

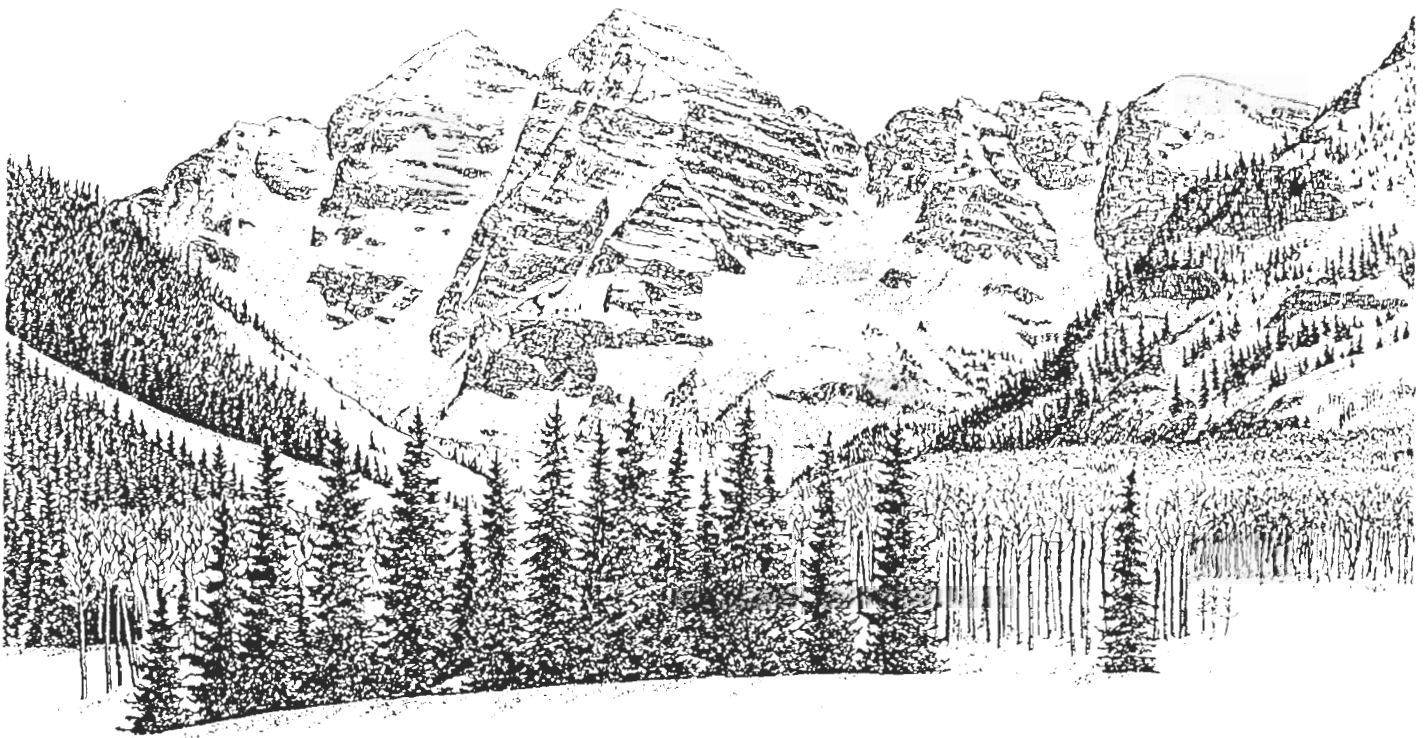
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THE TRUMPETER

*Voices from the
Canadian Ecophilosophy Network*



PARADOX, COMPLETENESS, UTOPIANISM, PAGANISM, BIOEXUBERANCE

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THE TRUMPETER

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The Aims of The Trumpeter: Our aim is to provide a diversity of perspectives on environmental relationships and Nature. By "diversity" we mean cross- and transdisciplinary reflections from both scholarly and nonscholarly sources. Our purpose is to investigate ecophilosophy as this manifests itself in the activities and lives of people working in different ways to come to a deeper and more harmonious relationship between self, community and Nature. **The Trumpeter** is dedicated to exploration of and contributions to a new ecological consciousness and sensibilities, and the practice of forms of life imbued with ecosophy (ecological wisdom). **Published Quarterly by LightStar Press, P.O. Box 5853, Stn B., Victoria, B.C., Canada V8R 6S8.**

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GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON ECOPHILOSOPHY, AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

Ecophilosophy in its contemporary form emerged in the 1960s, with the emergence of environmentalism. As Neil Evernden points out in his article, the word "environmentalist" was the creation of the media. It was a blanket term that covered everyone from Nature lovers to people concerned with making our system of resource use and development more efficient and less wasteful. The Nature lover was concerned not just with less wasteful and polluting ways of life, but also with preserving Nature for its own sake. The Nature lover found in first-hand experiences with other living beings and with the forests, oceans, deserts, plains, rivers, lakes and mountains of Earth the aliveness of the other, a beauty and inspiration, a home that is more than an address. The Nature lovers' concerns had neither temporal limits nor discriminations based solely on human resource use.

As Gil Lafreniere points out, the environmentalist who was concerned only with wiser use of resources, did not question the developmental progressivism that had become our secular religion by the 1960s. That developmental progressivism had led us to assume that we could put our faith in institutionalized science applied to technology according to our traditional patterns. Technological development was considered akin to the idea of progress, its most important measure. To use technology and technique to master and control Nature was part of a primary human want, an intentional goal of industrial society. Nature lovers were drawn toward images and ideals that could be described as utopian progressivism. As Lafreniere explains it, this could be described as an image of human perfection in the arts of living well together and with Nature. As he points out, in many ways Rousseau set the modern foundations of utopian progressivism, whereas Descartes articulated the metaphysical dualism that would define and underpin developmental progressivism.

For the Nature lover, then, Nature is to be appreciated and respected for its own inherent worth. The wilderness most fully represents Nature in its ongoing, creative wholeness. It is evolving, the creative power from which we emerged and to which we return. The aim of human life is best realized in creating cultures that enable persons to freely realize themselves to the fullest degree, in harmony with human and other companions. Human culture should bring out the best in humans, and human culture should order and arrange its patterns of activity so as to harmonize with Nature as It is, using and giving back Its gifts and bounty. The aim of human culture should not be more and more powerful, productive technologies, but sustainable, ennobling practices that enable conscientious life styles which thrive in conditions of intrinsic being for an indefinite time. However, the point of life is in its present living, and life's quality is not measured by things, after basic necessities are met, but by dwelling in states of intrinsic worth. From the ecophilosophical point of view to achieve this utopian or optimum state is to achieve ecosophy, i.e. ecological harmony and wisdom.

Nature lovers often connect the realization of states of intrinsic worth to religious considerations. In fact, almost all of them do in one way or another. In some cases, the Nature lover

espouses a Nature religion, it might be paganism, a revival of an earlier form, or neopaganism, the invention of new forms along with the old. In some cases, it is based on Franciscan Christianity or on creation spirituality based on the Sermon on the Mount. In other cases, Nature lovers base their sense of meaning on Zen Buddhism or Taoism. These are religious traditions clearly visible in the writings and work of Nature lovers. Other more esoteric and less visible forms are present as well.

Throughout the last 30 years, during the growth of environmental issues as political concerns, the ecophilosophical inquiry has twisted and turned with the developing ecological consciousness. During this period many different forms of environmental concern surfaced. Social ecology, green politics, deep ecology, bioregionalism, and ecofeminism are just a few of the lines of inquiry being carried out. For some time there was little criticism between these different groups. It was and remains the view of most, perhaps, that all of these seemingly disparate groups can come together in a harmonious way, for they share the same aspirations, to live in societies and cultures that are nonviolent, that are respectful and considerate of the Earth, that are equitable and not infected by anthropocentrism and racism, that are not afflicted with hierarchies of domination and subjugation. Some groups concentrated more fully on articulating their discoveries about wilderness and Nature, others were more involved in straightening out distorted relationships within human society. All were concerned, however, with developing an ecologically sound and sensible philosophy as both theory and practice.

We have now reached a pass in ecophilosophy where various parties to the ongoing inquiry have tried to defend their positions as separate and unique by attacking the investigations and activities of others. Names have been hurled and charges exchanged. These might clear the air, enable us to exorcise our pent-up frustrations, but, in the last analysis, much of this is wasted energy and it is irrelevant and often disrespectful to the task at hand and to one another. Let us hope that we can return to the demanding work of putting our own houses in ecological order, while we repair and improve our relationships to all other living beings, starting with those which fall immediately within our daily lives, including the lives of nonhuman beings. The creation of new ecological philosophies and practices is what we should be doing, rather than fighting.

This issue of *The Trumpeter* continues the ecophilosophical journey that we began together with the start of this network in 1983. The opinions and conclusions of the various authors reflect their own present judgements, and are offered as shared reflections to the members of the network. Their papers range over a variety of topics relevant to our quest. Neil Evernden's paper on the conceptual bind found in "environmentalism", and how this can be removed, is a deep reflection on a central problem of ecophilosophy. Michael Zimmerman adds these observations the problems inherent in talking about what is natural. He highlights and explains the paradoxes this often paralyzes us with. Next Robbie Newton presents an illustration of an exploration into completeness. He shows how fruitful the idea and sense of completeness can be to understanding how wholes func-

tion and develop. This is a crucial problem for ecophilosophy, because although we must appreciate the incredible complexity of the natural world and of ecological communities, at the same time we have to gain an overall view of the whole of ecological processes. For these purposes we have to take all of our existing information and knowledge and synthesize it in some way, and we can only do this if we have a sense for wholes and completeness. **Colin Graham** presents the case for Bioregionalism by highlighting what he considers the short-comings of modern nation states. He pursues a line of thought that is called bioregionalism, which involves a critique of the problems inherent in large, centralized systems. It builds on the work of Leopold Kohr, Kirkpatrick Sale and others on the problems inherent in large scale organizations which lack coherence. The problems of scale appear in all sorts of ways in contemporary industrial society. Many think that these problems can be overcome by creating sustainable bioregional communities that are interrelated through a living place. Bioregionalism ties into permaculture, appropriate technology, neoprimitivism, reinhabitation, and so on. A bioregional ecotopia was first fully described in a novel by Ernest Callenbach. **Gil Lafreniere** explores the different types of utopian thinking present in our contemporary setting. It is quite clear from his investigation that developmental progressivism has run into ecological limits and also has some inherent, self-defeating elements that make it unable to resolve our fundamental problems. **Rick Searle** explores the role of hope and faith in working for positive change. He shows us the fatal attraction of the either-or forms of heaven and hell scenarios that

plague our imaginations, and prevent us from acting positively to transform our lives and relationships. After Searle, I offer an historical and cultural overview of paganism and its relation to contemporary ecophilosophy, especially to deep ecology. **Gus diZerega** continues this line of inquiry and presents a deep analysis of neopaganism and what experiences in this form of spirituality reveal of natural values. **Holmes Rolston, III** reflects on bioexuberance and what is involved in appreciating other life forms, in particular plants, in a way that avoids the narrow focus of certain forms of humanism. It is the values inherent in plant and species life that Rolston helps us to understand more deeply, and such an understanding has the potential to alter the quality of our relationships and experience. **Dolores LaChapelle** reviews a series of novels which she says are the most complete presentation of the whole person and the problem of realizing wholeness in a world riven with conflict and hate. The pictures the novels present are not pretty ones, but they are not ones totally lacking in possibilities for redemption. What comes to mind in reading the review is the degree to which a misguided or confused spirituality can lead to despair and a sense of futility. The key to overcoming this is through an authentic spiritual way that connects us with our wholeness and Nature. As she points out, this will not be accomplished by calculating intellect alone, nor, we should add, by intelligence conceived as capable of being duplicated and structured by machine. Here we need a deep understanding of the difference between the artificial and the natural. Neil Evernden's book uses the title **Natural Alien** as a gesture to the koan we must resolve.

THE ENVIRONMENTALIST'S DILEMMA

By Neil Evernden

"Paradox--Statement contrary to received opinion; seemingly absurd though perhaps really well-founded statement; self-contradictory, essentially absurd, statement; person, thing, conflicting with preconceived notions of what is reasonable or possible." Concise Oxford Dictionary

Trying to preserve nature gives us licence to exploit it. Or so we might conclude, after comparing our words with our actions concerning the natural environment. But this is not a cynical observation about doing one thing while paying lip-service to another. There is a genuine paradox in this, a contradiction or absurdity built right into our motivations and methods. There is a common perception that conservation, or rather its modern embodiment, "environmentalism", has become a serious force in society and that it has had some success in imposing its ideals. But if a paradox is "a statement contrary to received opinion," then in the paradox of environmentalism that contrary statement might be "environmentalists do **not** act as the defenders of nature". To explore the roots of that paradox, we must glance back over the recent history of environmentalism and its precursors.

When Rachel Carson's book **Silent Spring** appeared in 1962, the tenor of the debate concerning human treatment of the natural world was dramatically altered. At the time, she seemed to be speaking from the same podium as other defenders of wildlife, and advocating the existence of those creatures threatened by the

proliferation of pesticides. This was the kind of defence of nature that was expected (and largely ignored) by Western society at the time. Time Magazine probably reflected the general attitude when, in its article on the furore surrounding the book's publication, it said that "many scientists sympathize with Miss Carson's love of wildlife, and even with her mystical attachment to the balance of nature. But they fear that her emotional and inaccurate outburst in **Silent Spring** may do harm by alarming the nontechnical public, while doing no good for the things she loves."¹ Notice that she was dismissed as being emotional, and that the regulation of pesticides was regarded as a technical matter which the ordinary person ought not be concerned with. However, the writer seems to have misjudged the content of the Carson book, for her extensive research was at least as compelling as her "emotional and inaccurate outbursts"-- and speaking of accuracy, this same Time writer assured us that most pesticides are "roughly as harmless as DDT." Carson was not to be dismissed lightly, and her success had a number of important consequences. She set a new standard for environmental advocacy. In fact, in one sense she created it.

Carson's statement was unusual in that she explained the threat to wildlife in terms of ecosystemic damage. Once the concern had been generalized to that level, environment itself could become the focus of concern. And environment was of equal significance to human and non-human beings. So three things

happened when Rachel Carson rose to speak: first, in spite of her personal concern with wildlife, a new protagonist, "environment", was introduced as the endangered entity; second, those who had spoken for wildlife with limited success in the past now saw in Carson's approach a promise of a new and more effective style of argument--rather than speak of our "doing right" by the other occupants of the planet, one could advocate doing what was smart by safeguarding "our" environment; and third, a new constituency was discovered which could be rallied in the fight for the natural world. Instead of drawing from a particular group, the movement could find support from almost every sector of a society uniformly threatened by environmental decay.

This enormous increase in potential recruits had a dramatic effect on the nature of the crusade. The environmental movement was conceived with the Carson book, but it had a gestation of eight years before its symbolic birth on Earth Day (April 22, 1970). It immediately attained a stature never dreamed of by its antecedents, and for a moment the spokespersons of the older conservation and preservation groups found themselves at the front of a new parade. It was a heady experience, but a fairly brief one. New leaders soon arose and began to steer the movement in a somewhat different direction. And instead of the inspired rhetoric of the Muirs and Thoreaus, these new advocates spoke of environmental planning and impact assessment. They sparked a craving for environmental specialists, and the universities willingly disgorged troops of them. Soon government agencies had full rosters of experts and could proudly claim to be practicing "sound environmental management." To many, it appeared that the movement had finally come of age, replacing the shrill emotionalism of the past with hard-nosed research and careful planning. "Ecological" became a prefix for most public activity. The new breed of managerial environmentalist seemed able to say all that need be said in defense of the environment, and expectations ran very high.

The change was more apparent than real, however. Soon mining engineers came to be called environmental consultants, and economists discovered a whole new range of externalities to list and dismiss. But the actual shape of human action seemed depressingly familiar. Certainly more parks appeared and roadside garbage collection increased, but the parks turned out to be high-density playgrounds and the roadsides remained as biologically sterile as before (evidently protecting birds is one thing but tolerating "weeds" is something else). It had been generally assumed that the environmental movement was a simple extension of the older conservation and preservation groups, but some of these original advocates began to grow uneasy. How could there be so much fine talk and so little appreciable change? Why was preservation still a rear-guard action except where human health was concerned? And why were all these new experts unwilling or unable to speak of anything except "acceptable limits?"

There was no sudden revelation, just a gradual recognition that something was missing. The shift in tactics had made environmental advocacy sound more reasonable, but it also made it more difficult to speak of value and meaning. It had become possible to be that contradictory being, a dispassionate advocate. It was now a case of balancing facts, not values, and certainly not emotions. We were simply finding ways of doing what was sensible.

But when what seems sensible turns out not to be, we have a paradox. And this is what the nature advocate gradually came to suspect. In most cases, "sensible" turns out to be a synonym for the customary, but these advocates had not wanted the usual.

Quite the contrary. It was never "sensible" to want to preserve this little lake or that species of toad, but it was vitally important to those who were moved to speak in defense of the useless. And now they began to realize that there was no possible defense in the new managerial calculus. Whatever was to be defended had to be defensible in the official style---it had to have use-value to industrial society. All the rest, all the "uneconomic" beings of the planet, were at least as vulnerable as before, perhaps more so since the environmental platform had now been occupied by technocrats.

Years ago, it was common to encounter as "filler" in magazines the statement that the human body was worth \$4.98 in materials, or some such figure. It was amusing just because it was absurd. It was a "self-contradictory, essentially absurd statement"---again, a dictionary definition of a paradox. The body was worth that sum, and yet it wasn't right at all. In this case, everyone realized that a person was worth much more, or perhaps "worth" something very different. To insist on treating only the material value of the person was plainly outrageous. But at one time, the environmental advocate might have said the same thing about nature. Certainly, you can measure its composition and calculate that it has a resource value of such-and-such. But to do so is to vastly underestimate, indeed to completely misunderstand, the kind of value experienced by the person in question, a value effectively defined out of existence by the tools chosen for environmental management.

Hence it became apparent that there is a misfit between the motivations of the nature advocate and the tools of the environmental movement. Many persist in believing that techniques are value-neutral and can be put to any use, but inevitably they come coated with a film of belief that cannot be wiped off before each new use. The tools of resource management require an assumption of the existence of resources. But resources are simply human categories, indices of utility to industrial society. They say nothing at all of experiential value or intrinsic worth. Furthermore, the predominance of "resourcism" tempts us to try to translate any sensed value into resource terms and thus to save by subterfuge what could not be protected by argument. Even landscape beauty is now being commodified through attempts to measure the shape of the "stimulus" that provides the sensation we deem indicative of aesthetic superiority. Once nature is thus reified, we have yet another object to manage, and instead of an experience or a way of perceiving the world, aesthetics becomes a collector's search for special things. The original value is effectively eliminated in the transformation from experience to commodity.

The act of promoting a place as a special commodity, or even of "selling" a bog as a glorified septic tank so as to establish its utility and ensure its survival, is not without risk. As R.D. Laing points out, "if an animal is debased to a manufactured piece of produce, a sort of biochemical complex---so that its flesh and organs are simply material that has a certain texture in the mouth (soft, tender, tough), a taste, perhaps a smell--- then to describe the animal **positively** in those terms is to debase oneself by debasing being itself. . ."² This is what resourcism requires. To describe a tree as an oxygen-producing device or a bog as a filtering agent is equally violent and debasing. For the nature advocate to do so is to betray his cause while seeming to promote it. The bog is saved, but simultaneously enslaved to human use. And rather than challenging the astonishing assumption that only utility to industrial society can justify the existence of anything,

the advocate tacitly concurs in searching for subterfuges that would make everything into a resource. This situation would not seem credible if we were forced to do the same to defend a human being. If instead of speaking of that person's intrinsic worth or his right to exist we treated him as a neutral object with potential utility to society, we would seem to have missed the point. Certainly we could measure him in various ways and judge his worth, and finally argue that whatever his faults or misdeeds he had such- and-such an amount of social utility and ought not to be preserved for future use, but to do so would be to treat him as what the bureaucrat unashamedly calls a "human resource." In order to save him, we effectively enslave him, as the tools of resourcism require.

