domination rather than harmony. By focusing on how these traditions are different from Western ones, non-Western religions meet the demand for new ecological paradigms that unite man and the environment as parts of one another.

Everything is Interconnected

One of the most common and enduring stereotypes in environmental literature on non-Western religions is that they are organic-holistic where everything is interconnected through cosmic webs. Human beings are not seen as something outside and above nature but as interconnected and integrated within nature. This preoccupation with interconnectedness is, for example, clearly expressed in the subtitles given to the Harvard volumes on non-Western religions:

Hinduism and Ecology: The intersection of earth, sky, and water

Buddhism and Ecology: The interconnection of dharma and deeds

Confucianism and Ecology: The interrelation of heaven, Earth, and humans

Daoism and Ecology: Ways within a cosmic landscape

Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life

Indigenous traditions and ecology: The interbeing of cosmology and community

But . . .

Christianity and Ecology: The well-being of Earth and Humans

Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust

Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word

This idea of interconnectedness is expressed somewhat differently in various non-Western traditions, but they are all claimed to be ecocentric rather than anthropocentric and nondualistic or monistic rather than dualistic. People are seen as intimately united with nature.

Scholars of Indian religions often quote from the Bhagavadgita that the person of knowledge “sees no difference between a learned Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or an outcaste,” and in East-Asian Buddhism the distinction between the animate and inanimate has gradually been erased to the extent that mountains, stones, mist and the sound of blowing winds have become sentient beings, and thus in possession of Buddha-nature (*dharma*). In Japanese Shinto one talks about *kami*, i.e. a divine power or spirit that resides in anything which gives a person a feeling of awe or spiritual experience, a notion shared with many indigenous traditions around the world. As everything may have Buddha-nature or has the potential of harboring divine powers, all creatures, animate and inanimate, are – at least in some contexts – on the same level. There is thus not a sharp line, as in much of Judeo-Christian thinking, between humans and the rest of nature. Here we encounter worldviews where “nature” corresponds to the cosmic whole, i.e. the totality of existing phenomena. In such views nature and the “universal principle” might be inseparable and intrinsically linked.

Jainism tells us that everything possesses *jiva* or life-force, and in Chinese cosmology the notion of *qi* (*chi*’i) or vital force not only permeates everything from rocks to heaven, but may even be seen as the very substance of the universe. *Qi* is thus seen as the cosmological link between all beings and all events, giving rise to the Chinese notion of “cosmic resonance” (*kan-ying*), whereby otherwise independent events are mutually influencing one another.

The interconnectedness has also a temporary aspect, through the laws of cause and effect (*karma*). Common to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism is the notion of reincarnation. In Jain thought all are souls entrapped in different states of karmic bondage, a notion that may lead to an ascetic life and a reverence for everything. But whereas Jainism holds that plants and animals must first be reborn as human beings before entering a state of eternal, blessed solitude, *kevala*, Eastern Buddhism holds that even plants can escape the suffering of rebirths and enter directly into *nirvāṇa*. Beliefs in reincarnation can also be found among indigenous hunters, as among the Cree Indians of North America who believe that killed animals will be reincarnated if rituals are properly performed.

Few, if any, of the above claims are controversial. But what many religious environmentalist writers have done is to clothe these observations, and many more, in the language of ecology and environmental ethics. According to

some of the participants at the Harvard conferences, the notion of *karma*, for example, is taken to entail an environmental moral responsibility, often seen as binding individuals to the environment. To locate human beings with animals, plants and stones is in this discourse supposed to foster a deep reverence for nature, encouraging us to think “like a mountain,” a notion borrowed from the American ecologist Aldo Leopold. And seeing the universe as a dynamic, ongoing process of continual transformation is, according to one of the editors of the Harvard series, precisely the “organic, vitalistic worldview which has special relevance for developing a contemporary ecological perspective” (Tucker 2003: 218).

Critical Voices

However, many observers have questioned the truth of the myths of the ecologically noble Other, whether they are savages or Orientals. The Indian sociologist Ramachandra Guha (1989) objects to attempts to turn Oriental religions into ecocentric religions. He views this Western appropriation of oriental religions as yet another expression of the need of Westerners to universalize their messages and to uphold a false dichotomy between the rational and science-oriented Occidentals and the spiritual and emotional Orientals. Others have argued that the concepts “ecocentric” and “anthropocentric” themselves are creations of the Cartesian worldview with little relevance to non-Western traditions, which may be one or the other depending on the context.

Many skeptics have pointed out that traditional practices are not necessarily benign to the environment. Historical ecology has indicated that indigenous peoples both in Polynesia, Europe and North America may have hunted a number of endemic species to extinction. Native North Americans have been reported to kill indiscriminately, although their environmental values are based on humanistic notions and morality toward nature where animals have intrinsic value. And early agrarian civilizations in, for example, China and Japan experienced serious deforestation and erosion long before industrialization, despite allegedly “environmental-friendly” religions such as Daoism, Buddhism and Shinto. The Chinese and Japanese managed to correct the situation, whereas the prehistoric Maya and Indus civilizations seem to have been unable to halt depletion of their forests. Hence it is certainly far too simplistic to blame all ills in non-Western societies in terms of Westernization and modernization.

We need to tread cautiously when inducing ecological practices from philosophical traditions. Discrepancies between theory and practice are common, as L. Holly and M. Stuchlik argued in 1983 and the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan asserted in his critique of the Lynn White’s thesis in 1968. Tuan warned us not to assume *a priori* that people’s attitudes and norms toward nature are mirrored in their actual behavior. This is important not only because we, as

those before us, often are ignorant of the effects of our practices, but also, as Eugene Hargrove has reminded us, because “moral principles and precepts are normative, not descriptive. They do not, in other words, describe how people actually behave; rather they prescribe how people – again often generally and obliquely – ought to behave” (1989: xx). Moreover, attitudes and norms do not merely serve as guides for our behavior, they serve to rationalize and legitimize behavioral choices already made.

Skeptics have accused religious environmentalist writers for selective readings of religious texts and practices and for ignoring beliefs and practices potentially harmful to the environment. But, writing about the situation in South Asia, Lance Nelson (1998: 5–6) asserted, “the negative outcomes of religious teachings that can be used to rationalize environmental neglect are probably greater than the positive influence of those that encourage conservation and protection.” Russel Kirkland made a similar point regarding Daoism. This situation is probably equally true for the whole of East and Southeast Asia, and most likely with all religious teachings. Worldviews and cosmologies are in this perspective not seen as coherent constructions but full of contradictions, making them vulnerable to interpretation and reinterpretations. It might be argued that it is precisely this ambiguity that makes religions versatile and adjustable to changing circumstances.

That worldviews are ambiguous and harbor contradictory views and values on nature, and that there are discrepancies between people’s attitudes toward nature and their actual behavior, ought not to surprise anybody. It is probably less trivial that the organic-holistic perspective, where everything is seen to be interconnected and changing, in itself might be part of the problem rather than the solution many advocates of the religious environmentalist paradigm want us to believe. Several arguments have been offered to this effect.

First, it has been argued that an organic-holistic view implies that there is no clear distinction between nature created by gods and artifacts created by people. In other words, artifacts and nature are not opposed, and nature becomes everything around us whether it is a river or teapot, a mountain or heap of garbage. Litter or a vending machine is just as much a part of nature as a crane or a pine tree. They may all harbor Buddha-nature, be potentially the abode for a spirit, be permeated by *qi* or possess *jiva*. Writing about Japan, the French geographer Augustin Berque stated that there “it can be natural to destroy nature” (1997:143). In more general terms, without some distinction between nature and humanity, we can hardly be held responsible for the adverse effects our activities may have on the environment. This does not inhibit human intervention in nature but rather opens the way for a utilitarian approach to it. Thus, an organic worldview that explicitly recognized the unity of the natural and social worlds may fail to give rise to sound environmental

practices and may even contribute to the environmental problems.

Second, seeing nature as dynamic implies that it is not regarded as something unchanging or absolute but as a process of something becoming, or entering into, a certain state. Nature is situational or contextual, and this view allows for multiple concepts of nature to coexist: the wild and threatening nature which sometimes plays havoc with people and landscape, or nature in its most cultivated form: a garden, a dwarfed tree (*bonsai*). It is argued that it is in this latter idealized form that nature is most appreciated, at least in East Asia. It is appreciated because it is cultured, which means that it is brought into people's social universe. It has been argued that human assistance is often necessary in order for things to appear in their real "natural" state, and even that the important thing is not the manifestation of nature itself but the idea about nature.

Third, the notion of *karma*, which underlines the dynamic character of many Asian religions, is intimately connected with a search for liberation from an endless cycle of death and rebirth. In viewing nature as a process, where everything decays and dies only to give birth to new lives in an endless cycle, one may arrive at the conclusion that natural objects acquire little value in and of themselves. In Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism there is a strong tendency to withdraw from the world of suffering (*samsāra*) to escape into some kind of blissful void (*kevala, nirvāṇa*), and many scholars have therefore stressed the world-denying features of Asian religions that encourage people to turn their backs on the world. In such a perspective nature becomes irrelevant, which is hardly the best starting point to address the issue of environmental destruction.

Finally, it has been argued that when nature is seen as immanently divine, as it is in animism, this leads to a "love of nature" relationship. But the close relationship between people and spirit also enables people to entice spirits to move from their abodes in order to utilize the locations in question for other purposes. Before the construction of a house can commence, for instance, ground-breaking ceremonies can be performed. Moreover, it is recognized that it is the nature of things that one organism feeds upon another, creating relations of indebtedness in the process. Human beings are considered to become indebted to nature when exploiting it, but can "repay" harm that has been inflicted upon nature, animate or inanimate, through offerings. Memorial rites have been reported for Japanese as well as indigenous hunters throughout the world. A divine nature is, therefore, by no means a guarantee against environmental degradation, as has often been claimed.

If its critics are right, why then, one may ask, has the religious environmentalist paradigm acquired such a prominent position within the environmental discourse?

There may be several answers to this question. Images of the Other do not only help us define ourselves but also serve as a powerful, internal cultural critique. Kay Milton has even claimed that such images are fundamental to the radical environmentalist critique of industrialism (1996: 109).

The paradigm can, moreover, help people to carve out new roles for old religions. This is true not only for Western eco-theologians who are busy searching the Bible and other Christian texts for ecological insight, but even more so for non-Westerners. Pedersen suggests,

By offering to the world what they hold to be their traditional, religious values, local peoples acquire cultural significance. When they speak about nature, they speak about themselves. They demonstrate to themselves and to the world that their traditions, far from being obsolete and out of touch with modern reality, express a truth of urgent relevance for the future of the Earth. This achievement, with its foundation in appeals to imagined, traditional religious values, represents a forceful cultural creativity which would not have worked by the invocation of "pure" ecology or environmentalism (1995: 272).

This opportunity to acquire cultural significance should no doubt be applauded and encouraged. Two warnings are nonetheless in place. First, the religious environmentalist paradigm's notion of the ecologically noble Other has occasionally contributed to chauvinism and even nationalism among indigenous peoples themselves. Second, and more important, by using images of the Other in cultural critiques of modernity, it becomes imperative to stress what the Other is not, namely modern. Only by being "authentic" – that is "uncontaminated" by modern ways – are they noble and worth our consideration. Corrupted by modern ways they become fallen angels. In the hands of some environmentalists, as Beth Conklin and Laura Graham concluded in their study of ecological politics and Amazonian Indians, the notion of the ecologically noble Other locked them in an "ethnographic present" of more idyllic pre-modern days.

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- See also: American Indians as "First Ecologists"; Anthropologists; Bhagavadgita; Buddhism; Buddhism – East Asian; Daoism; Descartes, René; Domestication; Ecological Anthropology; Ecology and Religion; Eden's Ecology; Environmental Ethics; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship; Francis of Assisi; Hinduism; India; Jainism; Japanese Religions; Noble Savage; Radical Environmentalism; Religious Studies and Environmental Concern; Romanticism and Indigenous People; Savages; Social Science on Religion and Nature; Traditional Ecological Knowledge; White, Lynn – Thesis of; World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Religious Naturalism

A working definition of religious naturalism was developed online in 2003 by members of a religious-naturalism internet discussion group on religious naturalism. The statement, a modification of the Champion statement of self-understanding generated by the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science, is as follows:

We find our sources of meaning within the natural world, where humans are understood to be emergent from and hence a part of nature. Our religious quest is informed and guided by the deepening and evolving understandings fostered by scientific inquiry. It is also informed and guided by the mindful understandings inherent in our human traditions, including art, literature, philosophy, and the religions of the world.

The natural world and its emergent manifestations in human creativity and community are the focus of our immersion, wonder, and reverence. We may describe our religious sensibilities using various words that have various connotations – like the sacred, or the source, or god – but it is our common naturalistic orientation that generates our shared sense of place, gratitude, and joy. We acknowledge as well a shared set of values and concerns pertaining to peace, justice, dignity, cultural and ecological

diversity, and planetary sustainability. We may differ on how these concerns are best addressed, but we are committed to participating in their resolution.

Several of the terms and concepts included in this statement are described in more detail below.

Naturalism

“Naturalism” is most commonly used to describe a philosophical lineage that starts from the framework of materialism – the universe is constructed from matter and energy – and articulates philosophical propositions within that framework. Given that our scientific understanding of the material world has undergone a vast expansion since the naturalism project was launched, and since philosophical responses are framed in cultural contexts, much of the thought that would be included in a historical treatise on naturalism would not resonate well with present-day understandings (this is true as well, of course, of other philosophical traditions). To release the term “naturalism” from its historical constraints is not to release it from the fundamental impulse of the naturalism project, however, which is to perceive and construct meaning systems based on what is known of the natural world.

What is known of the natural world has generated a recent and profound transition, moving from facts-about-physics (quanta) or facts-about-biology (genetics) to a sweeping integrated story – the Epic of Evolution – that deeply informs us about who we are (symbol-manipulating primates, social, mortal, creative, members of ecosystems) and how we got to be here (the Big Bang, nucleosynthesis, biological evolution, brain evolution, emergence). This shift has in turn enlarged the scope of the naturalism project: the challenge is not only to construct meaning systems based on a knowledge of, say, quantum uncertainty or genetic specification, but also to construct meaning systems that emerge from the new meta-narrative itself.

Religious Naturalism

Loyal Rue defines a religious orientation as that which offers personal wholeness and social coherence, and suggests that this is accomplished in traditional religions via metanarratives that indicate how-things-are and which-things-matter. The adjective religious can be said to encompass three spheres of human experience. 1) The *interpretive* sphere (akin to theological) describes responses to the big questions raised by the narrative (e.g., Why is there anything at all rather than nothing? Does the universe have Plan? Purpose? How do we think about death?). 2) The *spiritual* sphere describes inward responses to the narrative, responses such as gratitude, awe, humility, and reverence, responses that for some are best accessed in community with others. 3) The *moral* sphere describes outward, communal responses to the narrative such as compassion and fair-mindedness and respect.

Religious naturalism is best thought of as a generic term for mindful religious approaches to our understandings of the natural world. As such, it does not represent a detailed system of religious beliefs. Instead, the specificity shifts to, and resides within, the religious naturalists themselves.

Religious Naturalist

Religious naturalists are anchored in and dwell within their understandings of the natural world. They find their primary religious orientation within that narrative/perspective and develop mindful religious responses to it – interpretive, spiritual, and moral. These responses are then transfigured into emergent valuations that are called religious orientations and beliefs. Importantly, these valuations and beliefs may deeply overlap with those espoused by existing ethical and religious traditions: the substitution of one meta-narrative for another does not necessarily alter the human impulse toward common spiritual and moral sensibilities; rather, it influences how we get there.

Religious naturalists holding shared orientations and beliefs may go on to associate as more focused communities, albeit this possibility has not yet become widespread. These communities may, for example, develop art and ceremony that honor and celebrate their understandings of the sacred, and may commit to engagements in social and environmental activism. Such communities may coalesce within existing faith traditions, or they may come to stand alone. Examples include the World Pantheist Movement (www.pantheism.net), the Teilhard Association (www.teilhard.cjb.net), and the religious naturalism interest group of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science.

Ursula Goodenough

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- See also: Berry, Thomas; Environmental Ethics; Epic of Evolution; (and adjacent, Epic Ritual); Religious Studies and Environmental Concern.

Religious Society of Friends – See Friends, Religious Society of (Quakers).

Religious Studies and Environmental Concern

The establishment and growth of Religion and Ecology as a new area of study can be attributed in part to its instigation by scholars who feel morally and ethically compelled to address serious environmental problems. That religion itself has been implicated as a catalyst of environmental decline has prompted such scholars to examine the relationships among human cultures, religions, and environments. The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* is, of course, one manifestation of the effort to understand such relationships. But it is hardly the first example of interest in religion and ecology among religious studies scholars, and some of this interest is more than analytic, it is itself religious. Indeed, especially since the mid-1960s, there has been intense scholarly interest in the relationships between human cultures, religions and environments, not only among religious studies scholars, but also among philosophers who have been pioneering the field of ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS. Some ANTHROPOLOGISTS have also focused attention on ECOLOGY AND RELIGION and have been

developing a field known as ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. A good starting point for the study of religion and nature is to review the range of scholarly approaches to understanding the relationships between cultures, religions, and environments. Here we focus on the role played by religious studies scholars in religion-related environmental studies and activism.

Religion and Ecology in the American Academy of Religion

In 1989 and 1990 David Barnhill (then a professor of Buddhism and Environmental Studies at Guilford College) and Eugene Bianchi (a professor of Christian Theology and specialist in Roman Catholicism at Emory University) teamed up to propose a religion and ecology “Consultation” to the American Academy of Religion, an important academic association devoted to the study of religion. The consultation was approved and held its initial sessions in 1991. The Christian process theologian Jay McDaniel, and the Buddhist scholar and deep ecology activist Stephanie Kaza were among the group’s earliest supporters, both of whom were engaged in their own scholarly and activist work toward environmentally friendly religion. Demonstrating strong interest from Academy members, in 1993 the Consultation became a “Group,” a status which it has maintained to this writing.

The religion and ecology initiative represented a concerted effort to focus scholarly attention on the religion variable in human/ecosystem interactions. Some of the scholarly work presented there clung strictly to historical or social scientific analysis. The majority of the group’s presentations, while they might have been involved in or taken such work as their starting point, have also had a normative, ethical dimension.

Some participants explored how the world’s dominant religions could be “mined” or “reconfigured” to promote environmentally sustainable lifeways. Others, influenced by perspectives articulated during the emergence of ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS and RADICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM, promoted the revitalization of cultures and religions they considered to be environmentally benign (such as indigenous, pagan and animistic ones), but that had been declining in the face of what the presenters considered the world’s dominant, imperial religions (especially the monotheistic ones). Still others proposed or endorsed recent religious innovations (such as the “Universe Story,” “EPIC OF EVOLUTION,” ECOFEMINISM, and various NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS including WICCA) as correctives if not antidotes to anthropocentric religions that view the Earth instrumentally and consequently degrade it. Yet others advanced an EARTH CHARTER in order to capture and deploy religious ethics in a way that would promote a new environmental ethics, one that would consider the preservation of biological diversity a sacred duty, while simultaneously valuing cultural and religious diversity.

Within the wider American Academy of Religion, critics of the religion and ecology group have argued that religion and ecology scholars are more engaged in green religion and "missionary" work than in scholarly analysis. Such criticisms are likewise addressed to other ethically or religiously engaged groups in the AAR and reflect a wider fissure within it. For some scholars of religion, religious studies should promote religious tolerance and thus a more humane world, and therefore to promote the "greening" of religion, or to participate in it, would be appropriate modes of academic engagement. For others, such as Donald Wiebe (1999) and Russell McClutcheon (2001), who analyze in complementary ways the religiosity animating much of what is called "religious studies" today, the task of the discipline is properly to analyze religion rather than to defend or engage in it.

The conflicting responses of those in the religion and ecology group reflect this fissure. Some are apparently not involved in religious production or environmental ethics. Others unapologetically defend the normative religious or ethical dimension of their work and the group's attention to it, arguing that the world cannot afford to have scholars sit on the sidelines in the struggle for sustainability.

The differing approaches and tensions reflect the plural identity in the religion and ecology field to date, which has scholars engaged in both analytic and normative work. This said, most participants and observers of the AAR's Religion and Ecology Group would acknowledge that much of the work of its affiliated scholars is animated, at least in part, by environmental concern. And some of the participants would certainly understand themselves to be "engaged scholars" involved, in one way or another, in the struggle to "green" religion and ethics. (The word "green" is now used not only as an adjective but also as verb and adverb in a linguistic innovation that signals environmental action.)

Religion and Ecology Beyond the Academy

Outside of the American Academy of Religion, the contributions of religious studies scholars to the greening of religion is more transparent and less controversial. These contributions have been substantial and driven by a sense of environmental urgency, an impulse which predated the controversy of the LYNN WHITE THESIS. America's premier twentieth-century conservationist Aldo Leopold, for instance, urged the revisioning of ethics and religion toward a biocentric axiology in the 1940s, as Curt Meine, his biographer, reminds us in this encyclopedia. As Leopold asserted in 1947, when it comes to conservation, "philosophy, ethics, and religion have not yet heard of it" (Flader and Callicott 1991: 338).

Philosophy, ethics and religion have now all heard plenty about nature – beginning perhaps with a number of little-known conferences that focused on religion, ethics, and nature during the 1970s and 1980s. Several of these

occurred as the disciplines of environmental ethics and CONSERVATION BIOLOGY got off the ground. But two events deserve to be singled out for dramatically increasing public and especially religious attention to environmental ethics.

The first, in 1986, was inspired in part and influenced by religion scholar and Roman Catholic priest THOMAS BERRY, and held at the Basilica di S. Francesco in Assisi, Italy, during the WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE's twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations. Leaders of the five world religions who had been invited issued the "Assisi Declarations on Religion and Nature," which set forth religious obligations to nature and spurred additional discussion and statements among and from other faiths in the subsequent years.

The second was a "Spirit and Nature" conference held at Vermont's Middlebury College in 1990. It featured the Dalai Lama and a number of prominent religious leaders and scholars who had previously focused attention on religious responsibilities toward nature. The conference was followed by a similarly titled American Public Television broadcast and widely distributed video (produced by the well-known journalist Bill Moyers), and a book (Rockefeller and Elder 1992). All three "spirit and nature" manifestations promoted the idea of nature protection as a fundamental religious duty.

The driving force behind this conference was Steven Rockefeller, a Middlebury comparative religion scholar with a Ph.D. from Columbia, who also happened to be a practicing Buddhist born of one of America's wealthiest and most politically prominent families. No doubt Rockefeller's background and connections help explain the success of the conference. More importantly, the conference was successful because it reflected and captured a growing environmental concern among a wide variety of religious individuals and groups, and it evoked and inspired more of the same. The conference was capped by an interfaith religious service that included the voices of whales and other creatures, brought to the congregation through the medium of Paul Winter's music, itself an expression of contemporary nature religion.

In the subsequent years, Rockefeller and a number of other religious studies professors would become even more deeply involved in promoting a fusion of environmental concern and religious ethics.

The "Religions of the World and Ecology" Conferences

The next most significant development along these lines was a series of conferences, hosted by The Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University with support from diverse environmental, religious, and animal welfare groups. Entitled "Religions of the World and Ecology," the conferences occurred between 1996 and 1998. Like the "Spirit and Nature" conference, these were followed by publications. Between 1997 and 2004, ten

SP Critical Perspectives on "Religions of the World and Ecology"

Since its inception, the issue of "engaged" scholarship has been a focal point for intense debate within the field of Religion and Ecology. The sharpest criticism has come from those who charge that scholarship incorporating ethical concerns and thus an "environmental agenda" ultimately compromises the critical acumen associated with distanced scholarship. These are not idle concerns, but they were not easily resolved, nor were they foremost in my mind when in 2001 I was asked to evaluate the Harvard book series during a Religion and Ecology Group session at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Denver, Colorado.

After first acknowledging the monumental contribution of the Harvard Series, I expressed a number of reservations about the way it was framed and some of the tendencies found in the published articles. Three of these are worth repeating here, for they reflect some of the concerns that led to this encyclopedia project, which is itself an exercise in religious studies, and was designed to remedy lacunae in the inherited "religion and ecology" field as it had unfolded in its initial decades.

The first criticism was that the "Religions of the World and Ecology" enterprise was not as inclusive as it sounded, for its main conferences and book series focused only on those religions labeled "world religions." To their credit, the series included indigenous religions, which until recent decades had not been studied as a related religious type in venues like this. But the "world religions" category is problematic in itself and any list of religions so labeled will be difficult to maintain against criticisms. Scholars increasingly recognize that the contemporary multi-religious world decreasingly fits into tidy and conventional religious categories such as "world religions." Moreover, the conferences and books drew primarily on scholars and figures closely associated with, if not committed to, the traditions under scrutiny. This left much nature-related religiosity out of sight, including individuals and groups engaged in nature-focused spirituality, such as many environmentalists who are not involved in any formal, established religion but who often consider nature to be sacred in some way, as well as Pagans, Wiccans, and some New Age devotees, who consider a perception of nature's sacredness to constitute the very center of their religious worldview.

Although such lacunae were pointed out to the conference organizers early enough to remedy the oversight, and despite a sympathetic hearing and a recognition by them that there were significant gaps, nothing was done to make the conferences and book series more inclusive. Many scholars and religionists aware of this episode traced it to anti-Pagan bias and/or a desire not

to offend mainstream religions, especially the conservative monotheistic ones that have typically ridiculed Earth-based religions and sometimes even repressed their practitioners. Even if a lack of funding made rectifying the oversight difficult, leaving the original decision in force represented a choice, one that reinforced the original omission.

A second criticism was that embedded in the series was not only a clear bias toward mainstream traditions but also one favoring the mainstreams *of* these traditions. The "World Religions" format established a structural and conceptual hurdle that made it difficult to attend fully to the critically important dynamic of religious bricolage. On the one hand this obscured the important dynamic of hybridization in the contemporary greening of religion. It also undermined the desire for "creative revisioning" that was set out as a goal in the "Series Foreword" by (Tucker and Grim 1997: xxii) by casting implicit suspicion over such hybridization, seeing it as somehow impure compared to the existing traditions. This kind of tone was present in many of the contributions in the series, largely because so many of them were entrusted to scholars who were experts in their tradition's texts; even when critical, they tended to remain loyal to what they took to be the text's original meanings. Some of the authors ridiculed those engaged in what they considered inauthentic religious innovation, that is, at least, when they did not ignore popular religiosity and social movements altogether in favor of textual and worldview analysis.

In short, the series, by privileging the mainstream in its choice of its speakers and contributors (with a significant exception in the Indigenous conference and book, which paid substantial attention to contemporary grassroots engagements, and a few other notable exceptions) did not consistently look to the margins, where religious innovation tends to be most intense, arguably providing more fertile ground for new religiosities, including greener ones. Even when such religious production was charitably evaluated as possibly of some environmental utility, it was clear that many of the scholar-elites writing in these volumes considered such innovations to be "misunderstandings" and "misappropriations." This may have well served "political correctness" or religious orthodoxy, implying that only people with a certain background can or ought to interpret a tradition, but it was not good religious studies. Critical religious studies recognizes the critical role that hybridity and boundary transgression plays in the history of religion and that for non-devotees, ethical judgments about such transgressions will have to rely on concerns other than faith-based belief regarding what constitutes a "pure" strain of an extant tradition. In summary, assumptions that often accompany textual and worldview analysis often

Continued next page

discount popular, nature-oriented spirituality, making them invisible, and this kind of analysis has been the priority of the Harvard series, and indeed much of the religion and ecology field.

A third criticism was the idealistic (namely idea-focused) premise of the entire enterprise. Tucker and Grim in their series foreword insisted, quoting Lynn White, that "Human ecology is deeply conditioned . . . by religion" (in Tucker and Grim 1997: xvi). But this claim unfortunately assumed that which needs to be a central *conundrum* and subject of a scholarly inquiry into the relationships between religion and nature. It would have provided a better starting point for the religion and ecology series to turn this premise into a question: "Is environmental action conditioned by religious attitudes about nature?" Then, if an affirmative action were to follow, we could then push deeper, "If environmental behavior is so conditioned, how does this work within the immensely complex ecological and political systems in which we are all embedded?" Certainly many of the entries in this encyclopedia question the idealistic premise of this series and the majority of the inherited "religion and ecology" field. Some of these suggest, on the contrary, that it is environments which decisively shape religions, not vice versa, and that over the long run, the only religions that will endure will be those proving "adaptive" within their earthly habitats.

In these areas of criticism – undemonstrated idealism combined with a narrow focus and privileging of religious mainstreams – and in a number of other problematic assumptions conveyed by this series and much of the "religion and ecology" field, two differing approaches to the field can be discerned. One is activist in its priorities and chief orientation. It seeks to turn religions green while being careful not to offend religious majorities and mainstreams. For an activist, even a scholar-activist, this is an understandable choice, for to the extent that religious worldviews influence behaviors and thus impact ecosystems, the ones held by more people will be the most important environ-

mentally. Another approach places the priority on simply understanding the relationships between *Homo sapiens*, their religions and other cultural dimensions, and their livelihoods, environments, and so on – which is no simple task! This effort may also be motivated by environmental concern and it is certainly not value-neutral – many of its scholarly practitioners hope that the answers to such critical inquiry can help guide both environmental activism and public policy. But the approach endeavors to bracket value assumptions in an effort to prevent them from occluding understanding of the role of religion in nature.

Although these can be distinct approaches, in the real world these approaches, and those engaged in promoting them, sometimes, inevitably, intersect. Tensions between these approaches can even operate synergistically, helping to illuminate together the religion and nature terrain better than either would in isolation. Nevertheless, it is time for scholars involved in this interesting field of inquiry to exhibit greater self-reflexivity and transparency with regard to the approach they are engaging in, alerting the reader to when they are engaged in this approach, and their rationale for such choices. This would lead to greater clarity and would help guarantee that the inevitable tensions that accompany scholarly inquiry will be creative and productive as the field evolves.

Bron Taylor

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See also: Ecological Anthropology; Ecology and Religion; Environmental Ethics; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm; Social on Science, Religion and Nature; White, Lynn – Thesis of.

Harvard University Press books appeared, constituting an impressive series bearing the same title as the conferences. The volumes explored what the series editors decided were the world's major religious traditions: Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Indigenous Traditions, Jainism, Judaism, Islam, and Shinto.

The conferences were organized and the book series edited by two Bucknell University Religious Studies Professors, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, both of whom had been inspired by the work of Roman Catholic theologian PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, as well as by Thomas Berry and his protégé [philosopher and mathematician] BRIAN SWIMME, who together became the most influential religionists promoting the consecration of scientific and

evolutionary narratives, which they called *The Universe Story* (Swimme and Berry 1992). They and others moved by these narratives have been involved in grafting these new sacred stories onto existing and new religious forms, sometimes monotheistic ones (such as when Christians celebrate the "Universe Story" linking it to creation through ritual performance), sometimes not (such as can be found in ritualizing of the EPIC OF EVOLUTION, and in the COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS as presented in the work of Buddhism scholar/activist JOANNA MACY and the deep ecologist JOHN SEED).

Tucker and Grim have been instrumental in promoting the Universe Story through their long service as Vice President and President (respectively) of the American

Teilhard Society. The Society was founded in 1964, Thomas Berry himself serving as its president during the 1970s. Grim assumed the presidency in the early 1990s, and continued well into the twenty-first century. Tucker called the Society the “Seedbed for Thomas Berry” in a 2003 interview (31 January in Bucknell, Pennsylvania; this paragraph and its quotes are gleaned from this same interview). Tucker and Grim, her husband, were well placed to know, for they had facilitated the society’s role in this regard. For example, Tucker assembled a number of Berry’s essays and presented them to a publisher in the early 1970s, which led eventually to the publication of Berry’s influential *The Dream of the Earth* (1988), which would sell over 70,000 copies. For another example, the new journal *Teilhard Studies* (winter 1978) devoted its first issue to Berry, entitled “The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identification, and Transmission of Values.” Tucker and Grim were also been active in the AAR’s Religion and Ecology Group and instrumental in the development of the journal *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, which commenced publishing in 1997, providing additional venues for promoting a sacramental sense of the Universe’s evolution. They have worked to draw the broader religion academy’s attention to the Earth Charter as well, which also conveys such spirituality.

As important as an inspiring universe or other religious worldviews might have been in fostering the emergence of “religion and ecology” as a sub-field of religious studies, the field was driven as much by an apocalyptic reading of the current state and likely near-future of the planet. Tucker and Grim, for example, began the series foreword of “Religions of the World and Ecology” with a strikingly apocalyptic tone:

Ours is a period when the human community is in search of new and sustaining relationships to the earth amidst an environmental crisis that threatens the very existence of all life-forms on the planet . . . As Daniel Maguire has succinctly observed, “If current trends continue, *we* will not” (Tucker and Grim 1997: vi).

Although some may think the extinction of *Homo sapiens* is a real, near-term possibility, few scientists share such a view, let alone fear that “all life-forms on the planet” will go extinct. This suggests that the framing of these volumes may be grounded more on an apocalyptic faith than biosphere science. Scientists increasingly do, of course, express alarm about the extent and rate of environmental degradation. It should be no surprise that this would fuel apocalypticism. Indeed, some future scenarios do envision the end of the world as we know it, even suggesting this has already occurred, as Bill McKibben problematically did in his best-selling *The End of Nature*. He did so by conceptually extracting humans from nature,

for humans can only end nature if they are not a part of it. This illogical feat McKibben accomplished with little criticism, which was made possible by the apocalypticism of the age. We might, nevertheless, have wished for a more judicious framing of McKibben’s book, which had much otherwise to commend it, as well as the Harvard series, which despite such framing, will properly be understood as a benchmark for a certain type of engaged religion and ecology scholarship. And on a human level, the apocalyptic framing is understandable, for soberly presented ecological prognostications are certainly frightening enough to warrant such fears.

What is even more important to the current religion and nature discussion is the claim by Tucker and Grim in the introduction that the environmental crisis is grounded in defective religious perception, “We no longer know who we are as earthlings; we no longer see the earth as sacred” (1997: xvii). This implies not only that the Earth is sacred, but that earlier humans had a different and superior religious sensibility toward nature than modern humans.

Whatever the truth of such assumptions, they certainly make comprehensible why Tucker and Grim, and the other scholars who share such presuppositions, have labored so assiduously in developing the “Religion and Ecology” field. They hope to rekindle a sense of the sacredness of the Earth, which they consider a prerequisite to restoring ecological harmony. Indeed, a fundamental premise of most of the ferment occurring under the “Religion and Ecology” is a global, green-religious reformation.

The introduction to the Harvard series made this clear: Religious studies scholars could contribute significantly to the quest for sustainability by identifying and evaluating

[t]he *distinctive ecological* attitudes, values, and practices of diverse religious traditions . . . Highlight[ing] the specific religious resources that comprise such fertile ecological ground: within scripture, ritual, myth, symbol, cosmology, sacrament, and so on (Tucker and Grim 1997: xxiii).

