

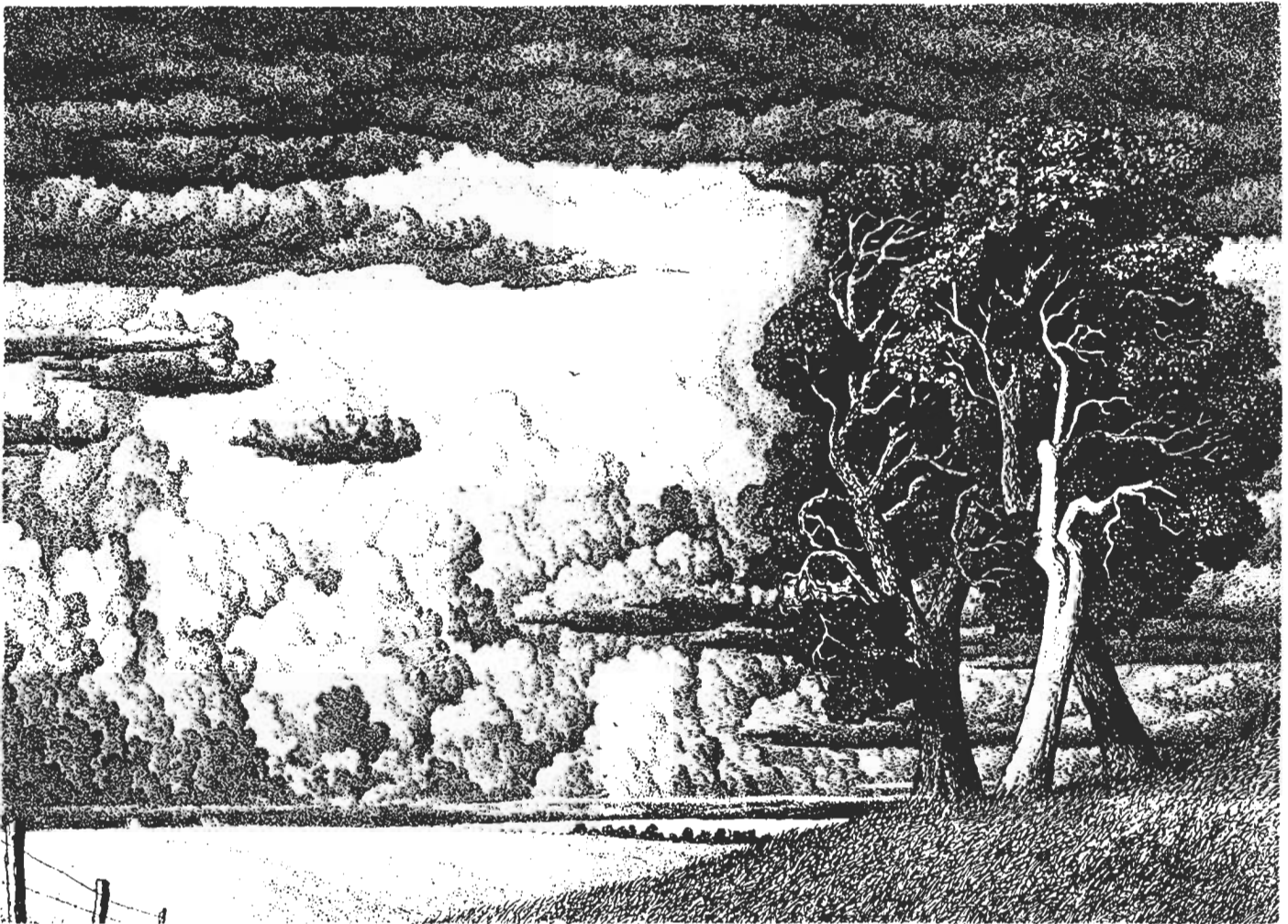
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# THE TRUMPETER

*Journal of Ecosophy*



WITTGENSTEIN, PANTHEISM/PAGANISM, ECOSOPHY, EDUCATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Alan R. Drengson, Editor