In other words, before a technique can be used at all, we must submit to the value-structure out of which it arises. Resources are the children of a particular world-view, a view which has no room for the perception of value that initially motivates the nature-lover. The very thing that brought the environmental movement to prominence and made it seem credible has assured that what was originally advocated cannot be spoken of at all. The rental fee for the use of the tools of respectability is a kind of emotional lobotomy. But as it happens, many nature advocates are poor surgeons, and the job was left unfinished. The murmurings from within have now begun to surface, often as quiet complaints but increasingly as full-fledged diatribes such as those of John Livingston and David Ehrenfeld. Livingston speaks of the failure of subterfuges, perhaps most emphatically the much-lauded "environmental impact assessment" which he indelicately characterizes as "a grandiloquent fraud, a hoax, and a con."³ While appearing to be the tool of environmental defence, it turns out to serve the interests of the developer by making ecology the handmaiden of a continuing environmental transformation. But if Livingston excels at picking away the scabs of deception, Ehrenfeld has done the unthinkable by laying the blame for environmental decay at the doorstep of our most cherished collection of beliefs, which he terms "humanism".

Some feel Ehrenfeld's use of that term is somewhat idiosyncratic. He claims that humanism has at its core "a supreme faith in human reason---its ability to confront and solve the many problems that humans face, its ability to rearrange both the world of nature and the affairs of men and women so that human life will prosper."⁴ Even though this is very close to the dictionary definition of humanism, he might have garnered more support had he been more circumspect in his choice of labels. Humanism has so many positive connotations that its use in this context, even if accurate, is resisted. Similar arguments have been made using different terminology. George Grant, for example, has observed that:

The dynamism of technology has gradually become the dominant purpose in western civilization because the most influential men in that civilization have believed for the last centuries that the mastery of chance was the chief means of improving the race. It is difficult to estimate how much of this quest for mastery is still believed to serve the hope of man's perfection, or how much it is now an autonomous quest. Be that as it may, one finds agreement between corporation executive and union member, farmer and suburbanite, cautious and radical politician, university administrator and civil servant, in that they all effectively subscribe to

society's faith in mastery.⁵

Grant calls this system of belief "liberalism" or "technocratic liberalism," and defines it as a "set of beliefs which proceed from the central assumption that man's essence is his freedom and therefore that what chiefly concerns man in this life is to shape the world as we want it."⁶ It is this central belief in the inevitability of human mastery that sets this society, including most environmentalists, apart from the most notable early nature advocates. In fact, one could argue that the environmental movement is today fundamentally humanistic or liberal, partly because of the institutional template into which it must fit to be intelligible to "the system," but at least as much because of the transformation that followed the publication of *Silent Spring*.

Remember, Rachel Carson did something quite different, even if it was not her intention to do so. She made the environment the protagonist, rather than the individual organism or species. And in so doing, she drew attention to the fact that something of enormous utility was in jeopardy. Indeed, she made it clear that what was really at risk was humanity. The new membership that effectively created the environmental movement was drawn in large measure from those areas of society which were most profoundly addicted to technocratic liberalism. It appealed to those whose central concern is mankind, and whose chief means of addressing the world is through reason and scientific manipulation. It attracted the social and environmental engineers who could save nature for mankind. Simultaneously, the goals and the tools of the movement changed, from inspired rhetoric in defense of the inarticulate to inspired engineering in defense of our habits of consumption and our craving for control.

Of course, this does not accord with the common perception of the environmental movement at all. Environmentalists are not generally understood to be human advocates, and indeed are regarded by some as misanthropic when they seem to put the well-being of nature ahead of some human project. But remember, the distinguishing tactic of the new environmentalist was to show people what's in it for them, why it is in their self-interest to conserve nature. Rather than try to defend predators *per se*, the new environmentalist defends predation as a necessary part of the ecosystemic processes upon which humans depend. Rather than defend wilderness, the new environmentalist defends the genetic diversity in wilderness which humans may someday need for the production of new crops. And rather than defend the right of the mountain to exist untouched, the new environmentalist defends the scenic resource necessary for a full and productive human existence. Environmentalism in its modern incarnation is not about nature but about people controlling nature. It is a social movement, and more important, it is in the mainstream of technocratic liberalism. Not surprisingly, the consequences of these efforts are not much different from those we have seen before.

Having said this, I must point out that many of those involved in the movement certainly aim to speak on behalf of the planet, and would reject the motives sketched above. But whatever the intent of the persons in question, the way the movement **functions** in society is as a defender of human well-being. Indeed, simply accepting the label "environmentalist" may ensure that end, for the term reveals an understanding of the world that can only lead to resourcism. Bear in mind that this tag was provided by journalists seeking a concise way to pigeonhole a new kind of protester. Since the group was talking about "the environ-

ment" or "the ecology," then this must be what it is concerned with---that stuff out there around us. And in accepting the term, the environmentalist tacitly agrees that it is "that stuff" that is at issue. But of course this radical dualism between the subject (us good guys) and the object (that stuff) is at the root of our environmental attitudes in the first place. Value inheres in the mind of man, to be bestowed on the world-stuff from time to time. If a use can be found then the valueless porridge around us can rise to the level of a resource, which the environmentalist can then demand be used "wisely" and "within acceptable limits." But it will never be anything more than a resource. According to Paul Shepard, "resourcism is the most insidious form of nature hating because it poses as a virtue, as prudent, foreseeing, and unselfish."⁷

Resourcism is virtually synonymous with modern environmentalism. Of course, it is also simply the visible manifestation of an understanding of nature that characterizes our civilization. Mary Douglas suggests that we must "recognize each environment as a mask and support for a certain kind of society."⁸ Nature-as-resource is our mask, the inevitable corollary of the beliefs of technocratic liberalism. Other societies have no doubt managed to visit considerable destruction on the natural world from time to time, but we alone seem to have so understood the world as to make this inevitable. Just when this understanding germinated is contentious, but we could do worse than accept J.H. van den Berg's suggestion that it is first revealed in the Mona Lisa. This was the first painting to depict nature as an environment, separated entirely from the subject. The enigmatic smile reveals an inwardness unknown before, and just as the individual is formed by drawing value inward, nature is discarded like a husk at the doorway of the person. Nature is merely "an exterior from which the human element has, in principle, been removed entirely. It is things-in-their-farewell ..."⁹ Nature, scraped clean of significance, becomes a landscape and a warehouse of resources. It is the first depiction of the world-stuff, fully a century before Descartes made the discovery dogma. It represents the birth of environment, and as such it is the essential precursor of the environmental movement.

Such is the lineage of the environment we strive to protect---it can only exist if it is first cast off and made available for dispassionate manipulation. Given this, it is not surprising that the nature advocates so readily accepted the journalist's label, "environmentalist," for as members of this society they share the social passwords and prejudices. In fact, instead of saying that we face an environmental crisis, it might be more appropriate verbal convention to say that we **are** the environmental crisis. The behaviour which we decry is an inextricable part of the story we embrace of "the way the world is." According to the Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset, "human life is a poetic undertaking, the invention of that character that each person, each epoch, has to be. Man is his own novelist."¹⁰ If that is so, it would seem that the story we have written allows us only one role, that of a sort of locust-being whose rationale is consumption. What is at issue is not simply the form or amount of consumption, but the very story we have lived by.

In this sense, the nature advocate remains a radical who implicitly challenges our belief in the way the world is. The environmental movement, in contrast, is paradoxically conservative, challenging only our efficiency in being what we are. Consequently when the nature advocates were subsumed within the environmental movement, it was not only the means

that changed, but the ends as well. The misfit between the new objectives and the old was too severe to be papered over indefinitely. When those of the nature advocacy stream began to question the progress of the movement, they discovered their vehicle had changed direction and was heading for a new and unwelcome destination. And in calling attention to this dislocation, the advocates began to question much more than their own immediate goals. In criticizing the change in direction, they were also questioning societal assumptions in general.

With the realization that the roots of the environmental crisis lay deep within us all, such persons had to face the necessity of examining their own beliefs. The lesson of the environmentalist's paradox had taught them that it is futile to try to erect new solutions on decayed social foundations. If there was to be any long-term resolution to what we call the environmental crisis it would have to be based on a revised understanding of our own role.¹¹ But beyond this rather vague realization there was no firm consensus nor any apparent course of action. It was, and remains, largely an individual search for a different starting point. However, the search has been focused to some extent by the work of several people, including those mentioned above, but most especially by Arne Naess who was the first to clearly recognize the alternative possibilities for an environmental understanding. He coined the terms "shallow" and "deep, long-range" to describe the different ecology movements active today. These roughly correspond with what I have been calling the "new environmentalists" and the "nature advocates," although Naess has fleshed them out more fully and has concluded that the overall environmental movement needs to be supplemented by the "deep" activities if there is to be any significant transformation. The task is one of removing layers of rhetoric and passive agreement for a glimpse of the primal foundations of modern thought, whence our imperatives to action arise. Only through such endeavour are we likely to transcend the paradox of environmentalism.

Notes

1. "Pesticides: The Price of Progress," *Time Magazine* (28 Sept. 1962)p. 68.
2. R.D. Lang. *The Politics of Experience* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1967)pp. 51-52.
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THE PARADOX OF NATURALISM

By Michael E. Zimmerman

Understanding how we have arrived at our current situation, in which environmental destruction figures so prominently, requires that we have some sense of the ideas that have shaped our history. Many people are familiar with the fact that post-Renaissance philosophy and science have described natural beings in purely quantitative ways, thereby stripping the natural world of life, meaning, and value. By regarding Nature as inert matter or raw material, humans find it easier to exploit it. But in the nineteenth century, thinkers like Darwin began portraying humanity itself in a "naturalistic" way. According to this new naturalism, human beings are simply a very intelligent kind of animal; we are not endowed with immortal souls, and there is no God or other deities. Such ideas were fought by Creationists--and this battle continues even today.

At first glance, you might think that "naturalism" would have tempered humanity's relationship with the rest of the natural world. And one type of naturalism did have an important effect on John Muir, and later on Aldo Leopold, Robinson Jeffers, and others. But this naturalism was incomplete; supposedly, it had done away with all gods and other supernatural entities. But a new god stepped in to take the place of the recently deposed Judaeo-Christian God: The new god of humankind. Humanism became the great religion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Capitalists, communists, scientists, philosophers and politicians were greatly influenced by this new "civil" religion. Humanistic naturalism puts humanity at the top of the natural heap. All animals are equal, as Huxley said in another context, but some animals are more equal than others. With the Judaeo-Christian God out of the way, human beings became the source of all value, truth, and meaning. Whatever promoted human goals was "good," whatever hindered them was "bad." There was no longer any transcendent value-system to limit and guide the new earthly god.

For both the ancient Greek and the Judaeo-Christian traditions, the greatest sin is pride or **hubris**--overstepping one's limits. We have gone even further than treating the non-human world as raw material; now we are also treating human beings as objects to be manipulated (for example, through genetic and social engineering) in accordance with our goals and desires. At times, we seem like the sorcerer's apprentice who knows some of the magical powers of his master, but lacks the wisdom to know how

to use them properly. The naturalism that removed all limits from our treatment of the non-human world has now justified removing limits from our treatment of human beings. Both capitalist and communist societies speak of the rights and dignity of humanity, but both sides are prepared to slaughter hundreds of millions in a nuclear war. Moreover, both economic systems exploit the natural world without let-up. Where are we to find an adequate foundation for a healthy relationship between humanity and Nature, and between different peoples?

The Judaeo-Christian tradition did not use to be helpful in the humanity-Nature relation. Christians, for example, rejected naturalism because it denied our special place in the scheme of things--a special place which, since the Protestant Reformation, had justified our economic "development" of Nature. This point of view is still maintained by many people today. However, more recently theologians have reinterpreted the passage in Genesis that gives humans "dominion" over the Earth. Now we are told that dominion means not domination, but stewardship. We fulfill our highest possibilities by tending to and caring for Creation. Others say that we are children of the Earth--and that we repay our Mother poorly by assualting her. In any event, many people today recognize the need for a transformation of our relation to the non-human realm of Nature--a transformation that must go hand and hand with a genuine shift in human relationships on this planet. We must learn to respect all beings; it is not enough simply to respect humans, although this would certainly be a giant step in the right direction. As the twentieth century German philosopher Martin Heidegger said, we must learn to give thanks for our existence by learning to let beings be.

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THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG: AN EXPLORATION OF COMPLETENESS

By Robbie Newton

One of my favorite metaphors for inspiration has been the ancient question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" To me the immediate answer is obvious; chicken/egg is a **whole** cycle, they are tied together and any further explanation is pedantic. Actually the implied pedantry stems not so much from the obviousness of the relationship and the lack of necessity to embroider on it, as the powerful inspiration that the tying together of two incisive images, chicken and egg, creates. If I choose to elaborate, then it is inevitably to pick out only one route away from that inspiration and to leave the others behind. And that is precisely what I plan to do with these comments, although I would encourage the readers to engage in their own chicken/egg diversions.

This particular one is to look at the biological reality of the chicken/egg cycle, or to be more accurate **spiral**; the relationship is cyclic but also sequential, the same chicken and the same egg do not repeat. This spiral connection is a useful image, because it is then conceptually easy to consider travelling backwards down this spiral, making historical connections with past chickens and eggs and observing how their particular chicken/egg cycles change and relate. And it is a continuous spiral backwards, although we would note that as each egg connects back to its mothering chicken, a whole series of like spirals connect together, becoming separate only as a future projection.

Travelling this path we eventually discover that the chicken has changed and now must be described as a bird. Further on the bird is no longer able to fly and looks like a reptile, but the reptile/egg cycle has still a lot in common with the chicken/egg one. By the time the fish/egg cycle is reached things are looking radically different. The numbers of spirals which separate with each mothering fish are vastly higher and the degree of protection that the egg can expect before it is projected into its sustaining environment is proportionately lower. But it isn't time to stop yet, the spiral continues a long way back until it finally reaches some unknown metazoan species which had two methods of reproduction, budding and that species/egg cycle. Somewhere around here it seems likely that the spiral has its end, or its beginning, and it seems appropriate to look for a cyclic source.

Conventional science and conventional logic tend to ask specific questions, such as, How did it begin? Whereas, my tendency is to ask much broader questions, like, What is the nature of the process of beginning? I see no advantage in trying to answer what I call an unyielding question, when the terrain of useful information is soft. At the same time my aim is to add to my broad questions the solidity of **completeness**; a perspective which requires extensive explanation and which I deal with elsewhere¹, but some aspects of it will be presented in Part II, below. Here I am judging it sufficient to draw attention to this difference in approach so that the reader is not misled into assessing it as unscientific. It is intentionally not scientific. It is intentionally not scientific if that means following certain conventions, and I

identify this process as exploration, lest it should also be confused as an attempt at analysis.

So now go back to that unknown metazoan species which budded and egged and consider its connection with its pre-cursor which budded only. In current comparable species, this early metazoan/egg cycle is initiated when its supportive environment enters a "dry spell", if it is acceptable to use that metaphor for a shallow sea environment, such that the survival of the species member is threatened. It isn't a likely consideration that dry spells were an unfamiliar phenomena to the pre-cursor or to other current species, so either their resolution was to perish or retreat to some form of safe haven. What then was the particular nature of that pre-cursor's relationship to the dry environment threat, if it was by some means to "learn" to produce a savable egg?

I like to label the character of the survival nature of any species, member or group, with the **whole** term "Resilience/Resourcefulness", R/R. R/R acknowledges the two way interactional aspects of survivability; not just an inert but resilient rubber ball absorbing the disadvantageous turns of its sustaining environment, but also its resourceful complement, the reaching out to take advantage of the environment's own usable rebounds. It is too easy to get lost in the dramatic images of survival as identified with predator/prey relationships, and forget that it is the individuals' healthiness which is at the root of survivability, and healthiness is the end product of an individual's response to the fluctuations of its everyday environment. Those fluctuations are invariably cyclic in nature and there are advantages to be gained from the ups as well as damage to be avoided from the downs, but even more is obtained by cyclically connecting the two. An R/R response is one which enables a species individual to ride the fluctuations of its environment as though it were a "roller coaster". R/R is a pulling together of those characteristics which fit that descriptive relationship between the species and its environment and indicates its strength or survivability in that regard.

It is somewhat diversionary to introduce the term R/R, but at the same time it does provide a useful way of presenting the problems facing that pre-cursor species as periodic dry spells threaten its survivability. Dry spells are not on/off switches in the environment, they are indeed the roller coasters against which a development of R/R could provide benefit for the species. If an individual were just to ignore the dry spell, then its metabolic functioning would slow down, a resilient response only. An R/R response would be to "store food" as the dry spell approached and to start to use the store as the dry spell receded.

Note two things about this last statement. One, there is no specificity about what "storing food" could possibly mean, it is solely an image which acknowledges a nutrient gain/use relationship in the metabolic functioning of this pre-cursor species. How and in what form the metabolic relationships could be modified such that "nutrient rich" cycles could be turned on

at some later stage is not being addressed. However, since the yet to be developed egg cell is largely a food store, it seems reasonable to assume that some resolution for which the image "storing food" is descriptive, is also a potentially valid one.

Second, as an R/R response the process of storing food is initiated by the onset of the dry spell and its use by the demise of the dry spell. The food storage is not assessed to have been initiated in "good times" to be used in "bad times", which is certainly a more logical expectation. That might possibly be a future development of the R/R of that species but the initial reality is that the metabolic cycles of this precursor are being perturbed by the dry spell fluctuations, so the changes of its metabolism which result are linked directly to those changes as they happen. To store food the individual needs to respond by restricting its metabolic output but not its input, as the dry spell starts, and then to reverse this process as the dry spell recedes. Both reactions are short term stabilizing influences of the R/R with longer term benefits.

Note also that the "storing food/re-using food" all fits within the description which is the R/R of an individual; a behavioural response which is naturally extended as dry spells become more intense or persistent. It is characteristic of a species member exploring new "environmental territory" just as it might explore new physical territory. The storing food/re-using food is initially a short term response within the R/R of an individual without requiring any genetic adaptation. As the dry spell fluctuations of the environment become more persistent, longer term reactions become more relevant which stretch the range for which the R/R of an individual is currently suited and provide the pressure for adaptation within genetic variability, without the need to assume adaptive mutation. With genetic change the longer term responses are structurally incorporated into the R/R of an individual, further extending its survivability.

As the notion of R/R is being developed, some of its relevance to a species or to an individual is becoming apparent. By identifying R/R with the responses to cyclic fluctuation it becomes meaningful to talk of its short term character or its long term character, understanding that it is the short term responses which incorporate most readily and that their establishment sets up the R/R to respond to longer term cyclic influences. Its short term capacity can then be identified with the ability to maintain the health of an individual, while its longer term capacity identifies with the survivability of an individual. At the same time the longer term capacity also crosses the lines which separate individual character from species character so can be identified with the ability to maintain the health of the species; and the real long term capacity of R/R identifies with the survivability of the species. R/R is a useful broad **whole** value which doesn't require exact definition to be appreciated.

Returning now to the pre-cursor species living out an interactive relationship with a dry spell environment, we are seeing a species capable of genetically adapting to this environment in a way that is consistent with extending its R/R. Suppose now the environment ups the ante with increased pressure of its dry spells and the species continue to extend its R/R rather than move out. What is the direction that its R/R would take the species? It is the amount of stored food which an individual can retain for future use which is being affected by the increased pressure, and a stage is certain to be reached where the store is insufficient to restore an individual to health after a dry spell. If the individual is not to die, what are the options? Even in these conditions the

stored food would be adequate for re-generation by budding, where fewer cells have to be supplied. So the long term adaptation in response to this greater environmental stress should be to make the stored food selectively more easily available for budding, rather than for use by the parent individual. The longer term development of this trend is fairly obvious, that of focussing the food store into the single "egg cell" which buds anew, when the dry spell is over.