The objective of the conference series was thus to establish a common ground among diverse religious cultures for environmentally sustainable societies, while treating individual traditions as resources to be mined for the envisioned religious reformation. Many if not most of the scholars writing for the Harvard Series seemed to share the objective of its editors, striving to uncover and revitalize the green potential of the religions they were analyzing.

This encyclopedia provides many examples of scholars deeply involved in this process. Perhaps one of the more interesting is that of J. Baird Callicott, a protégé of Aldo Leopold, and one of the world’s pioneers of the field of environmental ethics. As if taking a cue from Leopold’s above-mentioned lament that philosophy, ethics, and religion have had little to do with conservation, Callicott

has tramped worldwide pursuing cultural and religious resources for Leopoldian land ethics. Perhaps the foremost expression of Callicott's religion-related work is *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics From the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (1994), a project he pursued although, as he discloses in *NATURAL HISTORY AS NATURAL RELIGION* in this encyclopedia, he regards most religions as superstitious. He nevertheless hopes they can be made to promote conservation ethics that cohere with ecological science.

"Culminating Conferences" and Targeting the United Nations

After the World Religions and Ecology conferences at Harvard that focused on religious traditions, two "culminating conferences" were held, producing or contributing to three significant trends: 1) the spreading of spiritualities in which the evolution of the universe and life on Earth is considered a sacred story; 2) the wider extension of green forms of mainstream religions; and 3) the greening of international institutions.

The first culminating conference, "Religion, Ethics, and the Environment: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue," occurred on 17–20 September 1998 at Harvard University. The focus of this conference was cosmology, environmental ethics, and the world religions. Speakers included Thomas Berry, the entomologist and biodiversity advocate E.O. WILSON, and J. BAIRD CALLICOTT, all of whom have in their own ways promoted the consecration of scientific narratives. Steven Rockefeller also spoke. Since the Vermont "Spirit and Nature" conference, Rockefeller had become a critically important facilitator of the Earth Charter process. The Charter, intended for United Nations ratification as a sustainability strategy, is a remarkable document claiming that all life has intrinsic value and expressing reverence for the miracle of life, while calling the nations to understand, in one way or another, that preserving the Earth is a "sacred trust."

The second culminating conference took place on 21 and 22 October 1998, and brought the themes of the earlier conferences, including the sense of the sacredness of the universe, right to the United Nations (the second day was held at the American Museum of Natural History). This conference illuminated the role of religious studies scholars in the Earth Charter initiative, and indeed, one of the sessions was devoted specifically to "charting the course" for the Earth Charter.

One of the speakers was Oren Lyons, a professor of Native American Studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and the "Faithkeeper" of the Turtle Clan, Onondaga Nation, one of the traditional nations of the HAUDENOSAUNEE CONFEDERACY. In 1991, Lyons himself had participated in another important extension of nature spirituality into the culture's mainstreams, through a Bill Moyers public television program based on a conversation

with Lyons. Mary Evelyn Tucker was another speaker at the United Nations, bringing the message she was taking from the overall conferences, that religions were indeed turning green, sometimes in dramatic and decisive ways. Her experiences of this perception she discussed several years later in *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase* (2003). Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme were also presenters, bringing their reverence for the universe directly to the conference, and kindling substantial interest. The first day at the United Nations drew an overflow crowd including many United Nations employees, and 1000 people attended the sessions at the Natural History Museum.

Perhaps even more importantly, a number of prominent figures associated with the United Nations spoke and endorsed the overall effort to green religion and ethics, including Maurice Strong, who reportedly first hatched the Earth Charter idea while serving as the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This conference was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and became known simply as the "Earth Summit." Adnan Amin, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Program, also articulated his support for the overall effort to promote a global environmental ethics and politics congruent with it. A few years after this meeting at the United Nations, in 2002, on the occasion of the United Nations' World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (which was the official follow-up meeting to the Earth Summit), Steven Rockefeller played the leading role in promoting the Earth Charter. The Charter received respectful mention from a number of world leaders, but no formal attention on that occasion.

This discussion has demonstrated that ideas and initiatives, incubated if not birthed by religious studies scholars, have played important roles in the greening of religion and environmental ethics. They are, moreover, beginning to influence global environmental politics, bringing to them an important and sometimes innovative religious and ethical dimension.

The Forum on Religion and Ecology

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim developed the conferences to encourage scholarly work in the service of greening the world's religions, to promote a sense of the sacredness of the universe and evolutionary narratives, and to support related ethical initiatives including the Earth Charter. To continue such efforts they also used the conferences to spawn a long-term initiative, which they called the "Forum on Religion and Ecology." Known to many by its acronym, FORE, the organization was, according to its website, established to help develop "religion and ecology as an academic area of study and research in universities, colleges, seminaries, and other religiously affiliated institutions."

A number of religiously affiliated colleges and seminar-

ies have been developing religion and ecology as specialties, and in 2003, the University of Florida, a state-sponsored, secular institution, inaugurated the first "Religion and Nature" emphasis as a central part of its new Ph.D. program in Religion. Such developments – occurring both in religious and secular institutions – suggest that the field of religion and ecology began emerging from its infancy in the early years of the twenty-first century. The differing approaches, confessional/ethical on the one hand, and historical/social scientific, on the other, will sometimes be in tension, but this is likely to be a creative one. Sometimes the differing approaches will be blended in creative scholarly hybrids. Taken together, the various approaches will produce diverse kinds of scholarly work as the field is further constructed.

Bron Taylor

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Restoration Ecology and Ritual

Ecological restoration is the active attempt to return a landscape or ecosystem such as a prairie, a wetland or a lake to a previous condition, usually regarded as more "natural." This is done through the alteration of soils, topography, hydrology and other conditions, the introduction of extirpated or otherwise missing species of plants and animals, and the elimination or control of species not present in the historic, or model landscape.

Although restoration has existed in its modern form since early in the twentieth century, for most of that time it was merely a curiosity represented by only a scattering of projects, and playing no significant role in conservation thinking or practice. Only since about the mid-1980s have conservationists begun to take restoration seriously. This development has been accompanied, or perhaps to some extent driven, by the growing recognition of the value of restoration as a conservation strategy, a technique for basic ecological research, a way of experiencing and learning about landscapes and ecosystems.

At the leading edge of this ongoing discovery of

restoration are practitioners who have begun to explore its value as a context for the creation of ceremonies and rituals to explore and celebrate the relationship between humans and the rest of nature. The value of restoration as a basis for performance, ritual and other forms of expressive action arises from its essentially active nature.

Preservation, for example, despite its importance as a conservation objective, entails an essentially non-active relationship with the landscape, and offers few opportunities for expressive action in direct relationship with the land and other species.

Restorationists, in contrast, participate in evocative activities such as the gathering and sowing of seed and the reintroduction of animals, which provide occasions for celebration. They also participate in psychologically problematic activities such as the burning of vegetation and the “control” – that is, usually, the killing – of unwanted species, and in the contamination of “nature” by these and other intentional human activities.

The negative feelings aroused by activities of this kind are no doubt one of the reasons why environmentalists ignored and even resisted restoration for so long. But they are also the reason why restoration is so valuable as a context for exploring and defining the terms of our relationship with the rest of nature in a non-sentimental, psychologically and spiritually comprehensive way.

One way to explore the potential of restoration as a performing art, or as a context, occasion, or basis for ceremony, ritual and other modes of expressive action is to consider parallels between the “act” or “story” of restoration and other performative genres. Of these, perhaps the most obvious is dramatic reenactment. Restoration is, after all, a kind of time travel, which may be undertaken and understood variously as an attempt to reverse, repeat, alter or obliterate history. Thus the practice of restoration has been imaginatively linked with historical reenactments in events such as the annual Trail of History days at Glacial Park, site of a landscape-scale restoration project near Richmond, Illinois.

Another performative genre that parallels the practice of restoration in suggestive ways is pastoral art, which explores the relationship between humans and the rest of nature through action carried out in the field of tension between them. In classic forms of literary or dramatic pastoral, such as Thoreau’s *Walden*, or Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, this usually involves movement across the landscape, typically a double action of withdrawal from civilization (represented by a city, factory, court or the like) in the direction of nature (represented by a garden, or a wilderness, natural area or pastoral landscape) and then an ultimate return. The restorationist, however, performs this pastoral “experiment,” in a very different way, not by moving from one place to another, but by attempting, in effect, to remove culture from nature by modifying a single place. This variation on the pastoral

New Academy for Nature and Culture

The New Academy for Nature and Culture is a school without walls being developed to provide college-level training for leaders of community-based conservation efforts. Conceived by a consortium of restoration practitioners associated with the Society for Ecological Restoration, the New Academy is taking shape as a network of regional centers each comprising a number of partners, including environmental and civic organizations and at least one college or university, which provides basic courses, leading ultimately to a degree with a certificate from the New Academy.

Based on the idea that most of the resources needed to accomplish its mission already exist, both on and off campus, the New Academy is being developed primarily to identify these resources and to bring them together in behalf of a coherent, mission-driven program of study and reflective experience working with both the human and the biotic communities. Its aim is to help participants develop the skills they need to help others derive full value from conservation efforts in the physical, intellectual, psychological and spiritual as well as the purely ecological dimensions of value. These values, then, can serve as the value-base for the formation of communities, or “congregations” based in watersheds or other ecologically or culturally significant units, and for paying fees, or tithing to support the leadership needed to coordinate the effort.

The first regional center of the New Academy was established in 2001 in the Chicago area in partnership with Loyola University, Northeastern Illinois University and a number of non-academic partners. Development of a related program at the junior-college level, based at Merritt College in Oakland, California, has been underway since the early 1990s, and will probably become a regional center within a year or so, and there are also centers of interest at universities in Texas, Arizona and Michigan.

William R. Jordan III

design has important environmental implications, not least because it dramatizes the possibility of the redemption of the city, and also because it provides a constructive alternative to the essentially consumptive use of the natural landscape modeled by “retreatants” such as Thoreau or Edward Abbey.

Restoration also offers close parallels with traditional rituals of initiation. In particular, the task of copying – rather than imaginatively imitating – the model or “given” landscape provides an occasion for the radical self-abnegation or setting aside of the will characteristic of some traditional rituals of initiation (see, for example, Grimes 2000). When properly developed, this may serve as an opportunity for achieving membership in the biotic

community, a paradigm of relationship long favored by environmentalists. At an even deeper level of engagement, restoration provides a context for confronting the most problematic aspects of life, including the killing of plants and animals and the exercise of a kind of hegemony over entire ecosystems. Since it opens up the possibility of offering back to nature some recompense in nature's own kind for what we have taken from it, it also opens up the possibility of a kind of redemption in our relationship with nature through a ritual offering back to it, rather in the manner of the institution of ritual sacrifice characteristic of many traditional and pre-modern cultures.

At the present time, restorationists have made some progress toward the realization of these imaginative possibilities. Ritual in the context of restoration efforts currently ranges from the informal and minimally self-conscious bagel breaks and sharing of stories during workdays to more ambitiously conceived forms of ceremony and ritualization. In Lake Forest, a suburb of Chicago for example, the burning of brush piles resulting from the clearing of exotic species in rare oak savannahs has become the occasion for an annual festival featuring a parade of bagpipes, linking the city's cultural history with its biotic past and future. Other restorationists, like the San Francisco practitioner Amy Lambert or the Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin environmental artist Barbara Westfall, have used restoration projects as the occasion for the creation of installations or performances designed to explore and enhance the meanings generated by these projects (see *Restoration & Management Notes* 10:1 [1992], 59).

Others have used restoration projects and events as occasions for special ritual events such as weddings, or seasonal events such as solstices or equinoxes, illustrating ways in which meanings inherent in the task of restoration resonate with those of traditional events such as certain holidays, festivals and occasions of life-crisis and transition.

These developments are of special importance for environmentalism because they represent the value of reflective action rather than deduction and argument in the development of meanings and other environmental values. Since environmentalism, regarded as a religious endeavor, has arguably been rather "top-down," or "theological" in its approach to the formation of values and attitudes, an emphasis on ritual as a source of values and a context for conscience formation may prove to be of fundamental importance in the development of an environmental religion based on values that truly emerge from the experiences of groups of people in particular places.

William R. Jordan III

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See also: Biodiversity; Biophilia; Conservation Biology; Epic of Evolution (and adjacent, Epic Ritual); Ritual.

P Restoring Eden

Restoring Eden is a nonprofit organization working to reestablish nature appreciation and environmental stewardship as a core value within the Christian community. Headed by Peter Illyn, an evangelical Christian minister, Restoring Eden creates simple, heartfelt messages that target Christians in churches, universities and communities in an effort to raise up grassroots environmental advocates.

Illyn became an environmentalist during a 1000-mile llama trek through the Cascade Mountains of Oregon and Washington. As he recalls the experience,

One night, while camping in an alpine meadow, I watched a herd of elk come to graze. As I stood in the moonshadow, I saw a bull elk raise his head, snort and then bellow out a loud rutting call. I was overcome by the primal wildness around me. I finally understood, though dimly, the scripture in Genesis where God, after creating the wild animals, stated that it was "good." But two days later my llamas and I followed the trail into a massive clearcut. There were no trees left standing, no birds flying, no elk rutting. It had the quiet desolation of an abandoned battle field.

According to Illyn, while sitting there on an ancient fir stump, doing his daily Bible reading, he came upon Proverbs 31:8, which states that we should “speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.” Brokenhearted by the devastation he saw from horizon to horizon he prayed, “Lord – who speaks out for your forest, your elk, your salmon?” “It was at that moment,” he tells his audiences, “two days after seeing the elk, that I decided to become a voice for creation.”

Illyn states that he went into the mountains a minister but four months later came out as an environmentalist, committed to preaching the biblical call to love, serve and protect God’s creation. To further that commitment, in 1996, he founded Christians for Environmental Stewardship, to identify and network a church-based grassroots movement. In 2001, the organization’s name was changed to Restoring Eden.

A cornerstone of the work is assertive outreach efforts. According to Illyn: “Our goal is to be unapologetic, yet winsome in our advocacy. Our message is simple, ‘God is a good God, God made a good Earth, God calls us to be good stewards.’” Illyn and the others drawn to Restoring Eden recognized that the agents of change in the Church are seldom the pastors in the pulpit, but instead are the lay-leaders in the pews, and they focus on their potential.

The goal is to organize these lay-leaders into a grassroots voice willing to speak out about the goodness of creation in Church and in the political arena. Restoring Eden representatives’ table at Christian rock festivals, start environmental clubs in Christian colleges, and host student lobby-training events in Washington, D.C. They have come to the defense of protecting endangered species, protecting wild forests from road building, and have lobbied to prevent the U.S. government from permitting oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Through this activism, Restoring Eden has developed important partnerships with indigenous Christians working to protect their tribal land and subsistence economies and cultures. These partnerships have taken Illyn on speaking tours of tribal communities in Papua New Guinea and Alaska. He held workshops there with tribal leaders to confirm that a true biblical land ethic is similar to their traditional tribal land ethic – take only what you need, be thankful for all you have and see the connections and interdependencies. Often referring to themselves as “belly-button” Christians, these tribal communities still see their umbilical cords connected to their “mother,” the Earth. This is contrasted with a commonly held land ethic within the modern Church that believes God made the Earth for us, so take as much as you can, as fast as you can.

On these speaking tours, Illyn operates within the Christian tradition as a traveling evangelist. Prior to his mini-crusades, Restoring Eden volunteers and local environmentalists arrange for a meeting hall, contact media, and place posters up throughout the community.

Billed as “The Theology of Wild,” Illyn creates a biblical message of nature appreciation, environmental stewardship and political activism. The sermons advocate for native habitats, wild species and the rights of indigenous cultures.

According to Illyn,

Scripture is clear that humans have been given both the privileges and the obligations of stewardship. While we have the right to eat from the fruit of creation, we do not have the right to destroy the fruitfulness thereof. It is our sacred duty to love, serve and protect the rest of God’s creation. We are foolish and narcissistic to think this creation was all about us.

Restoring Eden’s goal is to establish a three-part strategy to make hearts bigger, hands dirtier and voices stronger. To get the heart involved it uses the traditional, but forgotten, spiritual discipline of nature appreciation to help people see the wonder, wisdom and whimsy of God revealed in nature. It gets hands involved through environmental restoration service projects and inventorying their lifestyle choices. Finally, the organization’s voice becomes stronger through public advocacy and political activism.

Illyn finds that getting Restoring Eden’s message can be difficult for some. The occasional negative reactions are usually based on differing political and religious understandings. Among the absurd but too common political responses he has heard are assertions that environmentalists are part of a conspiracy by supporters of the United Nations to create a one-world government and take over land in the United States. The religious arguments include claims that Christians need not be concerned with this Earth, because, as Illyn remembers hearing them, “God is unconcerned about the state of nature”; “God made the Earth for humans – he expects us to use the Earth and the sooner we use it up, the sooner Christ will return”; “God can re-create any species that go extinct”; “the Earth is not our home – I’m heaven bound!”; and perhaps most commonly, “Preaching the salvation message is the only important work of Christians – all else is a distraction.” Sometimes an apocalyptic expectation plays an important role in devaluing environmental concern, “My Bible predicts that things are going to get worse, no matter what we do.” Such assertions are often accompanied by claims that environmentalists “worship the creation instead of the Creator” and promote un-Christian “New Age” or “Pagan” worldviews.

Reflecting on the challenges, in 2003 Illyn stated,

while our work is still controversial and viewed with suspicion by some, we are winning the argument that environmental concern is appropriate for the

church. But so far we're losing the argument that such concern for creation should be a high priority.

Many Christians have been taught that evangelism is all that matters. But according to Illyn, "the Great Commission found in the Gospel of Mark is to preach the good news to *all* creation. Habitat destruction and species extinction is not good news for creation." Illyn passionately speaks out for the goodness and integrity of nature and believes that Restoring Eden can help Christians realize that environmental stewardship is an important Christian duty. According to Illyn, "If you love the Creator, you must take care of creation."

Peter Illyn with Bron Taylor

See also: Biblical Foundations for Christian Stewardship; Christianity (7i) – An Evangelical Perspective on Faith and Nature; Evangelical Environmental Network; Stewardship; Wise Use Movement.

P Rewilding

The long-term preservation of nature depends on a sustainable shift in the way we perceive and thus act upon the world around us – the return to conscious, authentic being, which I call "rewilding." Wildness could be described as a condition of dynamic wholeness and authentic expression. In our case this means oneness with our bodies, needs, desires, sensations, instincts and dreams . . . and with the natural world of which we are an integral part. Rewilding is the intentional restoration of wholeness: the integrity of entire ecosystems as well as the integrity of our individual beings.

In wilderness restoration we intentionally work to repair the torn ecological fabric, remove the invasive and the artificial, encourage the flourishing of every native form, protect against its dismemberment or destruction, and contribute to a state of continuous flux and balance. In personal rewilding we do much the same, mending our individual ecologies, the connections between our bodies and souls, hearts and minds. We purge any lies our societies may have taught, and those illusions that fear has wrought, while learning to express every aspect of our essential native selves. We do what we can to protect against distraction and dissolution. We strive for balance in our lives, and in our relationships to both the human and more-than-human world.

Alexander Marshack described humanity as a "persistent flowering of an ancient reality." The rewilding of the self is neither a retreat to the past nor transformation into something new. Instead, it is a re-formation, the reinhabitation of original form. It is being who we really are: the act of simply being. It is the uncomplicated if difficult cessation of all pretense, artifice, conditioning, labeling,

distraction, manipulation, domination, preoccupation with the future, suppression and repression. Rewilding is both a beautiful flowering and an essential coming into self.

The rewilding of the self begins with the rewilding of the body: reimmersion in the sensorial field, engaging every aspect and element of the world around us – and every experience – with every one of our atrophied senses, refamiliarizing ourselves with the feel and function of our flesh. The senses take us into ourselves, even as they reach out and thereby enlarge us. The wild body is fueled by passion, the passion to experience miraculous, finite life. Its rewilded sexuality is an ally of immediacy, moving us beyond objectification and back into the intensity of the moment, responding directly to fete or foe, task or poem. The rewilding of the psyche involves the reawakening of primal mind, restoring the sense of wonder and awe to its rightful place as a determinant of the human/nature relationship. As such, rewilding is a socio-religious experience as much as a personal epiphany or practice. It results not only in awakened ecocentric spirituality but also in social and political action.

The rewilded person is resonant with, protective of, and responsive to the natural world. Such persons act as activists and advocates for wilderness, which they recognize as our original home, the playground of evolution, and the formative context for a wilder humanity. Only since the 1900s has wilderness been looked at as a place to visit, a sequestered island of undeveloped Nature surrounded by a developed and depleted landscape. For most of our upright existence, humankind has lived with/in the flesh and flux of wilderness. As an extension of inclusive nature, we are a product of it. Our species was shaped by the nourishment and challenges of a wild life, responding to the constantly changing situations of a natural world. The way adrenalin speeds our heart and fuels our muscles when we sense danger, and the way love jerks us around whether we're ready for it or not, are both dynamics developed in our wild past. For several hundred thousand years we were integral rhythmic elements in the wilderness concerto. Judging by the attitudes and behavior of both our primate relatives and many existing "primitive" peoples, humans were likely blissfully engaged in the sensorial field whenever not hungering or actively being preyed upon. And whether we were ecstatic nature mystics or not, we were natural elements of a well-functioning whole – contributing to both the flowering and balance of what remains an incredible, evolving composition. We must bear in mind that the entire world, in all its wholeness, was not so long ago wilderness. And out of that authenticity, vibrancy and wholeness we were born. A wild Earth may yet be a necessary condition for the highest manifestation of human and nonhuman potential. It is the sacred source, the cauldron of creation on whose behalf the "wilder" makes his or her stand.

Like a growing number of anarchists, deep ecologists and indigenous peoples, author Derrick Jensen finds nothing absurd about either the possibility or necessity of dismantling the existing structures and paradigms of our techno-industrial civilization. "It just seems like a lot of hard work, done by a lot of people in a lot of places in a lot of different ways," he tells us. What's absurd is "the possibility of allowing this inhuman system to continue" (Jensen 2002: 588). Certainly, the dichotomy between wilderness and civilization is not a quandary to be solved, but rather, a choice to be made. Everyone, at some point in their lives, makes a deliberate decision to desensitize in a deal for comfort, to live in confinement rather than face the uncertainties of nature, to acquiesce to outside powers in order to avoid the demands of responsibility, to allow the destruction of wilderness and human wildness in exchange for the techno-gratification of our times. It's a matter of how we judge what is truly valuable in life. To determine something's worth a "wilder" asks: Is it freely and gracefully embodying its own nature? Is it real, authentic, and intensely itself? Does it contribute to diversity, wholeness/holiness, interdependence and balance? Does it sing, laugh, resonate? *And can you dance to it?*

Inspired Gaia whispers in every river and shouts from every granite peak: reclaim and reinhabit! Revere and resacrament! Resist and reshape! Re-member . . . and rewild! And we respond, with both our bodies and souls.

For all the difficulties of rewinding in this day and age, it is a shift that provides immediate rewards. Life presents all its flavors only to the wild, only to those who dare. In our reconnection to self and place, Earth and Spirit, we function as will-full conduits for the ancient ways, conscious receptors and transmitters of Gaian consciousness. In this great manifesting and gifting, we become the newest and most grateful members of the wild covenant, the response-able inheritors of the legacy and duties of the sacred wild.

Jesse Wolf Hardin

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See *also*: Sexuality and EcoSpirituality; Sexuality and Green Consciousness.

Rexroth, Kenneth (1905–1982)

Kenneth Rexroth was an American poet, translator, and cultural critic. Raised in the Midwest, he settled in California where he became a major figure in the San Francisco Renaissance and influenced the development of poets such as Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg. Three of his distinctive contributions are his blending of Catholic and Buddhist spirituality, a sweeping knowledge of world literature, and his affirmation of the interrelatedness of nature, mysticism, the erotic, and the political. This complexity resulted in some of the most compelling and socially significant nature poetry in the English language.

Central to his vision of nature is a deep sense of radical interrelatedness within a vast universe. He frequently drew on Huayan Buddhism's image of Indra's Net, in which all phenomena are likened to mirrors reflecting each other. "Doubled Mirrors" concludes with the narrator discovering the source of many tiny points of light: "Under each / Pebble and oak leaf is a / Spider, her eyes shining at / Me with my reflected light / Across immeasurable distance" (1966: 224).

Equally important is his realization of the flux of life. This theme exemplifies both the traditional Buddhist emphasis on impermanence and the Japanese aesthetic of *aware*, a bittersweet realization of the ephemerality of all that is beautiful. This sensitivity is evoked when he exhorts his daughter to "Believe in all the fugitive / Compounds of nature, all doomed / To waste away and go out" (1966: 241).

This ongoing flow of time contains brief eternities. In "May Day," he contrasts his vision to workings of the men of power who "are pushing all this pretty / Planet . . . / . . . nearer and nearer to / Total death." Despite his apocalyptic view, he can affirm to his daughter that "we have our own / Eternity, so fleeting that they / Can never touch it, or even / Know that it has passed them by" (1966: 331).

Rexroth's nature poetry emanates a this-worldly mysticism in which the natural world is itself sacred, a view reinforced by his interest in Tantric Buddhism. "The holiness of the real / Is always there, accessible / In total immanence" (1966: 248). To apprehend this sacrality, one needs to drop the cravings, aversions, and delusions of the ego and realize the contemplative flame that burns in each of us. His mysticism is also erotic: the body too is sacred and sexual love is one of the principal means of realizing the holiness of the real. Some of his finest nature poems are also intense love poems.

His sense of an interrelated and sacred world was the foundation for a deeply moral vision and engagement in radical social movements. He combined the traditional Buddhist critique of normal consciousness with a condemnation of the devastating power of social structures that manifests and reinforces the distortions of the ego. In particular he denounces the hierarchical, authoritarian

politics and acquisitive economic systems of the modern nation-states. The state “lives by killing you and me” (1966: 241) – i.e., by extinguishing our contemplative flame and severing our organic relatedness to the natural and social worlds. In numerous poems he combines exquisite sensitivity to nature and an incisive awareness of human suffering and evil.

Rexroth’s ethical mysticism was formed early in life by his commitment to social justice, a Quaker-influenced ideal in a free community of responsible persons, his readings in Christian mysticism, and his view of Christ as a model for feeling “unlimited liability” for the ills of the world. Later in life his social and ecological concerns became increasingly influenced by the Mahayana Buddhist ideal of the bodhisattva, who vows “I will not enter Nirvana / Until all sentient creatures are saved” (1968: 292–3). Unqualified compassion enables the bodhisattva to hear “the crying of all the worlds” (1968: 292) and effortlessly move to help those in distress – an ideal most subtly developed in his masterpiece, *Heart’s Garden, Garden’s Heart* (1967), a long poem written in Japan.

David Landis Barnhill

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- See also: Anarchism; Beat Generation Writers; Indra’s Net; Snyder, Gary; Tantra; Tantrism in the West; Zen Buddhism.

SP Ritual

By some accounts ritual behavior is utterly natural, “hard-wired” into the structure of the brain and nervous system, a function of our biological or animal “hardware” rather than of our cultural “software.” Even if one tries to escape explicit rites, tacit ritualization nevertheless emerges unbidden. So, for instance, if we do not initiate youths into adulthood, they will, perversely in all likelihood, initiate themselves. By this account, all habitual behavior, perhaps even all social behavior, is ritualized. Ritualizing and dramatizing are universal, givens in human nature. Our very biosocial being is dependent upon these twin foundational activities. Even if people avoid formal rites

and refuse to attend stage plays, they cannot escape ritualizing and dramatizing. They permeate human actions the same as they do the mating and aggressive behavior of birds and fish.

By other accounts, however, ritual is a most unnatural activity, not at all the sort of behavior one *cannot help* doing. Ritual is not like eating, sleeping, digesting, and breathing, or even copulating and speaking. Ritual is optional – one can choose *not* to engage in it. Whereas being alive requires eating and sleeping, it does not require ritualizing. Even if one claims that humans and other animals exhibit an inherent urge to ritualize, responding to that urge is optional, and because it is optional, ritual is cultural rather than natural.

The dichotomy, cultural versus natural, is familiar. It is a staple of Western thought, typical of its dualistic tendencies. And ritual is not the only human activity to be hoisted onto the horns of this perennial dilemma. But the dilemma is easy to overstate, thus rendering it a false dualism. There are ways around the problem; a third, less polarized view is possible. For instance, one might argue that it is perfectly natural for humans, given their upright postures and large brains, to be cultural. Or one might observe that cultural activities, when sustained for a sufficient time in the right environmental niche, can have genetic, which is to say, evolutionary, consequences. In other words, even though a noticeable cultural/natural divide characterizes much human behavior, this great divide is not impassable. It is a membrane rather than a wall. The distinction between things cultural and things natural, in this third view, is relative rather than absolute, making it conceptually possible that ritual, like language (but unlike digestion) is both natural and cultural, a cultural edifice, if you will, constructed on a natural foundation.

If this is the case, the question, then, becomes: what is this natural foundation? If brains and tongues and ears lay the groundwork from which human languages sprout and then diversify, what is the bedrock upon which human rites are built? The question is really two: 1) How essential is ritual to being human? and 2) By what basic biosocial means does ritual operate? Is ritualizing just one activity among many others, and doing it or not doing it like the decision to wear green rather than red, or like opting to ride bikes rather than paddle canoes as one’s hobby? Is the choice merely aesthetic, a matter of taste or personal preference? Or does something larger, grander, and greater depend on the choice to ritualize or not?

Examined historically and crossculturally, the consensus answer to the question would seem to be that participation in certain specific rites is an indicator of whether one is truly human or not. The view that ritual is merely optional or only decorative is anomalous in human religious and cultural history. It is an attitude mostly recent and largely Western. The questions: Who is truly human? and What is truly natural? have often been

answered: the truly human people are those most truly in tune with nature, and those most truly in tune with nature are those who dance this particular rhythm in this particular ritual dance. So the natural, the human, and the ritualistic are, in the final analysis, one.

If one were to allow a minor variation in the nature question – thus, What is truly natural, or supernatural? – the threefold equation would account for almost every religious tradition the world has known. In short, ritual participation (or not) has been utilized as a primary behavioral indicator not just of who “we” (as opposed to “they”) are, but of who is truly human and what is truly natural or supernatural.

This equation generates a peculiar torque in our thinking about rites. On the one hand, a rite is a cultural human construction. People make it up, revise it, and evaluate it. Politics and economics swirl about it as they do about any other human activity. On the other hand, the gods delivered it or the ancestors bequeathed it. A rite is not a work of fiction. It has no author, and no one dreamed it up out of his or her imagination. The popular mind-rites, especially religious ones, are above critique and debate. Those who evade the revealed sacred liturgy are unnatural and inhuman. Do it or die.

The contemporary form of the ritual conundrum is slightly different from the more historic form. The older form was: Which rite (thus which tribe, which nation, which tradition, which people) is the right one? The question seldom posed a real option. If you were a so-and-so, you knew your own ritual system was the right one.

The newer form of the ritual question is: To ritualize or not? Being born into a society with a divinely given rite is no longer the norm. Instead, this rite and that one seem equally plausible (or equally implausible). Besides, who wants to fight and die for a way of performing cultural ideals, all of which are relative anyway?

Rites typically (although not always) express associated cultural myths, predications of what is real and not, what is worthy and not. For cultures in which the question is, “To ritualize or not?”, the dominant myth is scientific and technocratic. Scientists, it is believed, study nature, things as they really are, not supernature, things as they might, or should, be. So we who are steeped in such cultures look to theory, fact, and evidence to warrant our decisions and evaluations. We resist labeling these “myth” even though they work in much the same way as more obviously mythic myths do.

And what does current scientific myth say about the necessity, or lack of it, to ritualize? First of all, it is seriously out of scientific fashion to talk as if human behavior issues from an urge, instinct, or drive. The current way of speaking of something as built-in is to say it is “encoded” in the genes, the DNA. But, of course, genes and DNA do not account for *everything* any more than the old drives and instincts or the older gods and spirits did.

Environment and natural selection are today’s other co-star actors. Together, DNA, environment, and natural selection make us who and what we are. And we are embodied, be-brained, mammalian, bipedal homonoids. Some of us ritualize and some do not. So the question is not ‘Do we ritualize?’ but ‘Should we?’ The ritual question is morally and practically driven. The long form of the current existential ritual question, then, is: Should humans ritualize in order to be attuned to nature and thereby avoid planetary destruction?

Why would it ever occur to anyone to pose the question this way? There are two reasons: 1) ethnographic social science is presenting rich traditions in which rites are understood to be the primary means of being attuned to the environment; and 2) psychological and anthropological science is tendering theories which claim that ritual activity synchronizes the halves of the brain, thereby diverting human tendencies to make war on their fellow “conspecifics,” thus making us better stewards of the Earth’s deep structure.

The import of the ethnographic testimony is that ritual participants the world over believe their rites enable them to live in synchrony with the natural world, especially animals and plants, sometimes even rocks, mountains, bodies of water, and specific places. This ritual sensibility is not characteristic of every ritual system, but it is typical of many of them, especially the local, smaller-scale ones. In these, people behave with humility and receptivity. They are, they confess, not more powerful than other creatures, and the human task in life is not only to use the creatures but also to be receptive to their teachings. In the ritualized world presented by ethnographers, what we in the West think of as nature (as opposed to culture) is peopled. Animals and plants and places are people too. So the nature/culture divide either does not exist or it is much less pronounced. In rites, animals and plants and places are addressed with respect as equals or even superiors.

The ethnographic evidence is that ritual participants believe they attune themselves with rites to the natural-supernatural world. Some non-participants believe this too, and they wish the Western technocratic world were more ritually saturated than it is. But – and this is an important “but” – animals and plants are also treated in ritually rich cultures as food. Albeit with apology, song, and prayer, they are killed or harvested, then distributed and eaten – either that or avoided altogether. Animals, like exceptionally generous people, give themselves to hunters, and hunters are the kin of animals. But hunters also track, stalk, study, and strategize. The ritual attitude, then, does not preclude a pragmatic attitude. Prey are persons, but they are also targets for arrows.

The ethnographic evidence, then, reminds us that rites are not foolproof; the game become angry, which is to say, the game are sometimes shot out and the fields overharvested. Although rites attune, they do not do so

perfectly or completely. Thus, not all native people in every place and time have been “natural ecologists.” Rites not only attune participants to nature, they insulate people from nature. Rites can become ends in themselves or tools for wreaking environmental and social havoc. Everything depends on which people at which times in which specific places of nature are engaging in which kind of ritualizing.

In the current Western scientific and technocratic world, true believers, of course, look with some skepticism on the claims of ethnographically presented ritualists. At best, their testimony is soft rather than hard evidence. At best, ethnographic reports present stories, beliefs, descriptions, occasionally even hypotheses, or theories, but not proven facts, which is to say, demonstrated and replicable ones. So the best one can claim, and still honor the sacred tenets of scientism, is that certain ritual practices *may* have survival value. They *may* enhance the adaptability and thus the longevity of the human species on the planet Earth.