A central theme in deep ecological discussions focuses on the ecology of self/Self. Throughout the writings of various people working at a deep ecological level common themes and insights are emerging, which give us a widening perception of the nature of the relationship between the human self and the larger Self that includes other beings of Nature. The papers in this issue enable us to appreciate the spectrum of self-Self, from minimal self, i.e. the shrinking of self identification to a self without definition or qualities, an "extensionless point," to a Self which is defined by an extension of identification which includes an ever widening sphere of beings and natural processes. What, we can ask, is the nature of the person with an extension that includes Self? What is an appropriate self for the Age of Ecology? Are we headed into the 21st century with the Self of Nature as part of our Earth vision, or are we (as individuals and culture)

going to extend a diminished sense of self that needs power-over to find its security, and uses technological control and manipulation to achieve this end? A certain kind of so-called "New Age" philosophy ties the human future to the narrower power-over self, which uses the extension of technological power to control all aspects of life. (Granted there are New Age writers and thinkers who are moved by a different vision of the human future. This, of course, shows the fuzzy character of the words "new age" as they are currently used.)

The reflections and researches of numerous people are converging on common themes, which recognize that the full maturation of the human being involves an expansion of sense of self-identification that transcends the human self defined as technologist and manipulator; it transcends the human as ego

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bloated to demagogue and dictator; it recognizes the ultimate mystery of existence, our limited knowledge, and the necessity of living by the way of compassion. Many writers from different religious traditions reflect the ecumenical nature of deep ecological reflections for the Age of Ecology. True, there is also a revival of minimal self and minimal conceptions of deity in some forms of religiousness, which are anti-ecological and exclusive, but these simply make more evident the direction of transformation the human spirit must seek to grow toward, if we are to solve our problems. The enlarging life of learning and discovery that characterizes an authentic spiritual path, is blessed by deepening love, compassion, tolerance and gentleness. It is this spirit that emerges with ecosophy and extension of self identification to Nature.

The discussion of self/Self and religion is aligned with one of the central aims of the world-wide, deep ecological movement. As we enter the Age of Ecology, we find there is taking place a respiritualization of our experience of the Earth, Nature and human life. Here the idea and practice of spiritualization refers to practical devotion to, and celebration of, the sanctity of creation itself, the mysteries of this life and the greater life of which we are a part. The self of the Age of Ecology matures into the experiential understanding that its fullest Self is intermingled with, and defined by, Nature Itself. The world around and within us is filled with inexhaustible possibilities for the discovery of meaning and worth. These aims of understanding and practice take a variety of different forms in cultural terms. Thus, some ecosophic cultural activity takes the forms of philosophical analysis and vision, or of art and play, in gardening with Nature, and so on.

The lead feature in this issue, on Wittgenstein's philosophy, is our first author focus. Wittgenstein's philosophical work, as the three authors John Martin, Jorn Bramann and Joe Mellon suggest, is highly relevant to the philosophy of the Age of Ecology, even though he does not explicitly say much about ecology. We focus on Wittgenstein's critique of the philosophical culture that has shaped our modern industrial society, and especially his critique of its notions of self and world. A thoughtful reading of the three papers here should make evident to everyone the importance of Wittgenstein's philosophical work to the Age of Ecology. In future issues we will focus on other thinkers and writers whose work has ecosophic implications.

The section on pantheism, paganism and primalism continues a discussion from earlier issues of *The Trumpeter*. Harold Wood responds to criticisms made by Monika Langer of his earlier paper on paganism and pantheism. Here Wood not only responds to her criticisms, but also presents a well developed account of modern western pantheism, its importance, and relevance to the Age of Ecology. Monika Langer responds to his criticisms of her, and also presents a defense of the form of paganism identified with the religions of the Goddess. She emphasizes the need for pluralism and a diversity of ways for celebrating, understanding and appreciating the natural world and the human self in harmonious relationships. Christoph Manes presents a discussion of the ecosophy of primal religions, which he explains in depth. He points out that primal religions are characterized by practices which avoid attempting to control the world according to certain conceptual-valuational methods. In a sense, one could say that primalism is our deepest, oldest response to Nature, both culturally and individually. When we go beyond our ignorance and fear through wilderness experience, for example, or shamanic journeying, we realize a larger Self. As Manes points out, the religions of civilization

have often suffered from an exclusiveness which shows itself as an attempt to impose centralized doctrinal purity and authority on other people, cultures, and the world, usually with disastrous results. The primal religions have greater relevance to the Age of Ecology, than the hierarchical power structures supported by many of the ideologies of civilization.