At this point it is tempting to say "Enough", but the need to maintain **whole** values is relentless. If the **egg** has been conceptually born here, then so has its **chicken**, at the same time. If the egg cell is to survive, while the parent individual dies, then a separation must occur, not just in time, not just a sloughing off of useless detritus; the connection between parent and egg had long behavioural and genetic history tied into the parent's R/R, which is being passed on into the egg's R/R, as it is being discussed here, is not the final physical egg cell, it is only the developing trend in the R/R, and it is this trend which leads to that cell's creation.

The act of separation here is a pushing apart. The egg is a separate entity in the act of becoming separate. It has to reject its parent, which is a separate entity also, while the parent is still surviving, because the impact of the dry spells on the R/R of the egg and its parent dictates that they cannot both survive together. Both do survive separation, because separation must precede death, but the R/R prediction from the egg's point of view is that the R/R of the parent is a losing cause, even if it does not turn out that way. This creates a distinctly different role for the parent, the "chicken" role, than that determined by the parent/bud relationship, where there is no trauma, and their separation is just a divergence of parallel paths.

It is also not the only separation that is being created. The egg in its determined direction of being separate rejects not only its parent but also its parent's advice. The creation of the egg cell is a one-way directed activity, inwards for storage and for survival against the exterior dry spell environment. The decision making which reverses the process of food storage and redirects the use of food for growth has up to the point of separation been coming from the parent; the rejection of the parent is also a rejection of this signal. But the signal, in whatever form it might take, is as much part of the R/R dedicated to survival, when the relationship is parent/bud, as when it develops to parent/egg. That part of the R/R which is committed to generating a useful signal for survivable regrowth must continue to do so under the pressure of rejection. Since the R/R prognosis of the parent is not for survival, a separate survival trend, for the signal mechanism should be a separate result. Sperm cells seem to be the end product of this other R/R trend.

Some of the characteristics of sperm cells are predictable from this view of their origin. For instance the generation of the egg cell is long term, that is, relative to dry spell periods, and the egg cell has a long term need to survive; whereas the regrowth signal is short term initiated, and its need to survive is restricted to making the connection with the egg cell. So the sperm cell has relatively little need for food storage, but it does have a need for movement to make its connection with the egg cell, which should also be established as an R/R trend. However, in the process of rejection direct and predictable routes of connection with the egg are being severed, so that the sperm cell is faced with multiple routes or a level of uncertainty. This uncertainty, together with the uncertainty generated by the short term nature of a decision

making signal-- set against the long term background of the dry spell fluctuation, creates conditions for the development of multiple sperm cells.

And also the role of the sperm cell in terms of genetic contribution might be fortuitous rather than of "nature's design". Since both egg and sperm are separate cells now, their connection to pass on a signal may have been drawn into a path of cell fusion and genetic conjugation, rather than what might have been just a hormonal transfer in the derivative parent/bud relationship.

However, this is a point in the exploration where speculation is taking over direction, and it is appropriate to back off for an overview. To extend this exploration into a more detailed understanding of the egg/sperm relationship requires separate explorations to look at the nature of cell fusion and the origin of meiosis. My analyst might despair apparent failure and confusing prospects, but to the explorer only ambition creates failure and all prospects are intriguing.

II

What is the point of this exploration, and what are its guiding principles? What is the value of its conclusions or has it any? In a substantive work still in progress¹ I am endeavoring to create a workable framework around a holistic philosophy which interprets holism as completeness, a completeness which can eventually be accepted with mathematical rigor. As daunting as this may sound when compressed into a single sentence, its practical application is much looser and inspiring. The concept of completeness implies that all loose ends tie together, and any indication that they don't can be turned into a source of inspiration rather than desperation. In "Completeness etc." (1) the guiding principles are being extracted from explorations which compare philosophy with known phenomena; in this exploration some of the guiding principles are being displayed as partially known phenomena are being probed. To display these principles is one intent, but at the same time the conclusions are unexpected and interesting.

This exploration is therefore intended to be an example and not to be definitive, and one of the first points to note is that the chosen origin of the chicken/egg spiral was **that**, a **choice**, a good possibility among several alternatives. But my broader experience with this technique convinces me that alternative starting points would produce substantially the same conclusions, largely because the results define relationships rather than specifics. Relationships are what hold specifics together, and being a **whole** goes beyond tied specifics, it involves completeness. Chicken, egg and sperm are all identifiable **wholes**, each with their own level of completeness because each must survive separately; but survival is a time-limited concept and over a broader time base all three survivals are linked into a more inclusive **whole**, the chicken/egg spiral.

The ability to deal with **wholeness** is at the root of this technique. Throughout this exploration I make extensive use of imagery to tie related specifics together, avoiding the discursiveness of detailed justification. The environmental conditions which initiate egg production are labelled a "dry spell" to enable the host the conditions which could be potentially responsible, to be identified by their relative impact on the life cycle of that early metazoan. Likewise, "storing food" identifies the character of the species response, not details of metabolic changes. The use of imagery is partially a table clearing

manoeuvre, a metaphor which itself emphasizes that some degree of care is necessary to see that important relevances are not being swept off the table too. Mostly this care revolves around identifying and perceiving the **whole** cycles, and later the **whole** image "riding the roller coaster" is utilized to identify the species relationship to this **whole** cycle; and the species response is identified with "storing food/reusing food" as a **whole** cycle and not as separate functions.

The **whole** term "Resilience/Resourcefulness" plays a crucial role in understanding this holistic perspective. R/R is a universal concept within this philosophy (1). It is not just another useful image suited to this exploration. However, in tying it into the text I have endeavored to present it only in terms that the needs of this exploration justified, and to allow its expressed image to develop on the same basis. It is gratifying to see that this process is largely self-determining; that the role of R/R in the genetic development of a species identifies itself without external justification; that the short term/long term/longer term development of R/R can be seen as the repository of species character.

Sceptics will unfortunately view R/R as something pulled out of a hat, not as something definable, not as a measureable value, not confinable in any convenient sense. But sceptics should first look at what is meant by confirmation and definition. "One plus one equals two" is not confirmation, it is only convenient definition; a dictionary conveniently defines every word it contains only in terms of other words, and scientific endeavor is equally incestuously based. Meaning, rather than definition, lies outside of dictionaries; the concept of a tree is such because consensual agreement made it so, before dictionaries and even before words. It is more valuable to try to understand and appreciate the meaning of R/R in context as it is developed before clamoring for a dictionary style definition.

It is not appropriate to identify the connection of R/R to genetic transformation as a conclusion to this exploration. It was necessary to see that connection, if the exploration was to succeed, but it is a topic which will require the much broader justification of (1) to support it. The significant conclusions are simpler and more relevant, the parent/egg/sperm relationships, the rejection of the parent by the egg, and the messenger role from parent to egg by the sperm. The current conventional view of genetic evolution has opted to take chance mutation and dominant survival as the routes of species development, so for that view, the above conclusions have no meaning. But for those who are capable of conceiving that species development is descriptably motivated, these parent/egg/sperm relationships are full of connection, and ache to have the remaining ends tied together to clear away the confusion.

And for those unfamiliar with this process, the exploration appears to end at a great precipice of unanswered questions, but as I noted earlier, loose ends are a source for inspiration, not desperation. Further work would, I believe, show that the cycle of meiosis is separate in its origin and not directly connected to the parent/egg/sperm relationship. I would expect to relate the meiosis cycle to the need to maintain genetic variability, another part of the depths to R/R, but its origin would have to be explored in a totally separate context, and in the process its own relationship to the parent/egg/sperm cycle would become clearer.

Once the parent/egg/sperm cycle became an established part of the life cycle of that early metazoan, the need for the cathartic stimulus of the environmental dry spell is lost to some degree, and developmental changes can occur with more freedom. A

useful image to appreciate this is to consider a self-motivated gyroscope as the role of the R/R. The resilience of the gyroscope progressively absorbs more and more of the fluctuations of its environment, structurally incorporating into its own motions activities which balance the volatility of its environment. Because the fluctuations are also cyclic the gyroscope can always find a stable way of achieving this, if they do not become too radical too quickly. Once incorporated this more skillful gyroscope engages its resourcefulness to generate greater freedom within this stability. Likewise, as it too becomes firmly established, the wholeness of the parent/egg/sperm cycle becomes itself like a new species, capable of development and separation into new directions. And this view that the cycle can itself become a developing whole is probably alone worth the effort of the exploration.

The sceptics are perhaps still muttering, "It came out of a hat, it's all speculation". But if so, they have overlooked that the assumption that natural phenomena express an inherent completeness, transforms the view from the flat Earth philosophy to a spherical one; new insights are generated without the need for new information. Moreover, the same criteria of completeness rejects unsupported speculation. Accepting completeness as a complete philosophical principle is at the same time inspiring and restrictive; only certain resolutions fit, and "survival of the

fittest" turns into a much more specific set of paths to be followed.

Notes

(1) **Completeness, The Unused Principle: The Key to Viewing a Holistic World** is a work in active progress since Sept. 1986, with several chapters current.

Other work relevant to the same Theme:

(2) "Energy and Matter: An Alternative Thesis," May 1984. (Predictions for the world of particle physics.)

(3) "Complements and predictions of a holistic world," June 1985. A broad summary of some conclusions that result when completeness and complementarity are allowed to influence scientific interpretation of phenomena from particle physics to cosmology.

(4) "Making Calculations," Jan. 1986. Comparing this philosophy with the views of four scientists whose approaches have been called holistic, Bohm, Prigogine, Sheldrake and Pribram.

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THE POWER AND IMPOTENCE OF THE NATION STATE

By Colin Graham

Ecological Perspectives

"Every nation ridicules other nations, and all are right." Schopenhauer's cynical remark applies no less to our time than to his. The larger nation-states do tend to behave ridiculously and abominably. What, one wonders, would he have thought of the spectacle of Britain and Argentina fighting ferociously over a few remote rocks; or of France blowing up a Greenpeace vessel which threatened to embarrass it over its bomb testing on a Pacific atoll? As Aldous Huxley remarked, "one of the greatest attractions of patriotism--it fulfills our worst wishes. In the person of our nation we are able to bully and cheat. Bully and cheat, what's more, with a feeling that we are profoundly virtuous." Bertrand Russell was even more emphatic. "When it comes to politics," he declared, "I think nationalism is an unmitigated evil--the State is primarily an organization for killing foreigners."¹

There are at least two key differences between Schopenhauer's time and ours. Wars and skirmishes in the nineteenth century were damaging, but they lacked the potential to become globally lethal. And paranoid feelings between states were milder than they are today. In our time they have reached a point where, by 1986, the annual expenditure on arms by all the world's states had become greater than the total income of the poorer half of humanity. War being basically a male activity, we have here the ultimate bankruptcy of the patriarchal, macho world outlook, with its hostility-begetting power drive, its lust to dominate, and its inevitable descent into paranoia.

Faced with this irrationality, there are in the post-Hiroshima world few sane responses other than that of Norman Cousins,

when he states that "the greatest obsolescence in the Atomic Age is national sovereignty."²

In addition to their dismal records in foreign policy, nation-states have by and large been failures on the environmental front, a stricture which applies equally to the capitalist and communist varieties. At best they have merely slowed the speed of ecological decline.

Cracks in the Fabric of the Nation-State

An obvious question then arises: If the paranoid mind-sets of the major states constitutes an intolerable threat to the world's people, is there even a remote possibility of getting rid of them and replacing them with something better?

There are, it seems to me, several factors which have emerged in recent years suggesting that the larger states at least could succumb to various mounting internal and external pressures. All very large-scale human organizations appear to carry within themselves the seeds of their own decline. Today's technologies are watering those seeds.

One characteristic of the information age is that it has enabled ethnic and linguistic groups within states to become acutely aware of their separate identities. Thus Europe now has twenty-nine such groups pressing for autonomy with varying degrees of vigour. From Britain's Northumbrian Scottish and Welsh devolutionists to France's Bretons, Savoyards and Occitanians; from Spain's Basques, Galicians, and Andalusians to Sweden's advocates of a separate Skaaneland, Europe is experiencing continuous low-keyed ferment. The same kind of unrest is seething

under the surface of the Soviet Union, which is after all a union of various nationalities. One recent result of Gorbachev's relaxation of controls has been nationalist street demonstrations in Latvia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Moldavia and three other republics. Added to earlier riots in Georgia and Kazakhstan, these events give point to a statement made several years ago by the leading western authority on the subject, Helene d'Encausse, who wrote that, "Nationality crises erupt sporadically from one end of the Soviet Union to the other."³

In the U.S. the huge federal bureaucracy has become in many respects so ponderous and self-defeating that it is leading to decentralization. The futurist John Naisbitt and his research group have come to the conclusion that, "centralized structures are crumbling all across America. . .the Centralization of America has transformed politics, business, our very culture. . .state and local governments are the most important political entities in America."⁴

In his book *Human Scale* Kirkpatrick Sale has brilliantly and convincingly documented the ills which beset states which grow beyond that scale. Gigantism is certainly one of the factors giving rise to the signs of U.S. decline which have been multiplying over the last five or so years. Economic decline is perhaps the most visible of those signs. As a recent issue of the American magazine *Business Week* put it, "There is overwhelming evidence that the U.S. standard of living is slipping for many people and may drop even more unless the U.S. can reverse its productivity decline."⁵ Products that are uncompetitive on the world market, an annual foreign trade deficit of around \$150 billion, and a share of the world market which was 50% in 1954 but is projected to be only about 16% by 1990--these data tell the story vividly enough. No wonder the Japanese feel they have defeated the U.S. in the global economic race and that, "America is going the way of Britain very fast."⁶ Adding to the bleakness of this picture is the news that in five or six years America will have exhausted its known reserves of indigenous oil, making it increasingly dependent on expensive and unreliable sources in the Middle East.

As if all this were not enough, there is mounting evidence of looming crises in the physical and mental health of Americans. In May, 1987, the Los Angeles Times reported that, "Two separate teams of researchers have found growing evidence suggesting that, among people born between the war and now, the incidence of common psychiatric disorders like depression is far more widespread than it was with previous generations. The concern, warns a research team from the National Institutes of Mental Health, is that an ominous trend may be present, leading to a broad spectrum of disorders in the coming decades."⁷

Chilling news comes from another front. Conservative data released in 1986 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reveal that 12 out of every 100 babies born in the U.S. today have a "serious mental or physical health disorder. This is double the percentage which obtained in the late 1950s."⁸ Should it turn out that this is a consistent trend, Americans will be faced with a horrifying situation thirty years from now where a quarter of those born will be malformed. That these pathologies are mainly related to the detritus of technological society is indicated by data relating this figures to those living near toxic dumps, uranium mines, and waters polluted by factory effluents.

While I have deliberately chosen the most vivid problems facing Americans (and it should be noted in passing that Canadian problems are doubtless only slightly less threatening),

it is obvious that the American people still have enormous reserves of energy and creativity. Nevertheless, once the full import of this daunting catalogue of troubles has been grasped by the broad American public, there will surely come a stunned realization that those aspects of the American dream which are based on the expectations of boundless technological affluence have turned into a nightmare. The upshot, based on past performance, will surely be a search carried on with typical American vigour for viable alternative lifestyles and social structures. Indeed, judging by the growing numbers of decentralists, bioregionalists, libertarians, deep ecologists and social ecology-anarchists, this has already begun to happen. Even conservative leaders have sensed the need for some kind of change. David Lebedoff, for example, a Minnesota politician and a veteran of numerous campaigns at both the state and federal levels, has written frankly that, "Now nothing seems to work very well...people seem to be losing faith in all our institutions, and their sense of kinship with each other...Everyone knows something is wrong."⁹

Soviet Dilemmas

If America is faced with mounting crises, those being experienced by the Soviets seem both worse and more dangerous. The relatively simple command economy which worked tolerably well under Stalin has now become too complex for central planners to handle. Along with the resulting stagnation which became so evident in the Brezhnev years, came the Soviet's discovery that their society, too, can be a heavily toxic one. Pollution problems have until recently been largely hidden by press censorship, but information recently leaked to the West leaves no doubt about the grave seriousness of environmental degradation both in the USSR and in its East European satellites.¹⁰ Alcoholism and poor medical services must account for some of the Soviet's health problems, but it seems that only widespread toxicity can account for the fact that during the past decade Soviet life expectancy, for the first time in any industrial society, began to decline. Murray Feshback of Georgetown University's Center for Population Research refers to "the incredible increase in death rates beyond all reasonable predictions."¹¹

As this is being written, the fate of Gorbachev's drive to revitalize Soviet society is uncertain, although the balance of informed opinion in the West tends toward scepticism. At stake, it seems, is nothing less than the legitimacy of the government, now that the sins and failures of previous regimes from Stalin to Brezhnev have been laid bare before the Soviet people, leaving them, as several commentators have pointed out, with little to be proud of apart from their achievements in the last war. These factors were evidently uppermost in the mind of a high communist official when he recently told a New York Times reporter that, "These things (meaning "glasnost") must be well prepared. Otherwise I fear terrible troubles, something awful could happen." In the opinion of a Soviet journalist, on the other hand, "There isn't any choice. Reforms have to go forward. If Gorbachev's program is blocked it won't mean more stagnation but collapse. That could be very dangerous...it could lead to civil war."¹²

The Soviets have economic and demographic problems, too. The once copious raw materials in the Soviet west are being used up and the government must now depend on those in Siberia, which are both expensive and hard to get. Soviet oil is expected

to start declining around the year 2000, making it difficult or impossible to continue supplying the satellite states in Eastern Europe. Finally, there is widespread doubt among Western Sovietologists that Gorbachev can give his country the massive infusion of electronic information technology necessary to get his economy moving again and still keep political control.

The world's two leading megastates, then, appear to be heading into very rough waters, their internal coherence is threatened for many reasons. Indeed, all states of the non-communist world are under siege from the impact of the electronic revolution. National governments, for example, are finding that the instant global communication made possible by the microchip is robbing them of full control of large-scale money movements across their borders. In one recent three-month period Brazil's national external debt rose from \$60 billion to \$90 billion, and no one knew about it until later, least of all the Brazilians. According to the English economist Michael Stewart, Keynesian economics can no longer operate under these conditions. "National economic sovereignty," he declares, "is an illusion."¹³ Business, too, disregards national boundaries in many essential ways. It was the president of the IBM World Trade Center who stated flatly not long ago that, "For business purposes the boundaries that separate one nation from another are no more real than the equator...they do not define business requirements or consumer trends."¹⁴ Economic and other structures will undoubtedly become more and more globalized at the expense of nation-states. As futurists such as Robert Russell see it, there will emerge "a new economic order in the first decade of the 21st century in which the functions of national governments would gradually be taken over by service corporations that lack economic or cultural roots in any single nation and are therefore gradually global in character."¹⁵ One major trend, in other words, is toward what Peter Berg has called a "global monoculture". For those who feel that such trends are pathways toward social dysjunction and spiritual emptiness, the challenge will be to sort out those international connections which will be both healthful and mandatory in an electronically unified world, from those concerns which absolutely must remain local or regional--if people are to live in integrated and spiritually rewarding communities.

Is Bioregionalism the Answer?

Bioregionalism calls for the devolution of nation-states into smaller polities, each confining itself to a specific ecological region such as a watershed, mountain chain, or coastal area, and each committed to living on a sustainable basis with the surrounding biota. Could the creation of such independent and more or less self-sustaining polities provide a solution to the many problems discussed here? Theoretically, the answer is yes. The following are some of the reasons.

Social Coherence: Lessons from sociology and anthropology imply that one of the prime conditions for mental health is that men and women should grow up having strong bounds with their family and neighborhood. Fossil fuels and the technologies which exploit them for moving objects through space have progressively weakened such community ties. Surely this is one of the major causes of the mental pathologies uncovered by the U.S. National Institutes of Mental Health, in a country where people tend to shift from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and from city to city, without forming lasting human bonds.

Bioregionalism's ethos runs entirely counter to this trend. The movement stresses the absolute need for the inhabitants of a bioregion to become deeply attached to their area through a thorough knowledge of its geology, flora, fauna, resources, and history. The achievement of such an aim will doubtless become less and less difficult as the age of fossil fuels gradually passes into history and it becomes increasingly expensive to move people and goods.