We must reiterate the “*may*” as long as we have not eliminated the alternative, namely, that deeply ritualized human life can become more one-dimensional, stereotyped, and inflexible than non-ritualized human life. In short, rites *may* make us humans maladaptive. If “stereotypy” (to use a term explicitly used in one theorist’s definition of ritual) were ever a ritual virtue in some other place and time, it is, in the Darwinian universe that most encyclopedia-readers inhabit, most definitely a vice. Loss of postural and gestural diversity and flexibility would not stand us in good stead with Natural Selection, the reigning deity of the current, almost inescapable Darwinian myth. Loss of bodily flexibility, like loss of cultural and biological diversity, would jeopardize human health and longevity. If ritualizing implies rigidifying, we are courting earthly extinction rather than planetary salvation by engaging in it. So the answer to the question, “To ritualize or not?” depends on how we define ritual, or, if not that, then on which kinds of ritualizing we practice and which kinds we forgo.

Anthropologist Charles Laughlin and psychologist Eugene d’Aquili, along with their colleague John McManus, have articulated some of the strongest theoretical arguments in favor of ritual’s adaptive import. If they are right, ritualization is more natural (in the sense of having more survival value) than is non-ritualization. In their view ritual, which emerged evolutionarily along with encephalization, is crucial for both the control and the transformation of consciousness. Rites employ various driving mechanisms such as drumming, chanting, dancing, ingesting, ordeals, and privations as means of retuning, or returning balance, to the autonomic nervous system. Ritual activity facilitates the entrainment (penetration and embodiment) of symbols into the human system.

More specifically, ritual practices facilitate simultaneous discharge of the excitation (ergotropic) and

relaxation (trophotropic) systems. Laughlin and company posit a drive toward wholeness in all biological systems, and consider rites a primary means for achieving both social and neuropsychological wholeness. They stop short of claiming that rites are the *only* means. Since they say many of the same things about both play and contemplation as they do about ritual, it seems that ritual is not the exclusive agent of wholeness, unless, of course both play and contemplation are conceptualized as kinds of ritual. In any case, for Laughlin and associates it is neither the “natural” nor the “supernatural” that takes precedence but rather the holistic. In the end, Laughlin, d’Aquili, and McManus espouse a wedding of what they call “mature contemplation” (in my view, a species of ritual activity) and neuroscience as the most holistic (in an older vocabulary, “natural”) form of consciousness.

Their claims are less appropriate to some kinds of ritual and more appropriate to others, especially those at the top and bottom end of the scale, for example, trance dance and meditation. These require, respectively, either sustained exertion or else the stilling of physical and mental activity. More than mainline worship and liturgy, these kinds of ritual activity evoke the extremes of the autonomic nervous system, thus facilitating the “crossing over” that these theorists treat as the primary virtue of ritual.

Another anthropologist, Roy Rappaport, is intent to restore ritual’s authority, hoping it can close the maws of several great beasts: desertification, ozone depletion, species extinction, and environmental degradation. Against the Goliath of quality-denying, “monetized” epistemologies rooted in cost-benefit analysis, which he clearly considers maladaptive, he marshals the slingshot of ritual, hoping its emphasis on complementarity and reciprocity can displace the forces of disintegration. Rappaport is more willing than most anthropologists to admit that the very idea of ecology is as much a religious conception as it is a scientific hypothesis. Ecological ideas encourage the preservation of the world’s wholeness in the face of pervasive fragmenting and dissolving forces. For Rappaport, the idea of an ecosystem, not just as a scientific hypothesis but as an active intervention, is a guide for how to behave in the world. He actively calls for ritual performance grounded in the concept of the ecosystem. For him, ritual performance is not merely a means for humans to illustrate ideas about the world. Rather, ritual is the way the world itself tries to ensure its own persistence.

But much ritual is in the custody of the so-called world religions. They claim to have a repository of wisdom, much of it ritualistic, that can help save the planet from ecological destruction. But the large-scale, multinational faiths have been slow to mobilize, and they are typically saddled with environmentally hostile or indifferent myths, ethics, and rites.

Religious leaders are now scouring the scriptures in

search of images that might inspire ecologically responsible behavior. The big religions are defending their traditions against attacks that blame them for the sorry state of the environment. In self-defense, they launch criticisms of economic greed and human failure to exercise stewardship of the land.

The monotheistic traditions bear a large share of the blame, because of their entanglement in Western ideologies of natural domination and dualistic separation. The truth is that none of the large-scale religions has resources adequate to the crisis. None of the "world" religions is an Earth religion. The non-local religions are in no better shape than the multinational corporations. Because so much pollutes the spiritual environment, cleaning it up is every bit as urgent and challenging as cleaning up the physical environment.

Assuming religious leaders were to take a more creative and critical ritual initiative, what might an eco-rite look like? Clear-cutting in Thailand has become so extensive that monks began preaching about the suffering of trees and land. In the 1970s, after his ordination, Phrakhrū Pitak noticed the deforestation around his home and the consequent damage to watersheds and local economies. He started to preach against the destruction but found that the villagers, even those who believed him, went home from temple services only to continue clearing the land. Moral admonition was not enough. So in 1991 he ordained a tree, wrapping it in monk's robes. To down an ordained tree would be to kill a sentient being and incur religious demerit.

At first the monk led people in sprinkling holy water on the trees. Later he upped the ante by requiring village leaders to drink holy water in front of a statue of Buddha by a tree. This way, community leaders ritually enacted their identification with the tree, and thereby pledged themselves to its protection. Sometimes, posted on an ordained tree would be a sign saying, "To destroy the forest is to destroy life, one's rebirth, or the nation." Sincere Buddhists do not want to tamper with their rebirth.

This improvised ritualizing is now attracting upstanding citizens. As a result, the Thai debate is no longer purely political but also moral and religious. The metaphoric act of ordaining trees has made it so. If trees have Buddha-nature, to saw one down is to slice yourself in half. Now, it costs moral and religious capital to lay low the ancestor-teacher trees. Ritual is a primary means of ensuring that moral behavior does not become merely moralistic, that instead, it is embodied and enacted.

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See also: Ecology and Religion; Epic of Evolution (and adjacent, Epic Ritual); Rappaport, Roy; Restoration Ecology and Ritual; Ritualizing and Anthropology.

Ritualizing and Anthropology

Ritual is a term rooted in nineteenth-century Western scholarship on the anthropology of religion that has been used to categorize and describe certain types of religious behavior. There is no single, universally agreed-upon definition of ritual. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars tended to define ritual as a patterned set of actions intended to bring about changes in the relationship between humans and supernatural agents, such as gods or spirits. In the late twentieth century, scholars began to view ritual more as a process than an object: a formalized response intended to bring about change that religions and cultures apply to a particular situation. Rituals are an important part of cultures and religions, and mark secular as well as sacred occasions.

Types of Rituals

French ethnologist Arnold Van Gennep identified two principal types of rituals, both tied to natural cycles: *rites of passage* and *rites of intensification*. Rites of passage involve transformations in the life cycle of an individual. They typically occur around times of personal transition, such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. Initiation rites for shamans, healers, priests and priestesses are also considered rites of passage. In some religions, rites of passage

involve the temporary isolation of initiates from the rest of society. Among the Plains Indians in North America, for example, young men often underwent a period of fasting, physical trials and retreat during which they would seek the guidance of nature spirits, who would appear to them in visions offering wisdom. Since Amerindians generally viewed their relationship to nature as reciprocal and contiguous, obtaining the protection of spirit guides was an important part of attaining maturity. In other indigenous traditions, young people underwent initiation in groups. Among the Mbuti of Central Africa, young initiates were taken away from their villages to a men's house, where elders instructed them on hunting techniques and the ways of the forest spirits. During the period when initiates are isolated and undergoing instruction and testing, they are said to be *liminal*, or in a threshold state betwixt and between social categories. The liminal stage is characterized by social equality and a temporary suspension of everyday norms of behavior, a condition anthropologist Victor Turner called *communitas*. Usually, upon completion of the rite of passage, initiates are reunited with their communities in a ritual of reintegration that celebrates their new status. While rites of passage serve an important function in the life of the individual, they are also important for the community, in that they help groups come to terms with changes in their members' life cycles. This is particularly true of birth and death rites, where the subject cannot participate fully in the ritual.

Rites of intensification mark important transitions in the life of a community. There are two types: *calendrical* or *year-cycle rites* and *rites of crisis*. Year-cycle rites center around important times in a community's seasonal calendar which often coincide with environmental changes – for example, the transition from winter to spring. They often mark crucial agricultural events such as harvest and planting times, or the seasonal migration of herd animals. Calendrical rites repeat yearly, and often involve a prolonged period of celebration which includes secular as well as religious aspects. There may be music, dancing, feasting and dramatic performances that enact myths associated with the seasonal cycle. Often, these celebrations are thought to be necessary for the continuation of the natural cycle. Rites of crisis, in contrast, are held in response to a crisis in the community, such as a drought, plague or other drastic event. In many religions, these events are often understood as being the result of disharmony between humans and nature. Rites of crisis serve to restore the relationship to a state of balance.

All rituals communicate through symbols, and many of these are rooted in the natural world. They act out important stories or ideas, often by bringing together a number of symbolic opposites in culture in a meaningful way. Participation in rituals helps communicate these concepts to the community, and brings the community together in recognition of their shared values. Because rituals enact

important values, they can also become points of contention and strife, especially when religions are undergoing rapid change. Some rituals reverse social norms through a process called *symbolic inversion*, in which important symbols are literally turned upside down or mocked. Ultimately, though, even such rites of reversal tend to uphold the existing social system by demonstrating its limits.

Ritual and Nature

Since the early nineteenth century, scholars have recognized a relationship between rituals and the natural world. Among the earliest observers of ritual was the German linguist Max Müller (1823–1900), who theorized that rituals originated as poetic dramatizations of natural and celestial phenomena, especially what appeared to early peoples as the movement of the sun in the sky. Since early humans depended on the sun as a source of light and heat, and feared the darkness, Müller hypothesized that they developed rituals as a way of attempting to control these natural phenomena. Later, anthropologists such as Edward B. Tylor argued that rituals were rooted in the belief that natural objects had a soul and could interact with humans, a notion he called *animism*. Tylor's disciple James G. Frazer (1854–1941) argued that rituals in all cultures enacted the death and resurrection of the divine king, whose life was connected to the fertility of the crops and herds and the prosperity of his people. Frazer's theory led to the emergence of the myth-ritual school, a group of early twentieth-century scholars who applied Frazer's idea of death and rebirth not only to rituals, but also to many forms of folklore such as folktales, myths and legends, folk drama and even children's games, which they thought had derived from rituals. For the myth-ritualists, almost all forms of expressive culture enacted the seasonal cycle of death and rebirth of crops and vegetation. Despite many scholarly criticisms of Frazer and the myth-ritual school, these theories continued to hold sway until well into the mid-twentieth century.

By the 1960s, scholars were becoming more aware of how cultures were uniquely adapted to their environments. This led to the emergence of new ways of interpreting the relationship between rituals and nature. Anthropologist Roy A. Rappaport pioneered the idea that rituals could regulate cultures' relationships to their environment. In his study of the Maring-speaking Tsembaga in New Guinea, he found that a complex ritual cycle involving warfare with neighboring groups, the raising of pigs and the cultivation of gardens helped to maintain ecological balance, ensured a fair distribution of land and protein among people living in a territory, limited the frequency of fighting between neighboring tribes, and helped create alliances between groups. Rappaport's work inspired a generation of scholars to examine rituals' function not only in creating social cohesion, but also in ensuring that

human groups did not exceed the carrying capacity of their ecosystems. For example, Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff examined the hunting rituals of the Tukano Indians of the northwest Amazon basin, in Colombia and Venezuela. He concluded that many of the prohibitions and rites surrounding hunting actually restricted hunters' activities in a way that ensured that the Tukano would not exhaust the supply of game in their ecosystem, and would be able to continue to survive within their territory without causing environmental degradation. The Tukano did not see themselves as existing apart from nature, and their myths and rituals ensured that humans could maintain a certain quality of life only if other organisms in their natural environment were also permitted to live and develop. In yet another study, O.K. Moore found that the divination practices of the Naskapi of the upper Labrador peninsula served to ensure that these arctic peoples hunted throughout their territory, rather than concentrating their efforts in only a few areas and thus overhunting the herds. These studies and many more like them helped to change anthropological perspectives on the relationship between nature and ritual by examining the ways rituals actually function in the material world. While scientists believe they may not function in the way their practitioners believe they do – namely, by regulating relations between humans and the supernatural world – they may, in some cases, have quite specific ecological and economic functions that maintain the balance between humans and their environment.

It is important to note, however, that not all myths and rituals function to maintain harmony between humans and their ecosystems, nor do all pre-industrial peoples ritually regulate their relationship to their environment. The Bible, in which Yaweh gives human beings “dominion” over nature, has been criticized as justifying the voracious exploitation of nature that has characterized the emergence of colonialism and capitalism in the West. And archeologist Mark Raab has demonstrated that Indians living along the southern coast of California before colonial contact overhunted fish and shellfish to the point of causing their own famine and near-extinction. Therefore, the relationship of each ritual system to nature must be carefully examined before drawing conclusions about ritual's function *vis-à-vis* the natural world.

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River Ganga and the Clean Ganga Campaign

– See Hinduism and Pollution.

Rock Art – Australian Aboriginal

Aboriginal people of Australia have a rich heritage of carving and painting on rocks, extending back well more than 20,000 years. Rock art, Australia's oldest surviving art form, expresses the Aborigines' social, economic and religious concerns through the centuries. In the form of petroglyphs (carvings) and pictographs (paintings), rock art is found across the continent. It served a variety of functions, and provides the earliest illustration of Aboriginal beliefs, technologies and activities. Australia is a particularly rich region for rock-art research because it is one of the few areas where the art is still being produced, which has facilitated the work of anthropologists in collecting some of the myths and meanings associated with the art. We know that as humans, our relationship with the world is deeply affected by the images we use to understand and express our place in nature and the cosmos. By combining ethnographic field research and archeological findings we can begin to interpret the cultural significance of prehistoric rock art in Australia.

Various regions developed particular styles of art, and Aboriginal rock art is often classified by these main regional types. Continuity of motifs within regions and across time is attributed to the extreme conservatism of Aboriginal religion. Some of the earliest known Aboriginal rock art lies underground, in the limestone caves of the southern portion of the continent. Perhaps the best-known depository of parietal designs is Koonalda Cave, where the markings consist of finger meanders (made by sets of parallel finger strokes executed on the soft and pliable areas of the cave wall) and incised lines scratched into the harder surfaces. The prehistoric use of torches in Koonalda resulted in deposits of charcoal near dense concentrations of the finger flutings. Associational dating with the charcoal indicates that this artistic development in Australia occurred about 20,000 years ago.

Another common type of rock art in South Australia is called Panaramitee after a site containing many petroglyphs of this classification. Panaramitee rock engravings are also found in portions of the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Tasmania, and Queensland. They were made by pecking away the dark, patinated outer surface that forms on exposed rocks, to reveal the lighter, unweathered rock underneath. Circles, tracks, tectiforms, and meanders predominate.

The Kimberly region in northwestern Australia offers interesting examples of the relationship between rock art and mythology. Aborigines claim that some of the paintings in the central Kimberly district contain the spirits of the Ancestral Beings known as *Wandjina*, the preeminent Ancestors in the religion of this region. When a Wandjina completed his Dreamtime actions he turned himself into a picture containing his spirit and power. Each clan in the Kimberly region has a number of totemic species or objects associated with its Wandjina. Hence, in addition to paintings of Wandjina, many of the caves contain representations of kangaroo, eagles, fish, and various plants. A significant component of the Wandjina cult was the duty of each clan to retouch the paintings in its caves, thereby ensuring a supply of the natural species represented there.

The Pilbara region of Western Australia has the largest concentration of petroglyph sites in Australia – perhaps millions of individual figures. The large numbers of human figures at these sites show a highly stylized and developed art form, and a great degree of creativity. Some are fairly accurate representations of humans with well-proportioned bodies, while others are biomorphs; part human and part animal, apparently representing Dreaming beings.

The rock shelters of sub-tropical Arnhem Land hold an abundance of varied and skillfully executed examples of rock art. The two most general pictograph styles in Arnhem Land are the X-ray and Dynamic (sometimes called Mimi) paintings. Both tend to be basically naturalistic, yet their differences in form and subject matter are striking.

The Dynamic style is generally simpler in design than the X-ray art, yet its elegance is remarkable. The anthropomorphs depicted in the Dynamic art are Mimi spirit people, the beings responsible for teaching the Aborigines to paint. Dynamic-phase figures are often slender and shown in action – dancing, fighting, hunting, and running. They are monochrome paintings, and are said to have been made by the small Mimi spirits. X-ray pictographs, generally larger and polychromatic, are usually representations of people and animals, and unlike the Mimi paintings, are essentially static pictures. The X-ray art is so called because it illustrates not only the body of a subject, but some internal organs and skeletal features as well; the heart, lungs, stomach, and backbone of an animal are often depicted. One of the most pervasive and distinctive contexts in which this art was created was through the practice of increase rituals at sacred sites.

The pigments used to create these and other rock paintings throughout Australia were primarily derived from pulverized minerals, often mixed with a natural binder such as tree resin or animal fat. Various shades of red and yellow ochre were utilized, as well as white pipeclay and black manganese. Charcoal was used often, as were brushes, probably made of human hair, bark, feathers, or a twig chewed at one end to loosen the cellulose fibers.

Many of the rock shelters of Arnhem Land contain painted images considered of vital religious importance to the Aborigines. Since it was believed that the act of creating or retouching a painting could release the spirit of the subject, these acts were often considered a necessary component of ritual. The practice ensured the preservation of the paintings, but with the breakdown of many aspects of traditional Aboriginal culture repainting has ceased, and the designs are slowly fading away. There have been some historical examples of rock-art production in the region, and the artists claimed that the placing of clan designs in rock shelters is an assertion of rights over the site, as well as an effort to keep religious tradition alive.

Scattered around the vicinity of Laura in the southeast Cape York Peninsula of far northern Queensland are some of the best-preserved pictograph galleries of the world. Hundreds of adorned shelters and caves are scattered throughout the hills and valleys of this region. The majority of the Cape York rock paintings are human and animal motifs representing totemic animals, mythological beings, game animals, and an assortment of human figures.

In the Carnarvon Ranges of south-central Queensland, the stenciling of hands and cultural material objects was a highly developed rock-art technique. The stencils are often arranged in intricate patterns, which form large murals of a dozen or more paintings within a single composition. They were made by pressing a hand or object against the rock and splattering paint around it to produce a negative imprint. The expression of physical and spiritual connection appears to have been an important feature of this art.

Thousands of petroglyph sites occur near Sydney, where numerous exposures of sandstone form large, horizontal rock pavements. The petroglyphs depict humans and animals, mythical beings, tracks, weapons, and various non-figurative motifs. The most unusual feature of this art is its scale. The large, flat rock surfaces enabled the Aborigines to depict their subjects life-size or larger; there are human figures and kangaroos measuring over seven meters, eels over ten meters long, and full-size whales. The huge scale suggests that some of these engravings may portray mythological Dreaming beings.

Rock art in Australia was once a prolific expression of social and material culture and religious thought. Through rock art, the Aborigines communicated ideas and concepts that were at the center of a complex set of cultural beliefs. While symbolism is inseparable from Aboriginal art, it should be understood that rock art was essentially utilitarian; it was one medium through which the powers of the Dreaming were brought to bear upon everyday affairs.

Paul Faulstich

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See also: Aboriginal Art; Aboriginal Dreaming (Australia); Art; Rock Art (various).

Rock Art – Batwa/Pygmies (Central Africa)

The central African hunter-gatherer rock-art zone has been termed the “Schematic Art Zone” by J. Desmond Clark. Nearly 3000 hunter-gatherer rock-art sites have been found within this zone and some 90 percent of these comprise superimposed layers of massed, finger-painted, geometric designs. The other 10 percent of sites comprise highly stylized and distorted animal forms plus rows of finger dots. Both seem to have a history extending back many thousands of years.

While the geometric art always dominates, the two traditions go together as a pair: they co-occur across a huge area and are regularly found close by, but in only a handful of cases can they be found together in the same site. They seem to be kept near, but apart. Both are found in the same overall distribution, in an area that encircles the central African rainforests and includes: Angola, Zambia, Malawi, northern Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, southern and western Tanzania, western Kenya, Uganda, Congo and the Central African Republic. The dominance of geometric rock art makes this area immediately distinctive from the other hunter-gatherer rock-art regions in Africa all of which, by contrast, contain a high percentage of brush-painted animals, humans and human-animal confluents. Little research has been

conducted on this art tradition and it is therefore still poorly understood by comparison with hunter-gatherer rock art in other parts of Africa.

Throughout most of central Africa, the pre-farmer hunter-gathering populations have gone and they exist today only in the archeological deposits and in oral traditions. Modern central African Bantu-language speakers remember these people as the Batwa (a word that is used widely in eastern, central and southern Africa to refer to any autochthonous hunter-gatherer people). They are described by many groups, and across a wide geographic area, as “short-statured, dark-skinned and hairy.” In those areas close to southern Africa they are remembered as being immediately distinctive from the San (or Bushmen). The rock art supports this division: it is entirely different from San rock art. The dividing line between southern African San rock art and central African Batwa rock art follows the Zambezi River and the Anglo/Namibia border. The archeological remains also show strong divergence along this same line. The later Stone Age lithic technologies vary to such an extent that they have been given different names: those in southern Africa are known as the Wilton/Smithfield whereas those of central Africa are known as Nachikufan. The cultural distinctions between central, southern Africa hunter-gatherers are thus profound.

The only surviving groups of central African Batwa are the so-called forest “Pygmies.” Genetic studies appear to confirm the archeological division between the ancestral heritage of these groups and that of the southern African San. Geneticists suggest great antiquity to the division between the San and the Pygmies, perhaps with a divergence in excess of 40,000 years. Pygmy groups are known to have occupied many sections of the central African “Schematic Art Zone” even into historical times, and it is probable that the full former distribution of these groups can be recognized from the distribution of the art. Certainly, elements within recorded Pygmy traditions help us to understand central African rock art.

Pygmy traditions, such as those recorded by Colin Turnbull amongst the Mbuti, are dominated by two major ceremonies. The Mbuti call these *molimo* and *elima*. *Molimo* is organized by men and *elima* by women. Both ceremonies traditionally take place in a clearing in the forest and involve singing around camp fires for night after night, sometimes for as long as a month. *Molimo* is often held after the death of an important member of the group or in the case of a violent argument; *elima* usually marks important women’s occasions such as coming of age. Turnbull describes how the songs in both ceremonies seek to bring out the spirit of the forest. In *molimo* the spirit of the forest literally comes out and its unearthly song can often be heard encircling the campfire in the darkness (the song is in fact sung by a boy through a special *molimo* pipe).

Turnbull argues that the purpose of calling out the spirit of the forest in these ceremonies is to restore harmony within the camp and the forest. He argues that the Mbuti see this state of harmony as essential to allowing the dead to be released back to the forest and to giving health and fertility to the girls. Smith and Blundell argue that it is these same concerns that underlie central African Batwa rock art. The stylized animal depictions mark the symbols and concerns of the ceremony of *molimo* (specifically the calling of the spirit of the forest) and the geometric designs represent the symbols and concerns of *elima* (specifically fertility and rain divination). They argue that this is why the two arts are found locally separated, and yet are together within the landscape. The arts were made by different groups within the same society and, together, they form a conceptual whole.

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- See also: Pygmies (Mbuti foragers) & Bila Farmers (Ituri Forest); Rock Art – Hadzabe/Sandawe; San (Bushmen) Apocalyptic Rock Art; San (Bushmen) Religion (Eastern Africa); San (Bushmen) Rainmaking.

Rock Art – Chewa (Central Africa)

The ancestors of the Chewa and Nyanja peoples of central Africa were among (and adjacent), the most prolific of Africa's Bantu-speaking farmer rock artists. More than 400 Chewa rock-art sites have so far been found spread across central Malawi, eastern Zambia and neighboring areas of Mozambique. Nearly 70 percent of the known sites fall within the Dedza-Chongoni hills of Malawi and it seems that this was a core area for Chewa art.

Chewa rock art divides into two separate art traditions: the art of nyau and the art of chinamwali. As is typical of rock-art traditions made by Bantu-speaking peoples, the primary color used is white and this is applied thickly by

daubing. In rare instances where the art is especially well preserved, black finger-painted decoration may be seen executed over the primary white design. The white pigment is a form of powdered clay, which can be dug out of most riverbeds in this area. The same pigment is used in traditional house decoration today. The black pigment is powdered charcoal. Both pigments seem to have been mixed using only water, as neither is tightly bonded to the rock surfaces. Rock engravings (also known as petroglyphs) are unknown in these traditions.

The art of nyau is a tradition belonging to Chewa men. Nyau rock art is comparatively rare and fresh-looking when compared with chinamwali rock art. Only a few dozen sites are known. It depicts a range of masked men and, in particular, larger animal basketwork figures. These are readily recognizable as the elaborate masked characters that still perform in the ceremonies of the nyau closed association. While the subject matter of the art is known, the art is no longer created today nor is the rationale behind it remembered.

It has been argued that the nyau art tradition belonged to the specific historical context of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time when nyau was forced to become an underground movement because of its suppression by Ngoni invaders, missions and the colonial government. According to this explanation, the art served as a mnemonic device, helping to teach young initiates about the construction and meaning of large nyau structures that could not be made in this troubled time. The art went out of use when the suppression of nyau ended and initiates could once again learn by making and using the real structures. The need for the rock art was thus removed.

The art of chinamwali is far more numerous and, judging by the many layers of superpositions – more than a dozen at some sites – it is a tradition that has a far greater antiquity than nyau art. It seems likely that this tradition of art has been passed down from the time of the earliest ancestors of the Chewa in this region, more than one thousand years ago. This, therefore, is traditional Chewa rock art. This art has been linked to Chewa women and to the girls' coming-of-age ceremony: chinamwali. The painted symbolism is thought to revolve around concepts relating to water and fertility. It contains many instructive messages that teach and remind those attending chinamwali how to behave and conduct themselves.

Similar designs to those in the rock art are modeled in clay and used in chinamwali and similar ceremonies in a number of places within central Africa. These designs each have a name, a dance and an instructive song and the image helps the young girls to remember the varied and complex teaching of the ceremony. The subject matter of these designs and their form suggest close parallels with Chewa rock art. It seems likely that the images in the rock art were also linked to song and to dance. Chinamwali

rock art is no longer created today, but some of the shelters containing this art are still used for chinamwali ceremonies. There are indications that the secret meanings of many of the designs are still understood, but there has been no published confirmation of this to date.

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- See also: Nyau – A Closed Association; Rock Art – Northern Sotho.

Rock Art – Hadzabe/Sandawe (Eastern Africa)

Within central Tanzania is a localized tradition of brush-painted hunter-gatherer rock art that stands apart from the predominantly finger-painted geometric rock art of other parts of central Africa. The southern boundary of this art follows the southern limits of Kondoa and Singida districts and the northern boundary is Lake Eyasi. The length and breadth of this distribution does not exceed 200 kilometers. This art is by far the most regionally confined of all African hunter-gatherer rock arts. Within this same region is a finger-painted rock-art tradition executed in yellow/white. This art was made by Bantu-speaking farmer groups within boys' initiation ceremonies. (I am concerned here only with the older hunter-gatherer art.)

The brush-painted hunter-gatherer art of this region has been known since the early 1900s, but was made famous by the work of Ludwig Kohl-Larsen, Henry Fosbrooke, Eric Ten Raa and Mary Leakey. The art contains depictions of a wide variety of animals and a few birds and reptiles. It is painted in an unusually varied collection of manners of depiction ranging from outline, through linear, dotted and gridded fills, to partial and fully filled forms. Humans are depicted in these same manners in a range of standing, bending and "floating" postures, sometimes with bows, and often with large and bizarre head forms that may or may not reflect the wearing of headdresses. A few humans

are painted with animal heads. Early researchers tried to sequence the manners of depiction, but more detailed recent studies by Fidelis Masao and others have found that the proposed sequences are flawed. There are too many conflicting overlays when one collects together the evidence from a large number of sites. It now appears that variety in manner of depiction is one of the characteristics of this art tradition.

The distribution of this art matches closely the historically known distribution of the only two click-speaking groups in eastern Africa: the Hadzabe and the Sandawe. It is widely believed by researchers and claimed by the groups themselves, that it was the ancestors of the modern Hadzabe and Sandawe that made the rock art. There has been much debate on the relationship between these groups and the southern African click-speakers such as the San (Bushmen). Linguists now see the languages as highly divergent and recent genetic evidence suggests that these groups may have diverged as long ago as 70,000–100,000 years before the present. These are therefore two of the oldest populations on Earth and the fact that they both speak click-languages is suggestive about the nature of the first languages.

As with most African hunter-gatherer rock arts, it appears that the art was part of traditional religious practice. Ten Raa, working among the Sandawe, records three instances in the mid-twentieth century when he witnessed Sandawe people creating rock art. Through this personal experience he connects some of the art with hunting magic and some with an ecstatic cult called *simbó*. In *simbó*, dancers use vigorous movement and hallucinogenic beer to attain an ecstatic state. In this state the Sandawe say that people become lions. David Lewis-Williams has argued that many of the bizarre head forms, many of the postures, such as the floating posture, and the depiction of therianthropes (animal-people) link much of the central Tanzanian rock art to this ritual experience of altered states of consciousness.

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See also: Rock Art – Batwa/Pygmies; San (Bushmen) Apocalyptic Rock Art.

Rock Art – Northern Sotho (Southern Africa)

In addition to its celebrated hunter-gatherer rock art made by the San (or Bushmen), southern Africa has a number of later rock-art traditions made by Bantu-speaking farmers. The most extensive of these traditions in terms of area covered and number of sites is the rock art of the Northern Sotho. This art is found spread across the greater part of northern South Africa.

Northern Sotho rock art is easily distinguished from San rock art both by its color and by its form. It is predominantly executed in white and was applied thickly onto the rock by finger (in contrast to the polychrome brushwork paintings of the San). Occasionally, red and black pigments are also used, usually as decoration over the primary white design. The white used is a form of powdered clay found in many riverbeds in the area. The choice of white as the dominant color is characteristic of rock-art traditions belonging to Bantu-speaking agriculturists. Reflecting this, these arts have become colloquially known as the “late whites.”

Northern Sotho art is found in its greatest concentration in the more remote hill areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa. Areas particularly rich in this art include the Soutpansberg and Waterberg mountains as well of the Makgabeng plateau. In total, nearly 300 sites with Northern Sotho rock art are currently known.

The art divides into an earlier and a later period. The early art depicts a range of wild animals such as elephant, zebra, lion, rhino, kudu, hyena and hippo, but the dominant subject is the giraffe. Almost all of the art is concealed in large rock shelters in remote and secluded mountain areas. These places are the traditional venues for the secretive Northern Sotho boys' initiation practices. Elders in some areas acknowledge a link between this art and tradition initiation practices, but they state that, while some of the painted sites are still used for initiation ceremonies today, the tradition of creating rock art has ceased.

It seems that each painted animal carried a particular instructive and symbolic message within the boys' initiation ceremony and indications as to how this symbolism operated survive in the continued use of animal symbolism within modern initiation practices. Within the modern initiation lodge, for example, the fire is sometimes referred to as the lion cub, the magic tree as the giraffe, the cairn of stones as the hyena and the structure under which food is placed as the elephant. Many of the instructive songs learnt by the initiates are also concerned with these same animals. The secret teachings in these songs are often

unclear to the initiates, but concealed within this complex structure of animal imagery are social messages that become progressively understood through life with age and experience.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the rock art underwent a dramatic change. The intrusion of white settlers into the region brought taxes, land clearances and conflict. A series of wars to subdue Northern Sotho traditional leaders left many homeless and destitute. At this time whole communities fled to the hill areas. Many of the old initiation sites became refuge settlements. A new form of rock art developed at this time dominated by depictions of steam trains, soldiers, settlers and guns. The images capture a people's tragedy, but served a more important purpose. They poked fun at the troublesome new intruders and through this pointed humor served to overcome some of the terrible stresses of the times. The art marks the origins of protest art in northern South Africa – ordinary people protesting their right to land and self-determination, and fighting the destruction of their traditional structures and cultural values.

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See also: Rock Art – Chewa; San (Bushmen) Apocalyptic Rock Art; San (Bushmen) Religion.

Rock Art – Sintu

Throughout much of south-central and southern Africa there extends a finger-painting tradition associated with Bantu-speaking groups. In the countries of Zaire, Zambia, Malawi, Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, this art form most often occurs where there are rocky outcrops on boulders and in shelters and caves. An expression of a primal religion, this art form can be considered a cultural complex, which is both religious in character and strongly linked to nature. In this artistic tradition we find highly schematized depictions of abstract zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures, fantastic beings, abstract symbols, signs and smears which can be linked to human sexuality and procreation. It is also associated with traditional rulers, rainmaking, initiation, diviners, secret societies, and to society in general. The overriding concern,

however, is for the fertility of man, beast and land, all of which impinge directly upon human society and welfare.

This artistic tradition differs greatly from Khoisan rock art in execution, intent and meaning, having been painted with a finger, or perhaps a stick, unlike Khoisan brushwork. It also has a much wider distribution extending from East Africa down to the northern South Africa, with isolated examples evident as far south as the Eastern Cape, yet it is less understood and far less researched. Early dates of 1800 BP have been suggested for the oldest depictions, but they may be older.

Sintu rock art is highly symbolic, reflecting and reinforcing ritual action, group structure, beliefs regarding nature and the wider cosmos. The manner in which the motifs and symbols are perceived and manipulated reflect people's attempts to manage natural and supernatural forces that impinge upon their physical and conceptual worlds.

In many parts of Africa caves and shelters are favored by ritual specialists for rainmaking and other religious activities, and many of those shelters given ritual status are decorated with paintings. This is almost certainly linked to widespread beliefs in Bantu-speaking Africa that holes, hollows and rock shelters are entrances to the ancestor-world and that, through these special points, communication with the ancestors and deities is possible. Supernatural beings are held to control the elements, and so it is here that appeals are made and offerings offered. Painted shelters are often used for rainmaking, thus linking sacred points with climatic phenomena.

Naturalistic and abstracted zoomorphic symbols, such as crocodiles and snakes, are associated with concepts of kingship, divinership, initiation and rainfall, but most importantly, with fertility and procreation. Many such motifs not only occur in the finger paintings but are also used as educational diagrams during initiation.

Bantu-speaking groups stress institutionalization of passage in which initiation is an elaborate affair emphasizing fertility. Not only do finger paintings form part of this iconography, but so also do schematic and naturalistic figures, masks and costumes of fantastic beings. In these societies, greater emphasis is placed upon hunting than among patrilineal cattle-complex groups. Here the killing of prey is associated with male sexuality, indicating that wild animals, as a communal concept in finger paintings, are yet another expression of fertility.