The Age of Ecology lies beyond the period of ideological fanaticism. It represents the maturation of the human person and culture beyond egocentrism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, and anthropocentrism. Ideological fanaticism is usually an expression of the first three of these identifications, and it begins to wain when one reaches a human ecumenism that is still nonetheless anthropocentric. To extend the identification of the collective human self to include "the other," i.e. Nature, involves allowing the human created boundaries between us and Nature to drop. When they are let go of, we become filled with all of Nature and even cosmic awareness, which is also called, e.g., mystical consciousness or Buddha mind, depending on one's cultural context. The central core of wisdom and mystical teachings East and West, ancient and new, have always included this insight- awareness, along with experiential methods for attaining it through deep self/Self knowledge. This is usually brought about by some type of disciplined practice, such as sitting or walking meditation.

In the last section, Arne Naess reflects on the interrelationships, or, we might say, the ecology of ecosophy, population and free Nature. He raises basic questions about the relationship between human numbers, per-capita consumption and quality of life. He ties these factors into ecosophy and the thriving of free Nature and wild Nature. He suggests a three-fold division of land: Urban and roads, free Nature (the area of mixed communities of sheep and wolves, e.g.), and wild Nature (characterized by Nature basically undisturbed in its continuing evolution). He also discusses the Brundtland report and the prospects for deep ecology in the future. The Brundtland report is bearing fruit, and various international development organizations are reshaping policy to emphasize sustainable development and environmental soundness. As Naess points out, in order to make a significant difference, the whole notion of development has to be ecologically shaped on the basis of ecosophy or ecological wisdom. This will require answering the sorts questions he raises about human numbers and per-capita consumption. Finally, Barry King recounts his experiences and insights that grew out of several years of experiential learning in an expedition community. He provides some valuable observations about the need for practical experience in connection with coming to understand the ecological complexity of human and nonhuman relationships.

The featured reviews in this issue by Bill Devall and Françoise Dagenais are of books directly relevant to the themes in this issue. The book reviewed by Devall, *To Govern Evolution*, provides an opportunity to discuss the technological self's attempts to control Nature via biogenetic engineering, and Dagenais' review of *Models of Man* provides an opportunity to tie the discussion of the ecology of self-nature, and the urge to control Nature, to the other observations in this issue, at the level of theory. Her review brings out the importance of the creative process involved in the task of forming relationships that are empowering and open.

Also included in this issue are some environmental cartoons by Rick Palidwor, and a selection of poems reflecting deep ecological sensibilities.

# LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN AND DEEP ECOLOGY

John Martin

## Biographical Note

Ludwig Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on 26 April 1889 and died at Cambridge, England on 29 April 1951. Prior to World War I he worked on the philosophy of mathematics with Bertrand Russell at Cambridge. At the outbreak of war he joined the Austrian army as a volunteer and served as a stretcher bearer. He was captured and held in a prison camp in Monte Cassino, Italy, and from there he smuggled out the manuscript of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In Wittgenstein's own words, the purpose of the book was to demonstrate that "what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."

For ten years after publication of this book he gave up philosophy. He also renounced a large inheritance endowed to him by his father. He taught in remote villages in Austria. He lived and dressed frugally.

He returned to Cambridge in 1929 and held the chair of philosophy until 1936, when he lived for a year in his hut in Norway. During World War II he worked as a hospital orderly in London and in a medical laboratory at Newcastle. In 1947 he gave his last lectures at Cambridge. From then until his death he spent long periods in seclusion in different parts of Europe, some of this time in a hut beside the ocean at Galway, Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

## The Relevance of Wittgenstein's Philosophy to Deep Ecology

King Duncan has been murdered, and drawing his brother aside from the welter of speculation and horror, Malcolm asks, "Why do we hold our tongues, that most may claim this argument for ours?"

Shakespeare wrote and lived in a time of cultural crisis. In his play *Macbeth*, from which the above lines are taken, the death of the holy king signals the collapse of the medieval worldview. The social atom splits and the new men wheel off to England and Ireland.

But why are the sons frozen? Why is it that they, of all people closest to and most profoundly affected by their father's death, "hold their tongues?" Why cannot they utter the most important question? Why cannot we, followers of Deep Ecology, say the true thing? Let us admit our difficulty here. It is not simply a lack of moral courage, it is more the lacking of the right words, or a language. It is more knowing that there are no words. We cannot speak the un-nameable.