Technology and the Land: No organism can long survive in an environment of its own waste. This truism of the biologist as applied by bioregionalists to the present human condition reminds us that the world cannot in the long run survive the endless piling up of toxic wastes. What has been accumulated over the last fifty years in industrialized countries should be enough to convince most people that the process extended over another fifty years could result in large parts of our planet becoming barely livable. Clearly, hard decisions will have to be made, and made fairly soon, as to which technologies can safely and beneficially be lived with and which must be rapidly jettisoned. Whereas in small countries such as Canada there seem genuine prospects of industrialists working with governments to control toxics, larger governments seem subject to enormous anti-conservation pressures, as is indicated by Washington's difficulty in doing anything about acid rain.

A bioregional polity, on the other hand, would presumably be compelled to make such hard decisions, since its founding charter would require it, before anything else, to live in non-disruptive harmony with its land, water, and air.

The Redirection of Patriarchy: It is encouraging that increasing numbers of people have begun to grasp the fact that the exploitive, ransack-the-Earth outlook, which is making such a shambles of so much of our planet today, has some of its historical roots in patriarchy. The early dynamic and aggressive European male energies which exploited women and assigned them a secondary role in the scheme of things were the same ones which produced not only the crusaders and the ravaging Spanish conquistadores, but also, as technical civilization grew, the entrepreneurs who organized and directed environmentally exploitive industries. The rape of the environment, in other words, is one of the offshoots of western-style patriarchy. As Judith Plant has pointed out, "Our language says it all; a "virgin" forest is one awaiting exploitation, as yet untouched by the hand of man."¹⁶

It is now clear that the world can no longer afford either kind of exploitation: both are unacceptable practically and morally. And it is one of the assets of bioregionalism that it understands this and insists on creating a culture evenly balanced between male and female. Indeed, it also insists that the attitude of a modern polity toward the environment must be a nurturing rather than an exploitive one; and of course nurturing is more a feminine rather than a masculine mode.

World Order: Splitting the world into more or less self-contained bioregions would obviously spell the end of the nation-states, as we know them today. Since the bioregional successor states would be too small to create world-threatening atomic arsenals (in the unlikely event that they would even want to) the world would have edged away from the nightmare of nuclear extinction. It might be argued that the creation of bioregional polities would merely substitute a host of naughty little nation-states for a few big bad ones, but that would be to ignore the fact that small states--the Norways, Belgiums and Swedens of this

world--have shown little liking for wars of aggression. In an earlier publication¹⁷ I have suggested how, under a re-structured equivalent of the United Nations, it should not be difficult to bring to its knees any polity or group of polities which threatened a neighbour or set out on a course of territorial expansion. What makes such police action unlikely or impossible with today's U.N. is, of course, the existence of megastates with the power to block any move distasteful to themselves or their client states.

Community and Scale: It is characteristic of megastates that their military planners think casually in terms of megadeaths, thus implying that the individual is of little or no account. The civilian bureaucracies of such states are obliged to think in units of hundreds of thousands or even millions of human beings, again with the feeling that it is masses rather than individuals which count. No wonder that the average citizen begins to mistrust her or his government, feeling little or no connection with what is going on and doubtful whether private opinions matter at all. Hence David Lebedoff's despairing remark about people losing faith in their institutions.

The obvious antidote to such social malaise is to pare the size of the state down to a point where the individual can be treated as such and given a sense of belonging. Obviously, this is the kind of connectedness which small bioregions could create.

Is Bioregionalism Practical

So much for the theory. What, then, are the chances of any of this becoming a reality?

The bioregional movement is growing rapidly, has some seventy regional groups covering most of North America, has held its second North American Congress, and has the benefit of some of the most searching minds on the continent. Nevertheless, it still constitutes only one aspect of the general Green movement and has yet to impact on the average woman or man.

This state of affairs will probably last until real environmental shocks compel people to stop merely worrying about ecological crises and start looking for practical measures with which to combat them.

Unfortunately--or fortunately, depending on one's point of view--the next couple of decades seem bound to produce quite enough traumas as carcinogens and mutagens, together with microwave and low-level ionizing radiation, make their delayed impact on health statistics and the Greenhouse effect becomes more pronounced. Unfortunately, too, North Americans will probably not have to wait that long to find out where unchecked technologies are leading them. As if the unhappy Poles have not already suffered enough, Poland seems slated to become a bell-weather of environmental decline among industrial states. There, a drive to industrialize at all costs has created in Silesia a devastating ecologic decline leading to equally devastating human illnesses. By 1985 over 60% of the rivers and creeks were no longer usable, even for industrial purposes. In addition to the inevitable forest die-offs from acid rain, there are large sections of agricultural land saturated with heavy metals from smoke-stack emissions. The human cost is staggering. One woman in four suffers from some pathology, while Polish men have the shortest lives of any in Europe. Much of the groundwater is poisoned and may have something to do with a 1985 report from the Polish Academy of Sciences which speaks of, "an appalling increase in the number of retarded school-age children."¹⁸

When average North Americans eventually realize that their future could take the form of a local version of Silesia, and when they begin to despair of Washington's ability or willingness to apply more than bandaid solutions, it is just possible that bioregionalism may gain wide appeal as a way of taming pollution, while regaining the lost sense of community.

A growing sense that the American empire is now in decline may well reinforce the willingness to look for alternatives. In 1986 the Congress' Joint Economic Committee consulted with Harvard and Princeton scholars who have been engaged in intensive studies of the causes of decline in earlier empires. The Committee discovered that what scholars have found to be the chief cause-- too large commitments combined with declining strength--precisely fits the present US predicament. It also fits that of the Soviet Union. This thesis reached a wider audience when *The Atlantic* magazine's August, 1987, issue carried an article by Paul Kennedy of Yale University titled *The Decline of America*.

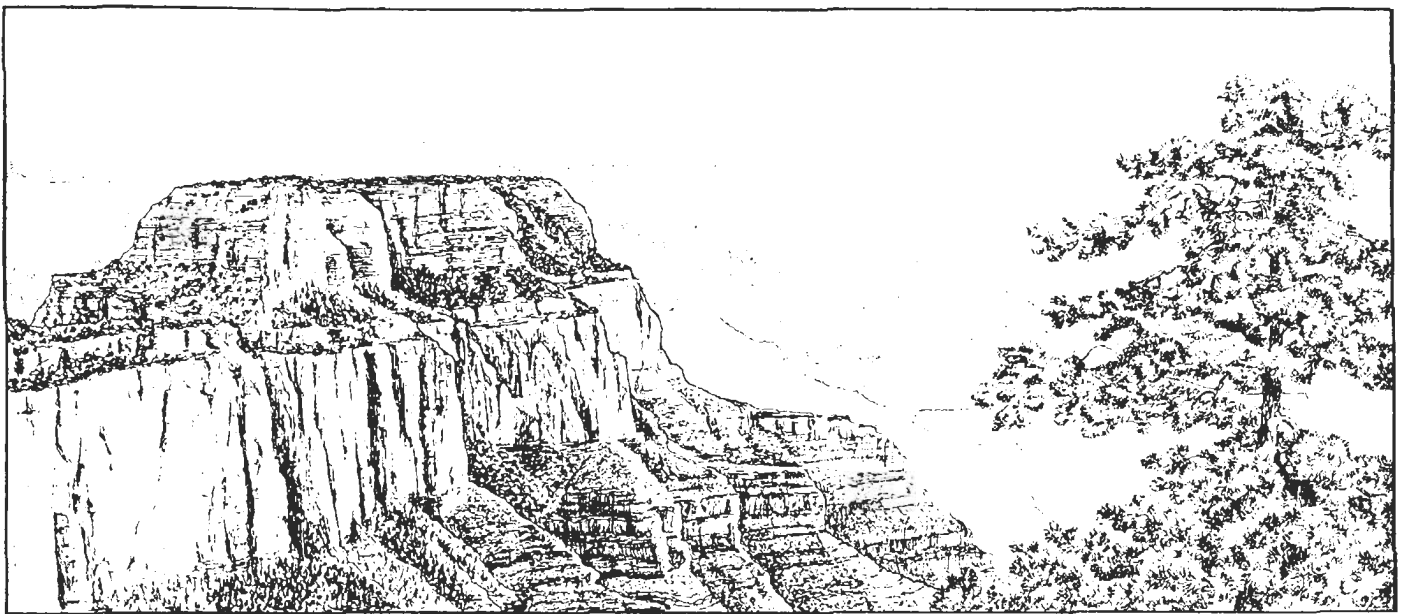
Putting bioregional precepts into practice in the non-violent manner, to which bioregionalists are committed, presupposes an educated electorate drawing on sophisticated democratic traditions. This is another way of saying that the most likely candidates for success are Europeans and North Americans. Perhaps the chief factor inhibiting devolution on either continent would be the prospect of a Soviet empire still intact and irresistably tempted, for both nationalist and ideological reasons, to push for world domination. The best hope could be that by then, if the Soviet empire had not already dis-integrated, it would be in such deep trouble economically and ecologically that well-publicised plans for devolution in the West would stimulate an irresistable move into devolution there too. This dis-integration in turn might allow the rebirth of the spirit of community, along with a regeneration of sustainable, ecophilosophical politics, suited to regional places. This would be a true greening of the planet.

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17. C.C. Graham, **Devolution: The Soviets and the West**. Published privately 1985, out of print.
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ENVIRONMENTALISM AND UTOPIAN PROGRESSIVISM: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UTOPIAN VISIONS & METANOIA

By Gilbert LaFreniere

The idea of progress has been the dominant philosophy of history of the Western world since the early nineteenth century, although the idea itself was clearly articulated in the late seventeenth century by Bernard de Fontenelle and his predecessors. Whether detached from or intertwined with the medieval Christian, providential interpretation of the nature of historical reality, the modern faith in progress recognized the assumed superiority of Western culture to be dependent upon its achievements in science and technology. The explosive developments of Western science, technology and imperialism during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seemed to verify the truth of a law of progress. This view of history, which I call developmental progressivism, is expressed either as a secular faith in science and technology (scientific progressivism), or as an optimistic teleological belief in the destiny of Western culture and humankind (millenarian progressivism).¹

The problems of the twentieth century have called developmental ideas of progress into question with countercultural utopian visions of progress towards sustainable, no-growth societies.² Antecedents to these utopian ideas are as old as the utopian tradition itself, from Plato's **Republic** and Saint Benedict's ideal Christian monastic society to Thomas More's **Utopia**. From the seventeenth century on, utopias have often expressed ideas of progress, usually in a qualitative sense of needed change in society. This **utopian progressivism** generally rejects the commercial, developmental ideals associated with the dominant, established culture, and calls for careful use of science and technology within a more humane institutional framework.

Much of the disagreement among scholars over the definition and nature of progress and its relationship to environmental problems is related to the various ways in which authors relate the idea of progress to the concept of utopia. From Lewis Mum-

ford to Frank Manuel utopia has been variously defined. Mumford's discernment of the nexus of the progress-utopia relationship as depending upon whether one emphasizes the **terminus quo** or **terminus ad quem** of progress, i.e., the process of **development** from a starting point as opposed to the **goal or utopia** of progress at its end point in future time, is a workable path through the labyrinth of contradictory evaluations of the relationship between progress and utopia.³ This approach also helps to explain the strongly opposed evaluations of utopia as, alternatively, a threat to progress or as creating the possibility of progress in the future. Thus, Robert Nisbet's denigration of utopia in **History of the Idea of Progress** (1980) stands in stark contrast to the use of a fictional utopia by Ernest Callenbach to establish new principles of progress, or the enumeration of the elements of a potential but undescribed environmental utopia by William Ophuls. These two examples of utopian progressivism, the first a descriptive utopia and the second an exercise in utopian thought, will be followed by a concluding discussion of the significance of utopian thought for an ecologically-based idea of progress.

Ecological writing expounding utopian principles dates from at least 1950,⁴ but the classic ecological utopia is Ernest Callenbach's **Ecotopia** (1975). **Ecotopia** describes an ecologically sound polity established in the seceded Northwest at the end of this century, a society in which deep ecology values, appropriate technologies, feminism, and autarky distinguish the steady-state alternative from growth-oriented technological societies. The fundamental goal of **Ecotopia** is stable-state life systems in which the costs of human use are not "ignored, or passed on through subterfuge to posterity or the general public."⁵

When questioned by the book's protagonist, a skeptical reporter from the U.S., as to whether they have given up "any notions of progress," an Ecotopian citizen replies:

It may sound that way, but in practice there's no stable point. We're always striving to approximate it, but we never get there. And you know how much we disagree on exactly what is to be done-- we only agree on the root essentials, everything else is in dispute.⁶

Thus, Ecotopian agreement on the first principle or goal of ecological stability and the difficulty of maintaining it expresses the principle of utopian progressivism. The impossibility of perfection is clearly acknowledged and progress is understood as the continuing attempt to partially realize the ideal in the face of natural and human contingencies. Following Oscar Wilde's aphorism, "Progress is the realization of utopia," Ecotopians would indefinitely continue to attempt to realize the implementation of a peace-loving culture in maximum harmony with the planet's ecosystems. Another Ecotopian citizen is described by the reporter as:

...strongly optimistic about the future. Believes that the nature of political power is changing, that the technology and social structure can be put at the service of mankind, instead of the other way round.⁷

This observation distinguishes between the false contemporary perception of scientific and technological change as progress, indeed, "inevitable progress," and the idea of true progress as requiring general human amelioration, even it means the diminution or scaling down of scientific and technological development to appropriate technologies in harmony with nature. Conversion to the steady-state:

...would mean sacrifice of present consumption, but it would ensure future survival--which became an almost religious objective, perhaps akin to earlier doctrines of "salvation". People were to be happy not to the extent they dominated their fellow creatures on earth, but to the extent they lived in balance with them.⁸

Finally, Callenbach makes it clear that the great cultural transformation necessary to the future survival and progress of humanity may mean economic disaster for plutocrats, but not necessarily survival disaster for persons because "the new nation could be organized to devote its real resources of energy, knowledge, skills, and materials to the basic necessities of survival."⁹ By comparison, the enormous obstacles which stood in the way of the political and social transformation of modern China suggest that the relatively peaceful restructuring to smaller, less densely populated states is a feasible future prospect.

William Ophul's *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity* stands an excellent chance of being looked upon as a classic in the twenty-first century, recent criticism of political viewpoint notwithstanding.¹⁰ Its explication of ecological complexity and the inability of existing political and economic paradigms to prevent wholesale degradation of natural systems contains a powerful implied critique of **developmental progressivism**. More impor-

tant, Ophul's guidelines for the building of a steady-state society clearly illustrate the method and importance of **utopian progressivism**. In the context of the geologic time scale and the evolution of homeostatic ecosystems, the scientific and millenarian ideas of progress of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear to be naively anthropocentric and anachronistic. However, "to challenge endless scientific and technological progress amounts to a kind of secular heresy."¹¹ Ophul does not call for an abandonment of technology but for its humanization as a historical force and a recognition of its limits:

This judgement certainly does not mean that all technological solutions are anathema. Indeed, to counter single-minded technological optimism with an equally single-minded neo-Luddite hostility to technology in all its forms is absurd, for a non- technological existence is impossible. The question at issue is what kind of technology is to be adopted, and to what social ends it is to be applied. The whole subject of technology needs to be demythologized, so that we have a realistic view of what technology can and cannot do and what its costs are.¹²

Ophul supports environmentalist demands for an alternative technology "diametrically opposed to **autonomous** technological growth of the kind that has produced an ecological crisis." He recognizes the prevalence of scientific progressivism in our belief system, when he observes "that during the last 300 years society has adapted to technology rather than vice versa."¹³ However, the repudiation of feasible alternative technology has occurred because "its adoption will require a revolutionary break with the values of the industrial era."¹⁴ There is no doubt in his mind as to the significance of these technological alternatives and the urgent need to shift immediately to alternative technology:

The epoch we have already entered is a turning point in the ecological history of the human race comparable to the Neolithic Revolution; it will inevitably involve racking political turmoil and an extraordinary reconstitution of the reigning political paradigm throughout most of the modern world.¹⁵

In considering probable sociopolitical responses to increasing ecological scarcity, Ophul implicitly states the distinction between developmental progressivism gone awry and utopian progressivism:

There is no escape from politics. As a consequence of ecological scarcity, major ethical, political, economic, and social changes are inevitable whatever we do. The choice is between change that happens to us as a "side effect" of ever more stringent technological imperatives and change that is deliberately selected to accord with our values.¹⁶

The need to define ecologically preferable values toward which we ought to strive may offer humanity "a grand opportunity to build a more humane post-industrial society."¹⁷ Such an undertaking would require reconsideration of existing bourgeois social contract theory in order to create an "ecological contract"

theory which would promote "harmony not just between men, but also between man and nature."¹⁸

It is clear that Ophuls prefers a planned economy to present corporate laissez-faire practice as a means of providing for an ecological society because capitalism is "founded on hidden social costs, in which development--would not have occurred if all the cost had been counted in advance....In brief, honesty and progress may not be compatible."¹⁹ In this context, "progress" means process or irreversible cumulative change. Recognizing economic growth as the "secular religion of American society," Ophuls notes the desire of individuals, business, and even government to maintain growth at any cost. Thus, political questions concerning the goals and "general will" of society are evaded by perceiving the "will of all" to be the "general will" and construing political processing of economic development to be the end of politics. The result is a "muddling through" which ignores long-term goals. Socialism has not provided a viable solution "because the ideology of growth and belief in the power of technology are even more strongly entrenched in the USSR than in the West..."²⁰

What basis, then, does Ophuls offer us for retracking a misdirected "progress"? First, he is adamant that "'**metanoia**,' or a fundamental transformation of world view, must precede concrete action."²¹ Second, rejection of current political reality is essential because "ultimately **politics is about the definition of reality itself,**" and "in its truest sense, **politics is the art of creating new possibilities for human progress.**" Third, we can expect the transformation to take at least several decades to produce a result which "will be a mosaic of many elements, some designed by man, and others fashioned by the accidents of history." Fourth, "the hour is very late," and finally, "the process of tearing down the old reality and constructing the new has already begun."²² Well aware of the potential dangers of premature planning for or prognostication of the form of the ecological culture of the future, Ophuls offers only general principles as guidelines for the building of a steady-state society. These include: **communalism** as opposed to individualism; **authority** versus liberty (to destroy nature); **aristocratic principles** versus equalitarian democracy; **politics** versus economics; **stewardship** versus exploitation; **modesty** versus "progress" or economic development; **diversity** and **autarky** versus centralization; **holism** versus scientific reductionism; **Socratic morality** versus instrumental ethics; and **post-modernity** as **pre-modern values** versus the rule of modern technology and economics.²³

Ophuls thinks that it is at least possible to meet the challenge of ecological scarcity "by creating a genuinely post-modern civilization that combines the best of ancient and modern."²⁴ His skepticism regarding the past several centuries of "progress" does not preclude him from belief in the possibility of spiritual and intellectual progress combined with material frugality. He is convinced "that nothing of real value would be lost if development were to cease."²⁵ Comparing the cultural achievements of ancient Greece and pre-modern Japan with our own, he concludes that "development appears to be virtually irrelevant to cultural richness and progress; social arrangements, not wealth in itself, seem to determine the level of social amenity."²⁶

Conclusions

The function of utopian thought has always been critical as well as reconstructive. Callenbach and Ophuls tell us as much about the blindness towards nature and intransigence of contem-

porary ideals and institutions, as they do about the possibility of a future society established upon principles of ecological cognition. Karl Mannheim emphasized this aspect of utopia in contrasting it with ideology. He defined utopia as an "orientation which transcends reality and which at the same time breaks the bonds of existing order..." The utopian state of mind "is incongruous with the existing order."²⁷ "Ideology" on the other hand, he characterizes as rationalizations of an existing order, as knowledge which "fails to take account of the new realities applying to a situation" and "attempts to conceal them by thinking of them in categories which are inappropriate."²⁸ In this sense, the modern idea of progress is our own unanalyzed ideology, the most powerful element in the world view of the West dangerously simplified to equate development of interacting science, technology, and industrial capitalism with a grand human effort, or even a historical design, for human betterment. A recent essay by philosopher Frederick A. Olafson lends strong support to the importance of Mannheim's distinction between ideology and utopia as applied to the idea of progress. Asserting the ideological character of the established idea of progress, Olafson argues that:

[I]ts principal disadvantage is that it also tends to "close down" for ethical purposes the very situations it has opened up by declaring that change in the general conditions of life is possible. It closes them down by offering assurances based on the scientific/technological character of the source of change to dissuade us from insisting upon a genuinely independent, ethical evaluation of what is, in fact, coming to pass.²⁹

Olafson goes on to conclude that two centuries of American life under the ideology of progress have failed to develop the humanistic education necessary to the healthy functioning of a democratic society, in recent decades creating a crisis of basic literacy. In this context, he perceives the idea of progress to have been "an obstacle in the way of a more deeply conceived and adequate view of human betterment."³⁰

Having unmasked the ideology of progress, i.e., developmental ideas of progress, as actually regressive in both ecological and social terms, and having sketched the necessary ecological basis of future progress, can the environmentalist prophets of post-modernity effect action? The deep ecology arguments for redefining and reorienting human progress are less likely to influence the existing technological society than appeals to prudence in our treatment of nature in order to assure long-term human survival. Given the imperatives of the burgeoning world market and its exponentially increasing demands for scarce resources, we can expect to lose wilderness and less pristine habitats at a terrible rate. Even worse, the conversion of diversified, labor intensive farmlands to machine and energy intensive monocultures will be highly destructive of both habitat and traditional social orders. The transformation of rural, agrarian humans into the nature-alienated individual of megalopolis will continue the building of the technological society, possibly in the form of the anti-progressive dystopias of Huxley and Orwell.