As a rule, African worldviews are unified, phenomena within them fading into one another, creating a holistic structure of both the physical and conceptual worlds, so that each becomes indistinguishable from the other.

The art expresses a liminality of interaction among the principles that govern the mundane world. Here, in shelters and caves, fantastic beings live and are represented in the rock art and iconography, often with exaggerated

features, such as exceptionally elongated necks, as an expression of their liminal status.

Diviners are prominent figures in finger paintings. They perform the rainmaking and fertility ceremonies and are the masters of initiation. They communicate with the ancestors in caves and shelters. Like the initiation event, and like the shelters, diviners are liminal, and it is their very ambiguity that entitles them to control the elements through the ancestors.

It is significant that the finger-painting tradition is widespread among groups who depend upon hunting and upon the fertility of game. The preeminent threats to hunting-based agrarian economies are drought and other natural disasters that reduce animal and plant populations. The positive expression of fertility may be seen as the ultimate symbol of well-being, and a manifestation that the social and natural order are operating smoothly. These conceptual associations permeate throughout different levels of society, and are believed to be reflected in the fertility of males and females entering adulthood.

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- See also: Xhosa-Speakers' Traditional Concept of God.

Rock Art – Western United States

Scattered across the immense and often empty expanses of the desert southwest in North America is a vast collection of imagery pecked, rubbed, or scratched (commonly

referred to as petroglyphs) and sometimes painted on stones: the legacy of a people long gone. These ancient, mystifying images, collectively termed rock art, are the portrayal of a world we can now only faintly imagine, a representation on stone of the experience of America's first human discoverers, the hunter-gatherers of prehistory.

Although the Bering Strait theory of migration is anathema to certain tribes of Native Americans, evidence continues to surface to support this idea; also, the very likely ocean routes by boat must be more strongly considered. The indisputable fact is that people did come, many great waves of them, by land, by sea, from many different origins. The various waves of migration streaming across the land bridge brought with them not only their tools for survival and their meager possessions; they also brought their ideology, their customs and beliefs, and their ancient forms of religion: animism couched within a framework of shamanism. Many of their rock-art images, though not all, were related to shamanistic themes, and images of birds are especially conspicuous; "... birds are the most common and most obvious symbols of shamanic transformation and magical flight" (Hedges 1976: 84). And in this myriad of imagery, if we pause and look closely, we can see the expression of "art and religion, twin mirrors of human thought" (Turpin 1994: 76).

Bird images in particular stand out in the iconography of shamanic rock art, whether in the explosive beginnings of Paleolithic cave art or the prehistoric rock art of the hunter-gatherers of North America. From the "bird-on-a-stick" image in Lascaux cave to the Egyptian *ba*, to the paintings along the Pecos River, the bird has appeared repeatedly as a metaphor for the human soul, and "There is no other symbol of the shaman's power of flight, his most essential magic capability, as logical and powerful as that of the bird" (Wellman 1976: 101).

These early people wandering across North America were completely immersed in the natural world; it sustained them and it destroyed them, and from its deeper dimensions they acquired their magic and their power. Religion, magic, and spirituality were expressions of the same thing.

The close relationship between men and animals, and the shaman's ability to share in the occult powers of the animal world is one of the major messages of shamanism in general . . . Birds in particular symbolize shamanic flight. Becoming a bird allows one to take the ecstatic journey to sky and beyond, and in many places in the world, bird elements are commonly incorporated into shamans' costumes. In rock art, birds fly over and around the heads and toward and away from the bodies of the anthropomorphic forms (Schaafsma 1994: 53).

Some of the rock-art styles, especially the older, painted ones, are noticeably replete with bird imagery, often in conjunction with snakes. (The underworld and the underworld.) This is especially true of the Barrier Canyon style of south central Utah and the Pecos River paintings of southern Texas and Northern Coahuila, Mexico. Other styles, such as the petroglyph images in the Wind River Range, Wyoming, are noted for their "owl-men" or "bird-men," and the Basketmaker II rock art of the early Anasazi (Colorado plateau, 200 B.C.E.–400 C.E.) has hundreds of images of anthropomorphic figures with ducks on their heads, or, more commonly, ducks as heads.

These bird images can be so prevalent in certain styles that they become the central theme.

One of the core beliefs of modern shamanism, the "bird-like flight of the soul" (Furst 1977: 2) is a major theme of the Archaic Pecos River pictographic style, an elaborate body of polychrome art painted by hunters and gatherers that occupied the arid lands of southwestern Texas and northern Mexico. Depictions of ascending, descending, and soaring anthropomorphic figures are augmented by a number of flight metaphors, such as birds, wings and feathers . . . These many illustrations of magical flight confirm the importance of religious ecstasy in Pecos River ritual . . . In fact, it can now be said with some security that magical flight, derived directly from the trance experience, is the dominant theme in Pecos River style art (Turpin 1994: 73, 82).

Among the petroglyphs of Pueblo peoples of New Mexico are numerous portrayals of the roadrunner, and sometimes just its odd, elongated, X-shaped footprint is displayed as a metaphor for the whole bird. "The mere presence of the roadrunner track in prehistoric rock art was strongly indicative that the roadrunner and/or its track had religious significance in the prehistoric southwest" (Schaafsma 1989: 26).

Owls, parrots, cranes, ducks, roadrunners, turkeys, eagles, quail, herons, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, hawks, to name only a few, were part and parcel of the prehistoric pantheon. And while "birds of all kinds were associated with shamans," (Whitley 1994: 25), certain birds held particular significance to specific groups of people. The duck, for example, continues to be revered in the Pueblo world as a messenger to the spirit world. Likewise, the prehistoric Pueblo world held the duck in great esteem, as is evidenced not only in the many images for ducks *per se*, but notably in the Basketmaker II anthropologic images known as "duck heads."

The duck is a magical being and a great shape-shifter (these figures often have distended hands and feet, an indication that shape is being transformed); it can walk on land, lay eggs in the rushes at water's edge, and tend to its

nest in an earthly way. It can also fly up into the sky where the cloud-beings live, its power of flight so easy, so natural. And, most magically of all, not only can it swim and float on water, it can also dive under the water – and come back up again! To a people who likely saw puddles and ponds as an entryway to the underworld, this must have seemed the epitome of magic.

Other water birds such as cranes or coots or herons (or their footprints) are also widely represented in the prehistoric rock art of the desert southwest, not surprising in cultures that were trying to eke out an existence in places where the rainfall was often far below the prerequisite 14 inches a year that are considered minimum for human survival. With the idea of supplication for rain, it is no wonder that water birds images are so prevalent, as are those of clouds, frogs, tadpoles, and fish. Images of turkeys were often associated with rain also, as these birds tended to reside in the mountains where there was more water, next to springs and streams, just as they do today.

It is a logical extension of bird imagery that bird feathers and bird parts served as a metaphor for the whole bird, and there is a long tradition brought forward into the present of using bird feathers in connection with sacred ceremonies, altars, prayer bundles, dances and rituals, and shamanic costumes. “Of all life forms found as decorative motifs in Pueblo art, the bird has undoubtedly enjoyed the most widespread use. Bird designs occur abundantly on prehistoric and historic culture materials from the Pueblo region” (Wellman 1976: 97).

Bird imagery in the Rio Grande style rock art is quite often generic (depending on the site); that is, the idea of birds is presented, though no effort has been made to suggest a specific kind of bird. And just as often, a specific bird image may dominate a site, such as raptors in Tenabo, New Mexico, the duck-men of the San Juan River area in southeastern Utah, the star-faced birds of prey in the Galisteo Basin in north central New Mexico, or the owl-men of Dinwoody Lakes, Wyoming.

And there are some sites that are wonderfully and inexplicably anomalous, such as the premier rock-art site of Three Rivers, in southern New Mexico. This remarkable site, with its many thousands of petroglyphs pecked into the basaltic lava along a hogback rising above the desert floor, hosts at least fourteen separate, identifiable species of birds, as well as birds with eggs in their bodies, bird migrations, seasonal portrayals and even a bird embryo, where the oval shape of the rock forms the egg. Most of the images are portrayed alone, and a few seem to have an overt shamanic context, though certainly the wide variety of images has generated numerous, often conflicting interpretations.

Unraveling the mystery of the many different bird species represented at Three Rivers is an appropriate metaphor for the study of the larger world of rock art. Not only by learning to live with the mystery without having to

explain it rationally on our own terms, but also by accepting it as the essence of the magic inherent in rock art, and learning, each in our own way, how to celebrate (and protect) that mystery, may we come into a true contact with the many people who left them there so long ago.

Brad Draper

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See also: Paleolithic Religions; Rock Art (various); Shamanism (various).

P Rock Climbing

Can rock climbing be understood as a religion? As a practitioner and a scholar, I think it can. Surely it entails a sensation of transcendence, an experience of raw nature, and calls forth a kind of reverence. Climbing offers a respite from the constraints of the horizontal world, recreating the *axis mundi* with each new ascent. While such sentiments convey aspects of what I feel when I climb, they serve only to obscure what I see as a scholar. As much as I'm prone to romanticizing my choice of leisure pursuits, here I want to approach climbing with a critical eye, still under the broad category of religion. This entails a shift to ritual. If we view climbing as ritualized behavior, we move beyond platitudes and speculations about the “beliefs” of climbers to analyze the social processes and practices they perform.

Climbing is almost wholly ritualized. This will become readily apparent to anyone who attempts to invent the sport *de novo*, as I did in my hapless early teenage years.

Armed with a bike lock, leather gloves, and an old sailing line, my friend Dan and I decided to “go climbing.” Before we had much of an opportunity to kill ourselves, Dan and I were approached by some “real climbers” who, while chuckling the we-know-better laugh, took us under their wing and initiated us into the esoterica at the heart of the sport. In language and gestures meant to close the gap between our ignorance and their “reality,” we were taught about the acquisition and use of proper ritual paraphernalia (ropes, carabineers, and anchors), appropriate regalia (climbing boots, designer clothes), ritual speech (“on belay”), sacred texts (guide books and various “how to” texts written by “founding fathers”), ongoing revelation (climbing magazines), sacrificial rituals (leisure blood letting by way of cuts and bruises – “badges of honor” – and the occasional involuntary corpse offering), salient ethnic distinctions (sport climbers, traditional climbers, alpine climbers), relevant ancestors and deities (local heroes), heretics (heroes from somewhere else), and most importantly, levels of salvation (grades of difficulty) and ethics (aesthetics – “good style”). More than this, we learned that “real climbing” is established around certain pilgrimage sites (Yosemite being Mecca and Jerusalem both), and only the apostate (independently minded climbers) or the visionary (sponsored climbers) venture beyond the sanctioned and sanctified cathedrals. However, meeting the needs of practitioners who can’t always and everywhere engage “pure tradition” (going climbing), climbers have invented traditions to match their late capitalist predilections (climbing gyms with espresso bars and interactive websites that successfully reproduce the social milieu – which is garden-variety, pecking-order calibration – of the “really real”).

Now, lest my critical view be taken as cynicism, let me point out the positive attributes of climbing as ritual. There is more *communitas* in climbing circles than there are bad dissertations on liminality – which is to say heaps. Climbing is about bonding, and bonding quite beyond the structures and constraints of everyday life. If there was ever “serious play,” this is it. At the level of rope mate, trust is paramount and all ascents are dually authored and doubly experienced. Beyond the sacred duty to one’s partner (holding his or her rope), climbing bonds extend like fractals, taking in ever-greater numbers of people yet linking them in the most intimate ways. Moreover, the very ritualism of climbing is so explicit and marked that it constitutes the primary identity of most adherents. This makes climbers remarkably visible and sympathetic to one another (intra-ethnic strife aside). Thus, to speak personally, I am certain that I have more in common – in terms of passions, appetites, ideals – with climbers from, say, Thailand, than I do with my neighbors. So it is that climbers can travel the world and have ready-made communities waiting to accept them. So, while climbers fashion themselves as radicals, independents, and iconoclasts, what I

find revealing in our ritual analysis is that it is precisely the sub-cultural homogeneity of climbing – produced and reproduced through ritual practices – that renders climbing the social phenomenon it is.

Turning to the sharper edge of my critical knife, I want to address the relationship of climbers to nature by way of exposing one particular class of rituals to analysis: the first ascent. Climbers most often take the first ascent to be the epitome of the sport. It represents the “best and purest” form of climbing. Adventurous, bold, committed, visionary, self-less: these are common ways first ascensionists fashion themselves, and most climbers endorse this discourse through consumption of it. As a first ascensionist myself, I’ve participated in this rhetorical economy, and I think many of the claims and aspirations surrounding first ascents are sincere and harmless. However, I would insist that the quest for the perfect route (climbing’s Holy Grail) by climbers as a whole and the quest for ego gratification by individuals have caused climbing to manifest itself in rather imperial ways. New climbing areas are sought with the fervor of New World explorers, and the consequences to nature (and sometimes natives, as with disputes between climbers and Indians at Devils Tower and Cave Rock attest) are similar in effect, but certainly not in scale, to those of their symbolic predecessors. Trails are cut, vegetation is removed, machinery bolts are drilled into the rock for anchors, erosion exacerbated, and litter is left by climbers “developing” new climbs.

I would also call attention to symbolic features of first ascents that strike me as dubious and revealing. These are signaled by the metaphor often chosen by climbers to describe establishing a first ascent: authorship. Climbers speak as if the act of climbing a rock somehow brings it into being – and so it does, for a certain social world. Beyond this, authorship is viewed to convey moral possession of the route to those who established it. In other words, subsequent climbers are to repeat the route by way of the standards of the first ascensionists, and any modification of the route (the addition of new anchors, for example) requires consent from its “authors.” Moreover, first ascensionists very often understand their act as one that confers entitlement in another sense. Quite literally, climbers have a long tradition of claiming the right to naming based on the first ascent. Even if a rock feature had a name before an ascent, climbers will re-christen the rock upon climbing it. And, in ways reminiscent of the Reformation, climbers will, on occasion, dispute the legitimacy of an ascent, registering their view by climbing it themselves and renaming it upon success. Route names enter climbing discourse swiftly and indelibly, eventually becoming recorded in guidebooks, often along with the “author’s” name. In this way, first ascents are perhaps best viewed in terms of apotheosis – human beings reaching for the gods in order to become them. As with so many human projects to transcend our limitations, in the game

of climbing nature often becomes a means to our ends – even while we purport to be worshipping it.

Yet, if we grant certain ego needs and failures to our kind, perhaps we can view climbing – and things like it – as simultaneously muddled and miraculous. On the latter side, climbing, for all of my skepticism, still affords the chance to gain a celestial view from a terrestrial perch. Doing so, climbing allows for an oceanic experience that inspires a caring rather than a conquering attitude toward the rock. And it must be said that within the climbing community there has always been a vocal environmentalist element. These climbers – from the very beginning of the sport – have maintained a “clean” ethic, seeking to leave no trace on the rocks they ascend. Moreover, their sensibilities extend to the broader context of public land use. Such climbers and the action groups they form and support have been instrumental in advancing low-impact approaches to nature.

Greg Johnson

See *also*: Deep Ecology; Mountaineering; Naess, Arne; Surfing.

Rolston III, Holmes (1932–)

Leading environmental philosopher, ethicist, and theologian, Holmes Rolston III is widely recognized as the “father of environmental ethics” for his central role in developing environmental ethics as a modern academic discipline. Throughout his distinguished career, he has helped make explicit the ethics of nature that have been implicit in philosophical and sacred writings since ancient times. Born in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia on 19 November 1932, Rolston’s multidisciplinary educational career included a childhood spent in contact with nature, an undergraduate degree in physics (Davidson College, 1953), a divinity degree (Union Theological Seminary, 1956), a Ph.D. in theology (University of Edinburgh, 1958), and later a masters in philosophy of science (University of Pittsburgh, 1968). He wrote the acclaimed books *Philosophy Gone Wild* (1986), *Environmental Ethics* (1988), *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (1987), *Conserving Natural Value* (1994), and *Genes, Genesis and God: Values and their Origins in Natural and Human History* (Gifford Lectures, University of Edinburgh, 1997–1998) (1999). He edited *Biology, Ethics, and the Origins of Life* (1994), and in 1979, helped found the now-refereed professional journal *Environmental Ethics*. Additional works include 80 chapters in other books and over 100 articles, a number of which have been used in college courses and have been translated into at least a dozen languages. A founding member of the International Society for Environmental Ethics (1990) and delegate to the

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992), Rolston has lectured on all seven continents, consulted with dozens of conservation groups, received numerous awards including the 2003 Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities, and currently serves as University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University, his professorial post since 1976.

For four centuries following the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution in Europe, Western philosophy promoted an almost exclusively anthropocentric focus, perceiving nature as mechanistic and only having value in relation to human uses and preferences. In the early 1970s, Rolston acknowledged that nature had instrumental or use-values for medicine, agriculture, and industry. He went further, though, recognizing that nature had other values – aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, scientific, economic, and religious – as well as intrinsic value. Fundamentally, he argued, organisms (including plants, animals, and humans), species, ecosystems, and the Earth have intrinsic value just for the fact that they have evolved and survived for millions and billions of years. Each level also has systemic value (value associated with processes and capacity to produce) that is interwoven with instrumental and intrinsic values. Rolston posits that for all of these reasons and more, humans have ethical obligations to the environment.

An ordained Presbyterian pastor like his father and grandfather, Rolston frequently draws on the Bible, emphasizing in writing and in lectures its implied guidance on environmental ethics. He likes to think of the “swarms of living creatures” brought forth from land and sea (Gen. 1:20, 24) as early references to biodiversity and notes that when God reviewed the display of life he found it “very good.” According to Rolston, the story of Noah’s ark illustrates that God wills for species to continue (Gen. 6:19) and the rainbow is God’s sign re-establishing “the covenant . . . between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations” (Gen. 9:12–13). In addition to the ecological, intrinsic, aesthetic, instrumental, and religious values implied in Genesis and Matthew 6, Rolston highlights biblical passages that speak to economic and other values, as well as human responsibilities.

Rolston promotes the idea that ethics are for people, but not only about people. To whom much is given, much is required, and humans have a rich and ancient inheritance, the Earth and biosphere, to steward. Rolston says that perhaps we make our deepest error “forever putting ourselves first, never putting ourselves in place in the fundamental biosphere community in which we reside” (2000: 83). Through his writings and lectures, he attempts to instill a more profound sense of civic and environmental

responsibility, calling upon people to live up to their duties as *Homo sapiens*, the so-called wise species.

Paula J. Posas

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- See also: Environmental Ethics.

Roman Britain

The inhabitants of Britain at the time of the Roman invasion in the year 43 were Celts. Archeological evidence from temple sites coupled with place-name evidence and inscriptions dating from the Roman period emphasize the importance of features in the landscape such as hills, springs and groves of trees, the last associated with the priestly caste of the Druids whose name is thought to have been derived from the oak tree. Although the art of the pre-Roman period was largely abstract, it included striking images of animals, among them horses, bulls, stags, boars, ravens and waterfowl, all of which were evidently held sacred.

The infusion of Roman ideas did not in any way weaken this empathy with nature, for the Roman cult had long peopled the countryside with its own deities of the wild. Thus the sanctuaries kept holy in the Iron Age often

continued to be religious centers even if the deities venerated there were now addressed in Latin and assumed a Graeco-Roman appearance. At Buxton in Derbyshire was a temple dedicated to Arnemetia, whose name derives from the word "nemet" which means a sacred grove. There was another "nemet" at Nympsfield in Gloucestershire, where the word has even been preserved in the modern English name; it may have been attached to an Iron Age and Roman-period sanctuary, recently excavated and located just over the parish boundary at Uley. A final example is preserved in the name of a deity venerated at Nettleham, Lincolnshire called Mars Rigionemetos – Mars, King of the Sacred Grove.

The name of Buxton was formerly Aquae Arnemetiae, showing that Armentia was a goddess of a spring as well. Even more famous was Sulis Minerva of Bath, Aquae Sulis, who presided over thermal springs. Another goddess-nymph, called Coventina, had a more local cult at Carrawburgh just outside one of the forts on Hadrian's Wall. Sometimes the name of the presiding deity of a spring has been lost but archeology has revealed a complex of temples at Springhead in Kent that attest the same feeling for flowing waters. It is likely that the sources of many rivers had sanctuaries and the actual names of some rivers imply veneration, for instance the River Dee (Deva) in Cheshire, whose name is cognate with the Indo-European word for goddess; the river gave its name to the fortress at Chester.

Many temples lay on hilltops or ridges, including the temple at Uley mentioned above, and those at Lydney, also in Gloucestershire but on the northern side of the River Severn; Maiden Castle, above Dorchester, Dorset; Pagans Hill, Somerset; and Lowbury Hill, Oxfordshire.

Such sites, placing the gods firmly in the natural world, find their reflection in furniture and objects connected with cult, as virtually all deities are connected in some way with the beneficence of nature. Jupiter is often attested by columns that are embellished with scale-like ornament perhaps representing the bark of trees. A capital from one of these, from Cirencester, Gloucestershire, has half-length figures of Bacchus, his consort Ariadne, a Silenus and a figure of Lycurgus with a vine, all emerging from the fronds of the richly embellished Corinthian capital. Another column, represented only by an imbricated shaft from Wroxeter, Shropshire, has inset figures of Bacchus and a cupid. Bacchus was Jupiter's son and seems to have been regarded as a major power in untamed nature. Here, on the two columns cited, he literally supports the majesty of Jupiter himself.

Mercury, god of flocks and herds, was popular among pastoralists. He was venerated at a number of temples including one at Uley, Gloucestershire, where one image shows him as horned, thus in a sense identifying him with the beasts he looked after.

A similar theriomorphic identification is to be seen in

the case of the deity known as Apollo Cunomaglus, the second part of his name being a Celtic word meaning “hound-prince.” He is mentioned on an altar from Nettleton Shrub, Wiltshire, but seems to be represented in other reliefs from the Cotwold area including Chedworth, Gloucestershire, as well as on a votive bronze plaque from Gloucester, in both cases accompanied by a hound.

Hounds would appear to have been the familiars of Nodens at Lydney, but instead of being identified with Apollo, Nodens was here assimilated to Mars, generally venerated in Britain (except in the official cults of the Roman army) as a protective, countryside deity rather than as a war god. The marine imagery on a mosaic set in the cella of his temple and on certain pieces of metalwork suggest he may have been connected with the mouth of the Severn below his hill, but he was also closely associated with the iron-rich waters of his healing spring. There may also have been a hunting aspect.

One epithet used for Mars (as on a votive plaque at Barkway, Hertfordshire) is Alator, “hunter,” and it is likely that Mars Cocidius, venerated at Bewcastle, Northumberland, was likewise venerated as a hunting deity.

Silvanus too had a similar function, and one of the most instructive of altars, from moorland near Binchester, County Durham, is dedicated “to unconquerable Silvanus” by a cavalry officer, because the god had helped him “to take a very fine boar which none of his predecessors had been able to bag.”

A gentler aspect of nature is represented by so-called mother goddesses (Matres), who in many instances are shown holding fruit or bread rather than actually nurturing children. They are sometimes depicted in triads, thus tripling their power, as is the case of the Matres Suleviae on reliefs from Cirencester, but on occasions a single goddess is shown. A relief at Daglingworth calls her Cuda and it is possible (as suggested by Stephen Yeates) that she was the mother goddess of the Cotswold Hills. On several reliefs she is accompanied by three votaries or minor godlings wearing the distinctive woolen, hooded coat (the *birrus britannicus*) made in the region. Such representations emphasize the relationship between economy and divine aid.

Some of the most attractive evidence for the veneration and awareness of nature is associated with sophisticated, literate people nurtured on the classics. The villa-owners of Britain loved myth and the themes of many of these were closely associated with the natural world. Not surprisingly the wine god Bacchus with his panther was the theme of a number of mosaics, Bacchus being venerated as a deity who could overcome even death with his life-saving wine. In the Cirencester region, a type of Orpheus mosaic was evolved in which Orpheus accompanied by a hound, or just possibly a fox, occupies a roundel all to himself while animals circulate in friezes around him. The

inspiration for these wonderful floors may have come in part from the local hunter god. Venus, water-nymphs and the seasons were also very frequently shown on mosaics.

In one remarkable mosaic found at Hinton St. Mary, Dorset, a bust of Christ occupies a central roundel. Flanked by pomegranates he, like Bacchus, is lord of nature. Four busts representing seasons (?) in the corners, and lunettes with, in one case, a tree of life, and in three others, a hound chasing a stag, present a striking variant on the Orpheus theme.

Perhaps the most successful and integrated expression of a literary, sophisticated approach to nature in religious cult belongs to the gold and silver treasure from a pagan temple at Thetford, Norfolk, dedicated to Faunus. Faunus was an obscure deity of the wild, from the countryside around Rome (Latium) and he was previously known mainly from Roman poets such as Virgil and Horace. Here, at Thetford, he was given local Celtic epithets inscribed on silver spoons dedicated to him such as *Medugenus* (mead-begotten) or *Cranus* (guardian of buried treasure). As he had animal-like ears he was called *Ausecus* (prick-eared), and a representation of his head, goat-like and with little horns and large gem-set ears, ornaments the bezel of a gold ring. Faunus’ father was *Picus* (“the woodpecker”), and it is no surprise that another gold ring has a bezel composed of a pair of woodpeckers, pecking at a wine bowl whose brimming contents are suggested by an inset purple amethyst. The names of the votaries such as *Silvia*, whose name is derived from “*silva*,” a wood, and *Agrestis*, whose name means “countryman,” remind us of the pervasiveness of the natural world even among the most refined society of the province.

Martin Henig

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- See also: Celtic Spirituality; Druids and Druidry; Roman Natural Religion; Roman Religion and Empire.

Roman Catholic Religious Orders

There are references in the New Testament to unmarried men and women who served the local communities in special ways. Later, this celibate tradition continued as some Christians went into the deserts of Egypt and Syria to live their commitment in solitude. These men and women were variously called “hermits,” “anchorites” and “The Desert Fathers.” In the wilderness, they found a peace and tranquility that was conducive to prayer, contemplation and reflection. Saint Anthony (d. 350) said that, in creation, he could read the word of God.

Demonic powers also resided in the desert. The anchorites saw their presence in the wilderness as a process of re-creating an earthly paradise, of reestablishing the dominion over all life that existed before the Fall. The stories of encounters with wild animals illustrated their spiritual power. The monk Florentius had a bear as a companion. The animals taught the hermits what was poisonous.

Their spirituality was to encounter a strange territory and move from conflict to harmony, to merge the natural with the supernatural until the two were indistinguishable. This spirituality influenced Celtic spirituality where the theme of voyage or pilgrimage provided a heightened awareness of the natural environment. Celtic spirituality, in turn, influenced Saint Francis of Assisi.

Some men and women of the desert gathered disciples around them and formed communities. These groups became the “cenobites” and their communities came to be characterized by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The members choose not to own anything, to live as celibates and to obey their abbot or abbess.

Today, there are several thousand orders and congregations in the Roman Catholic Church. Many use a rule that has been influenced by one of the four largest orders: the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits. Since the 1960s, the Maryknoll family has developed a particularly contemporary response to environmental issues.

The Benedictine Tradition

The Benedictine view of nature is grounded in the monastics’ commitment to a specific place, their efforts to be self-sustaining and the rhythm of their daily prayer. Early in the sixth century, Saint Benedict of Norcia wrote a series of guidelines for living together as a religious community. The Rule of Saint Benedict was used by his immediate followers and was also adopted by many existing communities. It became the principle guide for most religious orders before the Middle Ages. Saint Scholastica, Benedict’s sister, founded a women’s branch.

The Rule is characterized by a commitment to a specific monastery, a daily order that includes chanting psalms and canticles in the chapel seven times a day, manual labor, private prayer, simplicity, frugality, humility, obedi-

ence and hospitality. The routine of prayer and the focus on frugality shaped the monastics’ view of nature.

The collection of psalms and canticles is called “The Divine Office.” The psalms themselves, coming from the Old Testament, contain many images of nature that are meant to express the majesty of God revealed in the grandeur of creation. Chanting the office seven times a day embeds the images of nature in the monastics’ minds and gives a rhythm to their lives. The routine places time against the backdrop of eternity. The Office of Lauds, chanted at sunrise, is constructed to view creation and redemption as two aspects of the same divine activity.

Some time each day is to be spent in labor. The things of the house, buckets and spades; and the things of the Earth, trees and plants, are to be respected. Work is seen as an act of co-creation or ongoing cooperation with the Creator.

The view of nature within the Benedictine tradition reflects a basic Christian position. There is both a natural and a supernatural order. The supernatural order is not opposed to, but is above nature. Devotion to the spiritual life does not destroy but perfects and elevates the natural order. Creation will also be delivered from slavery and corruption. God remains distinct from his creation, but the universe has a dynamic structure. It is dependent on God and is constantly being created by God in conjunction with those creatures who cooperate.

There were also other perspectives in Europe between the fifth and thirteenth centuries. A neo-Platonic view exaggerated the distinction between the spiritual and the natural order to a point where the natural was disdained. From the eighth century on, there was also a rationalism that sought explicit explanations for everything. These trends would have influenced individual Benedictines, but did not affect the basics of Benedictine life.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) was a Benedictine nun who wrote treatises on theology, philosophy, cosmology and medicine and then wrote music to illuminate her vision. She saw human nature as a microcosm that contains the entire creation within it. Because they are so closely interconnected, the natural elements and humanity affect each other. Because of sin, creation turns against humans. In Christ, we can restore the balance. Hildegard saw music as the highest form of praising God. Through music, we integrate body, mind, heart and spirit and thus celebrate heavenly harmony here on Earth.

The Benedictine monasteries were a major means of preserving and spreading Western civilization in the centuries of transition from the Roman Empire into the Middle Ages. Towns grew up around monasteries. The monastic schools provided one of the few means of education and the monks both developed and taught agricultural techniques. The early development of Europe consisted in cutting back forests and reclaiming wetlands for agriculture. The monks were at the forefront of this movement.

As Europe approached the Middle Ages, a need for reform arose. Feudal lords were appropriating monastic revenues. The recitation of the Office had expanded in length, manual work decreased and the rule was interpreted rigidly. Besides monastic reform, several popes called for reforms on a larger scale within the whole Church. One need was a concern for apostolic life, for the care and education of people.

One monastic reform came through Saint Robert of Molesne (d. 1111) and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153). They broke with the mainstream Benedictines and founded the Cistercian Order at Cîteaux in France. By this time, much of Europe had become farmland and the Cistercians moved out into wilder country. Their writings expressed a sense of movement from wilderness to paradise. They still followed the Benedictine Rule.

Whereas the Desert Fathers saw beauty in an unspoiled wilderness, Saint Bernard emphasized the beauty of labor in preparing the fields. There should be a profound harmony between the natural beauty of the site and the monastic life set within it. Once nature has become fertile and purposeful, it takes on the utmost significance. Irrigation channels and waterways within the monastery provide sport and food for fish, refreshment for people, nourishment for gardens and a means of cleansing. Humanity and creation achieve perfection together because of human efforts to tend and organize the environment and creation's willing response to humanity's guidance. Creation repays human care by aiding people physically and spiritually. They are partners in a common effort.

Cistercian monastic architecture was medieval and reflected the simplicity and balance of the monks' lifestyle. The floor plan and the monastery's position within the environment were meant to reflect the harmony of creation and the presence of the divine within creation. Light, space, shape and texture were used to reflect this sense.

Because the Cistercians became involved in work away from the monastery, a reform within the Cistercian community began in the sixteenth century and developed until 1892 when a group of Cistercians became independent. The new group was centered at La Trappe in France. This reform revolved around a stronger emphasis on contemplation rather than apostolic activities. The group is known as The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance. They are commonly called "The Trappists." Thomas Merton was a Trappist and his writings have greatly influenced contemporary understandings of the relationships between prayer, justice and the environment. Today, there are 1400 communities worldwide who follow the Rule of Saint Benedict.

Over the last thirty years, contemporary currents and attitudes toward nature have influenced monasticism. In an effort to understand present thinking, a survey was sent out to 52 Cistercian and Trappist monasteries in 14 countries. An effort was made to distribute the questionnaire to

every third person. 147 questionnaires were returned. What follows is a summary of their responses.

When asked if their sense of the sanctity of creation had grown during their years in the monastery, all but three said it had. Two of the remaining three responded that they had always had a strong sense of nature as sacred.

To the question asking what people or published materials had influenced their view of creation, about half indicated specific books and authors. The Bible was the most frequently mentioned influence, followed by Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, Trappist Thomas Merton, Franciscan Saint Francis of Assisi, Passionist Thomas Berry, Saint Paul, William Wordsworth, Matthew Fox, Orion Magazine, David Thoreau, Julian of Norwich, Rachel Carson and Trappist Charles Cummings who wrote a book entitled *Eco-Spirituality*.

To the question, "What do you see in the Benedictine and Cistercian tradition that contributes to an ecological perspective?" the strongest response was the Rule of Saint Benedict itself, especially a sentence that says that the monastic should reverence all things as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar. Living in a natural setting, working the land, experiencing the seasons, and loving the place were also frequent answers. In addition, there were many mentions of their lifestyle and a daily order that stresses simplicity, silence, solitude, prayer, the rhythm of the liturgical year and the liturgy itself.

One question asked, "Would you please detail any concrete action that your monastery is taking that would reflect a concern for the environment?" In response, many mentioned recycling. Most made reference to responsible farming methods that include organic gardening, erosion control and the use of environmentally safe chemicals. Some mentioned significant proactive measures. The Trappist Monastery at Conyers, Georgia, converted 700 acres of land from swamp into wetlands. A Trappist monastery in Indonesia has dedicated a quarter of their land as a natural reserve. A monastery in Australia has been replanting five kilometers of river frontage damaged by overgrazing since 1840. The Trappist Monastery at New Melleray, Iowa, publishes a quarterly newsletter with a strong environmental focus. The monks at Vina, California took action against a nuclear power plant and are founding members of Dear Creek Conservancy. The Trappistine monastery at Whitethorn in Northern California was instrumental in stopping a dam on the Mattole River and preserving 1200 acres of old-growth redwoods as the "Sanctuary Forest." Members of the monastery sit on the board of directors. While most Trappist monasteries are involved in some farming, the sisters at Whitethorn are more focused on preserving a natural environment. Monasteries in Ireland, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada, Iowa, Oregon, Nigeria and Eritrea have undertaken extensive reforestation projects. A monastery in Cameroon is replacing eucalyptus they planted fifty years ago because

eucalyptus absorbs too much water from the land. The Trappists in Utah have been working for 53 years to preserve 120 acres of rangeland. Several other monasteries reported working with local conservation groups and several have received awards for their work in conservation.

When asked if the environment is one of the major concerns of our times, 98 percent said yes. To the question, "Does the Bible clearly call us to a reverence and respect for the earth?" over 90 percent said that it does.