The attempts of Callenbach, Ophuls, and other environmentalists to educate us in a radical, utopian way have not yielded impressive results thus far, yet education of values, particularly in the form of a new ecological humanism, is our best hope of avoiding a world technological society almost completely

alienated from Nature. At present, these values appear to be losing ground to those of economic efficiency and the short-term quest for wealth at the expense of the needs of posterity. Indeed, an environmentalist idea of progress may not gain widespread recognition until the twenty-first century, but the foundations are being created now, and there are several things which academics and intellectuals can do to accelerate a transformation of values, including the anachronistic developmental ideas of progress acting as an ideology.

First of all, we must all struggle constantly against the intellectually stupefying effects of academic specialization, which counts the introductory Western Civilization course and the discipline of intellectual history among its victims. Humanists even more than scientists are often psychologically alienated from Nature by the heavily anthropocentric orientation of their disciplines. In addition to personal effort, the rise of an ecological consciousness will require a reconstruction of both survey and advanced classes in the humanities and social sciences to include exploration of the meaning of Nature as well as that of human experience.

Secondly, within this broad framework, the history of ideas must be rejuvenated. Rather than an acquiescent acknowledgement of, or faith in, the value of science and technology as guarantors of a destructive process posing behind the euphemism of "progress," an awareness of the need to control and buffer their effects must become an element in any post-modern idea of progress. Rousseau, perhaps the earliest serious critic of scientific progressivism and its relation to human domination over Nature (and of his own species through the use of power over Nature) has provided us with the earliest model of utopian progressivism as an alternative, less destructive vision of human progress.³¹

Finally, a cultural perspective which recognizes geologic (natural) as well as historic (cultural) time is sorely needed. Our explosive "progress" of the past three centuries may be regarded as a frightening natural anomaly in an ecosystem context, for it has released the energy and mineral resources concentrated on our planet for hundreds of millions of years, within an iota of natural time. Understood in this perspective, the idea of progress is attached to an anthropocentric conception of time almost as naive as that of the Judaeo-Christian idea of providence. What is required is a "new Enlightenment," a general awareness of the cultural meaning of the scientific perception of time. The economic development of modern cultures must be confronted by the presently inert, non-motivating knowledge of the chronology of Nature within which ecosystems evolved, possessing a genealogy infinitely grander than that of human history. Only recognition of the prudential and moral significance of the disparity separating our cognition of cultural and natural time can provide the humility necessary to redefining an idea of progress which envisions the amelioration of humanity within a healthy and sustaining natural order. Unfortunately, the inertia of existing belief systems may prevent such a transformation of values from occurring in time to prevent wholesale destruction of the planet's ecosystems.³²

Notes

1. These terms are derived from my own typology of Enlightenment ideas of progress. See Gilbert LaFreniere, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Idea of Progress** (Dissertation; Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1977) and "Rousseau's **First Discourse** and the Idea of Progress" (Salem,

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2. The unacknowledged schism in progressive thought is reflected in such book titles as **Progress As if Survival Mattered** (San Francisco: Friends of the Earth, 1977) and **State of the World: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society** (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987). These books are exercises in utopian thought linked to a new vision of progress and therefore are expressions of what I call utopian progressivism.

3. Lewis Mumford, **The Condition of Man** (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944) p.265.

4. Bill Devall and George Sessions, **Deep Ecology** (Salt Lake City: Gibb Smith Books, 1985) pp. 162-177. Baker Brownell's **The Human Community** (New York: Harper and Row, 1950) is recognized as the first ecotopian vision of the post-World War II era.

5. Ernest Callenbach, **Ecotopia** (New York: Bantam Books, 1975) p.23.

6. *Ibid.*, p.39.

7. *Ibid.*, p.42.

8. *Ibid.*, pp.55-56.

9. *Ibid.*, p.56.

10. See Robert W. Hoffert, "The Scarcity of Politics: Ophuls and Western Political Thought," **Environmental Ethics**, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring, 1986): 5-32. Hoffert's recent critique charges Ophuls with placing too much of the blame for contemporary resource scarcity on the Western liberal tradition and with seeking a potentially dangerous political solution to the problems of ecological scarcity by applying the political thought of Hobbes and Rousseau. Although Hoffert's own grasp of the idea of progress within the liberal tradition is unsure (see especially p. 14), he is aware of the influence of the utopian tradition, through Plato and Rousseau, upon Ophuls' attempt to seek a basis for social and political reconstruction (redirected progress) in a world of scarcity (pp. 8, 21-3, 25-30).

Hoffert recognizes two possible responses to environmental limits to growth, one grounded in a moral revolution and the other involving unpalatable Hobbesian coercion, which Ophuls recommended only as a last resort. Both alternatives were stated by Ophuls, but Hoffert seems to misunderstand and also misrepresents the choices which Ophuls presented: Metanoia (a change in world view entailing a transformation of moral and religious values) or Leviathan.

11. William Ophuls, **Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity** (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1977) p.116.

12. *Ibid.*, p.126.

13. *Ibid.*, p.128.

14. *Ibid.*, p.129.

15. *Ibid.*, p.137.

16. *Ibid.*, pp.161-2.

17. *Ibid.*, p.164.

18. *Ibid.*, p.165.

19. *Ibid.*, p.176.

20. *Ibid.*, p.204.

21. *Ibid.*, p.223. On this theme, see my essay, "World Views and Environmental Ethics," **Environmental Review**, Vol. 9, Winter, 1985, pp.307-22.

22. *Ibid.*, p.223-5.

23. *Ibid.*, pp.225-232.

24. *Ibid.*, p.232.

25. *Ibid.*, p.239.

26. *Ibid.*, p.240.

27. Karl Mannheim, **Ideology and Utopia** (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1936), p.192.

28. *Ibid.*, p.96.

29. Frederick A. Olafson, "The Idea of Progress: An Ethical Appraisal," in **Progress and its Discontents**, edited by Gabriel A.

Almond, Marvin Chodorow, and Roy Harvey Pearce (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p.527.

30. *Ibid.*, p.545. Also see Nicolas Rescher, **Unpopular Essays on Technological Progress** (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980).

31. See note 1 and Mario Einandi, **The Early Rousseau** (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967).

32. Whatever the outcome, technological society or a steady-state in balance with Nature, some idea of progress, probably rooted in one of the three types which I have described, is likely to be an essential element in the world view of the twenty-first century. All three of these ideas of progress arose during the Enlightenment, scientific progressivism from Abbe de Fontenelle,

millenarian progressivism from Turgot and Condorcet, and utopian progressivism from Rousseau.

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HOPE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

By Rick Searle

Either/or choices are like a spider's web. Once caught, struggle only seems to make things worse. The trap begins with the realization that neither choice truly feels good. The struggle to fit into either position only drains remaining energy. As with the trapped fly who accepts its fate, the struggle subsides and passive waiting creeps in.

The deadly strands of the either/or trap are woven from complex problems. The weaver follows an ancient and deeply ingrained pattern of opposites. Good against bad, yes over no, and right from wrong produce the intricate designs of the web. The fine strands create the illusion of nothingness, but the lethal design quickly dispells the illusion. With the hapless victim ensnared, weaver spider moves in for the kill.

There is no shortage of complex problems from which either/or traps can be produced. Caley (1987) presents one disturbing problem as: "Can we somehow bring enough individuals along the Way in time to avert nuclear or natural catastrophe? And if so, How?" (p.22) Like most of us, Caley freely admits to swinging between the either/or of optimism and pessimism. His frustration with these choices appears when he suggests that: "...perhaps the question is nonsense." The question is far from nonsense, for the acknowledgement of frustration is necessary, if we are to find alternatives to the optimism/pessimism dilemma which will encourage social change.

The search for an alternative begins with realistic assessment of our serious predicament. The chances of a sudden and swift nuclear catastrophe appear to be increasing. In addition, environmental deterioration, such as acid rain, soil erosion and habitat destruction, also appears to be increasing. Unlike a nuclear catastrophe, environmental deterioration proceeds slowly and almost imperceptibly. Together, the threat of nuclear catastrophe and the continuance of environmental destruction seem to foreshadow an ominous final outcome. Belief in the certainty of a negative outcome creates the clouds of pessimism. The clouds gather and darken the spirit. Soon the search for a way to avert the "impending" disaster becomes meaningless as hopeless/helpless feelings become resignation. Given the foregoing, it is clear that pessimism is not a good basis for social change.

Hope for the best outcome creates the positive brightness of optimism. Unfortunately, our hope all too often fails to engage intermediate difficulties. The result is that optimism loses its

grounding and failures occur. Each setback corrodes optimism and adds to frustration. If it weren't for intermediate difficulties and frequent setbacks, then optimism alone probably could serve as a basis for social change.

Optimism and pessimism share some important features. In the case of pessimism, inaction is encouraged because of a sense of helplessness. In optimism, inaction might also be encouraged because there is no need to work hard, if the best will happen anyway. Both extreme optimism and pessimism promote possibility in relation to distant outcome. If we are to encourage action, and find better alternatives, we need to shift our attention from outcomes to activity-process.

Within any given activity-process, whether changing a tire, playing chess, or working for social change, opportunities for improvement arise. Sometimes perceived difficulties and setbacks turn out to be opportunities in disguise. By attending to the process, we are able to seize the opportunities and use them to advantage. The ability to recognize, seize, and use opportunities requires a state of inner readiness. In this state, attention is focused on the moment. Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) offers this advice: "Dwelling in the moment, I know that this is the only moment, I therefore endeavor to do my best despite the odds or conditions" (p.22). This description captures the essence of inner readiness.

This state of inner readiness is also known as Hope. According to Eric Fromm (1968)

Hope is paradoxical. It is neither passive waiting nor is it unrealistic forcing circumstances that cannot occur. It is like the crouched tiger which will jump only when the moment for jumping has come. (p.9)

Passive waiting and unrealistic forcing of circumstances develop out of a frustration with the either/or trap. Hope transcends this trap. Hope patiently waits for the right moment in which to take action. Therefore, hope is both nonaction and action. Yet hope constitutes much more. As Fromm (1968) explains:

To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet **not become desperate if there is not birth in our lifetime.** (p.9) [Emphasis

added.]

Social change requires vast amounts of effort and time, and usually more than any one person can give. Hope acknowledges the difficulties and remains undaunted, because it does not stand alone.

Faith stands with hope in the struggle for change. Fromm (1968) sees faith as, "the conviction about the not yet proven, the knowledge of the real possibility, the awareness of pregnancy" (p.13). He adds that faith, "is certainty in terms of man's vision and comprehension; it is not certainty in terms of the final outcome of reality" (p.14). This characteristic of faith strengthens hope.

The importance of a sense of vision cannot be over-emphasized. It encourages growth and striving, and it provides an intuitive sense of direction for personal and social change. However, the ability to stay on track depends on careful attention to the vision's development. Fuzzy visions translate into poorly developed potential. With a clear sense of vision and with attention to matters at hand, the full potential of the moment can be realized.

Setbacks and unexpected difficulties test faith and hope. The vigor of faith and hope depends on a strong fortitude. Fortitude comes from the strength of spirit. The stronger the spirit, the greater one's resiliency to setbacks. However, when fortitude weakens, the spirit becomes susceptible to suppression, and thus hope and faith are compromised. Compromising hope can lead to a state in which there is an outward display of optimism and hope, while inwardly there is a growing sense of helpless hopelessness (Fromm, 1968). Soon, passivity and a sense of impotence sets in. Further deterioration generates intense frustration and then there arises a tendency to overreact and to force what cannot be forced. Visions and dreams take hard work to fulfil. A person with a weakened spirit will seek ways to avoid hard work. Too often the visions and dreams are adjusted downward and the potential for growth is severely constrained. The actualization of vision and dreams requires an uncompromising faith. Social change demands people of vision.

Hope, faith and fortitude together with a strong spirit help us to avoid the either/or traps of optimism and pessimism. Faith keeps us focused on our visions as opposed to outcomes; hope maintains the awareness of the moment and the possibilities it presents; and fortitude sustains faith and hope.

Hope, faith, and fortitude do not just happen. They are produced out of the hard work of personal transformation, which is in turn replenished by their presence. From deep within each of us, the urge for growth nurtures the possibility for personal transformation. When we take the time to get in touch with ourselves, we have taken the first step (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1987). Only through careful attention can we come to see the fears which inhibit growth and produce frustrations. Once the fears have been acknowledged, standing still becomes much more difficult. However, the next steps still require great courage to do things differently, and to take action. Despite frustrations, old ways feel comfortable and safe, while new ways appear hard and threatening. However, courage to push through the appearances opens up a wonderful discovery--that making even the smallest of changes generates an invigorating feeling. Hope, faith, and fortitude gain in strength, encouraging more changes. A deep peacefulness is possible when fears are let go.

At this point, the importance of "dwelling in the moment" and doing our best needs to be re-emphasized. For it is by dwelling in the moment that we can sense the frustrations in our lives and

our opportunities for change. However, in the final analysis, the courage and will to make the necessary changes spring from Love. Peck (1978) defines love as: "The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth" (p.1) By extending, we open ourselves to change. Love emerges as the precursor of change and the promoter of growth. As May (1969) wrote:

Both love and will are conjunctive forms of experience. That is, both describe a person reaching out, moving toward the other, seeking to affect him or her or it--and opening himself so that he may be affected by the other. (p.273)

Faith that others can change grows from experience and conviction that "I can change." Nonetheless, as Peck (1978) states:

No words can be said, no teaching can be taught that will relieve spiritual travelers from the necessity of picking their own ways, working out with effort and anxiety their own paths, through the unique circumstances of their lives towards the identification of their individual selves with God (Buddha, Tao, Great Spirit). (p.311)

Therefore, we must learn patience--not only with others, but with ourselves as well. Love does not force change. Instead, it nourishes the courage and the will to choose change. Social change naturally grows out of personal changes. It arises from each of us changing and assisting others in their own struggle to change. Political action also grows out of personal change. The "I can change" experience engenders the conviction that one's actions will have a positive effect. With this sense, people are moved to take action against those forces which threaten life and growth, such as nuclear war and environmental destruction. Personal empowerment from self-knowledge enables us to allow things to reveal to us what they are. But while working from extremes, each of us is both the spider and the fly who becomes ensnared in the either/or web. But it doesn't have to be this way. With hope, faith, and fortitude founded on love, the either/or trap of extreme optimism and pessimism becomes meaningless and disappears. With that disappearance the real work of social change begins.

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PAGANISM, NATURE AND DEEP ECOLOGY

By Alan R. Drengson

If we accept current hypotheses about human origins, we must acknowledge that humans lived for a long time, without the benefit of what we would now call science. Our ancestors did not live in cities or villages, but lived predominantly in the country or in the wilderness. Not long ago the rural village community was the main home for most people.

The cultures that existed before the rise of agriculture tended to be nomadic. They had neither urban culture nor writing. They had a different sense of time and history than that developed after the literate revolution. Human religions tend to vary in form depending on the technology practices of the social context. Primitivism, as a form of religion that is Nature oriented, is how we might refer to the religions of humans prior to the agricultural and literate revolutions. By "primitive" (or primal) we do not mean unsophisticated or crude, but original, first or initial religious forms.

The word "pagan" came into use in the Roman world in Christian times to refer to the religions of those who were not Christian "soldiers". "Pagan" meant a peasant, country dweller, one who had not heard and taken to heart the "word" of Christ. Although sprouted in a context of tribal, agrarian religions, Christianity took root in the West in the urban centers of the civilization. Thus, it tended to associate itself with those literate traditions and texts. In those cities, it supplanted the older Greek and Roman polytheisms. It was with these that it largely came into conflict, and it was these to which the term "pagan" was first applied. Hence, "pagan" meant someone who was not Jewish or Christian, and who continued to believe in and practice the rites of the older polytheistic religions of the prechristian, agricultural societies, but it also included the Nature religions of nonagricultural peoples.

The polytheistic, pagan religions of both the Greeks and the Romans had earlier, nonliterate origins. They went back, not just to the dawn of agriculture, but to the religions of the hunter-gatherers, the tribal cultures of the primal (or first) peoples, which preceded the rise of agriculture and urban civilization.

It is interesting to note that Christianity, which attempted to eliminate paganism, has some of its own roots in various forms of paganism. Without an understanding of these pagan backgrounds, and their connection to Nature, it is difficult to understand Christianity in a fully historical and philosophical sense. Not only did Christianity borrow liberally from pagan festivals, rituals, holidays and the like, it also was infiltrated with certain forms of pagan religious vitality in its earliest teachings. Although these were written down in Greek, the texts recounted sermons and teachings delivered, for the most part, outside the cities, by a teacher named Jesus, who spent much time in the wilderness. His teachings were presented as a further development of an older, oral tradition, upon which Judaism was based.

The Gospels are filled with positive references to Nature, and many of Jesus's stories and sayings evoke our deepest feelings for the Natural world. Indeed, some interpretations of Chris-

tianity emphasize these connections and this gives rise to the type of respect for Nature found in the poems and writings of St. Francis--patron saint of animals. In addition, those interpretations of Christianity which hold that the world is the body of Christ view the whole world as having a sacred character. The body truly is, in this view, the temple of the Lord, and the Earth is His cathedral. The world as body of Christ doctrine has many affinities with older pantheistic, primal, Nature religions.

The elements of paganism in Christianity which mostly concern us here are those that have to do with the older Nature religions, for it is the insights of these religions that connect Deep Ecology and the Old Ways. It is from an understanding of this conjunction of elements that we can get some sense of what is meant by a future or neoprimitive.

In the very ancient, oral, non-agricultural, pagan religions, Nature was the primary subject of worship and source of ritual. In these practices were preserved complex patterns of diverse cultural elements, conveyed through oral traditions and active participation. Nature's patterns and meanings are pervasive, and woven through the fabric of their way of life. Each person is a source of knowledge of Nature. The perception of the natural world is holistic. It is not based on analysis or quantification. It involves a direct, first-hand experience of the apparent patterns of Nature, its course, its ongoing creative flow. Various forms of paganism involve such practices as shamanism, celebration of the Great Spirit, divination, trance-speaking, magic, witchcraft and the worship of the great Goddess. Christian opponents of paganism associated these with the devil and Satanism, but the devil is part of Christian religious concepts, and Satanism is an aberration of the goodness and love of Christianity turned into their opposites. It has nothing to do with paganism, especially not with primal paganism.

In some respects, it is misleading to call the Nature Ways of paganism "religions", since the term "religion" normally suggests something more formally organized. Indeed, it has been claimed, by Martin Buber and others, that Christianity became a religion based primarily on systems of beliefs and propositions. As such, it substituted second-hand knowledge, for first-hand experience. During certain periods, Christian society was dominated by textual disputations and interpretations. As it developed in Europe, it was a religion of the book and Cathedral, not one of the plain and grove. The older polytheisms of the Greeks and Romans were religions of the grove and field, (agricultural or agrarian) Nature religions that were decedents of the Old Ways associated with hunting and gathering cultures. The preoccupation with cathedral and text, and the rift between city and country, was not the only source of conflict between Christians and pagans.

Early in its traditions Christian doctrine was powerfully influenced by philosophies that had their ultimate source in the earlier hunting and gathering cults. However, mainstream Christianity had turned away from the implications of embodied life as celebrated by the primal religions, the Nature worship of

the Old Ways. Instead, It emphasized disembodied existence, the glory of the spirit alone. Christianity was directly influenced by Gnosticism, and Gnosticism itself was formed from the spirit/body, two-world ontology of Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism. Earlier Pythagoreanism went back through the Orphic cults, thence to the shamanism of hunting and gathering primal religions. For the Gnostics, that which is of the body is mixed with delusions; it is temporary, and not of fundamental importance.

It is doubtful that this dualism was any more than conceptual and expositional for Pythagoras. It was not, in other words, a deep ontological divide, but was used for purposes of spiritual cultivation. Unfortunately, over time dualistic ontology won out, and it was this which so strongly influenced the development of early Christianity through Gnosticism. Christianity, in departure from the Gospels, came to depreciate the body and things associated with it, such as this world and Nature. Christian attitudes toward human sexuality, Nature, paganism, and the Earth, were all influenced by this dualism. Major forms of Christianity in time became a religion of the other world. The pathologies of such other-worldliness are well known, and even though it is important at a certain stage in one's development to be able to distinguish between mind and body, spirit and matter, it is also important not to turn this into an ontological gulf that depreciates the embodied life.

It is worth noting that most of the major religions arose about the same time. When we say "major religions" we are referring to Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism and to the other religions of civilizations which are large and complex organizations. One of the dominant characteristics of these religions is that they have **soteriological** (or salvational) structures. A soteriological structure presents a diagnosis, prognosis and therapy for the ills of the human condition. For example, Christianity and Buddhism describe the human condition as a state of being fallen or unenlightened. This is an undesirable state (of sin or samsara) and we want to be released from it. (Here the problem of evil or of dukkha is also addressed.) There is a higher, perfect state (kingdom of heaven or nirvana), and it is possible for humans to reach it. Both religions offer practices which will enable the person to purify or perfect the self so as to realize a state of bliss, completion and resolution of life's fundamental anxieties. In the major religions, then, humans are seen as living in a state of disharmony and imperfection, and there is something they can do to transcend this state.

We find nothing like these soteriological structures in paganism. Primal pagans, for example, accept the world as it is, and try to align themselves with it. There is not an ideal state to which Nature will be called in the future. Nature is already perfect as it is. The aim of pagan religions is to continue and to have the Earth continue. The pagan finds completion and meaning in ongoing participation in this world. Thus, at its best primal paganism is a highly adaptive religious, ecological practice.

To be sure, there are forms of Buddhism and Christianity in which it is said that our principle problems are caused by ignorance of our own true nature, and so an ignorance of Nature. Zen Buddhism, e.g., was strongly influenced by ancient Taoism, and in Japan by Shintoism, and both of these go back to the shamanic paganism of hunter-gathering cultures. In them Nature's way is seen as **the Way**. In Taoism, e.g., one does not strive to follow Nature. On the contrary, striving will put one in conflict with It. Nature does not strive. Yet It is bountiful. Going

with the flow of Nature is not a matter of calculation but of holistic responsiveness. This should not be understood as quietistic mysticism---which is how it was often interpreted---but as a very practical understanding of and adaptation to the Natural world. If we leave It alone, the Natural world takes care of itself, and when we harmonize with It, It takes care of us.

We see then, that the primal, pagan religions are Nature religions which were a central part of human life for at least tens of thousands of years prior to the rise of agricultural, urban society. They did not have the soteriological structures of later religions, precisely because those who dwelt in Nature did not feel themselves as dislocated, nor did they see Nature as something to transcend or control. Instead, their stories, rituals, dancing and songs kept them tuned to the ongoing, creative processes of Nature, for all that they needed to know to survive and thrive was continuously being revealed by the ongoing processes of Nature within and around them. In sum, the paganism of the Old Ways was an ongoing, creative cultural process. It was not bound by texts or central authority. It was not a product of one or two minds, but of the community as a whole. It was an ongoing, creative, participatory process that ran in harmony with Nature and was seen as an expression of Its spontaneity.

The paganism of the agricultural societies could be said to represent religions of transition. Roman and Greek polytheisms, for example, retained many of the characteristics of the primal (hunting and gathering) religions, but they began to be less participatory and more urban oriented. As Christianity developed in the literate urban centers, it soon displaced this paganism which was rooted in the agricultural countryside. In more recent times, as Christianity paved the way for the development of modern science, its own desacrilization of the world lent force to the conjunction of science and technology in the creation of modern industrialism, a social form almost devoid of respect for Nature and Its wisdom. Modern industrial culture in turn not only undermined pagan cultures everywhere on Earth, it also came into conflict with Christianity. This brings us to the current situation.

Modern, Western, industrial culture, regardless of ideological or cultural contexts, is a religion of the fourth wave. In the first wave were the primal pagan religions, in the second were the pagan polytheisms of the urban agriculturalists, in the third wave was the urban Christianity of Western historical culture, and in the fourth is the secular religion of progress of urban industrialism. Its ideals exclude the last vestiges of paganism, for paganism---as we have noted, has its roots in the worship and respect for Nature. This brings us to these questions: How is paganism relevant to our current problematique, and how is Deep Ecology connected with this? What is the vision of the future primitive as a vision of a new Nature religion, a new form of primal paganism?

First, our problematique: It need not be argued that current industrial practices, coupled with human population levels, have created a whole network of problems that threaten to destroy, not only urban industrial society, but human civilization as a whole. There is no need to describe the growing, serious, environmental destruction we are causing. What needs to be stressed is that the failure of industrial society to value Nature as more than resource or instrument has made it impossible for it to solve its "environmental" problems, without transforming itself, for these are not environmental problems, but failures of character and culture.

Many agree (e.g. Deep Ecologists, social ecologists, et al.) that fundamental changes in industrial society are necessary, if we are to survive. Our survival, it is clear, depends on the continued survival of Nature wild and free. To achieve this, wilderness must be preserved in large areas, for it is Nature as it is in and for itself. It is most completely the uncontrolled, spontaneous development of the world as an ongoing, creative, evolutionary process. In pagan Nature religions this is a major theme: The world is an ongoing, creative process to which we must pay close attention. We come to know it, not just by thinking about it, but by being immersed in it, by letting it speak to us, by being in it in a myriad of ways. So, be the tree, be the wolf, be the bear, be the flowers of the field and the mountains. They teach us to be free and whole and how to live with ecological wisdom. These are things we know well from Native American spirituality.

In the primal (pagan) religions it was common to gain one's adult identity by spending time alone in the wilderness in fasting and purification. After a while, visions and animal helpers would appear. One's sense of identity would be extended, enlarged, made more complete. This direct, open contact with Nature as it is in itself, as it reveals itself to us, was the pagan's main source of inspiration and creativity. For primal pagans everything in Nature is a teacher. By this approach primal pagan cultures were able to maintain harmony with Nature and to thrive for tens of thousands of years. In contrast, we have seen how industrial society, in a brief time, has become increasingly at odds with Nature.

An ecological understanding of environmental problems should help us to realize that our war with Nature is ultimately a war waged against our own kind, against ourselves, for in the process we are poisoning not just "pests" but everything. Science alone cannot resolve our problems, for commitment to saving the Earth and respect for Nature are not scientific, they are moral and religious. Furthermore, they require holistic understanding, and there is no science for the creation of holistic vision; this is more a philosophical art than science.

Here is where Deep Ecology comes in. When we use the word "Deep Ecology" here, we are referring to the philosophical approach described by George Sessions, Bill Devall, Arne Naess, and others. They have emphasized that the Deep Ecology approach contains the elements of direct experience of Nature, the need for large wilderness, the importance of recognizing the inherent value of all beings, and the need for Self-realization and maturity. Using Naess's terminology, we can say that the follower of the Deep Ecology Way practices extended self-identification. In this extended identification one not only realizes the inherent values of Nature and its diversity, one realizes a much larger Self, and states of being with intrinsic worth. This extension of self-identification also involves an extension of one's concerns, commitments, and political actions. This sense of extended caring was expressed well in Spinoza's observation that we are as large as our loves. Love of one's self, to be complete, must be love of others and the Earth. It involves the loving protection of all beings. An understanding of this love opens the way to a reproachment between the Christian teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and the respect for Nature at the heart of primal paganism. It also allows us to see how other religions,

such as Buddhism and Hinduism, can enter into this enlarged ecosophic dialogue. Deep Ecology provides a philosophical framework that allows the gathering of these diverse elements together in a coherent and meaningful way relevant to our contemporary world.

Future primitivism involves the re-emergence of the primal Nature religions, not as a refuge from contemporary responsibilities, but as part of a new, more vital culture involving a synthesis of the deep ecological elements of our traditions, with new forms of technology practice and self cultivation that enable the modern urban human to reconnect with the body and Nature in an authentic, unalienated way. Deep Ecology as articulated by Naess, and by Sessions and Devall in their book **Deep Ecology**, is a philosophical approach with religious dimensions. They indicate the importance of living and acting in certain ways, not just thinking a certain line. The roots of future primitivism and Deep Ecology are both in the immediate experience of Nature as a perfect, alive and creative process.

The animism of paganism involves, among other things, the insight (shared by Deep Ecology) that Nature is not created according to a central text, controlled from one place, but is characterized by myriads of beings, each striving to blossom and realize itself, each expressing its vital, true nature spontaneously. The overall harmony of Nature is the result of these collective actions and interactions. For both primal paganism and Deep Ecology each being should be shown proper respect. Because humans are self-reflexive, culture creating, language using, intellectual animals who develop egos, they can get out of harmony with Nature, if they become too wedded to past cultural and personal forms. If our habits and cultural forms are making us sick, we should change them; if they are making others and Nature sick, we have the most pressing of spiritual and moral obligations to change them.

All humans, including the urbanite, have a deeper Self that connects with the pagan Nature religions of the old Ways. Various pagan elements can surface and reassert themselves in wilderness journeys, but also in such practices as meditation and gardening. These revealments are part of the total, deeper ecological relations of the Self. Paganism and Deep Ecology are both centrally concerned with this ecology of Self-self. Paganism can be seen as an aesthetic, religious process, Deep Ecology as a philosophical, religious one. Saying this does not deny to either, elements of the other. The contemporary resurgence of paganism is in part an attempt to escape from current realities to an earlier time of less hazard, but it is more than that, for it is also part of Nature's reassertion of our connection with the Earth. Properly understood, it is a call back to reality, sanity and life.

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NEOPAGANISM AND ECOLOGY

By Gus diZerega

Is Nature or Gaia conscious, and if so, can we enter into a relationship with Her? The exchange in *The Trumpeter* between Harold J. Wood and Monika Langer walked right up to this question, but halted at its outskirts. And yet, Neopaganism's potential contributions to ecological philosophy are intimately bound up with this matter.

Harold J. Wood criticizes Neopagan beliefs for being "pre-scientific" and threatening to resurrect the superstitions which preceded the Enlightenment. In its place he recommends "pantheism." Mr. Wood's pantheism seems "pan" enough, but I had a hard time finding the theism. He would apparently deny that the natural world is capable of responding to human interaction except by means totally explicable by the laws of physics, or, at most, the principles of systems theory. Hence, his concern with "anthropocentrism" and his rejection of the possibility of establishing any mutually aware relationship with the nonhuman world. Both beliefs are in conflict with scientism: The belief that scientific methodology is adequate for us to learn all true knowledge.

Enchantment and Reenchantment

Ms. Langer is quite correct in criticizing the intellectual blinkers worn by those who equate scientific knowledge with knowledge as such. But if, as she argues along with Morris Berman, the world must be "reenchanted," we have a problem. "Reenchantment" is a verb. It suggests that this is something we can **choose to do** to the world. But we cannot do this. At most we can discover the world to have been enchanted all along.

Mr. Berman makes his case for "reenchantment" by two arguments. First he argues for the radical inadequacy of the dominant scientific world view for sustaining human life. Secondly, he argues that systems theory as developed by Gregory Bateson can once again make us at home in the world, a world wherein we no longer find ourselves separate. Both arguments fail to make his case.

Mr. Bateson and Mr. Berman hold that the world itself is a vast and complex mind, of which we are component parts. There is much that is valuable and attractive in this vision, but ultimately it is inadequate as a solution to the predicament Mr. Berman so movingly describes. Batesonian "mind" is predicated upon cybernetic theory. Mr. Bateson makes his case for mind being as real as matter in part by removing consciousness from it. The world "mind" is ultimately a cybernetic "mind," a "mind" without consciousness. There is no room here for God in any sense.

A "mind" lacking in consciousness is a "mind" forever closed to **human** relationship. As such, it seems to me that our response to such a "World Mind" can be as detached, instrumental, and utilitarian as is our response to other self-organizing systems, or "minds" within which we find ourselves, such as the market and science. Ultimately, then, Mr. Berman's case for "reenchantment" boils down to an argument that it is advantageous to feel

at home in a cybernetic world system of which we are a part and, taken individually, expendable parts of no importance to the system as a whole. Such a system responds to us but is not aware of us.

As I read Mr. Berman, his position is ultimately complementary to Mr. Wood's. The distinction between them, if it exists, is in Mr. Berman's more sophisticated grasp of scientific reductionism's inability to comprehend living systems. I suspect that Mr. Wood has no objection to Batesonian systems theory. While systems theory models can be harmonious with a panentheistic vision of the world, they do not necessarily imply that such is the case. (See Hartshorne, 1984, pp. 51-63, 122-123, on panentheism and pantheism.) Mr. Berman explicitly says that he does not use any theistic model whatsoever.

An enchanted world, by contrast, is one wherein we can enter into conscious relationships with nonhuman entities, be they gods or fairies, or animals or trees or automobiles or what have you. We are immersed in more than a cybernetic system, we are immersed in a system of reciprocal awareness. Without reciprocal awareness the world is not enchanted. Nor can we argue for reenchantment upon the grounds that life would be better if such were the case. Many would object (as I once would have), "Yes, but it isn't the case and wishing won't make it so." I do not believe that Ms. Langer's use of Mr. Berman's work ultimately serves her purpose of rebutting Mr. Wood's criticism of Neopagan spirituality.

Neopaganism and Enchantment

Wicca and non-Western Shamanic spiritual paths do not have their roots in utilitarian calculation. Those of us who follow such paths do so because we believe them to be **true**. Not in the Christian sense of there being only one truth, but in the old pagan sense that in spiritual matters there are many paths, of which ours is a good one.

We believe Neopagan and Shamanic paths to be true because we have encountered superhuman spiritual consciousnesses, while attending and participating in these practices. Nature does respond, especially if we take the time to listen. In the context of Wiccan ritual She responds most powerfully as either female or male divinities.

The Wiccan path holds that the most appropriate spiritual road (for us) focuses upon the inherent sexual duality of life at the mythic (as distinguished from imaginary or fictional) level. This duality also expresses itself within and through the "Wheel of the Year," with the four seasons and Lunar phases being particularly powerful teachers and symbols. Nature, or at least temperate zone Nature, is our primary teacher. She teaches humankind not simply by revealing heretofore unsuspected laws like a good Baconian. She also teaches us about the most deeply felt and pondered issues of human life: love, death, sacrifice, individuality, community, beauty, and our relationship with the rest of the world.

Wiccan and other Neopagan and Shamanic spiritual paths rest upon the insight that divinity permeates the world. There are aspects of divinity in relation to all aspects of the world. Mr. Wood's critique misses this point, when he writes of our supposed "anthropocentrism" through worshipping a Goddess and a God. We do not limit divinity to the experiential world, let alone to the human aspect of it. But we are human beings, and that aspect of divinity which is most accessible to human consciousness is that which has most in common with ourselves.

It is also important to note here that the natural world without the human is not truly natural. Our ancestors have been here a very long time. A de-anthropomorphized world is no more natural than a completely anthropomorphized one. The world is our home as well as our temple. And no place is truly home unless it is deeply intertwined with our very human loves and hopes and memories. Home is where we belong. For Neopagans and others following traditions of nature-spirituality, home is also sacred. To deanthropomorphize the world, a word as ugly as the concept, is to make it inaccessible as a temple and alien as a home.

Relationship with Nature

When I first began investigating Neopaganism and Shamanic spirituality I was both attracted by its experiential character, and deeply skeptical that such experiences were "real" in any but a personalized psychological sense. I suspected that those reporting encounters with spiritual entities were mentally unstable, hysterical, suggestible, or prone to never letting prosaic facts get in the way of a good story. Social scientists may not be as "hard-nosed" as physicists, but I was skeptical enough to manage an indulgent, if wishful, smile when confronted with talk of spirits, goddesses, gods, and the like.

The first Neopagan ritual I ever attended changed all that. It was a Midsummer Ritual held on the Summer Solstice. The ritual took place in a secluded meadow in the hills behind Berkeley, California. My skepticism was scattered to the four directions, when the Goddess was invoked. To be sure, no Greco-Roman beauty came magically floating out of the woods. What happened was both more subtle and more profound. Suddenly, very suddenly, the atmosphere surrounding us changed. A presence permeated the area, and was experienced by most there as very powerful, very feminine, very nurturing, and very loving.

Many subsequent experiences, some much stronger, have convinced me that the powers of Nature will often respond when approached. But they do so in their own way and in their own time. If I have noticed any constants, it is that often the most important encounters are the most subtle, and that small groups or people alone will more frequently have such experiences than will large groups. Experiential evidence suggests to me that these beings are separate from us. Their communication frequently works with symbols carrying levels of meaning not easily described through discursive reason (an important one for me occurred as I discovered a forgotten bulb in my garden). Often the message or teaching is "holistic" (I'm sorry, I can't think of a better word) involving a sort of total awareness which is neither verbal nor visual, but which can be very roughly described in such terms.

All this does not fit very well into the modern mind-set. The best intellectual framework I have thus far encountered, one roomy enough to account for the phenomena but rigorous

enough to sink one's mental teeth into, is most clearly presented in Part I of Alain Danielou's *The Gods of India*, especially chapter one "The Theory of Polytheism." The best discussion of the role of Goddess spirituality is, in my view, Edward C. Whitmont's *Return of the Goddess*, although Mr. Whitmont seeks to interpret his subject in Jungian terms and makes no mention of the contemporary revival of Western Paganism.

But ultimately Neopagan and Shamanic practices are just that: **encounters with spiritual forces and not theories about them.** Their primary impact is not in the cogency of their theoretical frameworks, but rather in an individual's encounters with particular deities and spirits. Someone interested in the subject is better off going to where rituals and ceremonies are taking place, or alone or with a few friends to wilderness for extended periods. Going to a well run Wiccan sabbat or Indian sweat lodge is preferable to reading everything ever published on Witchcraft and Shamanism.

Books capture spiritual experience as well as photographs capture the Grand Canyon. The best do very well, and can encourage us to go. But none truly do the subject justice and can often be better appreciated after we've been there ourselves. With this caveat, I recommend my favorites in the bibliography.

Spirituality and Ecology

Human beings have altered every place they have lived, just as have ants, wolves and robins. Sometimes they enriched the world for all. And too often they did otherwise. Overall, humanity has not excelled in good housekeeping. Whether a culture was Christian, pagan, Hindu, atheist, or something else does not appear to have made a major difference in this regard. Which brings me to my second point about the importance of Neopaganism to the task of healing our Earth.