The Franciscans

The Franciscan view of nature flows out of the nature mysticism of their founder, Saint Francis of Assisi. As Western civilization entered the Middle Ages, a new prosperity created capitalism and a middle class. There was also a universal call for reform within the Catholic Church. A significant mode of that reform came in the person of Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) and his founding of the Franciscan Order. The order was approved by edict of Pope Innocent III on 16 April, 1209.

With the Benedictines, very little is known about the personality of Saint Benedict. It is his written rule that has shaped the order, but with Francis, his personality and charism dominate and is hard to capture in a written rule. The Franciscans became the first of a different type of order. They are friars and mendicants, not monks. Like the monks, they have a distinctive habit (robe) and chant the psalms and canticles of the Bible in common. But unlike the monks, they have a strong emphasis on apostolic work, on preaching and serving people in a variety of ways. They move easily from place to place and are not bound to a particular monastery.

Francis' father was a wealthy cloth merchant who also bought up small farms and expelled the tenants. Francis reacted dramatically to his father's lifestyle and attitude. He saw power, prestige and possessions as leading to violence and so he embraced humility, poverty and the cross. Much of his life was spent alone in nature like the Desert Fathers and the Celtic hermits. In this liminal position, he had a direct and mystical experience of God in creation.

What is unique to Francis is that he is the first known person within the Christian tradition to exhibit a nature mysticism. Previous ascetics were ambivalent. They saw the natural world too much as the realm of demonic powers. For Francis, his union with nature became a mode of God's communication of himself to humanity and humanity's union with God through a perceived presence in the physical world.

There is a charming fresco by Giotto in the Basilica at Assisi. Here, Francis is seen preaching to birds. The famous incident illustrates the Saint's sense of the interdependence he saw in creation, an interdependence that called for respect and obedience. The birds praise God with their song. They each have autonomous worth and beauty and yet are brothers and sisters performing their divinely allot-

ted function. The birds respect Francis because he is also a servant of God. Their response encouraged him to sustain his new perspective and to carry his preaching to people. By implicitly humanizing creation through affective links, Francis made it easier for others to share his bond with creation. It was Francis and the early Franciscans who introduced the use of the crèche, the manger scenes that dramatize the Christmas event.

The legend of the wolf of Gubbio tells of a hungry wolf that was terrorizing a town. Francis went out and preached to the wolf and then preached penance and peace to the villagers. He was thus able to convince the people that the wolf was simply hungry and needed food. He forged a covenant wherein the people agreed to respect the wolf and provide him with food.

Like the monks before him, the psalms and canticles from the Bible shaped Francis' expressions. But unique to Francis, is the influence of the songs and lyrics of the troubadours. The troubadours were wandering musicians who composed and sang love songs. Here, Francis spiritualizes the mistral's interplay of natural setting and human experience, an interplay that elicits love and joy. Francis embraced and expressed the chivalric values of beneficent magnanimity and deference to all.

Like the ascetics before him, Francis also saw nature as allegorical. He had a particular affection for worms because there is a passage in the New Testament where Christ says, "I am a worm and no man." So Francis would carefully pick worms up off the road and place them in safer places. He saw Christ in the worms. The sun is like God because it is beautiful in itself and it gives light.

The clearest illustration of the Franciscan view of creation can be found in Francis' Canticle to Creation. The hymn praises the four elements; fire, air, water, and earth, which were seen as the components of all life forms. In the Canticle, he expresses the intrinsic goodness of the created world, the interdependence of all life, and his passion for beauty and peace. Because we call God "Father," creation becomes our brothers and sisters. He calls for a fraternal model, rather than a model of stewardship. We are to be detached from creatures in order not to possess them. Francis goes so far, at times, as to say that we should even obey animals. The Franciscans were a dynamic argument against the Cathars; a heretical group at the time who held that "the spiritual" had been created by a beneficent divine power and the natural world by an evil one.

Francis forbade his followers to cut down a whole tree. Part needed to be left intact so that new sprouts could bud. Until recently, a Franciscan needed permission from the provincial before cutting down a tree. Francis spent the last years of his life in the wilderness.

Saint Francis represents a watershed in the development of Christian views of nature. Some spiritualities after him flow from him. Others, such as the Rheinland mystics, continue a neo-Platonic tradition.

The Saint of Assisi fulfills Arne Naess' definition of a deep ecologist because he emphasized the diversity and intrinsic value of creation and because he addresses the need to reform behaviors that threaten to destroy entire ecosystems. On Easter Sunday, 1980, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi the patron saint of ecology, following the suggestion 13 years earlier by Lynn White, Jr., in his seminal article in *Science*.

Today, Franciscan men and women continue their founder's work by focusing on the changes of hearts and minds needed to live in balance. Franciscan Keith Warner trained in geography and worked for a reforestation cooperative in the Pacific Northwest that planted over 600,000 trees. He is on the steering committee of the California Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and has lobbied with The Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation. Warner also campaigns against what he calls "Bird-bath Franciscanism," a superficial and romantic view of Francis depicted in flower-garden statuary. He sees his founder as much more ecologically radical.

Father Richard Rohr, also a Franciscan, founded and is director of The Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The center's aim is to seek a balanced life by bringing together the worlds of spirituality, psychology, social action and environmental concerns.

Former Franciscan Leonardo Boff is a Brazilian and a major figure of liberation theology. In *Ecology and Liberation* (1995) and *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (1997), he brings together poverty, ecological degradation and liberation. For Boff, the fate of the rainforest and the fate of Amazonian Indians are inseparably linked.

Franciscan sisters run Michaela Farm in Oldenburg, Indiana, where their aim is to seek and teach skills in organic food production and to foster a simple lifestyle in harmony with the Earth. Sister Rita Wienken has similar objectives with her Franciscan Earth Literacy Action Center on 500 acres in Tiffin, Ohio.

The Dominicans

The Dominican view of nature is based on the fact that they were founded to combat a heresy advocating that the natural world was evil. On 17 January 1217, just eight years after Pope Innocent III approved the rule of Saint Francis, Pope Honorius III ratified the constitutions for the Dominican Order. Like the Franciscans, the Dominicans are friars. They work outside the monastery and were founded to combat the Albigensian heresy.

The Albigenses espoused a form of Manicheism, a cosmic dualism, holding that the devil was actually a rival god who created matter. The soul is imprisoned in matter and the objective is to liberate the soul. Therefore, they discouraged marriage and saw death as the final release. For them, Christ was not the Son of God but an angel with a corporate appearance. The first objective of the Dominicans was to restore a Christian view of creation.

The Dominicans call themselves "The Order of Preachers." But "preaching" here is not restricted to a discourse on Sunday morning. They see their charism as closely following the Old Testament definition of a prophet as one called by God to speak for God. They say of themselves that their objective is to contemplate and to share the fruits of their contemplation. Like the Franciscans, the first Dominican priests were friars. They worked outside the monastery and were founded to combat the Albigensian heresy. Today, the Dominican family includes sisters and lay people.

Fra Angelico (1400–1455) was a Dominican and a painter who continued the work of Giotto in giving more natural shape and color to works of art.

Dominican Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) is considered the greatest of the medieval philosophers and theologians. His *Summa Theologica* is built on Aristotle and provided a synthesis of theology up to that point in time. Saint Thomas presents the knowledge we get from revelation, our experience and our capacity to reason as compatible and complementary ways of knowing. He set the stage for the later development of the scientific method.

A recent movement within the religious orders of women in the United States is to convert the lands that once served as novitiates, mother houses and schools into organic farms and ecological learning centers. The Dominican sisters have been at the forefront of this movement and Genesis Farm is their flagship.

Founded by Sister Miriam Therese MacGillis and the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell, New Jersey, the farm focuses on learning and teaching a new cosmology. They also sponsor a large, community-supported biodynamic garden. Their teaching is built around the works of Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme and a section of Saint Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. In Part I, Question 47 of his *Summa*, Aquinas says that God is most fully revealed, not through one species only, but through the whole universe because one creature alone could not adequately represent his goodness.

Genesis Farm uses the structure of a story. The universe is a series of unfolding stories. Humanity needs to listen to the stories and individuals need to see the story of their lives in the context of the universe of which they are a part. MacGillis also uses the image of a punchbowl on a table surrounded by glasses. Each glass is a religious or ethnic tradition that holds some wisdom. When the glasses are emptied into the punchbowl, the wisdom is not lost but enlarged. The families who sponsor the organic garden at Genesis Farm are presently founding a grammar school where their children can progressively learn the stories of the universe.

The Dominican sisters also operate Sophia Garden in Amityville, New York and Siena Spiritual Center in Water Mill, Long Island. They have similar farms and learning centers in Springfield, Illinois; Ponchatoula, Louisiana;

Blacklick, and Bath, Ohio; Houston and Boerne, Texas; Plainville, Massachusetts; St. Catherine, Kentucky; and Pawnee Rock, Kansas. The Dominicans' *EarthLinks* in Denver, Colorado endeavors to link people, especially the economically poor, to each other and nature through hikes, garden projects and school programs. Sister Mary Ellen Leciejewski, based at the Dominican hospital in Santa Cruz, California, works full time on issues related to the impact of health services on the environment. She says, "Our ecological commitment is integral to our healing mission. There is a profound connection that exists between healing the individual and healing the planet." The Dominicans also run an ecological farm in Benin City, Nigeria.

The Jesuits

Saint Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, had a vision, while praying on the banks of the Cardoner River in Eastern Spain, of God's abiding presence in all of creation. He later had a second vision of Christ carrying a cross for the salvation of the world. Putting the two visions together, he developed a series of meditations and contemplations called *The Spiritual Exercises*, in which, a person is guided to enter the vision of God's presence in and love for the world. From there, one moves to a deeper realization of where and how God might be calling that person to serve.

The Jesuit order itself was founded on 15 August, 1534 at Montmartre in Paris. Pope Paul III approved their constitutions in 1540. With the Jesuits, a third type of order comes onto the scene. The Jesuits were to have no special clothing and did not pray the Liturgy of the Hours in common. Their lifestyle and daily order was to focus on what one Jesuit writer called "a mysticism of service."

From their beginning, Jesuits have been involved in education, scholarship and the foreign missions. Early Jesuits were colleagues of Galileo and over thirty lunar formations bear Jesuit names. Athanasius Kircher (d. 1680) was a major link between medieval and modern science. Jiri Kamel, a Czech Jesuit (d. 1706), sent drawings and specimens of insects and plants from Manila to the Royal Society of London. He recognized strychnine in a type of bean and camellia tea is named after him. Christopher Clavius (d. 1612) designed the Gregorian calendar and introduced the decimal point to mathematics. The Jesuits introduced geometry and Western astronomical instruments to China in the seventeenth century.

Teilhard de Chardin (d. 1955) was a French Jesuit paleontologist. He was concerned with the split between his spirituality and what his fellow scientists were saying about the universe's evolution toward entropy. He developed a schema wherein he saw the possibility that the universe was rather evolving toward a deeper spiritual unification.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (d. 1889) was an English Jesuit

poet and artist. He was acutely aware of the beauties of creation and coined the word "inscape" for what he saw as the unique and particular quality of each object in nature. The experience of the particular, of the "deep-down" beauty, leads to an experience of the transcendent. He had a Wordsworthian feeling for nature coupled with a sense of nature as an expression of God. The squalor of industrial towns and the oppression of the working class horrified him. His sonnet, "God's Grandeur," begins with the lines; "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; it gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil crushed." He then goes on to describe how the Industrial Revolution has damaged the Earth. But he ends the poem by saying,

And, for all this, nature is never spent. There lives
the dearest freshness deep down things. And though
the last lights off the black West went – Oh, morn-
ing, at the brown brink eastward, springs – Because
the Holy Ghost over the bent world broods with
warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

He poetically expresses the heart of Jesuit spirituality.

Today, Jesuit John Surette is co-founder of *Spiritearth* in Arlington, Massachusetts. The educational center is built on the principle that an openness and reverence before the universe allows community to form and justice to flourish. The center would like to see humanity enter an ecozoic era. Another Jesuit, Al Fritsch trained as a chemist, worked for Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law and then founded Appalachia Science in the Public Interest in Mt. Vernon, Kentucky. The center is devoted to the notion of sustainability and has developed solar-energy applications, organic gardens, artificial wetlands and dry-composting toilets. Members of the center are helping to develop ginseng as an alternative crop to tobacco and extensive lumbering in Appalachia. The center has conducted over 200 assessments in 34 states and consulted in Haiti, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. Fritsch would like to see a 12-step program addressing people's addiction to material things.

The Jesuits have assisted sixty religious groups in ecological improvements to their property. Jesuits also teach ecology, sustainability and ecospirituality in their many educational institutions.

Maryknoll

The Maryknoll order is a younger group within the Catholic Church and their approach to nature is uniquely modern. They were founded early in the twentieth century as an American foreign missionary society of priests, brothers and sisters. Today, they include lay-people and call themselves the Maryknoll Family.

Working in South America, they experience extensive exposure to liberation theology and as that movement

started “turning green” in the early 1990s, so did they. Maryknoll founded Orbis Press, whose publication list includes books on the environment.

Maryknoll lay-people are involved with CEDICAM in Oaxaca, Mexico. The organization works with Indian campesinos and encourages reforestation and crop diversification throughout the Mixteca Alta region. This group has established tree nurseries in 22 farming communities and has planted more than 150,000 trees.

Maryknoll sisters run the Center for the Integrity of Creation in Baguio, The Philippines. The area is threatened by excessive logging. The Center focuses on education for biodiversity and sustainable development.

Maryknoll Father Herb Gappa runs an anti-erosion and tree-planting project in the Shinyanga District of Tanzania. Maryknollers are also working to conserve green space and diversify agriculture in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. In Chile, they develop ecological education units for high schools in Linares, work in the Spirituality and Ecology Center in San Nicolas, provide workshops on spirituality and ecology in Santiago and develop an awareness of the illegal seizure and logging of native trees in Chol Chol. The logging has led to a drop in the water table. Hazardous chemicals and pesticides have also been introduced.

Other Religious Orders

There is a strong movement today to network, to link and affiliate. A project or center might not be staffed exclusively by members of one order. Individual religious from different congregations join local and national conservation groups. The Maryknoll project in Baguio, The Philippines, includes on its staff members of the Redemptorist and Divine Word orders. The Sisters of Charity, Religious of the Sacred Heart and Passionists have projects and centers similar to those run by the Dominicans.

The Global Education Association is an international network and resource for ecologically related issues. Within GEA, The Religious Orders Partnership includes more than 150 orders. Their aim is to cooperate in using their resources of schools, universities, healthcare facilities, community services, retreat centers and churches to further a concern and care for the Earth. Most religious orders include ecology within their programs for social justice.

Thomas Splain, S.J.

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See also: Berry, Thomas; Boff, Leonardo; Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Christianity (7d) – Feminist Theology; Christianity (7e) – Creation Spirituality; Francis of Assisi; Genesis Farm; Hildegard of Bingen; Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation; Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre.

Roman Catholicism in Latin America

Roman Catholicism has long been the religion of peasant farmers in Europe and Latin America, and thus the tradition's ritual practices, annual calendar, and many cognitive and moral beliefs are closely linked to natural cycles and landscapes. The Church does not, however, have a long tradition of explicit theological and moral reflection about the natural world. While this is probably true of most branches of Christianity, the strongly humanistic emphasis of Roman Catholic social thought has arguably slowed the development of debates and theory-building within that tradition in comparison, for example, to Eastern Orthodoxy and some Protestant denominations. In the Roman Catholic tradition, God's work from creation to salvation focuses on human good, and nonhuman nature serves mainly as a backdrop for human action or as a means to human ends. Nature appears to have little intrinsic (non-instrumental) value, but is valuable insofar as it contributes to collective human well-being. This carries the potential risk of justifying almost any exploitation of natural resources that appears to serve human well-being.

Recognizing some of the tensions in the Catholic humanist approach to nature, in recent years Catholic thinkers in the First and Third Worlds have been reworking attitudes toward the natural world. Important differences in perspective and emphasis distinguish Catholic environmental philosophy from different cultures, but they are also united by some overarching themes. First and most important, Catholic thinking about the environment almost invariably contends that God created nature in order to serve human dignity and the common good, not individual profit. Creation is a gift of God, intended for the well-being of all of humanity. Greed, expressed in consumerist culture and unrestrained capitalist economics, leads to overexploitation of both nature and persons, ultimately destroying both human and natural com-

munities. In consequence, people are called to serve as wise and careful stewards of the natural world. Humans are entitled to use natural resources, but this use must be moderate and in the service of the common good rather than individual profit.

These emphases lead to a close link, in most Catholic work on the environment, between environmental and social problems. In Latin America, this means that Catholic thinking about the environment often takes up the themes of social and economic justice. For example, a pastoral letter issued in December 2000 by the Apostolic Vicariate of the department of Petén, Guatemala, titled “The Cry of the Forest in the Jubilee Year: Between Agony and Hope,” asserts that “It is not possible to speak of ecology without taking justice into account. It is not possible to defend the conservation of the forest apart from the advancement and life of the poor” (*El Grito de la Selva en el Año Jubilar*, 9).

Bishops in other parts of Latin America have taken up similar themes. In an April 2000 Pastoral Letter, the Bishops of Northern Mexico denounced the socially and environmentally destructive consequences of forest exploitation, concluding that

The protection of the forests requires urgent measures . . . The forest is not mere food for industry . . . The forest is a giver of life for its inhabitants. For these reasons we appeal to the conscience of everyone and urge all Christians to take responsibility for preserving the life on this planet that God has entrusted to our care. All of this makes it our obligation to . . . denounce the ecological devastation we are witnessing (http://conservation.catholic.org/bishops_from_around_the_world.htm).

And a statement from the Church in the Dominican Republic asserts that

Human sins against nature redound always to the detriment of humankind itself . . . It is not right that those who have greater resources, whether countries, cities, groups, or individuals, should lean toward excessive consumption which, in addition to being a provocative insult to the poor, is an evil misappropriation of natural resources necessary for the have-nots of the world (http://conservation.catholic.org/bishops_from_around_the_world.htm).

Similar themes emerge in the environmental writing of Latin American liberationist theologians, such as the Brazilian Leonardo Boff, who gained international prominence in the 1970s and 1980s for his arguments in favor of democratization within the Church, among other themes. In the 1990s, Boff has turned his attention to ecological

themes, insisting that, “The very same logic of the prevailing system of accumulation and social organization that leads to the exploitation of workers also leads to the pillaging of whole nations and ultimately the plundering of nature” (Boff 1997: 110–11).

This destructive system must be replaced with “a non-consumeristic type of cultural practice that is respectful of ecosystems, ushers in an economy of what is sufficient for all, and fosters the common good not only of humans but also of the other beings in creation” (Boff 1997: 113). Boff contends that excessive consumption by some harms both the poor and the natural world; the solution requires both more restraint in human use of natural resources and a more equitable distribution of the goods they make possible.

In addition to theological explorations, Catholics in Latin America are addressing environmental problems in grassroots organizations and pastoral projects. Many dioceses and parishes have formed “ecological committees.” These take different forms and emphasize different issues, depending on the setting. In many urban areas, primary concern is with issues of “environmental justice,” such as waste disposal, sanitation, and air and water quality. In rural areas, attention often focuses on problems related to agriculture, such as soil erosion, reliance on chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and exhaustion of water resources. Latin Americans, Catholic and other, devote less attention to issues such as biodiversity and wilderness protection than do environmentalists in North America and Europe. This emphasis stems both from the urgency of social and economic inequities and also from the dominance of a perspective in which environmental problems are significant in relation to human needs and interests. The Roman Catholic tradition has contributed substantially to this humanistic worldview. There is some evidence of the emergence of more “biocentric” ways of thinking, especially in regions with large wilderness areas remaining, but this remains a minority perspective within Latin American environmentalist thought and activism.

Anna Peterson

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See also: Boff, Leonardo; Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Christianity (7d) – Feminist Theology; Christianity (7e) – Creation Spirituality; Gebara, Ivone; Mayan Protestantism.

Roman Natural Religion

The close association of Roman religion with the natural world is apparent from the various versions of the Roman seasonal calendar ranging from the popular “farmer’s

calendar” to the much more formal listings of sacrifices and other observances which had to be undertaken by various priestly colleges on behalf of the state. In all cases the purification of the fields, sowing, growth of plants and harvest were central to the pattern of the year, as indeed was the securing of the fecundity of flocks and herds. It is not surprising that this seasonal cycle is so widely celebrated by poets (such as Virgil, Horace, and especially Ovid, who wrote a long poem, the *Fasti*, detailing the festivals month by month); it is also apparent in works of art often described as sacro-idyllic as there is always a religious component, such as representations of shrines and divine images, in Roman portrayals of the countryside.

Many aspects of this religion depended on deities who were the personifications of natural phenomena. Ceres, though later equated with the Greek Demeter, was simply the process of growth; Vesta was the controlled fire of the hearth; Jupiter, with his epithet Fulgur, was the thunderer. The most famous and long-lived of Roman festivals, the Lupercalia, celebrated in February, came to celebrate the myth of Romulus and Remus at the wolf's cave. But the identity of the god to whom the festival was dedicated was no longer really known, though the rites, which included the sacrifice of goats whose skins were put on by otherwise nude runners who would lash out with thongs believed to bring fecundity to the childless, were held in high regard until the end of the fifth century. It was clearly a purification ritual like the April festival of the Parilia, which was concerned with flocks and herds and was symbolized by Pales, a goddess of whom little is known.

Not surprisingly, a grove of trees was often regarded as the dwelling place of a deity, often Mars, who would certainly need to be propitiated if anything were done to it. Cato in his book on agriculture describes the procession and sacrifice that the farmer would have to make if he wished to thin the grove. Evander in Virgil's *Aeneid* (viii, 351–2) describes the woods covering the Capitoline Hill as “the abode of some god.” In his *Fasti* (iii, 295–9), Ovid mentions another wood in Rome, a grove by the Aventine, dark with enormous holm-oats, where the viewer would exclaim, “this is the home of deity.” It is not surprising that later Diana, goddess of hunting, had her Roman home here. Ovid, however, associates the spot with more localized rustic deities, saying that Faunus and his father Picus, who was the woodpecker and son of Mars, often came to drink at the spring here. Springs, sacred to major deities such as Neptune or Minerva, or some more localized water deity, or to the nymphs, were widely venerated throughout the Roman world. Typical examples were the springs of the nymph Arethusa at Syracuse in Sicily, and of Sulis, equated with Minerva, at Bath in Britain.

This identity of the divine and the natural worlds meant that nature was frequently employed to interpret the will of the gods. Thus by observing the song and feeding habits

of birds, augurs could foretell the future. A related phenomenon is recorded at Tiora near Reate, where according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities* 1.14.5), at an oracle of Mars, a woodpecker tapped-out on a post responses to questions put by the enquirer. Most important was the study of bird flight across the sky, as this could be divided into sections, each with a meaning. The Etruscan art of haruspicy, in which the haruspex (literally the “gut-gazer”) looked at the heart, intestines and liver of sacrificed animals, at first sight could not have been more different from bird-watching but, as is demonstrated by a bronze model liver excavated at Piacenza, carefully marked out in sections, this too could be related to the sky map of the augurs used similarly in divination.

The religious person would look out for omens, which might well be connected with animals, some of which were sacred to specific deities. There are many stories of Jupiter's eagle giving succor and hope to Roman armies; but Juno's peacocks and geese, Apollo's corvine, Minerva's owl, Mercury's cockerel, Diana's deer, the serpent of Aesculapius, the ant of Ceres, the dolphin of Neptune, the panther of Bacchus, and the lions of Cybele, are all familiar in literature and art. Sometimes the animal is so closely associated with the deity that the two are virtually interchangeable, a process known as “theriomorphism.” Dea Artio, the bear goddess attested by a figurine from Berne in Switzerland, has a name derived from that of the name for bear. Another goddess originating in the Celtic world was Epona, who can be identified with the horse. In the case of Aesculapius, serpents and hounds lived in his sanctuaries and helped the healing process of the sick by, for example, licking the sores, wounds and swollen limbs of votaries.

In art, this naturalistic religion was prettified and made polite, providing the basis for the idealized view of nature in so much Western Art where fauns (originally godlings of the countryside around Rome) and satyrs gamboled in woods and fields and where Priapus, who developed from a phallic pillar, became a somewhat risqué symbol of sexual activity. The sacro-idyllic landscape was developed, if not invented by a certain Studius who lived in the reign of Augustus. In landscape paintings of this time, as well as in other works of art such as silver plate and gems, we find temples and sacred columns as well as images of Venus or Priapus set in idealized countryside. Venus keeps her place as the garden goddess but is now very much identified with the Greek love-goddess Aphrodite. Both aspects are very much to the fore in the elegant fourth-century poem, *Pervigilium Veneris* (“Venus' eve”), which celebrates both love and fertility.

Outside the essential domesticity of the estates and gardens celebrated by writers and artists, nature had a darker side, one that needed to be taken by human effort. In myth this is symbolized by the deeds of heroes such as Belerophon who slew the fire-breathing Chimaera, Perseus

who vanquished the sea monster, and, above all, Hercules who killed savage lions, boars, bulls and monsters in a series of Labors. This attitude to a hostile nature beyond the world of humankind, partially at least, explains one of the contradictions in the Roman psyche between the gentle appreciation of the divine in nature, which had such resonance with pantheist eighteenth-century writers, and the savage barbarities of the Roman arena. The *venationes* (plays) staged at the Roman Coliseum and other amphitheatres celebrated the dominance of Rome over “the other.” The “*ludi*” (games!) were part of the annual cycle of religious festivals in the calendar; they were attended by priests and by the Vestal Virgins. It is clear that despite the obvious dominance of popular entertainment, there was an element of sacrifice here: Rome was offering up the fruits of nature to the gods.

It could be claimed that the introduction of the amphitheatre was relatively late in date, not appearing until the late Republic, but the attitude toward nature as essentially savage is to be found in the Lupercalia. It is also apparent in a famous ritual at the grove of Diana at Aricia beside Lake Nemi. This grove was presided over by a priest, a runaway slave who obtained his office by plucking a bough from a certain tree and then challenging the reigning priest to mortal combat. This curious priesthood was investigated by the famous anthropologist, Sir James Frazer, which started him on his magnum opus, *The Golden Bough*. Although not all of his deductions would now be accepted (for example, his belief that the rites celebrated a single Mediterranean Great Goddess), the cult was almost certainly earlier than its Hellenization and originated in the pattern of death and rebirth which could be observed in nature. The priest, challenged and cut down by his rival, literally died for the goddess, who in classical times was called Diana.

Roman religion cannot be limited to Rome or even Italy, and it is often difficult to decide where Roman religion ends and those of other peoples in the Empire begin. From Britain to Syria the ancient traveler would find many similarities in attitudes to natural features, mountains and mountain passes, rivers, caves and groves, but also local differences. The second-century Greek rhetor, Lucian, describes the superstitions of a Roman senator, Rutilianus, who would only have to see a rock smeared with holy oil or with a wreath laid on it to fall on his face before it. He became the dupe of a charlatan named Alexander, who set up an oracle in which the responses were given by a serpent called Glycon, at Abonoteichos in Asia Minor.

The more or less contemporary guidebook to Greece written by Pausanias was intended for the sophisticated Roman traveler and is full of accounts of a god-filled countryside and rites available to the pilgrim. Nature could be both benign and brutal but it was never regarded as simply secular. At Patras in the sanctuary of Laphrian

Artemis, live animals were rounded up and thrown alive onto an enormous bonfire in honor of the deity (Pausanias: VII, 18,6). To modern eyes this is incredibly cruel, and a reminder to those who over-idealize the Greeks, that the “Roman” amphitheatre did not signify a unique distinction between the two peoples in this matter. We can also recall that the maenads, servants to Dionysus, tore animals limb from limb in their trances and in doing so were in a sense identified with wild nature. However, other information, for example in Pausanias, has a more gentle charm, describing a countryside of hills, islands and woods peopled with gods who are part of beneficent nature, and which belongs much more to the sacro-idyllic world which we meet in many Latin poets and can observe in depictions on wall paintings, engraved gems, and other works of art.

Religion and Nature in Art

Excavation at Pompeii has found the remains of many gardens, and these, together with frescoes from the Campanian cities and Rome, and engraved gems from throughout the Empire showing the natural world, provide a fascinating body of visual evidence of how ordinary inhabitants of Italy approached the divine around them. It is clear that all landscapes were regarded as having a divine aspect, as does the Christian landscape of southern Europe today with its shrines and churches – everything from the Lararium, which brought the Lares into the front hall, to the garden with its marble figures of Priapus, Venus goddess of gardens, or Mars, associated with Venus in love but also with sacred groves. The peristyle of the House of the Marine Venus, with one painted panel showing the birth of Venus (her physiognomy and coiffure perhaps based on those of the lady of the house) and another a statue of Mars in front of garden plants and birds, was only part playful; these were deities seriously regarded as bringing peace and order to nature.

A panel of landscape on this painting is in fact a “sacro-idyllic landscape,” with shrines interspersed with people. Such landscapes, generally with herdsmen, satyrs and nymphs, are highly distinctive and often of high quality, especially in the Augustan period when they were popular as symbols of the return of peace, and are to be found in stuccoes, paintings and marble relief sculpture. One of the carved panels of the screen wall of the Ara Pacis, begun in 13 B.C.E. and completed in 9 B.C.E., shows a figure of Italy suckling two babies in a rich landscape with a stream, a cow and a sheep grazing, and crops ready for harvest. Another depicts Aeneas sacrificing a white sow with her piglets at Lanuvium in a rustic landscape in which there is a temple of his household gods, or Penates. The rich acanthus scrollwork of the pilasters and lower part of the screen inhabited by nesting birds and buzzing insects reinforces the importance of harmony in nature to the Roman ethos. Moreover, on the interior of the screen wall, hanging garlands filled with fruit reinforce the

message of the fecundity of a peaceful nature that Augustus and his advisors wished to convey to the Roman people.

In Classical Greek times, Dionysus was, although powerful, a destructive and menacing god. His satyrs often represented untamed nature and were in consequence themselves wild and menacing. There is a tendency, well shown on Roman-period engraved gems, for Roman satyrs to be genial quaffers of wine or players on pan pipes and thus to exemplify the pastoral ideal; they often appear with offspring and if maenads are shown, the sexual relations between male and female tend to be decorous. Frequently these country spirits make offerings on altars in front of little statues of Priapus or Pan, which must have existed in actuality in garden and parkland settings. Dionysus, generally known as Bacchus in Roman times, presided over the vine and the feast and would also be very much at home in a villa setting as is shown by the famous fresco in the Villa of the Mysteries; here the cult scene is shown as taking place in the house, but connections with the great outdoors were to be found in bacchic symbols in the painting, such as the phallus, the organ of generation, which is being uncovered by one maenad, and the nude female maenad-dancer who brings to mind the wild freedom of the god's followers in the myths of the god. Moreover, elsewhere in the house, there were panels depicting sacrifice in a rustic landscape.

The very frequent appearance of such themes on personal objects, such as signet rings, is noteworthy. Satyrs, cupids and countrymen making offerings to the gods of the countryside, doubtless reminded the wearer of his or her obligations to the gods and genii loci, who looked after fields and gardens. Popular themes of animal life, groups of cattle, panthers, goats, eagles, deer, dolphins and ants are equally symbols of the complex relationship, secular and religious, between man and the gods, either as sacrifices or as familiars of deity.

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See also: Animals; Delphic Oracle; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; Roman Natural Religion; Roman Religion and Empire.

Roman Religion and Empire

The great ancient Mediterranean empire of Rome provides examples of the ways in which religion determined attitudes to nature, but also of the tendencies of business and politics to circumvent religious sanctions regarding treatment of nature. The amorphous deities of early Roman religion were considered to govern the domestic activities of household and agriculture, but also the wild natural forces they perceived in the forests, waters, weather, and wildlife. The Romans regarded certain features of the landscape, such as springs, groves, and mountains, as sacred. Their rituals and ceremonies were deeply involved in agriculture and the round of the seasons. In the years between 200 B.C.E. and 200 C.E., the Romans were deeply influenced by Greek attitudes to the gods and nature, so that their ideas of the gods became more anthropomorphic. At the same time, a growing Roman orientation toward practicality and desire for profit and control weakened the traditional sanctions that had given a modicum of protection to the natural environment.

Like Greece, Italy was part of the Mediterranean environmental zone, with a hot summer and relatively mild winter, but with more rainfall on average than Greece. The Roman Empire, however, embraced the entire Mediterranean area and extended beyond it into Western Europe. Such a vast area contained a variety of ecosystems from deserts to high forests.

Roman religion followed its own course even though it shared some sources with Greek religion, and in later times eagerly adopted Greek myths and religious practices. Early Roman gods were formless spirits or presences, sensed as *numina*, mysterious presences in the natural world, not as anthropomorphic as the Greek gods, although Romans accepted Greek portrayals of the gods from the late Republic onward. Any natural phenomenon could be seen as the result of a god's operation. Therefore any human activity that affected the environment could be seen as attracting the interest of or provoking the reaction of some god or goddess, and ought to be undertaken with caution.

Since nature was full of gods, natural events could serve as the medium for discerning their intent. To a skilled Roman augur, birds of many kinds, singly or in groups, bearing prey or flying free, on the left or on the right, displayed the plans of gods. In the sound of thunder or the rustling of leaves those who knew how to listen could hear the gods' words.

Roman gods were extremely numerous. Their hierarchy ran from great deities like Jupiter the thunderer to local

spirits of springs like Juturna. Roman religion had an agricultural flavor, reflecting the observances of farm families who depended on the orderly cycles of nature for subsistence. The Romans possessed gods of the farmhouse and storehouse (*penates*) and of the fields (*lares*). A god or goddess was the growing spirit of every major crop, such as Ceres of grain and Liber of wine. Every activity of the farm had a deity to be invoked for its success, such as Vervactor for first plowing, Repacator for the second, Imporcitor for harrowing, Insitor for sowing, and even Sterquilinius for manuring. On the margins lurked Silvanus and other wild gods of the forests. Romans were not without reverence for wild places, and personified mountains like "Father Apennine" as gods, but agricultural themes dominated their religion.

Religious worship and appreciation of natural beauty are reasons given for the ascents of high mountains recorded in Roman times. Rome's most famous mountaineer was the Emperor Hadrian, who ascended Mount Casius in Syria by night to see the sunrise and to make an offering to Zeus. He narrowly escaped being struck by a bolt of lightning that killed the sacrificing priest. High mountains were places where the gods could be worshipped.

Sacred groves in Italy were as ancient, numerous, and widespread as in Greece. The Latin words for them were *nemus* (grove), and *templum* (a space marked out). The latter is the root of the word "temple." The Romans never forgot the motive that had created them: religious awe. Virgil said that when they saw the old tree-covered Capitoline Hill, the rural folk who lived around it exclaimed, "Some god has this grove for his dwelling!" (Virgil, *Aeneid* 8:351–52). Seneca remarked,

If you come upon a grove of old trees that have lifted their crowns up above the common height and shut out the light of the sky by the darkness of their interlacing boughs, you feel that there is a spirit in the place, so lofty is the wood, so lone the spot, so wondrous the thick unbroken shade (Seneca, *Epistles* 4.12.3).

The numerous Roman religious festivals followed the calendar of activities of the ancestral farm, from the hanging of the plow on the boundary marker in the Compitalia in January to festivals of Saturn and Bona Dea, deities of the soil, in December. Sacrifice was usually in the form of the slaughter, cooking, and eating of domestic animals, although wild animals were sometimes offered. Bloodless sacrifices, such as the pouring of wine, oil, milk, or grain, or the presentation of fruit, cakes or cheese, were also made. Sacrifice was a gift to the gods in expectation of benefits, or in thanksgiving for them. The Latin phrase was *do ut des*, "I give (to you) so that you will give (to me)." The animal or substance sacrificed often represented the god. Since the number of victims was sometimes in the

hundreds, the effect on the environment through killing animals, consuming fuel, and releasing smoke must have been considerable. Sometimes sacrifice was used as a way to avoid the environmental protections that religion afforded to sacred places. For example, Cato the Elder advised landowners to make a handy prayer "to the god whom it may concern" for permission to cut down trees in a sacred grove (Cato, *On Agriculture* 139–40).

Pliny the Elder, taking a different view, complained that people abuse their mother, the Earth, but should know better. Lucretius had claimed that Earth was growing older and weaker, and therefore less able to reward human labor. The idea that meager crops could be blamed on an aging Earth was attacked by the agriculturist Columella, who placed the blame for nature's infertility not on senescence or changing climate, but on poor husbandry. A good farmer knows how to restore soil to fertility, but those who misuse the land should not be surprised when the result is diminishing crops and sterility. Horace scorned landowners who were neglectful of their land.

To what degree did the religious ideas held by the Greeks and Romans about nature affect their practical treatment of the Earth and its living inhabitants? There is no simple answer. Hunters spared some animals, particularly the young, because gods were thought to punish their killers. Prohibitions against cutting trees saved them in sacred groves. Animism provided an enchantment of nature that made people think twice before harming it. However, the undeniable fact that the natural environment suffered considerable damage at the hands of the Greeks and Romans remains to be explained, and it was more than one would expect from people who worshipped gods of nature and regarded much of the landscape as sacred.

Religion permeated all levels of society, and the beliefs of common folk preserved older practices. The environmental orientation of ancient religion was toward preservation of the natural order. Still, it is characteristic of human beings to evade religious prescriptions when it is in their perceived self-interest. It is possible that tree worshippers might have preserved a few sacred trees while they were cutting down whole forests, if they needed wood for fuel. Some of the mystery religions taught the oneness of human beings with the universe and nonviolence toward other forms of life, but they also stressed purity of soul and escape from the physical world, and therefore neglected the natural environment. Religious doubt increased in later classical times, and Christianity weakened the older nature religion.

Ancient religion could have provided constructive environmental attitudes. But these would not have been effective in conservation without knowledge of the workings of nature and the effects of human actions upon it. There were places where a body of practical knowledge of interactions with the Earth, the result of centuries of trial

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and error, survived. For example, the practices of subsistence farmers reflected adaptations to the limits of ecosystems they had to live within or perish. They took care of the land as long as their lives were not disrupted by war, which unfortunately they often were. It would have been difficult, however, to decide which practices would bring the best results when an environmental problem first appeared or was exacerbated from a tolerable level to an intolerable one.

It seems, therefore, that the course environmental problems took in the ancient world was not chiefly the result of the religious concepts of the natural world held by the Greeks and Romans. It was also the result of the technology they inherited and developed, the population levels they reached, the agricultural and other economic measures they took to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves, and the patterns of their rural and urban lives. Only through studying the interaction of all these factors will it be possible to gain understanding of the ecological failure that underlies the decline of ancient Mediterranean civilization.

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- See also: Egypt – Ancient; Greco-Roman World; Greece – Classical; Mesopotamia – Ancient to 2000 B.C.E.

Romanies (Gypsies)

If religion is popularly perceived – as it so often is – to include a place of worship, a clergy and a set of holy scriptures, then it is easy to understand why observers such as Hoyland, Roberts, Morwood, Greenfeld, and others should have reached the conclusions which are quoted below:

I never could meet with anybody that pretended to say what their private faith and religion may be (Hoyland 1816: 25).

They have, as a people, no religion (Roberts 1836: xvij).

The lack of religious ideas, and the want of a peculiar system of worship among the Gypsies, constitute remarkable features in the history of this strange people (Morwood 1885: 281–2).

They cannot be said to have a religion of their own (Greenfeld 1977: 52).

If, on the other hand the usual dictionary definition is adhered to, such as *Webster's* "belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe [and the] expression of this belief in conduct and ritual" (1966: 1228) or *Encarta's* "particular institutionalized or personal system of beliefs or practices relating to the divine" (1999: 1516), then it is clear that they were wrong.

Romanies, often incorrectly referred to as "Gypsies," descend from a migration out of India in the early years of the eleventh century. This exodus was prompted by a succession of raids led by Mohammed of Ghazni between 1000 and 1027 in his attempt to spread Islam into Northern India. The Hindu response was to assemble military forces known as Rajputs, conscripted from various language groups, though ones close enough to share the same genetic descent. The linguistic nature of the Romani language strongly suggests that it began as a composite military lingua franca (under the same circumstances that gave rise to the Urdu language), and for which the name *Rajputic* has been proposed. This only later crystallized into an ethnic mother-tongue when the troops and their camp-followers reached Anatolia and began to marry within the group and produce new generations of children. Because the first written account of the appearance of Romanies in the Byzantine Empire dates from 1054, we can assume that it was reached within fifty years or less of leaving India. If so, it was over two centuries before their descendants finally entered Europe – again because of the spread of Islam, this time toward the West.

It is not difficult to understand why outside observers

were uniformly convinced that Romanies have no religion. Apart from there being no tangible evidence – a sacred text, a temple or a priest for example – Romani society is tightly closed to outsiders, considerably reducing the opportunity to observe cultural behavior at close quarters. Ethnographers attempting to enter Romani households report being kept at arm's length by various means, even by being met at the door with feigned epileptic seizures or frightening explosions of profanity. But it is one of the aspects of Romani religious belief which keeps that barrier in place.

So entrenched is the idea that Romanies lack religion that it has become a part of European folklore: the story that “the gypsies have little or no, if any, religion . . . their church was constructed of curds or lard and the dogs ate it” (de Peyster 1887: 58) is widespread. Block repeated it half a century later:

the gypsies, it is said, once possessed a church of their own built of cream cheese. On one occasion, however, when they were particularly hungry, they ate the church and for this reason are now without a national religion (1938: 234).

Because Romanies come ultimately from India, it is in Hinduism that the roots of their religion are to be found. However, awareness of this has become lost over the centuries and is only now being relearned by Romanies today. Likewise the daily cultural behavior in which Indian-based spiritualism (called *Rromanipen*) manifests itself so clearly is not recognized as such; asked what his religion is, a Romani is likely to say Orthodox or Roman Catholic, Mormon, Muslim or Bahá'í or any one of the non-indigenous faiths acquired, voluntarily or not, since arrival in the West.

Woodcock, like so many others, was wrong when he wrote that

The gypsies . . . are utterly without religious impressions . . . they brought with them no Indian idols . . . nor indeed Indian rites or observances, for no trace of such are to be discovered amongst them (1865: 84).

While Kounavine claimed to have found Brahma, Indra, Lakshmi and other Hindu deities continuing to be worshipped by name among Romanies in Russia, this has been shown to be fabricated. Nevertheless other connections with Hinduism are in evidence, although the names of only three deities have survived: Sara-Kali, Vayu and Maruthi. Shiva's trident, called *trishula* in Sanskrit, changed its role from Hindu symbol to Christian symbol and has become the Romani word for “cross” (*trušul*). This probably happened when the migration first reached Armenia; in the Lomavren language *trusul* means both

“church” and “priest.” Similarly, *rašaj* “(Christian) holy man” represents a shift of meaning from Sanskrit *aršeya* “of a (Hindu) holy man.” The word for “God” is Devel, (from Sanskrit *devata* “divinity,” compare Hindu *dev*), while the Devil is known as *o Beng* (from a Munda root meaning a malevolent spirit).

The description here is specifically of beliefs found among the groups of Romanies classified as Vlax (Wallachian), from the dialects of Romani they speak. Vlax Romanies emerged as a distinct group in the Balkans during the five centuries of their enslavement there, where their social and physical isolation enabled them to retain traditions lost elsewhere. While each group maintains more or fewer of these, the present account must not be interpreted as descriptive of all Romani populations everywhere.

Some Romani groups in Europe today appear to maintain elements of Shaktism or goddess-worship; the Rajputs worshipped the warrior-goddess Parvati, another name for the female deity Sati-Sara, who is Saint Sarah, the Romani Goddess of Fate. That she forms part of the yearly pilgrimage to La Camargue at Stes Maries de la Mer in the south of France is of particular significance; here she is carried into the sea just as she is carried into the waters of the Ganges each December in India. Both Sati-Sara and St. Sarah wear a crown, both are also called Kali, and both have shining faces painted black. Sati-Sara is a consort of the god Šiva, and is known by many other names, Bhadrakali, Uma, Durga and Syama among them.

The names of two Indian deities have been preserved in some Romani riddles. Reference to the Vedic god of the wind and the air, Vayu (also called Marut), is retained in a number of these: *Kana hulavel peske bal o Vajo, legenisavol e čar* (“When Vayu combs his hair, the grass sways”), *Amaro Vajo hurjal tela savorrenge podji, aj konik našti t'astarel les* (“Our Vayu flies under everyone's petticoats, and no one can catch him”), *O pharo vurdon e Vajosko cirdajlo ekhe šele grastendar kaj phurden ande'l rrutunja* (“Vayu's heavy wagon is pulled by a hundred horses blowing through their nostrils”); the answer to each is *e balval* “the wind.” In Indian theology the task of Vayu's son Maruti (also called Hanuman) is to tear open the clouds and let the rain fall, and in Romani the expression *marutisjol o Devel* means “the sky [*lit.* “God”] is growing overcast.” The reference to a hundred horses may also be of Vedic origin; there are several references in the scriptures to the *avamedha yajña* or “horse sacrifice,” whereby in ancient India the king would release one hundred horses to roam freely through his kingdom. Stopping them or blocking their path was forbidden.

The female spirits or fates, in Romani called the *vursitorja*, hover in its presence three days after a child is born to determine its destiny and to influence the choice of name the parents will decide upon. They may be compared with the Indian *matrka* or “little mother” spirits who also possess a baby's destiny at the time of its birth. The red

thread (the *loli dori*) tied around a new-born's ankle or wrist and worn for two or three years afterwards to guard against the *jakhalo* or "evil eye" reflects the protective properties of that color, which is also worn or painted on the body in India.

The burning of one's possessions after death and even, among some populations at least into the twentieth century, the ritual suicide of the widow has striking parallels with *sati* in India.

Time spent in the non-Romani world (the *jado*) drains spiritual energy or *dji*. Sampson (1926: 257) gives the various meanings of this word as "[s]eat of the emotions, heart, soul; temper, disposition, mood; courage, spirit," comparing it to Sanskrit *jiva*, Hindi *ji*, "life, soul, spirit, mind." In some dialects it has the additional meaning of "stomach." One's spiritual batteries can only be recharged by spending time in an all-Romani environment – in the normal course of events, in family homes. It is in the area of spiritual and physical well-being (*bart*) that the Indian origin of the Romani people is most clearly seen.

In the preparation of food, and in one's personal hygiene and deportment, it is absolutely essential that a separation between "pure" and "polluted" conditions be maintained. A pure state is achieved by maintaining spiritual "balance" or what is called *karma* in India (and in Romani *kintala*, or in some dialects *kintari* or *kintujmos*) in one's life and avoiding shame (*ladžav* or *ladž*), being declared unclean or, in extreme cases, being shunned by the community. Maintaining balance or harmony pleases the spirits of the ancestors (the *mulé*), and they are there to guard one and help one to do it, but if they are displeased, they will mete out punishment by way of retribution (*prikaza*). Depending upon the nature of the transgression, this may be mild (e.g., stubbing one's toe) or so severe as to involve sickness and even death. The consequences of *prikaza* underlie the universal Romani belief that nothing is an accident; that nothing happens simply by chance.

The penalty for extreme pollution is being banished, or made an outcast, and an out-caste, from the community, which may or may not imply a state of pollution, can be imposed also for other reasons (e.g., disregard for territorial claims). Being in a state of pollution is literally to be "smeared" (i.e., with menstrual blood). This can be contrasted with being "dirty," but only from physical dirt.

Prikaza brings bad luck (*bibart*) and illness (*nasvalipe*), and it can be attracted even by socializing with people who are not *vuže* (*vužo* "clean"). Non-Romani people are not seen as *vuže*, which is why Romanies avoid contact that is too intimate. But this is not an inherited condition of non-Romanies, it is because these cultural practices are not maintained. A non-Romani woman who marries into a Romani family is expected to adopt them, and in doing so becomes in that context *vuži*.

The Ayurvedic concept of ritual purity and ritual pollution, so central to Romani belief, existed in the eleventh-

century caste system and continues to exist today; thus members of the same *jati* (sub-caste) may eat together without risk of contamination, for example, but will become polluted if they eat with members of other *jati*; and because the *jatis* of one's associates might not always be known, contact between the mouth and the various utensils shared with others at a meal is avoided, just to be on the safe side. In conservative Romani culture, liquids are poured into the mouth from a container held away from the lips, so that the rim of the vessel (the *kerlo*) is not touched; smoke from a shared tobacco pipe is drawn through the fist clenched around its stem, again to avoid making contact with the mouth. The surest way not to touch utensils used by others is to eat with the fingers, and every one of these habits is to be found among Romanies today.

Like the Rajputs, some Romani groups divide foods into "ordinary" and "auspicious" or "lucky" (*baxtalo*) categories (the Rajputs' terms for these two categories mean "cold" and "hot," though these have nothing to do with either temperature or pepper); this distinction reflects the close relationship between food and health, a particular ingredient being not only beneficial to the physical self but also to the spiritual. "Auspicious foods" include those which are pungent or strongly flavored, such as garlic, lemon, pickles, peppers, sour cream and so on. The use of red pepper in some traditional Romani dishes is typical of Rajput cuisine particularly, and such food is called *ito* or "piquant" in one Romani dialect. Also in common with Indian culinary behavior is the practice of not preparing dishes far in advance of their being eaten, and of not keeping left-over food. Dishes set for the dead at a *pomana* (wake) table or a *slava* (saint's day) table are eventually disposed of by being offered to passers-by, never just thrown away. There are very many customs associated with food and eating: potatoes (*kolompirja*) are not eaten at a *pomana*; there cannot be an even number of chairs at a *pomana* table; greens (*zelenimata*) are not eaten while one is in mourning, or expecting a baby, and so on.

Because access to physicians and hospitals is only sought in extreme cases due to their polluting association, safeguarding the health of the community *within* the community is of special importance. Like groups in northern India such as the Banjara, some Romani populations distinguish illnesses which are natural to the group; these are such things as heart complaints, rashes, vomiting, hiccups, insomnia or irritability, from those which are the result of overfamiliarity with the *jado* or non-Romani world. These latter include, for example, all sexually transmitted diseases. For such afflictions, a non-Romani physician needs to be consulted; but for "Romani afflictions," traditional cures are provided by a *drabarni* or female healer. This is the same as the Hindu *siana*. The root of the word *drabarni* is *drab* which means "medicine" (from Sanskrit *dravya* "medication," compare the Hindi

word *darb*). It is also the root of the verb *drabar*, which is usually translated in English as “to tell fortunes,” but which from the Romani perspective means “making well.” When speaking English, Romanies prefer to call this skill brought from India “advising” rather than “fortune telling,” for which another verb, *duriker*, exists.

If it is necessary for a person who has contracted a *gadžikano nasvalipe* to be admitted to hospital, relatives and others will go to him, often in considerable numbers, to provide *dji* and help restore balance. “Relatives, their relatives, and friends of a Gypsy flock around his hospital bed because [of] their culture” (Anderson and Tighe 1973: 282); only recently have hospital administrations begun to recognize this as cultural behavior and to accommodate it. Depending upon the nature of the non-Romani affliction, the individual may be declared defiled; not visited in hospital but instead banished from the community. This is invariably the response when this is, for example, syphilis, AIDS, or other such disease. Infections of this kind are a clear indication of a too-personal involvement in the non-Romani world, since it is assumed that they could never be contracted within the ethnic community.

Romanies and Other Religions

The journey across the Middle East took place too rapidly for Islam to have had an impact on Romani spiritual belief, as well no doubt because it was the religion of an enemy people. There is no linguistic impact at all directly from Arabic, and none from Persian religious vocabulary. Nevertheless there are hundreds of thousands of Romanies throughout the Balkans and Turkey who are Muslim, having converted, or having been converted, during the centuries of Ottoman rule in the area.

Zoroastrianism existed in northwest India at the time of the exodus at the beginning of the eleventh century, and in Persia through which that migration passed, and a number of writers have suggested that Rromanipen has acquired at least some aspects of that religion, particularly its dualism and the significance of fire. It is unlikely that this was the case, however, given the circumstances of early Romani history, the time and location involved, and the fact that these are also characteristics found in Hinduism.

There are numbers of Romanies who profess the Jewish faith, though in each documented case it has been the result of conversion following marriage to a Jewish spouse. Reportedly, during the Second World War several Romani-Jewish marriages took place in a concentration camp (and known as the “marriage camp”) close to the Serbian border, though the fate, and religious persuasion, of any survivors is not known.

Christianity was first encountered in Armenian-speaking Anatolia, at the eastern end of the Byzantine Empire. The Romani words for “Easter,” “co-father-in-law” and “godfather” are of Armenian origin, all concepts specific to Orthodox Christianity. Whether it was adopted

at that time or not is unknown; in the Christian Byzantine Empire professing Christianity clearly brought benefits to the outsider Romani population, and later presenting themselves as Christian penitents and pilgrims in Europe was also a means of distancing themselves from the Muslim threat. But in Ottoman Turkey, being Christian was a liability, and the seriousness with which either religion was embraced is open to question.

In Europe, it was often the Church that was most openly hostile to Romanies. In 1568 Pope Pius V banished them from the entire realm of the Holy Roman Empire, and priests in the Eastern Rite church could be excommunicated for performing Romani marriages. Monasteries in the Romanian principalities were reportedly the cruelest of all toward their slaves, and in Western Europe, Romanies were routinely forbidden from entering churches to worship, and had to listen from outside through the windows. Such incidents are not entirely unheard of today.

Some Romani groups in France relate the story of how Christianity first came to their people. Originally, they say, the woman leader of a group of Romani metalworkers who lived along the Rhône and whose name was Sara saw a boat on the river which was sinking. In it were Saint Mary Salome, Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Mary Jacobi, the three Marys who comforted Jesus as he died on the cross. Sara was expecting this since she had seen it in a dream, and she waded out into the water and threw out her cloak which became a raft, and which enabled the three Marys to reach the riverbank safely. As a reward, they made her their servant, and converted her to Christianity. This story, however, seems to originate in European, rather than Romani, tradition. Generally speaking, the Romani population of an area will claim to follow the predominant religion of that area: Protestant in Protestant lands, Roman Catholic in Roman Catholic lands and Orthodox in Orthodox lands.

In the early 1950s in northwestern France, a Breton evangelist named Clément le Cossec began preaching Pentecostal Christianity to Romanies in that region, and it spread rapidly through France and Spain, then the rest of Europe, and to North and South America. Today, “Born-Again” Pentecostalism is the fastest growing and most widely found religion among Romanies. It has been suggested that there are two main reasons for this: first, that it is a church that tells its congregants that they are loved, a personal aspect not characteristic of more formal churches, and a message not formerly heard by Romanies. Second, that, compared with the Roman or Orthodox churches, it is easy to become a pastor, and to establish a church of one’s own. There are today hundreds of Romani churches, with pastors and congregations who are Romani, who preach in Romani and who even have Romani-language evangelical radio programs and who distribute Romani-language sermons on audiocassette tapes. Significantly, the growth of “Born-Again” Christianity has

caused a split in the Romani population, some of whom believe it is a major factor in the loss of traditional *Romanipen*. One successful Pentecostal church in Dallas, Texas, developed a program that has deliberately integrated references to dualism, balance, ancestral spirits and other aspects of Romanipen, which do not conflict with Christian doctrine, stressing parallels rather than differences.

There are Romanies who have embraced Mormonism, and the Bahá'í religion has acquired numbers of converts, especially in Spain. But with the exception of those completely assimilated to the non-Romani world, whatever religion may be professed, it will exist syncretistically with more or fewer elements retained from the original set of beliefs and practices which find their origins in India.

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See also: Hinduism; India; Proto-Indo-Europeans.

Romanticism and Indigenous Peoples

Romanticism with regard to indigenous cultures has its roots in the edenic episode wherein nature and culture were rent apart in the generative moment of the Western narrative. As a taxonomic device, this separation has most often functioned in favor of "culture" and its putative bearers: "culture" defines the "properly human," and it is that which allows humans to claim a certain stewardship over nature. Configured historically by way of imperialism, this taxonomy also distinguishes between people of God (saved) and people given over to nature (fallen). Whether we choose to map this relationship according to the coordinates offered by Augustine, Columbus, or Andrew Jackson, for example, the results will largely be the same. Native peoples – cultural and categorical "others" – become the inverse and absence of "civilization." Lacking spirit, reason, and private property, among other crucial markers, natives are viewed as children of nature. Redeeming them (if indeed they are human and redeemable) entails converting them away from the world, lifting them up, as it were, from their earthly condition.

And yet the very taxonomy put into place by the edenic myth has an historical alter ego. As if unwilling to wait for the apocalypse – the mythological or technological rectification of history – many Westerners have sought to return to the garden by means of a shortcut. Ironically, this path is found precisely through the romantic recoding of the dominant taxonomy. Whether drawn from public discourse or scholarly treatises, we might distill a set of categorical oppositions concerning the relationship between romantic desires and the decidedly less romantic modern condition:

Nature ~ Culture
 (source of redemption) ~ (liability, a state of decay)
 Past ~ Present
 Hunting/agriculture ~ Industry/global economy
 Rural ~ Urban
 Communal ~ Private

In romantic thought, what is striking about this set of oppositions is the way each term in the right-hand column is understood to be a corruption of the left-hand one. The remedy, then, is to chart a return to the former (if sometimes fictive) state by whatever means available. What is relevant for our purposes are the channels through which this symbolic "return" is navigated. As strong as nostalgic

sentiments might be, actually traversing any of these categories is, at turns, impossible, impractical, or frankly undesirable. What is needed is a stand-in: a scapegoat symbolically and metonymically linked to nature who can perform an eternal return to the garden. Enter the native.

Whether in tandem with real political agitation or in place of it, indigenous peoples have been looked to as an environmental and spiritual panacea by people around the globe in their retreat from the perceived failures and implications of modernity. Surely there are positive aspects to this phenomenon, as there is much to be learned from native traditions, particularly in terms of resilience and creativity. And one might add that it is high time that native peoples be celebrated rather than denigrated. It should be noted, however, that the degree to which Indians were “the first ecologists” is a hotly contested issue. Defining, defending, and denying the Earth ethic of Native Americans has become an academic blood sport. Quite beyond the historical and institutional concerns of this debate, I would call attention to several ideological aspects of romanticism that are problematic. First, romanticism is reactionary and escapist: romantic views of indigenous peoples spring from other peoples’ needs and desires, not from an appreciation of indigenous people in their own right. Second, romantic tendencies are predicated on a kind of social evolution model, even while its valuations are ostensibly reversed from the imperial pattern. Native peoples are looked to as an antidote to modernity precisely because they are understood – however uncritically – to inhabit the social past, specifically as anachronistic representatives of an imagined natural past (which explains why Native American exhibits are frequently located in natural history museums). The ramifications of such a view are anything but comforting. Third, romanticism reifies the very traditions it exalts, paradoxically suffocating that from which it seeks inspiration. Romantic images portray tradition as fixed, stable, uncontested and, linking us back to our earlier points, anti-modern. To imagine tradition in this way eliminates the prospect that the people romanticized will be heard when they speak in their own voice – even when it comes to speaking about those things which matter to them most, like the land and nature itself.

The narrative I have painted in broad strokes is, of course, distorted in significant ways. Observing this, we want to acknowledge that most people do not imagine or inhabit the world in ways so divided. Most of all, the dichotomy as stated obscures real political efforts of people and groups to heal and sustain nature in ways that neither depend upon the Western narrative nor the burdening of indigenous peoples as surrogate messiahs. That said, the romanticization of native peoples remains – indeed, it seems to escalate with every year and with each new environmental crisis. Complicating the picture, many

indigenous people have willfully engaged this discourse, sometimes as authors.

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- See also: American Indians as “First Ecologists”; Noble Savage; Radical Environmentalism; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm.

Romanticism in European History

Romanticism has long been recognized as a major trope in modern environmental thought and practice. Romanticism, however, was a complex, diverse, changing historical movement. Our present conceptions of Romanticism tend to be defined as much by critics and subsequent commentators as contemporary articulations by Romantic figures. Even the representations of Romanticism within academic studies are the products of different readings from different historical and theoretical positions, and seldom free of polemical overtones. As de Man has noted: “From its inception, the history of romanticism has been one of battles, polemics, and misunderstandings: personal misunderstandings between the poets themselves; between the poets, critics, and the public; between the successive generations” (de Man 1993: 4). Contested are not only the meanings of Romanticism, its very boundaries, origins and influences, and who might be considered a Romantic, but also its conception of nature, its relationship to religion and its relevance to modern environmentalism.

An emblematic text of European Romanticism has long been Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*. It is precisely this emblematic status of the poem that gives contestation over its appropriate reading such significance. The poem is an account of the poet’s formation as a poet, from his childhood experiences of nature to his mature vision of the sublime. Abrams reads Wordsworth’s poem as part of his

program for the secularization of inherited theological ideas, for a “natural supernaturalism.” The “high argument” of *The Prelude* is that the heights and depths of the mind of man are to replace heaven and hell, and restore the lost paradise; we need only to unite our minds to nature in a holy marriage, and paradise is ours (Abrams 1971: 17–140). Hartman gives central place to the cultivation of the imagination in Wordsworth’s poem, attending particularly to the role that “spots of time” – places in nature and time, and in creative time – play in this cultivation. The spirit that lurks in spots of time renews the poet *vis-à-vis* nature; as the *genius loci* or the indwelling spirit of a place, it also acts as spirit inspiring the genial powers of the poet. But for Hartman, the spots of time bring the poet closer to his imagination, not to nature, and the transference of significant experiences to nature acts solely to allow such events, such moments, to reach through time. *The Prelude* is an exercise in soul making, the development of the imagination and the formation of a poet, in which nature takes a secondary role (Hartman 1964: 208–59). McGann, in contrast, sets out to expose the ideology within Wordsworth’s poetry, and within such readings of his poetry. McGann is critical of Wordsworth for finding consolation in nature when he should be worrying about the economic realities of the rural life he idealizes. He reads Romantic poetry as an escape from or even suppression of socio-political conditions (McGann 1983: 81–92). These readings of Wordsworth have been highly influential.

Recent critics, however, have found in *The Prelude* both a Romantic ecology and an important religiosity. Bate, for example, argues that Wordsworth’s pastoral poetry, highlighting the life and beauty in nature, and finding poetry not only in language but also in nature, has a permanent, enduring power – it is a language that is “evergreen.” By fostering an emotional communication between human beings and nature, a love of nature leading to a love of humankind, Bate contends that Wordsworth’s poetry offers a political model for modern environmentalism, an “ideology” based on a harmonious relationship with nature that goes beyond, and in many ways deeper, than the neo-Marxist political model to which McGann appeals (Bate 1991: 12–35). Prickett, on the other hand, challenges Abrams’ reading, arguing that *The Prelude*, given its historical context, displays not so much the language of secularization as religious revival. Pointing to the relative absence of God from neoclassical literature and critique, and more generally from public life at the end of the eighteenth century, Prickett finds Wordsworth’s poem striking for its overtly religious language. Abrams represents Romantic poets as rhetorically adorning the robes of prophets who through the illumination of the mind of man and its communion with nature could restore paradise on Earth. Thus Wordsworth represented himself as the chosen son for his time, the poet now replacing the priest. But

Prickett contends that this claim is not simply the poet’s retention of the rhetoric of the religious tradition he sought to displace. He argues that we need to take seriously Wordsworth’s claims for the religious calling of the poet, and reads *The Prelude* as a pious account of divine election modeled on St. Augustine’s *Confessions* (Prickett 1986: 95–104).

The Prelude closes with an image of the poet’s ultimate confrontation with nature, the divine and himself; climbing Mount Snowdon, he emerges from a fog to confront a terrifying alpine vista – brooding masses of hills and the dark sea receding into infinity, a chasm of raging waters. The experience of the sublime is the response of the viewer to such a vision that transcends the powers of understanding and imagination, with fear giving way to pleasure as the mind is expanded to encompass what previously seemed beyond comprehension. For Wordsworth, the imagination matured through “spots of time” has the power and autonomy to grasp the whole and dwell in the infinite. An alternative image of such a scene of a wanderer arrested by an infinite alpine landscape is offered by Friedrich’s famous 1818 painting “Wanderer above the Sea of Fog.” In this image the view remains veiled in part by the fog, which, in addition to heightening the role of the imagination, fragments the visible, eradicates the connecting ground and renders the scene insubstantial. The unusual, distorted perspective only finds its connection in the central figure of the wanderer, which orders and mediates our view of the landscape. This large, central figure with his back to us, viewing the scene, reminds us that the sublime lies not in the object viewed but in the subjective effect on the viewer; it is the experience of nature that is depicted in the painting, how we as viewers participate in what we see. The *Rückenfigur* thus leads us to reflect on our own views of nature. Friedrich’s landscapes are natural scenes infused with the divine, yet not explicitly; the divine is both present and absent. His landscapes also represent the alterity of nature, a nature the human subject is not able to appropriate. Indeed, a chasm stands between the wanderer and the landscape before him, a disjunction in the planes of the painting. Whereas in Wordsworth’s poem the divine power of the imagination enables the poet to feel at home in the infinite, in Friedrich’s image the play between proximity and distance, familiarity and estrangement, revelation and concealment, serves to depict the longing for unity with the infinite rather than its realization.

These images of the experience of the sublime depict on a grandiose and abstract scale what was a concrete and common experience of Romantic figures – a sense of alienation from oneself, from society, from the divine, and from nature. Reflection on this sense of alienation was also a critical consciousness of the limits of all knowledge and experience. Romanticism has often been depicted as a form of idealism in which all is resolved into the human

subject. Certainly Romantic thinkers were acutely aware of the role of the mind in knowledge of the world. Yet they were also aware of the impossibility of a full representation of the material world or the divine, of their irreducible otherness. Reflection on the alterity of nature was an acknowledgement of its potent presence, that the material world cannot be wholly abstracted into conceptual knowledge, that nature is at once impenetrable and the ground of all being. Poetic renderings of nature articulated the ultimate indecipherability of nature's script, and hence the need for a continual creative reading and writing, rereading and rewriting, as an unending exploration of its elusive meaning.

Historically, these reflections were not so much a reaction to Enlightenment thought as a development of it. Romanticism has significant continuities with the critical philosophies of the Enlightenment and their radical questioning of social, political and religious institutions, and of traditional systems of thought. Its expression of the impossibility of complete systems of thought or perfect works of art, of the fragmentary nature of all human production, is an extension of Enlightenment critical tendencies. The experience of the French Revolution, in particular, its promise and its failure, was pivotal to its preoccupation with the tensions between illimitable aspiration and actual limitation. The eighteenth century's discrediting of traditional authorities and certainties, its faith in intellectual, moral and material progress, its faith in humanity and earthly happiness, generated an atmosphere of optimism about new freedoms and new possibilities for individuals and society as a whole that was formative for many early Romantics. The failure of this promise, and the violence unleashed by the Revolution and its aftermath both in France and elsewhere in Europe, led to a conception of modernity in which a sense of crisis, a sense of alienation from nature, the self and society, and a sense of the infinite gulf between the ideal and its realization was central. Many poets used the metaphor of the Fall for this crisis, but now figured as a secular history of the individual and humankind, with the current suffering alleviated by the hope of redemption through communion with nature or a strengthened imagination. The celebration of "country" so characteristic of Romanticism was also an eighteenth-century theme – the glorification of the countryside and local places in opposition to the metropolis, of indigenous experiences of nature and culture as opposed to universal truths, of the songs and lore of common folk as opposed to elites or aristocrats. But many Romantic exaltations of country life were written from the distant perspective of privilege rather than direct experience, or ignored the physical and social hardships endured by country folk. Moreover, in the aftermath of the revolutionary wars the love of country often turned into the love of nation and virulent forms of nationalism.

What is not contested is the privileged place of the

artist in Romanticism. As the example of Wordsworth shows, Romanticism saw artists cease to be representatives of religious and political powers, and assume the authority in their own right to speak in the name of the concerns of humanity. Bénichou argues that in France the dethronement of former spiritual powers and the elevation of the self to the highest level of critique and edification begun in the eighteenth century led in the Romantic period to the investment of writers with high social function and spiritual power, what he terms the consecration of the writer. In Germany, Schiller gave aesthetics a political role, arguing that an aesthetic education alone is capable of exciting and refining feelings, of cultivating sensibility, so that citizens could take pleasure in the form of things and thus be ready to act according to rational principles rather than out of self-interest. It is through beauty that the human being achieves freedom. Friedrich Schlegel argued that by possessing an element of divinity in his soul, the poeticizing philosopher or the philosophizing poet is the modern prophet. But for all the discussion of artists and their productions, few artists managed to live from their art alone and their aesthetic manifestos did not translate into real political power.

One area where artistic genius and the role of imagination did come to be especially valued was in the study of nature. Kant drew parallels between the judgment of art and the judgment of organic nature in his 1790 *Critique of Judgment*. Schelling developed Kant's philosophy of nature, making a powerful argument for all of nature and each natural product to be conceived as organic, as a complex, dynamic organization of formal and material principles. Schelling held that what is essential to art as well as to the organism is the creative or productive activity of relating matter and form, the real and ideal. It is the *daemon*, the creative spirit or indwelling element of divinity that is part of the nature of all human beings that is alone able to comprehend the productive, synthetic forces of art and nature. But although the study of nature during the Romantic period emphasized the correspondences between the hidden forces of nature, the imaginative genius within human nature and divine creator, it would be oversimplifying their insights to label such philosophies of nature pantheism. Romantics were acutely aware of the gap between infinite aspiration and its actualization, and of the limits of articulation, and often resorted to metaphor when approaching what defied definition, whether it be the absolute or the fundamental forces of nature.