Judging from the historical record, spiritual insights by themselves are unlikely to preserve the natural world. The forces of physical human need have always intervened too strongly. What is interesting today is that for the most part Western societies have solved questions of physical need, giving their citizens a realm of significant choice in how we relate to the rest of our relations. We do not need to choose between deforestation and doing without firewood. We can choose whether to pay a little more in money prices or continue consuming the capital of the past and the resources of the future.

And yet, phrasing the issue in these terms exposes the modern mind-set's inability to choose wisely. For the secular mind, the nonhuman world is ultimately a world of things, however beautiful or impressive or important those things may be. For most people most of the time, the temptation to overuse anything considered to be simply a thing is well documented. Individually each of us often makes a small negative impact upon the world, while reaping a significant personal gain (at least to us at the time). So we rationalize that our transgression is only a teeny weeny one. But the cumulative impact of these transgressions, of many small concessions to greed or sloth, can be catastrophic.

Utilitarian calculation and reliance upon enlightened self-interest will not preserve the natural world as it is valued by most of the readers of this journal, because they discount the future against the present. We do not know the future and so necessarily undervalue it, when applying narrowly human criteria of value. While coming from very different perspectives, Garrett Hardin and Roy Rappaport have discussed this modern conceit

with exceptional clarity. Only appreciation of the sacred seems able to offset this bias.

This shortcoming within the modern secular mind is why the ecology movement needs a spiritual foundation. When we face a choice, spiritual values will offset the myopia of self-interest. To be sure, only a few people follow spiritual paths at great personal cost. But today those of us in the developed world are no longer faced with painful choices, insofar as the environment is concerned. Our choices are largely ones of convenience. Consequently, for many of us a widespread understanding of our spiritual relationships within the world will tip the scale in favor of living in harmony with all our relations, even in the face of moderate short term inconveniences.

I do not mean to exclude non-Pagan spirituality from my argument. For example, Matthew Fox's attempt to ground Christianity within "Creation Spirituality" is a brave effort, and I and many other non-Christians wish him well. Similarly, Wendell Berry has shown that Christianity need not be interpreted as anti-environmental, and I know of no better proponent for harmonizing human life with the Earth than Mr. Berry. But no perspective which disparages or attacks Neopagan and Shamanic religions, such as Wicca, can offer our society what it needs to overcome its present adolescent rebellion against the rest of the world. In ending this rebellion, Neopaganism--and other forms of spirituality, open us to the presence of all beings, and in this sacred reciprocity peace and harmony dwell.

Resources

Titles whose citations are followed by an (NP) for Neopagan and (AI) for American Indian are especially recommended for their coverage of these subjects. They are not exhaustive by any means, but are my personal favorites. Mr. Wood's and Ms. Langer's articles are in **The Trumpeter** 4, 3, Summer, 1987. Adler, Margot. **Drawing Down the Moon** (Boston: Beacon 1986) [NP]. Berman, Morris. **The Reenchantment of the World** (New York: Bantam 1984).

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ON BEHALF OF BIOEXUBERANCE

By Holmes Rolston, III

The signs at a subalpine campground in the Rocky Mountain Rawah Range suggest a new kind of caring about plants. For years the trailside signs there read, "Please leave the flowers for others to enjoy." But recently, the wasted wooden signs were replaced by newly cut ones: "Let the flowers live!" Perhaps the intent was only to send a subtle psychological message, but I suspect a shifting ethic--respect for plants, replacing what was before only respect for persons.

There is similar evidence at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, along Lake Michigan. The dunes were the site of the earliest studies in ecology, and their preservation required a long, bitter environmental fight. A major argument for saving the dunes was to preserve them as a playground for Chicagoans. But a recent Park Service poster depicts a clump of marram grass, sand and the lake and offers the injunction, "Let it be!" There seems now in the Park Service a caring for grass and dunes, something beyond mere maintenance of a lakeshore playground.

Such responses reflect a new ethic--one that adds a respect for plants to a respect for people. Not coincidentally, this comes at a time of enormous human-caused changes in the natural world. Previously, humans did not have much power to spoil ecosystems and cause extinctions, or much knowledge about what they were inadvertently doing. But today humans have more understanding than ever before of the biological processes, more predictive power to foresee the intended and unintended results of their actions, and more power to reverse the undesirable consequences. We know many floristic natural histories; we find that willy-nilly we have a vital role in whether these stories continue.

We are appreciating vitality in the biological world, one that precedes and overleaps our personal or cultural presence. And with this new appreciation comes a deeper sense of responsibility.

Ethicists say that in *Homo sapiens* one species has appeared that not only exists but ought to exist. But why say this exclusively of a late-coming, highly developed form? Why not extend this duty more broadly to other species? Only the human species contains moral agents, but the paradox is that humankind, the single moral species, acts only in its collective self-interest toward all the rest. Perhaps conscience ought not be used to exempt every other form of life from consideration.

In understanding why humans ought to let wildflowers and marram grass be, we need to see that to care about plant species is not to adopt some vague, subjective intuitions of romantic humans who fancy curious plants. To the contrary, it is to be quite nonanthropocentric and objective about botanical processes that take place independently of human preferences.

The Shift Away From Humanism

In the past, the reasons given for preserving rare plants have routinely been humanistic; **Please leave the plants for others**

to use. People have a strong obligation not to harm other people, and a weaker, though important, duty to benefit others. Given the many ways that humans use plants--agriculturally, industrially, medically, recreationally, aesthetically, scientifically, as cultural symbols, as environmental indicators, as part of their life-support system--humans are significantly affected by their flora. Even rare plants had value to the extent that they were part of this plant world that benefits humans.

In this human-oriented view, we would not say that the needless destruction of a plant species was cruel, but we might say that it was callous. We would not be concerned about what the plants felt, but about what human destroyers did not feel. We would not be valuing sensitivity in plants, but censuring insensitivity in persons. And we might go on to ask what properties in plants a person should be sensitive to.

But when we look past a concern for people, when we try to articulate an ethic to explain the deeper, naturalistic, reasons to let rare plants be, we get lost in unfamiliar territory. We find that all the familiar moral landmarks are gone. We are not addressing humans, or culture, or moral agents; we are not considering animals that are close kin, or can suffer or experience anything, or that are sentient. Plants are not "valuers," with preferences that can be satisfied or frustrated.

In moving toward a new ethic, what we find ourselves caring about are "only" plants, and plants can't "care," so why should we? It seems odd to assert that rare flowers or species have rights or moral standing, or need our sympathy; odd to ask that we should consider their point of view.

Moreover, we are not caring about individual plants, but rather about species. To an even greater degree than individuals, species don't "care."

In addition, 98 percent of the species that have ever inhabited Earth are extinct. Evidently nature doesn't care about species, so why should we? Finally, why should we care about rare plants--what has their rarity to do with their value?

None of these elements--flora, species, ecosystems, wilderness or rarity--has figured within the coordinates of prevailing ethical systems. In fact, ethics and biology have had uncertain relations. An often-heard argument forbids moving from what *is* the case (a description of botanical facts) to what **ought to be** (an ethical prescription to duty). Philosophers accuse anyone who argues in this way of committing what they call the naturalistic fallacy.

The Plant Way of Caring

A living plant, though lacking a brain or neural center, has a controlling program that enables it to maintain itself. The plant control program is coded in the DNA, the informational molecules. Through this program, the plant composes and recomposes itself, maintaining order against disordering tendencies and checking against its performance in the world via feed-

back loops. The genetic set distinguishes between what is and what ought to be--that is, it is a normative system.

Each plant develops and maintains a botanical identity, posting a boundary between itself and its environment. An acorn becomes an oak; the oak stands on its own.

Plants do not, of course, have ends in view, they do not have goals. And a plant is not a moral system--there are no moral agents in nonhuman nature. But a plant, unlike, say, a rock, is an evaluative system, selecting resources for itself.

From one perspective, a plant's activity is just biochemistry--the whirl and buzz of proteins and other organic molecules. But from an equally valid (and equally objective) perspective, the activity is a valued state; the plant life is not merely **biological** but, given the way the plant defends itself, the life is **vital**.

Hence, to the assertion that plants don't care, the response is that plants do care--using botanical standards. They defend their lives, an intrinsic value, in the only form of caring available to them.

If we attach value to life defended (rather than to human preferences), then we must attach value to plants, because plants defend their lives as good-in-themselves. To say that there is no value involved because this activity is controlled by the genome and not by a conscious brain is something like saying that there is neither information nor life in the plant.

A plant is engaged in the biological conservation of its identity and kind. Conservation biologists and others ought therefore to respect plants for what they are; projects in conservation biology. This view aligns ethics with objective biology.

The Argument for Species

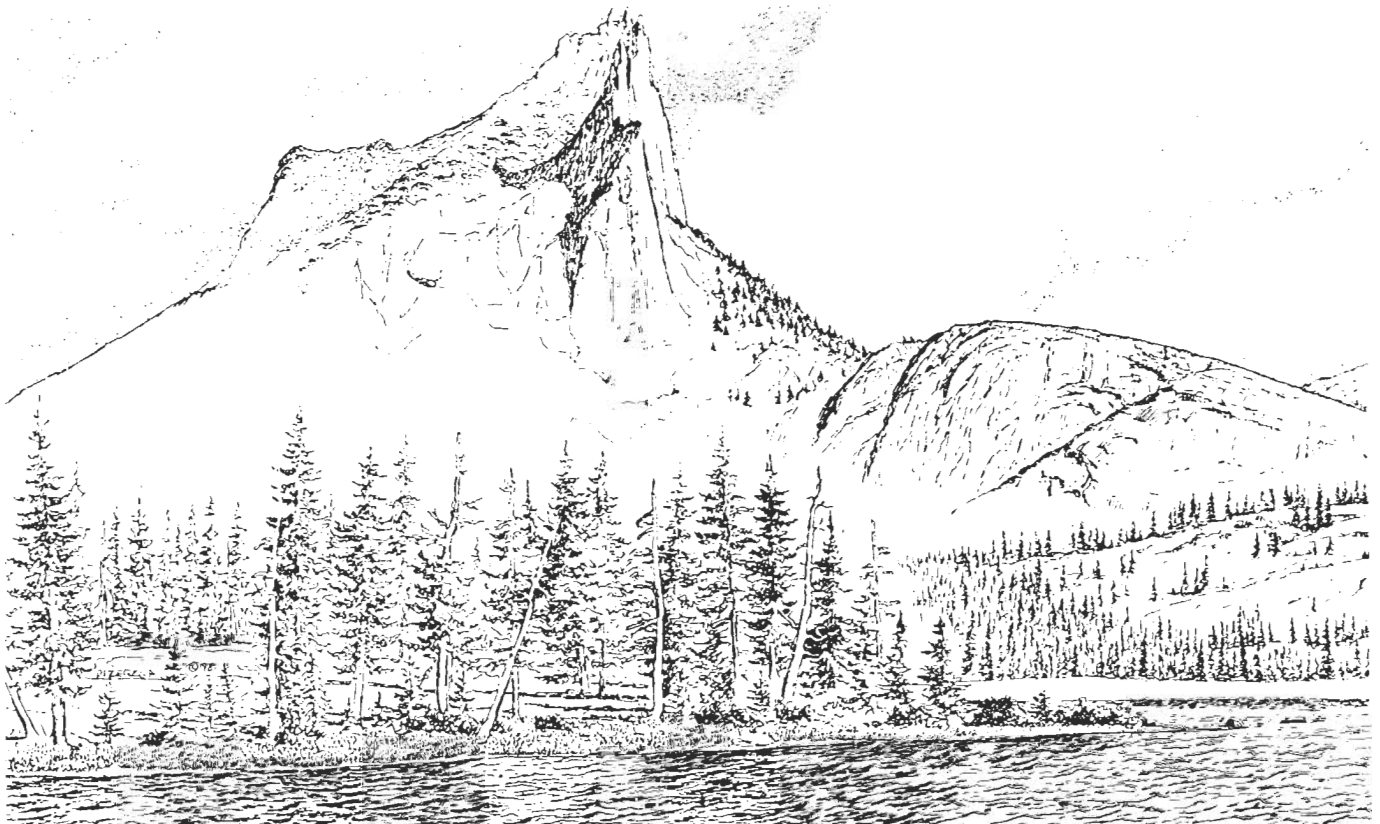
Although we can see why we might respect individual plants, what about species? In one view, a species is a useful fiction, like the center of gravity or a statistical average. Species might be only classes of convenience, or, like lines of latitude or contours, devices for mapping the world. Indeed, taxonomists insist on appending to the plant's Latin name the name of the "author" who, they say, "erected" the taxon.

Even Darwin wrote, "I look at the term species, as one arbitrarily given for the sake of convenience to a set of individuals closely resembling one another." Botanists are divided whether Illinois' Kankakee mallow, *Iliamna remota*, and Virginia's *Iliamna corei*, both rare, are distinct species. Perhaps all that exists objectively are the individual mallow plants; whether there are two species or one is a fuss over what labels to use.

Against this, though, is the claim that there are specific forms of life maintained in their ecosystems over time. Evolutionary lines develop into diverse kinds of life, each with a more or less distinct integrity, a breeding population and a gene pool.

G.G. Simpson says, "An evolutionary species is a lineage (an ancestral-descendant sequence of populations) evolving separately from others and with its own unitary evolutionary role and tendencies." Niles Eldredge and Joel Cracraft insist that species are "discrete entities in time as well as space."

In this view, the idea of species does not seem arbitrary or fictitious at all, but rather, as certain as anything we believe about the empirical world, even though at times taxonomists revise the



theories and taxa with which they map these forms. Species are like mountains and rivers, objectively there to be mapped. The edges of these natural groups will sometimes be fuzzy, to some extent discretionary; one species will slide into another over evolutionary time and in some cases actual speciation is now in progress. But the various criteria biologists use for defining species (descent, reproductive isolation, morphology, gene pool) provide evidence that species are really there.

What survives for a few months, years or decades is the individual plant; what survives for millennia is the kind, or species. Life is therefore something passing through the individual as much as something the individual possesses on its own. A species is a dynamic life form preserved in historical lines and has a vitality that persists genetically over millions of years, overlapping short-lived individuals.

Further, reproduction can be looked on as the means by which a species defends itself. This does not mean that a species has a controlling center, any more than a plant has a brain; but the species, like the individual, is a survival process. Both conserve botanical identity over time.

An ethic about plants sees that the species is a bigger event than the individual. In a sense the species level is more appropriate for moral concern since the species is a more comprehensive survival unity than the organism.

When an individual rhododendron dies, another one replaces it. The deaths of individual rhododendrons are even necessary if the species is to persist: Seeds are dispersed and replacement rhododendrons grow elsewhere in the forest. As landscapes change or succession shifts, later replacements, including mutants, provide a steady turnover. Thus the species improves in fitness or adapts to a changing climate or to competitive pressures. Tracking its environment over time, the species is conserved and modified. As this process is extended over time, certain species are unable to adapt, there are natural extinctions, with re-speciation and a normal turnover--and the generative process continues unabated.

But with human-caused extinctions, this process stops. Such extinction shuts down the generative processes and is a kind of superkilling. It kills forms beyond individuals. It kills "essences" beyond "existences", the "soul" as well as the "body." It kills collectively, not just distributively. To kill a particular plant is to stop a life of a few years, while other lives of such kind continue unabated and the possibilities for the future are unaffected. To kill a particular species is to shut down a story of many millennia, and to leave no future possibilities.

A consideration of species strains any ethic focused on individuals, much less on sentience or persons. But, though it revises what was formerly thought logically permissible or ethically binding, the result can be a biologically sounder ethic. The species is fundamental. It is more important to protect this integrity than to protect individuals. The appropriate survival unit is the appropriate level of concern.

"Ought species x to exist?" is a single element in the collective question, "Ought life on Earth to exist?" The answer to the question about one species is not always the same as the answer to the bigger questions, but since life on Earth is an aggregate of many species, the two are sufficiently related that the burden of proof lies with those who wish deliberately to extinguish a species and simultaneously to care for life on Earth.

Humans ought not to play the role of murderers. The duty to species can be overridden, for example with pests or disease organisms. But a prima facie duty stands nevertheless.

The Argument for Evolving Ecosystems

On evolutionary time scales, species, like individuals, are ephemeral. But the speciating process is not. Persisting through vicissitudes for two-and-a-half billion years, species evolution is about as long-continuing as anything on Earth can be.

Ecosystems are biotic communities, kept in dynamic evolution over time by selection pressures toward an optimally satisfactory fit for each species. Each species defends only its own kind, but the ecosystem coordinates kinds, through a spontaneously evolving order that arises when many such species interact. That order exceeds in richness, beauty and dynamic stability the order of any of the component parts. Species reproduce their own kind; evolutionary ecosystems produce new kinds. Bioexuberance, both diversity and complexity, is conserved while it is increased.

Ecosystems are the context of speciation. Neither individual nor species stands alone; both are embedded in an ecosystem, and in that sense it is even more important to save evolutionary ecosystems than to save species. Species are what they are where they are. The comprehensive ecosystem too is a vital survival unity.

It might seem that for humans to terminate plant species now and again is quite natural--after all, plants become extinct all the time. But when human culture supplants nature, extinction is radically different. Natural extinction is the key to the future because in nature, a species dies when it has become unfit in its habitats, and other species appear in its place. Artificial extinction closes off the future because it shuts down speciation.

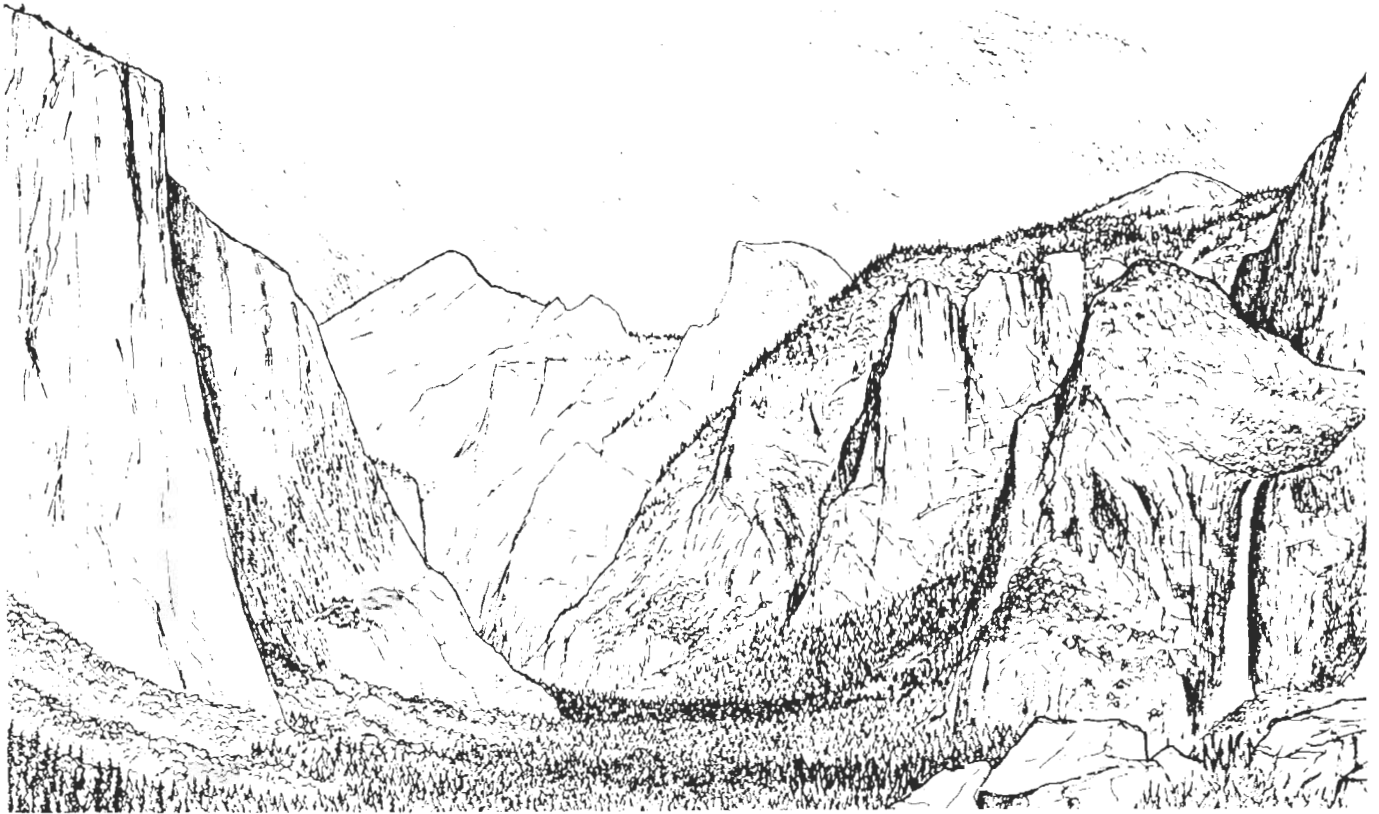
One can say that nature doesn't care about species, and in a way that is true. But it does not follow that there is nothing in nature promoting, conserving, elaborating species, or that we should not care about this. "Caring" is perhaps not the appropriate language to describe the natural processes by which Earth conserves life, overlapping species, starting from zero to elaborate a biota of several million species. But nature does seem to generate species with remarkable fertility and extravagance in Earth's several billion years of creative struggle.