Indeed, the greatest danger in reading Romanticism is confusing the figural with the literal. Perhaps the continued contestation over Romanticism arises from its excessively figurative expressions, from its deceptive play with language, and from its unusually reflexive and ironic critical positioning. Confronting the boundaries of human comprehension and language, even as they had a vision of

what exceeded such boundaries, Romantic works are often difficult to engage and hence it is understandable that their significance has been variously construed. As Bate and Oerlemans convincingly demonstrate, however, critical engagement with Romantic works can be an important stimulus for reflection on nature and religion of particular relevance to the concerns of modern environmentalism.

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- See also: Romanticism in European Literature; Western Esotericism.

Romanticism in European Literature

European Romanticism's complex understanding of the word "nature" must be seen against the background of the eighteenth century and the growth of the industrial city, which gave rise to a new understanding of the beauties of nature as these ceased to be a mere backdrop to human activity and became the place where human beings could be closest to themselves and to God. Appreciation of the grander landscape beauties of nature and a fascination for

the "sublime," encouraged by the popularity of artists like Salvator Rosa (1615–73), resulted in a new "aesthetics of the infinite" that coincided with changing religious views of nature.

Behind the Latin tags *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* lie roots extending as far back as Classical times, but now revived in complex ways. The latter consists of the "forms of nature," laid out to be investigated and observed. The former, literally "nature naturing," is nature experienced as active, dynamic and constantly changing. It refers to that animating principle that gives life to the objects of nature, which may remain at the disposal of God, or else be regarded as a pantheistic "presence" or a "power of harmony" that in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" "rolls through all things" without God's help. For the Anglican priest John Keble, however, the Book of Nature is precisely to be "read" as an indication of the workings of God. In Keble's poems in *The Christian Year* (1827), nature is a book "which heavenly truth imparts" to the Christian "reader." In a very different Romantic portrayal of Christianity, Chateaubriand's *Genie du Christianisme* (1802), drew his experience of nature from his visit in 1791 to America, where the "cultivated fields" of Europe, which "everywhere meet with the habitations of men," are replaced by virgin forests and the "abysses of cataracts" where alone the unknown "Supreme Being manifests himself to the human heart" and we can find ourselves solely with God. Nature is only truly appreciated where it has escaped the destroying hand of human cultivation.

In the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Wordsworth claimed to be writing in the "real language of men," deliberately giving attention to rustic life lived "among the natural abodes of men, Fields with their rural works" (*The Prelude* XIII, 102–3). It was here that the poet sought to recover the roots and affections of human nature. For the young Wordsworth, at least, and certainly for Shelley and Rousseau, human nature is fundamentally good, and most truly discovers itself as it recovers an affinity with nature that the city-dweller has lost. Though their aspirations remained highly idealized, the Romantic poets at least abandoned the classical literary conventions of Theocritus or Virgil, so beloved of the eighteenth century, and donning their walking boots gave minute attention to "the mighty world / Of eye, and ear," and "the beauteous forms / of nature" ("Tintern Abbey"). Yet, at the same time, they were not blind to the heartlessness of nature's creatures, and Keats, even while he celebrates the "flowers gay / Of periwinkle and wild strawberry," laments the "fierce destruction" wrought by the shark, the hawk or even the "gentle robin" as "ravening," as it attacks the worm. For William Blake, this same worm is a canker which destroys the rose by its "dark secret love." Nevertheless, though we live in a fallen world (an acknowledgment which awaited the advent of Darwinian theory later in the nineteenth century), still, for some Romantics the goodness of nature

is seen as a proof of the goodness of its creator, while for the pantheistic Wordsworth (Lucy, though her name is not mentioned in the brief lyric of 1799, "A slumber did my spirit seal"), death returns us to an absolute unity with the natural world of rocks, and stones, and trees. Blake, who can "see a World in a Grain of Sand" (a remarkable though probably unconscious echo of Julian of Norwich's hazel nut that is the whole of creation), also sees heaven in a rage at a caged bird ("Auguries of Innocence").

It is typical of the Romantic awareness of the active principle in nature (*natura naturans*) to be conscious also of the universal in the tiny specifics of natural things, a symbolic acknowledgement of what Coleridge calls "the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal" (*The Statesman's Manual*, 1816). At the same time, and concurrently with German Idealist thought, Coleridge and Wordsworth celebrated the shaping spirit of the imagination, recognizing the mind's power to participate in the creation of what we see in a noble interchange of nature and the human. In Coleridge's words, "we receive but what we give / And in our life alone does Nature live" ("Dejection: An Ode"). In an ancient tradition, drawing upon both Greek mythology and Judeo-Christian thought, the German philosopher of Romanticism, Friedrich Schelling, claims a profound kinship between the human spirit and nature. In his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling affirms "we do not want that nature only accidentally correspond to the principles of our spirit." Thus for the poet Novalis (1772–1801) the true being of nature and the true being of humans are analogous and one, each revealing the truth of the other. Goethe's young Werther, at the beginning of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) writes, with absolute truth,

My whole being is filled with a marvellous gaiety,
like the sweet spring mornings that I enjoy with all
my heart. I am alone and glad to be alive in sur-
roundings such as these, which were created for a
soul like mine.

Even at his death, Werther remains one with nature and the Eternal One: "Through the storm clouds flying by, I can still see a few stars in the eternal sky. No, you will not fall. The Eternal One carries you in his heart as he carries me."

For Goethe and Romanticism there is no final reconciliation between the spirit *in* nature, of which we are a part, and nature *as* spirit, often seen in terms of the ancient Mother-Goddess, and there is a complex, eclectic coming together of Christian theology and mythological references. Later in nineteenth-century literature, the Mother-Goddess may be personified in such figures as Mother Carey in Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863), a parable of the purity of nature set against the life-denying

city as the chimney sweep Tom becomes conscious of his grimy body, falls into a river and is transformed into a water-baby.

But there is more to Goethe's view of nature than *Werther*. He was also fascinated with scientific observation of plants, animals, rocks, light and color, holding an idea of evolution that, unlike Darwin's later theory, is nonlinear. For Goethe, what evolves in nature is timeless, a spiral development of endless motion, at the heart of which is a central Romantic concept – polarity: the idea that natural processes live by the interaction between opposites. Without this, as Blake said, there can be no progression. The Romantic fascination with science and nature (which often fed a highly mythological viewpoint), finds a later devotee in John Ruskin (1819–1900), who approached art entirely through nature. In some ways a successor to Wordsworth, Ruskin took a far more intelligent interest in nature, and, with his strict religious upbringing, regarded nature, like Keble, as a holy book. He sometimes described himself as nature's priest. As he looked at the minute particulars of nature, Ruskin was both a poet and a scientist, and, like Goethe and the artist Turner, he was fascinated by the quality of light and color. Ruskin regarded nature as a moral being, for both good and ill, objects in nature often "speaking" to us as moral tutors. In *Modern Painters* (vol. 5), the pine tree has "a tremendous unity [which] absorbs and moulds the life of a race. The pine shadows rest upon a nation."

The complex Romantic view of nature has continued to influence our thinking. Aware, long before Darwin or Tennyson's evolutionary version of "Nature red in tooth and claw," of the cruelty in nature, Romanticism nevertheless regarded nature as a primary source of our education and was deeply aware of the dangers of our neglect or destruction of its delicate balance. In the symbiosis between nature and the human spirit, the destruction of the former, symbolized, for example, by the albatross in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," was also, inevitably the demise of the latter.

David Jasper

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See also: Blake, William; Philosophy of Nature; Romanticism in European History; Romanticism – American; Western Esotericism.

Romanticism – American

American Romanticism is the general term used to encompass the intersections among several philosophical, theological, political, and artistic movements that occurred in the United States during the middle of the nineteenth century, a period characterized by American territorial expansion and industrialization on the one hand, and sweeping religious and social reforms on the other.

Like its earlier European counterparts, American Romanticism represented a reaction to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment values of order, rationality, scientific method and urbanity. While not fully rejecting the gains of the Enlightenment – which included a critique of orthodox Christianity and religious “superstition” that many Romantics shared – Romanticism sought to reinvigorate those aspects of human knowledge and experience that the Enlightenment had pushed aside. These included: attention to mysticism and psychological supernaturalism and a thematic emphasis on the value of the imagination, sentimentalism, natural spiritualism, and pastoralism.

A prominent theme in this intellectual and artistic movement was a renewed attention to nature, not simply as a system of laws to be interpreted (an Enlightenment trope) but as a source of spiritual and psychological renewal. Like the British Romantics (such as Wordsworth and Coleridge), the American Romantics saw experience in nature as a means to return to a childlike state of innocence, unswayed by civilization. Regained innocence, in turn, could lead to a higher level of insight into the nature of the good, the true, and the beautiful (and for some, also, the nature of God). The responsibility of the Romantic artist was not only to advocate for such a return to nature, innocence, and moral purity but also to convey it to others through poetry, essays, paintings, and related arts. Because the American landscape was already steeped in symbolic associations (America as “the new Eden” or “New Canaan”), it is not surprising that the American Romantics would emphasize the uniqueness of American nature in particular. Such emphasis built on the already established symbolic importance of American nature, while also contributing to the Romantic agenda of shaping a new national identity.

American Romanticism is traditionally thought to have begun in the late 1820s and to have ended by the 1860s, the period of the Civil War (1861–1865). Several important historical events and trends were associated with these middle decades of the nineteenth century. Perhaps most importantly, the Romantic era saw a movement away from – and calls for a return to – the Jeffersonian values of agrarian republicanism that had dominated during the preceding Federalist period. Thomas Jefferson had argued that the moral, spiritual, and national integrity of American culture rested upon the citizenry’s relationship to the natural landscape and its gentle cultivation, and he had imagined a nation of small farmers. By the 1830s and 1840s, however, industrialization had begun to spread across the American landscape in the form of railroads, steamboats, and agricultural machinery. According to historian Leo Marx, this led to a consciousness of what has been called the “machine in the garden” – the recognition that the utopian and rural values of early American identity were being challenged by industrialism, expansion, and urbanization.

The middle of the nineteenth century also marked a change in American self-perceptions in two important ways. Perhaps most importantly, the question of slavery and abolition became increasingly urgent as the economic and social climates of the urban North and the agricultural South diverged radically and as the opening of the western frontier shifted the balance of political power. At the same time, the territorial expansion of the United States westward also changed the way Americans came to understand and to construct their identity. During this period, characterized by the philosophical imperatives of expansion known as “Manifest Destiny” and shaped by the war with Mexico from 1846–1848, the settlement of the American west was advancing rapidly, so that by 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner could claim that the frontier was closed and that it had irrevocably shaped what it meant to be an American. In the “Frontier thesis,” Turner had completed the idealization of the west that had begun during the presidency of Andrew Jackson (1828–1836), and the settlement of the west brought with it new mythologies, stereotypes, and images of progress. American Romanticism may be understood as an alternatively nostalgic and progressive response to these shifting values and as an effort to negotiate the tension between different models of the American relationship to the landscape.

These changing attitudes toward the American landscape and its relationship to national identity are reflected in the art of the Romantic period, particularly in the works of a group of painters known as the Hudson River School. Established during the 1820s and working until about the 1850s in the United States, these painters represented in their images the tensions surrounding American attitudes toward nature and the unsettled wilderness. While earlier paintings of the American landscape had emphasized the

aesthetic tradition known as the picturesque, in which the harmonious balance of natural and human elements was central, the Hudson River painters introduced the more complex dynamics associated with the sublime. The sublime had been a central theme of European Romanticism since the 1780s and was used to explore the mind's encounter with objects that overwhelmed the understanding. According to its most important theorist, the English writer Edmund Burke (1729–1797), the sublime was an experience characterized by feelings of fear and anxiety in the face of something awesome – particularly wild and rugged landscapes such as the Swiss Alps, Niagara Falls, or, later, the American west.

While elements of the sublime are present in the work of many painters associated with the Hudson River School, including the works of Asher B. Durand (1796–1886), paintings such as Thomas Cole's (1801–1848) *The Oxbow, the Connecticut River near Northampton* (1836) are considered representative examples of the movement. In this image, Cole captures the contrast between a calm and cultivated pastoral valley and the threat posed by the encroachment of the wilderness, and the painting has been read as symbolizing the Romantic tension between nature and human endeavor. "Luminists" such as John Kensett (1816–1872) continued this tradition of Romantic landscape painting from the 1840s–1880s, focusing on subjects associated with maritime scenery. Most importantly, as the nineteenth century progressed, painters began to create images of the American west that drew upon the visual language of the sublime. Artists such as Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) and Thomas Moran (1837–1926) helped to mythologize and, therefore, ultimately to preserve areas of the Rockies and the west by helping to create support for the conservationist movement (1850–1920) and for emergence of the National Parks in the 1870s; yet, by representing western America as "virgin" territories, they also reflected the very conditions of "Manifest Destiny" that placed these landscapes in jeopardy of development.

This tension between civilization and wilderness can be seen in the literature of American Romanticism as well, but in these works the dynamic is often internalized. In other words, the contrasting aspects of the landscape often come to symbolize a conflict within the national psyche, which imagined American identity as simultaneously a product of the frontier and of emerging industrial capitalism. Romanticism emphasized the individual encounter with the natural, moral, and spiritual world, and one of its central concerns was the process of self-knowledge. Writers often described this encounter with the self in very different ways, however. Some Romantic writers, such as Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), or Herman Melville (1819–1891), focused on the wild or "savage" drives to power, domination, and cruelty within human nature, and their works often engaged themes of supernaturalism, psychological dis-

turbance, or the Gothic. The classic example of American Romanticism in this vein is Melville's novel *Moby Dick* (1851), which focuses on Ahab's encounter with a natural world that takes on the characteristics of his own mind and its pathologies.

While authors such as Melville emphasized the sublime or Gothic mode of Romanticism, other authors represented the American psyche and the progress toward cultivation of the landscape more positively. Writers such as James Fennimore Cooper (1789–1851), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), and David "Davy" Crockett (1786–1836) offered images of Anglo settlers and frontiersmen transforming and taming the American wilderness, and these works connected American national identity with the characteristics of the "noble savage." The term "noble savage" was first popularized in the eighteenth century by European philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1788), and it was used as part of the language of colonial encounter to describe indigenous peoples such as the American Indians in ways that idealized them as simple, uncivilized, and close to nature and to natural religion. During the nineteenth century, Anglo writers hoping to create a new literary tradition and to define their own national voice came to assimilate these same "savage" values into an image of American political identity as grounded in a reverence for and personal connection to the landscape, even as individuals participated in its conquest and appropriation. Davy Crockett's *Autobiography* (1834) and the mythology that surrounds him, for example, reveal the powerful legacy of Romanticism on American culture during this formative century.

Finally, the American Romantic period was also associated with a group of writers and philosophers known as the Transcendentalists. This group included writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), and the movement later influenced or involved important nineteenth-century nature writers such as Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894), or George Perkins Marsh (1801–1882), founder of the conservationist movement. A central theme of Transcendentalism was the idea that complete human experience could only be achieved through harmony with nature and through participation in the universal consciousness ascribed to the living universe. In formulating its ideas, the Transcendentalist movement drew upon several theological and philosophical traditions, including pantheism, Unitarianism, Platonism, and the increasingly available translations of Eastern religious traditions. The literary texts most closely associated with Transcendentalism include Emerson's *Nature* (1836) and Thoreau's *Walden* (1854).

American Romanticism, then, describes a formative period in American cultural history, during which the landscape and its wildness again came to represent a particular source of spiritual, moral, and national vitality. If

the previous and first generations of Americans had viewed the wilderness as an obstacle to be overcome in the cultivation of democracy and as a space to be conquered and tamed as one of the conditions of stable nationhood and national identity, the Romantics came to see the matter differently. For the American Romantics, the wilderness came to symbolize an empty space, the very vacancy of which allowed for the projection onto it of an idealized and powerful vision of national identity. Preserving the wild and the mythologies that characterized the wilderness as “empty” allowed the American landscape to become the scene in which the moral, spiritual, and political conflicts of Romanticism were forged and resolved.

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Romanticism – Western toward Asian Religions

Although some of the pioneers of the environmental movement, notably Henry David Thoreau, were interested in and sympathetic to Asian religious ideas, it was not until the 1960s that the idea that South and East Asian religions are more likely to promote beneficent behavior toward nature became widespread amongst scholars, adherents of those religions, and the public. The idea became popular at a time when environmentalists began to argue that the severity of the environmental crisis demanded a deep and radical change in attitudes rather than scientific or technological fixes.

The perception that scientific and technological intervention in natural processes was a part of the problem, rather than a solution to environmental degradation, was reinforced by the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962. Carson’s belief that “whenever we substitute something man-made and artificial for a natural feature of the earth, we have retarded some part of man’s spiritual growth” (Carson 1998: 160) found ready acceptance in the counterculture of the period. In 1967, Lynn White argued in an influential article that the roots of the ecological crisis were to be found in Judeo-Christian conceptions of divinely legitimated human mastery of nature. Moreover, White argued that “Marxism, like Islam, is a Judeo-Christian heresy” (White 1996: 189) and that therefore, both shared Christian axioms. Alternative values or an alternative spirituality that could promote a less damaging relationship with the environment had therefore to be sought outside the Western religious tradition in, amongst others, the religions of South and East Asia.

Although each of the major South and East Asian religions has found advocates for the environmentally positive values of the tradition, by far the most significant have been the claims made for Buddhism. White already identified Buddhism as offering the best chance to rethink humanity’s relationship to nature, although he remained doubtful of its viability in the West. As Buddhism has attracted more Western converts, the claims made for its environmental credentials have grown. Martine Bachelor and Kerry Brown write, “at its very essence, Buddhism can be described as an ecological religion or a religious ecology” (Bachelor and Brown 1992: viii) and Alan Sponberg makes the claim that “Buddhism is an environmental ethic” (Sponberg 1997). Other prominent Buddhist environmental thinkers and activists, such as Gary Snyder and Joanna Macy, have made comparable claims. Rather more sober estimates have been offered by Ian Harris and Lambert Schmithausen. It is, however, the strength of some of the claims made for Buddhism’s environmental credentials, and their similarity to some other Western claims about Buddhism (for example, Rita Gross’s claim that “Buddhism is feminism” [Gross 1993: 130]), that may indicate that they owe more to Western interests than to anything that is the case about Buddhism. To demonstrate this, it is worth conceptualizing these claims within the longer history of Western perceptions of Asian religions, and of Buddhism in particular.

Although as early as 1710 the Jesuit writer J.F. Pons had connected the Chinese who revered the Buddha, the monks of Japan and the Lamas of Tibet with the Buddhists reviled as atheists in India, it was not until the 1840s that speculations about the possible African or central Asian origins of Buddhism were finally replaced by a consensus among European scholars that India was the birthplace of Buddhism. Once the question of the relative priority of Buddhism and Brahmanism had been settled in favor

of the latter (by about 1850) the idea that Buddhism was to Hinduism as Protestantism was to Roman Catholicism (or, more rarely, as Christianity was to Judaism) became irresistible to northern European authors. The late-nineteenth-century vogue for Buddhism, especially in England, owed much to contemporary revulsion for Hinduism and to anti-Catholic polemic. Philip Almond quotes the Unitarian James Freeman Clarke, who insisted that despite the apparent external resemblance of Buddhist and Catholic ritual, “deeper and more essential relations connect Brahmanism with the Romish Church, and the Buddhist system with Protestantism. . . . Buddhism in Asia, like Protestantism in Europe, is a revolt of nature against spirit, of humanity against caste, of individual freedom against the despotism of an order, of salvation by faith against salvation by sacraments” (Almond 1988: 74).

Just as the Buddha was represented as the ideal Protestant for a certain northern European, anti-Catholic audience, so he was represented as an agnostic among those doubting Victorians for whom the term was coined in 1869. The idea that the Buddha was an agnostic may be found among both scholars sympathetic to Buddhism, such as T.W. Rhys Davids, and those who were more hostile. That this was another projection arising from intra-European debate may be demonstrated by considering David Snellgrove’s comments on the absurdity of applying the term “agnostic” to the Buddha, who is consistently presented in Buddhist sources from the earliest period as omniscient.

The best-known attempt to say something of a general kind about Western perceptions of Asia remains Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. For Said, Orientalism is characterized by the conviction that the Orient is above all different, that which the West is not. This gives rise to a series of oppositions that configure Orientalist perceptions of both self and other. Where the West is rational, active, disciplined, masculine and free, the Orient is irrational, passive, degenerate or lascivious, feminine and subjugated – all ideas that can be abundantly documented in relation to early European perceptions of Asia and its religions. Said’s work has been subject to extensive correctives – there were always exceptions to the perception of the Orient as entirely “other.” For the British, India’s “martial races” were masculine, and Buddhism has been seen as a rational, even a scientific, faith. Nevertheless, the best evidence for thinking that ecological concern in the West has simply extended this binary logic by adding another series of oppositions to it (where the West is environmentally destructive and polluting, the Orient – and its religions – are environmentally affirming and beneficent) is the uniformity and vehemence of the claims made on behalf of Asian religions. Indeed, these claims have been made on behalf of all the major South and East Asian traditions and arise not from the overwhelming weight of evidence of practical or doctrinal environmental concern among

Asian religions but rather in spite of the (at best) inconclusive nature of such evidence. This strongly suggests that the key reason for the emergence of such claims has been the Orientalist perception of such religions as fundamentally “other.” As the West came to perceive itself as environmentally destructive and, following White, to attribute that to its religious formation, this Orientalist logic dictated that Asia – and its religions – being “other,” had to be seen as environmentally beneficent. Moreover, as was the case with other Orientalist perceptions, the idea that Asian religions are environmentally beneficent has been readily adopted by adherents of those religions, the more enthusiastically because this perception lacks the derogatory associations of some earlier perceptions of Asian religions despite depending on the same logic of difference.

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See also: Carson, Rachael; Nobel Savage; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm; Romanticism (various); Thoreau, Henry David.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a leading Enlightenment thinker, was perhaps most famous for his appeal to the “state of nature” as an ideal in whose light the general distortions of modern society could be measured and remedies proposed. Rousseau was a passionate critic of what he perceived to be the artifice, false consciousness, and inequality of modern society, and he advocated strongly the need to recover natural feeling, virtue, natural compassion, freedom, and equality. He placed such trust in “nature” because he trusted nature’s God.

Born a Calvinist, Rousseau converted to Catholicism as a young man, and later adopted deist views rejecting revealed religion in favor of “natural religion” based on the evidence of God’s existence that reason discerns in the wondrous order and harmony of the system of nature. He elaborated in detail an educational agenda aimed at protecting the natural feelings and growing virtue of young people by having them first engage the challenges and constraints posed by the natural environment, rather than the alienation, prejudice, and competitiveness thrust at them by society. During his last years of life, he turned for comfort to the study of botany and to walking in the countryside. His last book, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1782) described ecstatic periods of direct contemplation of the “great pageant” of creation. This work was widely read and gave impetus to the Romantic Movement’s general reverence of the nature and celebration of natural feeling. Rousseau was a watershed figure of the eighteenth century whose writings did much to popularize a growing sense of reverence for nature.

Rousseau followed the lead of classic Christian theologians and deist thinkers in seeing proof of God’s existence in the harmony, order and motion of the system of nature. Rousseau drew on Christian and deist views regarding God’s providential dominion over the world and on humanity’s “fall,” combining these into a powerful narrative of original goodness, societal corruption, and proposed paths of recovery and renewal. He broke with the Christian notion of original sin and located the Fall not in human nature, but in human history. Armed with these themes of creation and Fall, Rousseau could launch a harsh indictment against societal alienation and injustice and still affirm hope in humanity’s fundamental goodness and potential.

Born and raised in Geneva, Rousseau received no formal education, but his father gave him a love of nature

and of books. He was apprenticed to an engraver, but he soon left, and was taken into the home of a Swiss baroness, Madame de Warens, who became his patron and lover. Under her guidance Rousseau converted to Catholicism, enjoyed years of undisturbed study of philosophy and literature, and grew in his appreciation for the beauties of nature. At the age of thirty he moved to Paris, developed a close friendship with Denis Diderot (1713–1784), the pantheistic French philosopher, and met many other philosophers. He achieved notoriety in 1750 with the publication of his essay, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, which sparked controversy by arguing that progress in the arts and sciences distorted human life by pulling us away from the essential goodness, contentment, and virtues found in the “state of nature.” This argument clashed with a central assumption of the Enlightenment, namely, that progress in reason and science directly promotes human well-being and moral virtue. After publishing a *Discourse on Inequality* (1755) that developed his account of societal evolution, Rousseau moved out of Paris to the country home of a benefactor. There in rapid succession he wrote his masterworks: *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761); *Emile, or On Education* (1762), and *The Social Contract* (1762). The first, a novel about romance and love and their conflict with duty, became the most widely read work of fiction in France for a number of years. The second became a recognized classic of educational philosophy. *The Social Contract* became a landmark of political theory. Its stress on popular sovereignty and freedom gave voice to aspirations that anticipated the ideals of revolutionary France. Many critics, however, noted the irony that Rousseau, who could not tolerate the demands of family life and abandoned his five children to a public orphanage, could write so eloquently of love, personal duty, and the importance of children’s upbringing.

Rousseau’s fullest account of his views on religion is found in *Emile*, in a section titled the “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar.” In it the Vicar explains that when we ponder the marvelous order, harmony, and motion of the physical universe we can only conclude that there exists a rational and benevolent power who wills this universe into existence and sets things in motion. As he says: “I perceive God everywhere in His works. I sense Him in me; I see Him all around me” (Rousseau 1979a: 277). As God is good, so is all God’s creation, including humanity itself. Religious belief thus provides Rousseau with basic confidence for trusting nature’s goodness and purity. Rousseau thus affirms the essential goodness of humanity even while stressing the history of human corruption. As he put it in the opening of *Emile*: “Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man” (Rousseau 1979a: 37). For Rousseau, the path out of societal “sin” lies not in some special divine grace, but rather in recovering our original goodness.

Both *Emile* and *The Social Contract* were condemned in Paris and Geneva by religious and political authorities who viewed the books as subversive. Rousseau fled France and lived for a number of years at the mercy of benefactors. Anxiety ridden and often paranoid, he worked on his *Confessions* and retreated into the solace of the botanical studies and countryside walks. His *Reveries*, published posthumously, describe him as feeling rejected by friends and society and yet experiencing a sense of “peace and contentment” arising from a sustained contact with nature and its simple plant life. Walks in which he observed the “great pageant of nature” gave him a sense of the “unity of all things.” Such encounters promote an “expansive soul.” “I feel transports of joy and inexpressible raptures in becoming fused as it were with the great system of beings and identifying myself with the whole of nature” (Rousseau 1979b: 108, 111, 112). Walks amidst nature gave him a pure “feeling of existence” (Rousseau 1979b: 89).

Many in Rousseau’s lifetime dismissed him as an apostle of “primitivism” and this caricature is alive and well even today. This view arises from readings of Rousseau’s *Discourses* where he fails to clarify exactly how we are to recover the “state of nature.” In places he does seem to call for a return to the practices of a primordial “golden age.” However in *Emile* Rousseau makes clear that such a return is neither possible nor desirable. He states directly that his aim in education is to protect young people’s natural feelings and virtues from premature bending under societal pressure so that when they reach adulthood they may join society with their emotional integrity and sense of moral responsibility healthy and uncorrupted. *Emile*, the boy, is to live in the countryside amidst nature, so he will grow “naturally” and be well prepared to enter marriage and society in adulthood. The “state of nature,” for Rousseau, functions less as a claim about historical origins than an assertion about fundamental human capacities to recover natural integrity, simplicity, and virtue.

Rousseau’s naturalism anticipates in important ways our ecological understanding of humanity as a part of the natural world. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss among others admired Rousseau’s insights in his attempt to understand humanity’s evolutionary history. Rousseau’s expansive sense of identification with the rest of creation anticipated a similar emphasis found in today’s deep ecology movement. Likewise, while Rousseau followed the general anthropocentrism of classic Western ethics in placing humanity as the crown of the natural world, he extended basic “natural rights” to animals and thus anticipated the core moral principle upheld by today’s animal welfare movement. Years before British utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham famously made the same point, Rousseau held that natural compassion urges us both to refrain from harming not just other humans, but also “any other sentient being” except in cases of true necessity. Humans are bound by strict duties toward ani-

mals who enjoy “the right not to be needlessly mistreated” (Rousseau 1988: 7).

In addition Rousseau’s analysis offers insight into some of the contemporary societal dynamics that increase ecological degradation. For example, his understandings of inequality and how it shapes social structures and psychological dynamics shed light on forces that promote overconsumption and ecological degradation. Similarly, his critique of education anticipated the concerns of ecologically concerned people who fear that modern advertising promotes unsustainable lifestyles. Rousseau’s suspicion of socially inflated wants and his affirmation of the simple, virtuous life are as timely now as they were in his day. For all of his eccentricities and faults, Rousseau remains a seminal figure in eighteenth-century Western philosophy and letters challenging many aspects of modernity by an appeal to nature’s goodness as it comes from the hands of the divine.

William French

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- See also: Deism; Philosophy of Nature; Romanticism in European History; Romanticism in European Literature.

Rubber and Religion (Belgian Congo)

The Belgian occupation and exploitation of the Congo (1885–1960) was one of the most brutal chapters in world history. At the infamous Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, European powers carved up the African continent into colonial possessions, and the King of the Belgians, Leopold II, was granted sole control of the vast Congo River Basin. A devout Catholic and self-promoting “philanthropist,” Leopold founded The Congo Free State (1885–1908) and

vowed to bring civilization to its people, which for him meant bringing Christianity to save “pagan” souls. In reality, the Congo Free State was a colonial slave system designed to exploit two of Central Africa’s most precious natural resources: its people and its land, first for rubber and ivory and later for minerals. Catholic missions played an integral role in this system, providing moral sanction and local manpower for the plunder, making this form of religion a tremendously destructive influence on the region’s environmental and social history. On the other side of the struggle, however, Protestant missionaries brought the horrors of the Congo Free State to the world’s attention, while indigenous Congolese religious movements like the Kimbanguist Church rose in staunch resistance to white occupation. Thus religion was a central force in both the establishment of and resistance to Belgian rule in the Congo and its concomitant environmental and social destruction.

Roughly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River, the Congo Basin is dominated by a network of rivers and tributaries that flow into the one of the world’s greatest rivers, the River Congo. This riverine system generously nourishes the immense Central African Rain Forest, which is bordered to the north and south by rolling savannah and to the east by the Ruwenzori Mountains and the great lakes of the Rift Valley, the birthplace of humanity. The original inhabitants of the region, often incorrectly referred to as “Pygmies,” count as descendants the baMbuti and the baTwi, who today still live in the Congo’s rainforest much like their ancestors did since at least 2000 B.C.E.: living in small kin-based clan units, hunting, gathering, and praising the forest for providing them with the gifts of life. Appreciation of these gifts in the form of dance, song, and prayer remain the ritual emphasis of their religion. One of the most painful ironies of Central African history is, therefore, that a foreign religion, Catholicism, would join forces with Leopold in the massive plunder of this forest and its indigenous peoples who so venerated it.

By around the year 1000, Bantu ethnic groups had migrated from north of the forest to the Congo Basin, eventually becoming the region’s dominant peoples, with large and complex centralized kingdoms forming as early as the fourth century. The Bantu brought with them monotheistic religions that were centrally concerned with the dead and local nature spirits, which, for instance, the baKongo call *basimbi*. Certain *basimbi* reside at local springs or other significant topographical features. A key difference between their worldview and that of the Congo Basin’s indigenous peoples was the Bantus’ deep-seated fear of sorcery. Bantu religion is in fact largely concerned with the negotiation of sorcery (i.e., with detecting it, combating it, and healing those who are afflicted by it).

Generously funded by Leopold from 1874 to 1877, the Englishman-turned-American Henry Morton Stanley

explored the Congo Basin to locate both the source of the River Congo and the famous English Protestant missionary and explorer David Livingstone, from whom no one in Europe had heard in five years. Upon finding Livingstone, Stanley triumphantly returned to Europe, and Leopold promptly hired him to establish commercial relations with local Congolese chiefs and a series of trading stations along the River Congo. Leopold’s foray into “The Scramble for Africa” thus began to unfold as European powers looked to the African Continent to provide natural resources for the Industrial Revolution. Like Leopold, most Europeans involved in the Scramble liked to think of themselves as having higher moral purpose, hence the spread of civilization was linked to Christian missions and the abolition of the Afro-Arab slave trade in East Africa.

With the invention of the pneumatic tire, rubber immediately became a key natural resource for a rapidly industrializing Europe. Merely six years after Leopold founded the Congo Free State, his personal colony was producing one-tenth of the world’s rubber, upwards to 6000 tons a year. How this was accomplished is one of the most violent and tragic stories in African history. Local chiefs had signed away their lands in treaties that they could not read, while Leopold aggressively sent administrators and missionaries to oversee his plunder of the Congo, ordering them to “neglect no means of exploiting the produce of the forests.” To do so, the Belgians enslaved thousands of Congolese, razing their villages and forests to clear land and provide labor for rubber plantations. Symbolic of this great injustice, the *chicotte*, a whip made of strips of dried hippopotamus hide, was liberally used to beat Africans either to work or to death. Along with severed African hands, the *chicotte* would become the symbol of colonial oppression in the Congo.

Resistance to such oppressive and violent domination was of course to be expected. Hence Leopold arranged for the formation in the Congo of *La Force Publique*, a standing army of African mercenaries and forced conscripts under Belgian command. This notoriously brutal force of some 19,000 soldiers served to ensure that Leopold’s greed would be satisfied with abundant exports of rubber and ivory. In order to swell the Force’s ranks, the King of the Belgians had Catholic missions double as boot camps for thousands of child soldiers. Some were orphans; many others were quite simply slaves. In 1890 Leopold wrote,

I believe we must set up three children’s colonies. One in the Upper Congo near the equator, specifically military, with clergy for religious instruction and for vocational education. One at Leopoldville under clergy with a soldier for military training. One at Boma like that at Leo . . . The aim of these colonies is above all to furnish us with soldiers (Hochschild 1999: 133–4).

In time, many other “children’s colonies” were founded by Catholic missionaries, whom Leopold heavily subsidized. Thousands of Congolese became orphans as a result of La Force Publique’s brutality. These children were sometimes forced to march hundreds of miles to Catholic missions for military inscription. One priest described the fusion of military and religious symbolism reflective of this horrific arrangement: “the children marched in front, the soldiers following . . . During Mass . . . at the moment of the elevation of the host, ‘present arms!’ was sounded by bugles” (Hochschild 1999: 134). Discipline and order were of course maintained by liberal use of the *chicotte*, exacerbating the already inhumane conditions for African children on the Congo Free State’s Catholic missions. Between malnutrition, disease, beatings, and long marches, over half of the colonies’ children perished. Yet even this was lent a glaze of ecclesial sanction, as seen in the commentary of one mother superior:

Several of the little girls were so sickly on their arrival that . . . our good sisters couldn’t save them, but all had the happiness of receiving Holy Baptism; they are now little angels in Heaven who are praying for our great king (Hochschild 1999: 135).

These “little angels” were among some 10 million Congolese who perished in Leopold’s Congo Free State, more than half the region’s entire population. The Congolese interpreted such oppression in other religious terms, looking to nature to render divine justice, as expressed in their singing:

O Mother, how unfortunate we are! . . .
 But the sun will kill the white man,
 But the moon will kill the white man,
 But the sorcerer will kill the white man,
 But the tiger will kill the white man,
 But the crocodile will kill the white man,
 But the elephant will kill the white man,
 But the river will kill the white man
 (Hochschild 1999: 139).

Some whites also cried out against the rampant human-rights abuse in the Congo Free State. E.D. Morel was a high-ranking Belgian administrator during the early phase of Leopold’s plunder of the Congo. Outraged by the brutality of the occupation, Morel quit the régime and sought to alert the world to the grave injustice of the Congo Free State. His cry was echoed by numerous Protestant missionaries in the Congo Basin, who, unlike Catholic missionaries, were independent of Leopold’s regal authoritarianism. In 1904, Morel founded with British Protestant missionaries John and Alice Harris the *West African Mail*, a newsletter that publicized the horrors of Leopold’s

Congo. Among their more influential readers, Bertrand Russell wrote,

The only men in the Congo who could not be silenced were Protestant missionaries . . . To take one instance out of many, Joseph Clark, of the American Baptist Missionary Union wrote: on March 26, 1896: “This rubber traffic is steeped in blood . . . The lake is reserved for the king – no traders allowed – and to collect rubber for him hundreds of men, women, and children have been shot” (Russell 1934: 454).

The world took note, and in 1908 the Congo Free State was annexed from Leopold by the Belgian government and renamed “The Belgian Congo” (1908–1960). Central African prophets (Kikongo: *bangunza*) had by then reinterpreted Christianity to denounce white rule, recasting indigenous notions of sorcery into modes of understanding and denouncing colonialism. The most important of these was Ngunza Simon Kimbangu, whose rapidly blossoming movement was so threatening to the Belgians that he was imprisoned in 1921 and given 120 lashes. Many of his followers were exiled to other parts of the Congo Basin, which only served to spread the movement into an international multi-ethnic religion that today counts some 5 million adherents. After Kimbangu’s death in prison in 1950, his son Joseph Diangiende was declared the leader of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu (*l’Eglise de Jesus Christ sur la Terre par le Prophete Simon Kimbangu*: EJCSK). EJCSK holds that Kimbangu was God’s apocalyptic messenger who prophesied the end of white rule, the establishment of the kingdom of God, and the second coming of Christ. The Church was formally recognized by Belgian authorities in 1959, one year before Congolese independence. Since 1970 EJCSK has been a member of the World Council of Churches.

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See also: African Religions and Nature Conservation; Biodiversity and Religion in Equatorial Africa; Congo River Watershed; Kimbanguism (Central Africa); Pygmies (Mbuti Foragers) and Bila Farmers.

Rubber Tappers

In the year 1839 Charles Goodyear perfected the vulcanization process for rubber, thus creating an immediate worldwide demand for rubber. The Brazilian Amazon, and in particular, the upper Amazon region and the state of Acre, holds the world's largest natural rubber tree stands. In the late 1870s, immigrants from the northeast of Brazil, driven by droughts in the northeast region and drawn by the promise of riches from collecting rubber, provided the labor for extracting, or "tapping" latex. They became known as *seringueiros*, or rubber tappers. The rubber "boom" ended with the domestication of rubber trees in Southeast Asia in the early 1900s. However, another wave of northeastern migrants, known as *soldados do borracha*, or rubber soldiers, came to the region during World War II as the axis powers cut off access to rubber plantation production in Southeast Asia and the upper Amazon once again became the world's source of rubber. This second "boom" ended at war's end, but rubber tappers remained and still ply their trade.

Northeastern migrants brought to the Amazon a strong Catholic faith without indigenous religious influence. The names given to *seringais*, or rubber forest areas, such as São Pedro, São Vicente and São Francisco do Iracema, themselves demonstrate the strength of the Catholic tradition brought by the rubber tappers. However, upon their arrival, the rubber tappers did not wholly impose their religious traditions on the local population, but rather their religious traditions were modified by the new socio-cultural and environmental conditions of life in the Amazon. Many of the beliefs of rubber tappers today are of mixed influence, with Catholic traditions influenced by the Amazon folk beliefs held by *caboclos*, or mixed-race river-dwelling populations, and indigenous populations that inhabited the region. Some of these folk beliefs have European origin and were brought by Portuguese settlers in the early seventeenth century. Santo Daime, a religion founded by a rubber tapper in the 1920s which involves the drinking of *ayahuasca* as its sacrament, also reflects this mixing of Christian and indigenous beliefs, as well as African influence. Thus, like the religious beliefs of other Amazon populations, the formation of rubber tapper religious beliefs should be looked upon as a "continuous process" (Galvão 1952: 169), one that retraces their cultural background and adaptation to the Amazon environment for over a century.

The most widespread folk beliefs adapted by many rubber tappers are: *mãe seringueira*, the mother of the rubber tree; *panema*, a hex that prevents rubber tappers from killing game; and *cabloquinho*, father of the forest. Smith (1996) provides an excellent description of *mãe seringueira*, a short, long-haired woman with bleeding arms and legs, that appear to have been cut by a tapper's knife. *Mãe seringueira* appears to those who overexploit her rubber

trees. Although regular, measured cuts can be made during the tapping season, "mae de seringa becomes upset when people abuse her children," namely, cut her trees excessively or too deeply, causing the trees to die (Smith 1996: 132). Smith recounts the story of a rubber tapper, in debt to his patron and needing greater rubber production to pay it down. *Mãe seringueira* appeared to him as he was angrily overtapping the trees. Explaining his situation, *mãe seringueira* agreed to provide him the latex he needed if he "would leave her daughters alone" (Smith 1996: 132). He was also told to tell no one about the agreement. However, the following year, unable to keep silent about their accord, the rubber tapper died of a poisonous snakebite, attributed to his broken promise.

Panema is another common belief among Amazon folk peoples. A rubber tapper's "repeated failure" in hunting "that cannot be explained by natural causes" is attributed to *panema*, a hex that contaminates both the individual and their weapon (Galvão 1952: 108). Although *panema* is sometimes referred to as "bad luck," ". . . it is not merely an occasional failure of fortune, but an incapacity," sustained over time (Galvão 1952: 108). Galvão noted that this can occur for various reasons. For example, the consumption of game by a pregnant woman is one common source of *panema*. "Ill feelings or jealousy among friends over food" may cause that friend to experience *panema* (Galvão 1952: 108). A rubber tapper in Acre, Brazil stated that one can get *panema* if one shoots an animal and then cannot find it, thus it dies unconsumed by the hunter (Weigand 1997). A tapper may be stricken with *panema* if his wife sleeps while he is hunting, or if "he hunts with dogs on Thursdays, the day belonging to *Caipora*," the father of the game (Almeida 2002: 123 [our translation]). Methods to cure *panema* may involve the use of plants collected in the forest or grown in home gardens in "smoke" and water baths.

Cabloquinho is described by a rubber tapper in Acre as a "magical boy-like creature, one meter tall and owner of all wild game" (Weigand 1997: 55). *Cabloquinho* punishes hunters who exploit wild game for pleasure or commercial gain. If a rubber tapper hunts every day, beyond consumptive needs, *cabloquinho* may become angry and beat the hunter. Rubber tappers in Acre noted that he may inflict physical pain on both the hunter and their hunting dogs to the point of unconsciousness. One rubber tapper stated that his brother was hunting a peccary when a small boy appeared and touched him on the head before he was able to shoot. The man passed out and when he woke up his ammunition was gone and he felt poorly. The rubber tapper's belief in *cabloquinho* is similar to the more generalized Amazonian belief in the *curupira* legend. Thus, *mãe seringueira*, *panema* and *cabloquinho* illustrate tapper conservation behavior and rationale in using forest resources.

The Santo Daime religion, founded in the 1920s by

Raimundo Irineu Serra, a rubber tapper living in the Southwest Brazilian Amazon state of Acre reflects the melding of Christian, indigenous, and African beliefs. The Santo Daime ritual is centered on the consumption of ayahuasca, a drink made from the psychotropic vine plant *Banisteriopsis caapi*. While drinking ayahuasca, Serra experienced a series of visions during which he encountered the “Queen of the Forest . . . a woman whom he identified with the Virgin Mary” (Mizrach 2003: no page number). It is through these visions that the tenets of Santo Daime, “reincarnation, salvation and protection of the rainforest” were developed (Mizrach 2003: no page number). Hymns and rituals that accompanied the consumption of ayahuasca focused on “enlightenment and healing” (Mizrach 2003: no page number). Today Santo Daime ritual still centers on the drinking of ayahuasca with the chanting of hymns and rhythmic dancing. Although still practiced in small forest communities of southwest Amazonia, it is primarily urban-based, with a growing network of followers in major urban centers in southern Brazil as well as in Europe and the United States.

In addition to its spiritual role, the Catholic Church has also played a critical role in the rubber tapper’s struggle for social justice, most notably in the state of Acre. In the 1970s, as the rubber tappers came under increasing pressure from ranchers to abandon their landholdings, the Catholic Church, through the establishment of *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* and the teaching of liberation theology, became an organizing force for poor landholders in their confrontations with ranchers. The Church supported union organization and educated rubber tappers of their land rights. During *empates*, nonviolent confrontations with workers hired by ranchers to deforest areas where rubber tappers lived, rubber tappers recited prayers, such as *Pai Nosso do Seringueiro* and *Ave Maria do Seringueiro*, to ask God for liberty and justice.

Today, the Catholic Church continues to play an important role in rubber tapper community development in the forest, serving as a base for community organization and social action. In addition, annual festival days celebrating Patron Saints, such as San Sebastian, the Patron Saint of the cities of Rio Branco and Xapuri in Acre, remain important religious holidays to the rubber tapper population. Throughout the 1990s, evangelical churches have also established a growing presence in many forest communities. Future research should examine how different religious beliefs among forest families may be creating new community customs and shaping natural resource use.

In the state of Acre, the state “Forest Government,” elected in 1998, is incorporating rubber tapper traditions and beliefs in innovative policies for forest management. These policies are part of a broader state development vision referred to as “neoeextractivism,” which emphasizes

the role of traditional peoples in conserving tropical forests while improving their economic well-being.

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- See also: Amazonia; Ayahuasca; Brazil and Contemporary Christianity; Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Umbanda.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford (1936–)

Rosemary Radford Ruether is a leading ecofeminist voice. She seamlessly connects feminism, liberationist thought, and concern for the Earth.

Ruether’s ecofeminist approach has been a long-standing and vital part of her constructive theological work. Her ecofeminist commitment emerged organically out of her recognition of the connections between human domination of the Earth and human interspecies domination: men over women, “First World” over “Third World” peoples, whites over people of color, rich over poor, Christian over non-Christian, and other forms of oppression. Her influential book *New Woman/New Earth* (1975) made her the first Christian liberation theologian to articulate those relationships explicitly.

Ruether’s theology demonstrates thorough historical knowledge. She explores the historical traditions of Jewish and Christian scriptures, Greek philosophy, Ancient Near Eastern worldviews, mainstream as well as marginalized Christian theologies, and more contemporary philosophies of romanticism, liberalism, and Marxism. Her nuanced approach balances incisive critique of elements in these sources that contribute to sexism, racism, and environmental degradation with the reclaiming of liberating aspects of the same sources. *Gaia and God* (1992) expands

the sources of her constructive thought to include the new, scientific “creation story.”

Ruether’s work illuminates the systemic nature of patriarchal, hierarchical, and environmentally destructive attitudes and behaviors. Equality of women with men is not enough if both continue to dominate nature. Bridging the gap between rich and poor countries cannot be accomplished by raising the worldwide consumption rate to the unsustainable levels of northern rich nations. She calls for transformation of religious symbols and cultural values, and also for a radical restructuring of power relationships within societies and globally. To accomplish this restructuring, Ruether builds alliances with others who are struggling for eco-justice and justice in human relationships. The book *Women Healing Earth*, which she edited, includes essays from Third World women about the impact of globally destructive environmental practices and political policies on their lives, their communities, and the natural world around them.

Her far-ranging critique of patriarchal values in Christian thought and in Western social/ecological practice is made more valuable by her concrete pictures of a different way to live. Her books include imaginative portrayals of how life might be different if men and women lived in mutual harmony with each other, in sustainable communities that did not oppress the Earth or privilege one culture over another. In these communities she calls for shared childcare and use of renewable resources, for egalitarian relationships and widely available mass transit. She enticingly describes life in such a place, where people “watch sunsets . . . plant seeds in soil. . . The sun rises every day. Con Ed sends no bill for sunshine” (1983: 266).

Rosemary Radford Ruether’s ground-breaking connections between the human domination of nature and the subjugation of some human groups by other human groups have been a key influence on liberation theology, the feminist movement, and the ecological movement. She untiringly speaks out for the continued struggle for liberation for the Earth and for women and men of all classes and races, cultures and religions.

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See also: Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Christianity (7d) – Feminist Theology.

Rumî, Jalaluddin (1207–1273)

Rumî, the greatest Sufi poet of Islam, was born in 1207 in Balkh, Afghanistan. The Muslim world honors him with the title of *Maulana* (Our Master). His uniqueness lies in that he based his anthropocosmic worldview on the principle of love. It is this aspect of his deep vision of the universe, and the place of humanity in it, which attracts environmentalists and provides them with a new perspective to see the deeper dimension of reality.

When Rumî was twelve years old, his family left Balkh to escape the Mongol invasion. For four years, the young Rumî traveled extensively in Muslim lands, encountering majestic mountains and beautiful plains, visiting major cities, and meeting well-known Sufis and scholars of the time. His family performed pilgrimage to Mecca and finally settled in Konya, Anatolia, then part of Seljuk Empire.

Rumî’s first teacher was his father, who was an authority in Islamic theology. However, Rumî found theology and classical learning unsatisfyingly occupied with formalism. At this juncture, he had a life-changing meeting with Shams-i Tabrizi, who would become his spiritual mentor. Through his friendship with Shams, Rumî discovered love as the dynamic force of universe. When Rumî died on 17 December 1273, Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike attended his funeral.

God and Creation

For Rumî, God the Cosmic Ego created the material world *ex nihilo* – out of nothing – and never ceases to create new things. Everything has been created with a specific order, duty, purpose, and meaning. There is no lifeless matter in this system; all matter is alive, albeit at various gradations of being. According to Rumî, “earth, and water, fire and air are alive in the view of God, though they appear to be dead to us” (Sharif 1995: 827). He cautions: “never think the earth void or dead; it is aware, it is awake and it is quivering” (Harvey 1994: 56).

Theocentricism is the key concept to understanding Rumî’s anthropocosmic worldview. God is the goal of Rumî’s thought. For Rumî, God wants to be known, so he manifests himself out of his eternal qualities. Two of God’s attributes are especially relevant in this regard: God is the Nourisher of all realms and beings, and as such, he *creates* and *sustains* out of love. Furthermore, God is not a static Absolute, but a perpetually gushing fountain of eternal life, manifesting his Majesty, Wisdom, and Knowledge through the universe. Consequently, in the cosmic system as Rumî sees it, everything happens according to a great plan formulated by Divine Will and Wisdom. Even bees build their houses by inspiration from God. So, a colorful and living world reveals itself in his poetry. While everything is related and connected to each other, everything also has a special space, meaning, duty, and importance.

The cosmos, thus, becomes a meaningful book and precious piece of art which manifests “the attributes and qualities” of its owner. Furthermore, the whole world – fish and moon, atom and sun alike – has been created to worship and love God, and to express its constant adoration in an intoxicated dance. Therefore, Rumi, “teaches his readers to contemplate this aspect of the ever-active God, who shapes the world according to a plan that He alone knows” (Schimmel 1992: 82).

For Rumî, human beings are not outsiders and strangers in a hostile and brutal natural environment. Rather, the whole world is a majestic garden, in which every flower has its function and represents various states and aspects of human life; every leaf on a tree and every bird in a bush offers praise and thanksgiving for God’s greatness and sustenance. Every leaf and tree is a messenger from nonexistence, proclaiming the creative power of God, talking with long hands and green, fresh tongues. Not only does Rumî listen to the constant praise uttered by the flowers and all other creatures, but he also visualizes them in the various positions of prayer. A plane-tree, for example, is opening its hand in prayer just like as a believer would do. The clouds, on the other hand, are pregnant from the ocean of love. The morning breeze is a fitting symbol for the life-giving breath of the Beloved that causes twigs and branches to become intoxicated and dance.

Animal symbolism is also prominent in Rumî’s poetry. Says Rumî, animals are not at all “machines or automata,” as Cartesian philosophy would have us believe. Even the wolf, rooster, and lion know what love is. Therefore, Rumî was very sensitive and kind to animals, as many anecdotes attest. For example, when he was walking, he would not drive a sleeping dog from his path, but rather would wait until the poor creature got up. Moreover, Rumî did not restrict his compassion and love to large animals but embraced every created thing.

The whole of Rumî’s poetry can be regarded as admiration of eternal Beauty as reflected in the cosmos. Therefore, he often uses a mirror as a symbol for the created world, which reflects the eternal Beauty of God. Since the natural world is a mirror of divine beauty, God is closer to human beings than their jugular vein. Rumî sees his Loving God’s signs everywhere, and he never tires of repeating the marvels of God’s creation – the result of the unceasing Divine Will and Power.

Rumî is regarded as an outstanding evolutionary thinker, although not a mechanical or biological evolutionist like Darwin and Spencer. While Darwin presented a biological view of the creation of higher species by blind urges of struggle for existence and life’s adaptation with environment, Rumî comprehends the whole process of evolution in a grand system. Instead of explaining it by mechanical dynamics, he resorts to love as the fundamental urge that creates attraction and affinities: “All

atoms in the cosmos are attracted to one another like lovers, everyone is drawn towards its mate by the magnetic pull of love” (Sharif 1995: 828–9). The heavenly movements are waves in an infinite ocean of love. If cosmic love were not there, all existence would freeze and shrink into nothingness. The organic would refuse to merge and emerge into vegetation, vegetation would not be lifted into animal life, nor would life ascend toward the mind and spirit. In short, without love, nothing would move. It is clear that Rumî developed a different understanding of evolution as assimilation rather than annihilation, one that is based on love and interdependence instead of conflict and survival of the fittest. His theory of evolution can be compared with Bergson, who also argues the creative and evolutionary dimension of life. But while Bergson views this creative evolutionary process as devoid of goal and meaning, Rumî, on the other hand, regards God as the ground and goal of all existence, thus of evolution (Sharif 1995: 829).

Love as a Dynamic Force

For Rumî, a force – a secret energy – lies beneath the spiritual and material world, informing the invisible, progressive change in the universe (humanity included). This force is love, and it originates in God and moves toward God. According to Rumî, love is the positive energy that is responsible for interaction between particles, thus connecting everything with everything else in the universe. So, everything in the universe is interdependent.

Furthermore, says Rumî, since the love arouses every sense, increases the power of intuition, and leads to insight, love is superior to intellect in human life. In daily social life, for example, love has an important practical function: it solves disputes, eliminates selfishness and egotism, and draws aside all veils from the mind. Thus, not only is love basic and necessary for a religious and ethical life, but also for the sustainability of the cosmic order. In a nutshell, Rumî presents a deep and comprehensive understanding of the interdependence and interrelatedness of humanity and the natural world. In so doing, he affirms the reality of the world and dignity of all life, particularly of human life, which has become self-conscious and conscious of its divine origin and goal.

Humanity

Humanity is the central figure in God’s creation and, therefore, is the vicegerent of God on Earth in the sense that it is up to human beings to take care of the whole system. The whole creation is a gift from God and a sign of his creative power. Since God creates and sustains all ecosystems, human beings must interact wisely with the natural world and use its natural resources with care, nurturing a relationship with it founded on love and compassion, which is the essence of all reality.

To conclude, spirituality, rationality, and universal

morality have found a healthy synthesis in Rumi's thought. In his system, God, the universe, and humanity are embraced in a single all-encompassing vision, the vision of creative love. Although six centuries old, Rumi's notions are relevant to present environmental concerns.

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- See also: Islam; Sufism.

Russian Mystical Philosophy

Orthodox Christianity had held the official status of state church in pre-revolutionary Russia, but its rivals were numerous and included Christian sects of a Protestant derivation as well as mystical and occult systems of a syncretic religious orientation. Russian esotericism and occultism have given the world such famous names as Theosophy founder Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), Georgy Gurdjieff (1870s–1949) and his student Pyotr Ouspensky (1878–1947), and Nikolai and Elena Reikh, all of whom brought Eastern-derived spiritual systems to the West. The mystical element is abundant in the work of many prominent Russian philosophers, such as Vladimir Soloviev, Vassily Rozanov and Nikolai Berdyaev. Less well known in the West but extremely influential in Russia were such mystical and “cosmicist” thinkers and visionaries as Nikolai Fedorov, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Pavel

Florensky, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Aleksandr Chizhevsky, Velimir Khlebnikov, Daniil Andreev, and Georgy Gachev. In recent decades, Lev Gumilev, Alexander Dugin, and others have provided an intellectual foundation for the emergence of a variety of strains of Russian ethnonationalism, radical traditionalism, Eurasianism, and right-wing spiritual ecology, most of which are based on ideas regarding the connections between nation or ethnicity, nature, and spiritual or cosmic destiny.

The tradition of Russian mystical philosophy has been characterized by several traits and themes. These include: 1) a propensity for mixing Christian and pre-Christian mythological motifs; 2) a strong social, and often messianic, orientation, evidenced in an intent to inspire the whole nation and to organize it into an ideal societal body; 3) a cosmic dimension, oriented both to a planetary and even extra-planetary future and to the exploration of invisible spiritual worlds; 4) the idea of a global destiny for Russian civilization, based on the premise that its location between Europe and Asia ideally situates it to become the keeper of a universal wisdom combining the best of East and West, and holding forth the promise of Russia becoming the first “post-historical” nation, fated to experience the suffering and illuminations imposed on the world by the struggle of Christ and anti-Christ; and 5) an interest in the notion of a feminine spiritual essence, variously conceived as the Divine Wholeness, Sophia, “the Eternal Feminine” (*Vechnaia Zhenstvennost*), or “The Soul of the World” (*Dusha Mira*).

Cosmism

One of the most popular terms in contemporary Russian philosophical discussions, *cosmism* has come to designate both a particular movement or trend and the principal quality and legacy of Russian philosophy on the whole. Cosmism literally refers to a “cosmic orientation” of thought. The cosmos, in this perspective, is seen as the object of thought, but thought is also considered as a part of the cosmos, both a cognitive reflection of cosmic reality and a constitutive force of cosmic evolution. This philosophy of active evolutionism presupposes the possibility and necessity for the human mind to regulate and transform the laws of nature. Cosmism explains historical, social and psychological processes by the influences of cosmic energies and asserts a reciprocal dependency of the fate of the universe on human consciousness. It is thus a holistic, anthropocentric, teleological and frequently utopian tradition of thought, which sees humanity as in the process of developing a “planetarian consciousness” which could guide the further evolution of the universe and lead to its ultimate perfection.

The roots of cosmism can arguably be found in Eastern Christianity. While Catholicism had a principally historicist and more activist orientation, Orthodoxy is generally considered to be more concerned with the cosmic or

vertical dimension of reality. Within the Orthodox tradition, the foremost aspiration of a Christian is seen to be the “deification of the creature,” presupposing the transfiguration not of only human flesh but also of the entire substance of the universe and of all living entities. Russian Orthodoxy was built on the foundation of an agrarian economy, and inherited from its pre-Christian substrate both a dualistic worldview of light and darkness and an intense sense of participation in the cyclical processes of nature, contrasting with the linear, historical imagination of the more urbanized West.

Perhaps the first monument of Russian cosmism is the so-called *Golubinaia Kniga*, or the *Book of Depth*. This book presents popular Christian beliefs, as expressed in religious folk songs, as a huge matrix of cosmical elements. For example, it says that human meditations derive from heavenly clouds and draws numerous other parallels between human life and the workings of the universe, thus anticipating the basic presupposition of contemporary cosmism – that humanity and the cosmos are symbiotically joined. In a conventional sense, however, the founder of Russian cosmism is considered to be Nikolai Fedorov (Fyodorov, 1828–1903). The religious thrust of Fedorov’s project is the reversal of all natural laws, death being one of them, in order that humanity may manifest God’s omniscience and omnipotence. Christianity, for Fedorov, is primarily the religion of resurrection, and the moral task of humanity is not to wait for the Last Judgment, but to follow the example set by Christ and endeavor to make bodily resurrection possible on the Earth, to transform the entirety of human existence into a humanmade and continuous Easter, using whatever technological resources we can muster.

Following in Fedorov’s path, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857–1935), commonly honored as the “father” of the Soviet space programs, developed a philosophy according to which all physical matter is animate and sentient, and every atom a living and conscious entity. Two basic ideas of cosmism, the recognition of the universe as a living organism and the active regulation of natural forces through means such as genetics, owe their prominence to Tsiolkovsky. If Fedorov were primarily a religious thinker and Tsiolkovsky a hybrid scientist-visionary, Vladimir Vernadsky (1863–1945) represents the strictly scientific end of the cosmicist spectrum. He originated several new disciplines in the natural sciences – among them biochemistry, geochemistry, and integrative geoscience – and was the first scientist to theorize the geologic role of living matter, and the increasing influence of plant, animal and human life on the evolution of planetary structures. Together with French thinkers Eduard Le Roy and Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, Vernadsky developed the concept of the “noosphere,” the collective body of human thought incorporated into the biosphere as an active factor in its transformation. In his view, the geosphere organically

overlaps with the biosphere, which in turn grows into the noosphere. Thought is a form of energy and an active factor of geological evolution that allows humanity to cooperate with nature as a complementary part of a living and thinking organism.

Though cosmism, like all other non-Marxist and “idealist” teachings during the Soviet period, was rejected by official ideology, it nevertheless enjoyed a privileged status. Fedorov’s project for the resurrection of the dead was implicitly incorporated into some undercurrents of Soviet ideology, as manifested most strikingly in the construction of Lenin’s mausoleum, which was designed to preserve his body until technology could resurrect him. In spite of the atheism of Marxism-Leninism and the religiosity of Fedorov, the two systems are compatible inasmuch as both attempt to give immanent realization to transcendental aspirations. The imperative of both ideologies is technological progress that will lead to the mastery by humankind of the blind forces of nature. Both systems criticize capitalist civilization for its social inequality and materialistic obsessions, which appears in Marxism as the greediness of the bourgeoisie and in Fedorov as the dictatorship of fashion, which Fedorov considered to be corrupt and “feminine.” Both strive to overcome individualism and egoism, valuing labor instead as the highest moral duty, since the task of humanity is to subordinate nature to teleological and creative reason.

In recent years, Russian cosmism has been reinvigorated by an increased interest in environmental matters, giving rise, in the writings of Svetlana Semyonova (the most prominent follower of Fedorov), Nikita Moiseev, Fyodor Girenok, and others, to a scientific strand that could be considered the Russian equivalent of the environmental holism of James Lovelock, Gregory Bateson, and other “New Paradigm” scientists. Here, cosmism has been influenced by ideas of negentropy, the anthropic principle, and the Gaia hypothesis.

Gumilev’s Biocosmic Theory of Ethnogenesis

The son of poets Nikolai Gumilev and Anna Akhmatova, historian and ethnologist Lev Gumilev (Gumilyov, 1912–1990) has been one of the most influential voices in recent popular Russian ecological and cultural thought. Influenced most by the “Eurasianists” of the 1920s–1930s, for whom Russia was a distinct world civilization embodying the combined virtues of Asia and Europe, and by the Earth scientist Vernadsky, Gumilev developed a “theory of living matter,” according to which the organic substance of life determines the formation of both inorganic and superorganic (rational) layers of the global ecosystem, including the biosphere and noosphere. In his most important work, *Ethnogenesis and the Earth’s Biosphere* (*Etnogenez i biosfera zemli*), Gumilev applies his theoretical model to the development of ethnic groups, or *ethnoi*, proposing that each ethnos undergoes an organic evolution through

which it develops a sense of deep connection with its geographic environment. The key factor for development of an ethnos is “passionality,” or the “passionate drive.” Whereas most people, for Gumilev, are motivated by a desire for self-preservation, a select proportion are “passionaries” who devote their lives to particular goals and charge the larger society with the energy of action. In contrast to this life-affirming energy, necessary for any creative development and associated with the growth of an ethnic group living in harmony with its environment, Gumilev argues that ethnic mixing leads to a dangerous loss of that organic connection with the natural environment, a turn to abstract thinking, and ultimately an entropic degeneration into an inert or “vacuum” state. Another danger, for Gumilev, is represented by the “parasitic ethnos” or “chimera,” which develops outside of any environmentally symbiotic context and, when it becomes lodged within the territory of a “benign” ethnos, threatens it with destruction from within. (Gumilev stops short of blaming the Jewish diaspora for the misfortunes of Russian and other ethnoi, but this allusion is implicit in his writings.) Needless to say, Gumilev’s assumption of ethnic essences goes against the grain of Western scholarly thinking on nationalism and ethnicity, and his thought bears an obvious resemblance to fascist notions opposing communities of organic solidarity against dangerously rootless “cosmopolitans.” Yet he remains an extremely popular cult figure, influential even on elite Russian conceptions of nature and society.

Other Developments

In the post-Soviet context, various streams of nationalist and anti-globalist thought have emerged at the forefront of Russian popular philosophical discourse. Paralleling Western civilizationalist thinkers such as Samuel Huntington, with his argument that global conflicts of the future will be based on the “clash of civilizations,” Russian neo-Eurasianists, radical traditionalists, and defenders of “Orthodox civilization” oppose the commercial empire of the “Atlanticist” West, claiming that a Russian-led Eurasia harbors a more proper balance between the spiritual and material worlds. Frequent reference is made to the rather loose notion of “ecology of culture,” which draws on Gumilev’s ideas about ethnos as a biological phenomenon, as well as the more conventional views of cultural and historical preservationists such as the cultural historian Dmitry Likhachev.

Beyond vague pronouncements about the necessity of environmental protection, however, nature remains muted in most current Russian philosophy, playing second fiddle either to the quest for a Russian national (or civilizational) identity or to a more speculative cosmism. Beliefs in the sacred destiny of Russia and in the power of specific landscapes (such as the Ural mountains), however, have been spread through the work of artist and theosophist Nikolai

Rerikh (1874–1947), his wife Elena (1879–1955), and followers of their synthetic spiritual philosophy alternately known as *Agni Yoga* and “Living Ethics” (*Zhivaya Etika*). A mixture of Theosophical occultism, millennial beliefs about Russia’s role in a coming world transformation, beliefs in “vital energy” and the power of art to channel this energy, and parareligious revisions of official Soviet ideology, these ideas now inform a broad network of centers and groups, found in every major Russian city today. The teachings of Ukrainian-born nature mystic and ascetic Porphirii Ivanov (1898–1983) have also found a large audience of followers scattered across the former Soviet Union, and have even been incorporated into the official educational curriculum of Kazakhstan. Rejecting materialism, Ivanov advocated a “system” of living in close harmony with nature, including twice-daily cold bathing in natural waters, regular barefoot walking in the outdoors, weekly waterless fasting (from Friday evening to noon Sunday), abstinence from smoking and drinking, and an altruistic demeanor in all activities. With its focus on natural health and rejuvenation and its mixture of personal virtue ethics, rural communitarianism, millenarian optimism, and rejection of worldly power, Ivanov’s teaching represents the latest in a long tradition of Russian (and East Slavic) nature religion. Similar ideas and practices have mixed with cosmicist thinking, Asian spiritual trends, occultism, and strands of Orthodox belief, to produce much of the diversity of alternative religion in Russia today.

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See *also*: Alchemy; Blavatsky, Helena Patrovna; Gurdjieff, G.I.; Neo-Paganism in Ukraine; Ouspensky, Pyotr Demianovich; Slavic Neo-Paganism; Slavic Religion; Western Esotericism.

P Rustlers Valley (South Africa)

Rustlers Valley was established as a community in 1991 under the guidance of Frik Grobbelaar in the eastern highlands of the Free State, South Africa. Rustlers community does not embrace any particular religion but rather draws from religious practices worldwide where they seem appropriate to our world vision. Our world vision is primarily shaped by a belief in the value of diversity and freedom of thought – no method, no guru. This approach derives from the recognition that all religions arose in isolation from one another due to the experience of religious feeling in the individual human breast. We therefore see all religions as garbled human attempts to cater to this feeling. We see this feeling as the only legitimate basis for religion. Living in one of the most beautiful valleys in the world we see the expression of divinity in nature all around us and attempt to enhance this with simple reverence in everyday cultural behavior. By reverence I mean living in the constant awareness of nature's beauty and bounty. To this end we use sweatlodges, ayhuasca ceremonies, drumming circles, traditional healing methods and the upliftment of our surrounding community through the creation of a food-rich environment. We use a permacultural approach which includes organic farming methods but is more like an adaptation of nature by concentrating plants that are useful to the human community while maintaining nature's patterns and strategies.

Rustlers believe society is undergoing a fundamental transformation. A new worldview is being born and whether this birth is to be an easy or difficult one will depend largely upon the individual. It is our aim to assist

the individual to cope with and contribute to the birthing process. The goal is to embrace the hopes, transform the fears and discover the magical behind the mundane to encourage the individual to achieve his/her highest level of spiritual awareness.

Rustlers runs permaculture design workshops at the Lodge twice a year and has hosted annual music festivals for the last decade with a view to spreading this awareness. Neighboring Rustlers Valley is Mautse (the valley of the ancestors) which we believe is one of the oldest sacred places in the world, as our valley has had human occupation for a hundred thousand years and this sacred site was inherited by the current indigenous people from the Bushmen who were here before them. Mautse is currently occupied by traditional healers or "Sangomas" who are teaching us about the collection and use of medicinal plants.

Sustainability is our primary value as it applies to the species and to our community and to this end we are creating a model for sustainable African existence, promoting the conservation of all energy including human effort and the use of renewable natural resources. We have a living seed bank of the 280-odd vegetables that are still available on the planet and we use the production of our gardens in our restaurant.

Rustlers Valley works in conjunction with Food and Trees for Africa to promote permaculture in disadvantaged schools and communities throughout South Africa to supplement school feeding schemes and poverty alleviation projects.

Rustlers considers the recognition and integration of nature's bounty to all the people of the planet as a great spiritual healing that will aid the birthing of a new worldview and therefore a new world. The various rituals that we use, such as the sweatlodge at full moon, are meant to assist in the shifting of paradigms through the experience of one's own personal power and sense of well-being in the universal context of one's connectedness to all else.

Frik Grobbelaar

See *also*: Esalen Institute; Findhorn Foundation/Community; New Age.