We hardly yet have a complete theoretical account of this richness of life, but bioscience gives us this certainty: The evolutionary odyssey is prolific, that is, pro-life. We ought to admire the process as much as the product.

Valuing the Rare

Rarity per se is not a valuable property. Rarity simply means few individuals of this kind exist. We do not, or should not, value plants or plant encounters just because they are rare.

That a plant is naturally rare may seem to suggest its insignificance in an ecosystem. But naturally rare species, as much as common species, signify exuberance in nature. Each is a unique expression of the potential that drives evolution. Some rare plants may be en route to natural extinction, but it does not follow that most rare plants have less biological competence than common species. On the contrary, endemics or specialized species--like the grape fern *Botrychium pumicola*, which grows only on pumice at high elevations in the Cascade Mountains--may competently occupy restricted niches.



A rare flower is a botanical achievement, a bit of brilliance, a problem resolved, a threshold crossed. An endemic species, perhaps one specialized for an unusual habitat, represents a rare discovery in nature (in addition to the adventure that humans experience in finding it). Rare species ornament the display of life. Together, the myriad species make Earth a garden.

Some rare plants live on the cutting edge of adaptability; some are relics of the past. Either way they offer promise and memory of an inventive natural history. Even more poignantly than the common, they provide both a liberal and a conservative sign, evidence of life persisting in struggling beauty, flourishing, pushing on at the edge of perishing. The rare flowers--if one is open to a wider, more philosophical perspective--offer a moment of perennial truth.

Rare species have proved their right to life through being tested by natural selection. These examples of biological right-to-life, of adaptive fitness of an ecosystem, generate at least a presumption in the humans who encounter them that these are good kinds, good right where they are, and therefore that it is right for humans to let them be, to let them evolve. That leaves plants, species and process all in place.

When humans make once-common plants artificially rare, biological vitality is lost. When humans extinguish species, they stop the story. That makes humans misfits in the system, because they bring death without survivors into Earth's prolific exuberance. Life is a many-splendored thing; extinction of the rare dims its luster.

Several billion years worth of creative toil, several million species of teeming life, have been handed over to the care of this late-coming species in which mind has flowered and morals have emerged. Ought not those of this sole moral species do something less self-interested than count all the produce of an evolutionary system as resources? Such an attitude hardly seems ethically adequate.

There is something overspecialized about an ethic that regards the welfare of only one of several million species as an object of duty. It is an ethic no longer functioning in, or suited to, the changing environment. There is something morally naive about living in a reference frame where one species takes itself as absolute and values everything else relative to its utility.

The old sign, "leave the flowers for others to enjoy," reflected a humanistic ethic. The new, naturalistic signs invite a change in reference frame. Love the flora too. Let it be. Let life flower!

* * * * *

About the author: **Holmes Rolston, III** is professor of philosophy at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. He is the author of *Philosophy Gone Wild* (Prometheus Books, 1986) and of *Environmental Ethics* (Temple University Press, 1987). The article published here is from *Garden Magazine* 11, no. 4 (July/August, 1987): 2-4, 31-32. Published by New York Botanical Gardens. Reproduced with permission.

BOOK REVIEW

The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever, by Stephen R. Donaldson; Vol. 1 **Lord Foul's Bane**, 474 pages; Vol 2, **The Illearth War**, 518 pages; Vol 3, **The Power that Preserves**, 480 pages; (New York: Del Ray Books/Ballantine, \$2.95 each, paperback).

Reviewed by Dolores LaChapelle.

In this fantasy trilogy we have, for the first time in modern fiction, a **whole man**--"blood and bone and thew and mind and soul"--and the whole of "the Land" fighting together for the good of **the whole**. The hero, Thomas Covenant, freed from humanity's two thousand year old delusion of arrogant humanism, learns at enormous cost that he must rely not only on the nonhuman beings of "the Land" to help him, but also on his own so-called "lower" elements--the emotions of the old limbic brain, the very inbuilt knowledge of his own body--for he is fighting not only the enemy of "the Land", the Despiser, but the despiser built into himself--that part of the mind which we call the "rational".

Until recently the tragic hero, capable of winning out over all obstacles, was the protagonist in most fiction; but as Joe Meeker so ably proved in his book, **The Comedy of Survival**, this tragic hero complex, inherited from the ancient Greeks by Western Culture, has led inevitably to the present ecological destructiveness. The opposite of the tragic hero, however, is not the currently popular nonhero, but the picaresque, coyote wily-trickster type of hero of primal peoples. The first picaresque hero in modern literature was Thomas Mann's Felix Krull who said, "He who truly loves the world must shape himself to please it." Writing long before the growing awareness of the ecological disasters now confronting us, Mann did not understand the full dimensions of such a hero; however, Donaldson, son of a Christian missionary who was an orthopedic surgeon in a leprosarium, growing up in the midst of the many "spiritual" paths of India and with an intimate acquaintance with the horrors of leprosy, has seen the importance of such a hero and has given us this much-needed modern myth.

Donaldson's protagonist, Thomas Covenant, a leper, is "summoned" out of our world into "the Land", not knowing what he is to do or who summoned him. During the course of his adventures he gradually becomes aware--step by step--of what he must not do or he will fall under the Despiser's power or perhaps even become a **Raver**. The supreme stroke of genius on Donaldson's part is naming the three Ravers (followers of the Despiser); **Samadhi**, **Moksha**, and **Turiya**. Each of these Ravers takes possession of another body each time it is killed. Part way through the trilogy they reincarnate as members of a clan of gentle giants. Here they eventually become known as Kinslaughterer, Fleshharrower, and Satansfist, so-named for the horror and destruction they bring down on "the Land." Their underlying true names remain **Samadhi** (Buddhist term for a highly advanced meditative state), **Moksha** (Hindu term meaning "freedom from earthly bonds") and **Turiya** (Hindu term for the fourth state of consciousness, "beyond the gross physical waking, dreaming and sleeping state--the transcendent self"). I have provided here the technical definitions from translations of Hindu and Buddhist works. What Donaldson unmistakably indicates in his use of these three characters is that if the highest goal of human life is

considered to be abstracting oneself from this world into a timeless state of "bliss", then this world becomes unimportant, has no fundamental value, and humans are free to destroy it in the interests of something "higher". Donaldson critiques the otherworldly tendencies of various forms of Buddhism and Hinduism. Christianity, however, does not come off much better. At the beginning of the third volume there is a harrowing scene where Covenant, temporarily back in our world, and, half-mad from his festering wounds as well as the fear of his growing leprosy, is drawn into a revivalist tent meeting where the mesmeric preacher is working his audience up to a frenzied response with his words about acknowledging their sins so that they will be healed. Covenant staggers up to the stage saying, "Help me, I am a leper." The crowd doesn't hear his low mumble but the preacher does, and "brother Logan" escorts him out with a vice-like grip "to pray with him". As they go down the aisle "brother Logan" states that he will break both Covenant's arms if he does anything to interfere further with their "collection". With such scenes Donaldson effectively dismisses the idea that help can come from any kind of "organized religion" based on ideas or ideals out of human heads.

Is there any hope? As one follows the narrative of continually mounting horrors, depicted in the three volumes, all seems hopeless. (I must warn readers of the trilogy that they cannot skip over these horrors, even though they can lead to nightmares, for what Donaldson finally shows us is the real underlying problem--the truncated idea of humanity which the modern world has and its concomitant illusion, human perfectionism--all brilliantly exposed in the final pages of volume three. But I cannot say more here without giving away the most dread-filled scene I have ever read.) What I can say is that in volume three Covenant discovers that the more he tries with a "tragic hero" consciousness to save himself and "the Land" the worse it becomes, and he realizes the danger of becoming swept into becoming another **Raver**, but when he gives up that method and relies no longer on his "rational" brain but on the knowledge of his whole body--"heart and blood and bone and thew and mind and soul"--and on "the Land" itself, the first glimmer of hope appears.

Where does hope lie? Near the end of the last volume Covenant is again back in our world, in a hospital, dying of an allergic reaction to rattlesnake anti-venom, acquired as a result of rescuing a small child in our world. The creator of "the Land", although he could not with impunity "break the arch of time" of his own creation, "the Land", can help Covenant in his own world. When he makes this offer, Covenant angrily replies, "I don't need any gifts..." The creator insists "Ah, but you have earned..." Covenant breaks in with: "I didn't earn anything...You put me in "the Land" without my approval or consent...All I did was see the difference between health and disease." In this apparently simple statement lies the hope of healing ourselves and our world. This is what conservationist Aldo Leopold spent thirty years of his life working toward, and finally stated in his *Land Ethic*: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." And "beauty" is an integral necessity here, as Donaldson clearly understands, when early in volume one he tells of Thomas Covenant travelling through "the Land" with the woman, Atarian, to the Lord's Keep with his warning. They enter a section of the Land never ruined, when the former High Lord

Kevin Landwaster invoked the Ritual of Desecration in a vain effort to quell the Despiser. Covenant's consciousness suddenly clarifies so that for the first time he "saw its verdancy, its springtime life, its fitness...he received an impression of potency, health, that dumbfounded him. His thoughts reeled, groped, then suddenly clarified around the image of **health**. He was seeing health, smelling natural fitness and vitality, hearing the true exuberance of spring..."

Atarian asks him, "Did you not see such things before?" He shook his head. "Then how does the world from which you come live?" She sounded dismayed by the prospect of a place in which **health** itself was invisible.

Later, when they have arrived at the Lord's Keep and the High Lord asks him about his world, Covenant, rather than delineate the problems of our world, begins to speak hesitantly of the beauty he sees in "the Land". "Where I come from we don't see...We have beauty, too. We call it 'scenery'." The Lord repeats the word very suspiciously saying he doesn't like the sound of it.

Covenant felt oddly shaken, as if he had just looked over his shoulder and found himself standing too close to a precipice. "It means that beauty is something extra," he rasped. "It's nice, but we can live without it." "Without?" Mhoram's gaze glittered dangerously. And behind him Foamfollower breathed in astonishment, "Live without beauty? Ah, my friend! How do you resist despair?" "I don't think we do," Covenant muttered. "Some of us are just stubborn."

For many years I have been involved in different aspects of writing and teaching ecological consciousness, yet as far as my relationship to the land is concerned, these are some of the most important books I have read in my entire life. The only other person who has glimpsed the full implications of what Donaldson has shown us in this trilogy was Gregory Bateson. In his **Steps to an Ecology of the Mind** and in his last book, **Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity**, Bateson used many different methods and a good deal of data to support his thesis that "mere purposive rationality...is necessarily pathogenic and destructive of life." But I have found few people who can or will make the effort to read Bateson. The power of Donaldson's writing, however, not only forces us to experience, deep in our bodies, the full destructiveness of this "pathogenic" ability we have, but even more important, shows us the way to whole consciousness, which includes "the blood and bone and thew and mind and soul" of human beings, but also the consciousness of the "one Forest" and **all** the beings of the Earth.

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About the author: **Dolores LaChapelle** directs the Way of the Mountain Learning Center, P.O. Box 542, Silverton, Colorado, USA 81433. She is a ritualist and writer and has for years been a wilderness traveller. She has published other pieces in **The Trumpeter** as well as elsewhere. Her book **Earth Wisdom** can be ordered from the Way of the Mountain Learning Center. Her latest book **Sacred Land, Sacred Sex: Rapture of the Deep** will be published early this year. It and the books discussed in this review can also be ordered from the Center. Their catalogue is available upon request.

POETRY

THE MARGINS

by Walt Franklin

Walking there in late summer dusks,
I double up on purposes, to seek the
Blackberry and the bear among dense canes.
A fallow land, between mown fields and
Woods, returns to wildness, shifting
To a place where men rarely walk
Old fencelines, rarely gaze deep

Into cellar holes except while hunting
Game or timber stands. Utility
Has vanished with the independent farmer
And the general store. And yet, a spirit
Of the early settlers gleams in hidden
Eyes of bear. On margin lands I meet them:
Grouse, raccoon and peewee families
Cavorting, hunting this new marketplace
Where man and creature share resemblances,
Thieving from each other peacefully,
Loss and hope mere shadows of a walk
For blackberries in the dusk, for bear.

CREATION

by David Sparenberg

How wonderful is earth.
Yet we fail to know,
being obsessed
with business of finance.

How wonderful are trees.
Tall spreading evergreen or
deciduous in autumn.

I would kiss the planet.
Healing wounds
of ignorance and greed.

How foolish is man.
Yet earth celebrates;
life endures.

Earth remembers.

The stones remember.
The worm,
plowing the soul of tomorrow,
recalls the intrusive spade
and metamorphic glow
of renewal.

The natural dancer dances.
Even the rapacious criminal
is folded
into this plethora
of suffering and ecstasy.



ACID RAIN

by Richard F. Fleck

In sheets of grey
sifts the acid rain
where grey of land
meets grey of cloud--
all is dimmed--
even trees once bright with autumnal flame
appear enflamed
like sore throats
for birds and beings
credited as human.

THE GREAT RETURN

By Richard Langlais

Returning to mountain
clear in foothill air
every dark ridge bare
cold rock frigid tarn and trees
black splash of rock in arc
laugh as arm throws high.

High my eye travels as I settle in for study.
Tea boils and books wait;
the door of the hut is closed.
I stare and see mountains
in the fire and in the mist.
Day of dreams and nights awake,
yesterday is last month,
there could be snow on summits;
is that its far roar, maybe the mountain king?
My hut is desert and its place, ocean.
I begin to see that all is mountain.

Mountain returns to mountain
tea drunk hut open
lie in grass gaze waterfall
another on trail walks toward
with mountain clear I see her near
I see her clear return to mountain.

THE DARK THAT WHISPERS START

by Richard Langlais

Can you hear
in the dark that whispers start
the raven dropping through the night?

Cry delicately.
The rain rushes the eaves,
the leaves fall wild again;
sensitive without you,
the bass times a stream
my eyes black beat
a loss of time again.

CITY RATS

By Arnold Talentino

The muskrats cruise the creeks,
Bellies gliding muddy bottoms
As silently as submarines;
They only show their faces
In the dark, between a
Wake of ripples that reflects
Distant street lights, or the stars.

These muskrats build no homes
From sticks, they disappear
Into tattered banks, lay low
Except to eat--coming out
At clumps of cress-like weeds,
Devouring camouflage,
Sure of the street, its darkened eyes.

About the poets: David Sparenberg's essays, stories and poetry have appeared in a variety of periodicals. He has published **Words on Fire, Not Bodies** (prose) and **The Name is Shalom** (poetry). Both are available from him at 230 - 23rd Ave. E. Apt. 407, Seattle, Wa. 98112.

Richard F. Fleck is a professor of English at the University of Wyoming. He has written one novel and three collections of poetry. He is also author of **Henry Thoreau and John Muir Among the Indians**, Archon Books, Hamden, Conn., 1985.

Walt Franklin is the author of several volumes of poetry including **Topographies** published by M.A.F. Press, Box 192, Portlandville, N.Y. 13834 U.S.A.

LIVING AMONG CROWS

By Arnold Talentino

Crows outside my window
Swoop to a nest
In the tall spruce,
Caw from my roof,
Challenge from my driveway.

Raucous clowns of escape,
The park is theirs:
Beyond my fence
Stiff steps scavenging
Trash cans of commotion;

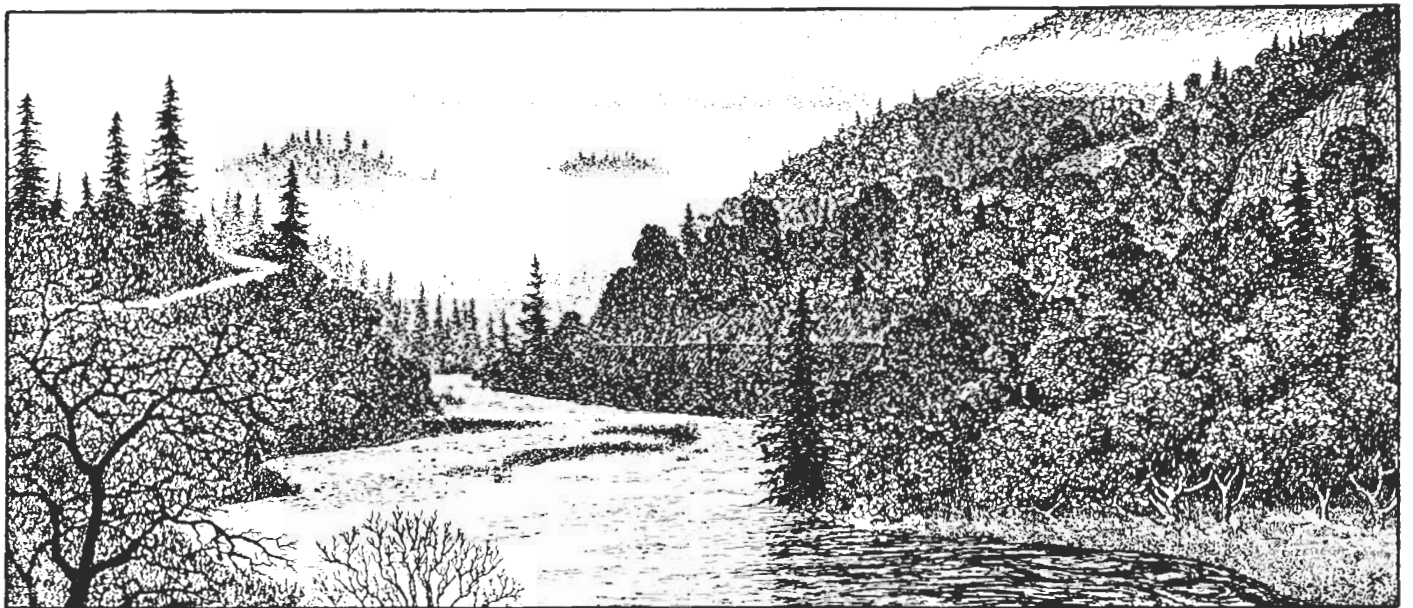
Ring-eyed desperados
In hemlocked lairs,
And a brook for fishing,
On the turn of small stones.

But in snow and frost,
Dark silhouettes
Creak through stiff air,
Pterodactyls,
Lords of an ancient place.



Richard Langlais has worked for Canada National Parks on the Columbia Icefield, and has also studied Chinese Literature and Language, with study in Taiwan and a six month walk in Tibet. He is currently writing a book, **Road News From Tibet** which will be published by the end of 1988, by Asia 2,000 Pub., Hong Kong. Two of his poems were published in **Soundings**.

Arnold Talentino lives in a small city in the country, Cortland New York, where small mammals come to town along the wooded banks of two creeks. He is working on a group of poems which suggest that the natural world presents an enigma lurking beneath the surface.



*The Trumpeter: Dedicated to the exploration of and contributions
to a new ecological consciousness and the practice
of forms of life imbued with ecosophy.*