I believe that Wittgenstein's work is impossible to summarize or interpret in a simple way. He explicitly stated that he wanted

people to work through the problems that he raised and that only when his propositions were transcended would one "see the world aright."

A follower of Deep Ecology wants to say: You have no grounds for your arrogant assumption of power and knowledge of what you think is right for the world. And why? Because reflection will show you how little your words support. We live in a world made heavy with "knowledge" and "information." We have forgotten the silence. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein distinguished between what can be expressed and expressed clearly, from that which cannot, and must therefore "be passed over in silence."

Wittgenstein builds no system, no metaphysical theory, no ontology. It is as if he viewed Western philosophy as tied in a massive knot of concepts and assumptions, so that his approach is a puncturing one--his philosophical probes are exploratory needles, testing what will give and what will not. This process has the effect of loosening the hold that words have on our thinking, feeling and acting. Most importantly, Wittgenstein draws our attention to the space where words end--the silence. Since Socratic times we have ignored the silence. Western philosophy has been characterized by the din of argument.

Deep Ecology points to silence. We withdraw our "human clamor" from the world. Yet silence is not to be understood only as "withdrawal" or "emptiness." Silence is a ground. It is the deepest part of Self and World. When we speak and when we read we fail to note the space between the words, and of the white that everywhere surrounds the black. That is always there and Wittgenstein reminds us of that.

Deep Ecology is not merely words, and by putting words to paper I extenuate. Deep Ecology is something we try to do, and it is only partly a matter of arguing the toss on moral extensionism, human exemptionalism, or the limitations of an anthropocentric view of the world.<sup>2</sup> Such philosophizing is useful (and necessary to a point) but hardly sufficient. Conversely, neither is Deep Ecology only a matter of activism, poetry and lifestyle. It is all these things, and more. It is a matter of deep earth experience and a profound seriousness towards the job of life.

Bearing this in mind, "silence" has more than philosophical relevance. It too is something to be experienced in our lives, and to be found within our bodies--always there. Dolores LaChapelle writes of an experience on the island of Hokkaido, Northern Japan.

*With a Japanese Professor and some students, we drove for hours in a jeep miles from any habitation. We were north of the paths of all airplanes...I was sitting alone on top of the lit-*

the mountain, looking out over the ocean toward a small volcanic island, a castle-like cluster of vertical rock. And I sat and looked out over this startling landscape and was grateful for the total silence. It went on and on, and I sank deeper and deeper into it...It was total silence. I discovered that total silence is total awareness and total life.<sup>3</sup>

From out of that eternal silence emerge words and concepts that tangle us in the net of the world. What concerns Wittgenstein is how easily the mind becomes dazzled, gripped, or "bewitched" by language, or more precisely the images or ideas to which particular words seem to point. For example, we are dazzled by the idea that an argument should be logical and rational, that emotion should not enter it. It is this image of rationality that grips us...

We want to say that there can't be any vagueness in logic. The idea now absorbs us, that the ideal must be found in reality. Meanwhile we do not as yet see how it occurs there, nor do we understand the nature of this "must." We think it must be in reality; for we think we already see it there. (PI, 101.)

The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakeable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe. Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off. (PI, 103.)

We take our view of the world for granted. We believe that its "reality," its "truth," its "correctness" is beyond question. Yet is my view of the world arrived at after a process of testing?

I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No; it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false. (OC, 94.)

...one can instruct a child to believe in God or that none exists, and it will accordingly be able to produce apparently telling grounds for the one or the other. (OC, 107.)

For most of us, "apparently telling grounds" applied to various facets of our world-picture will remain satisfactory for the rest of our lives. "Thinking" takes place within a life. "Thinking" is an activity or a set of processes that takes place within, between, and with the aid of a web of concepts, beliefs, values, pictures, images and ideas whose origins are obscure and of whose "truth" we cannot begin to estimate. The "inherited background" is a nest of deep assumptions by which we make sense of the world. Two such, of particular interest to the follower of Deep Ecology are those of (1) the distinction between subject and object, and (2) of the **intelligibility** of the world. These assumptions or "deep intuitions" have only achieved sharp prominence within Western culture and arose at one of those nodal points in history. In *Before Philosophy* Henri Frankfort, et al., we read how the Ionian philosophers transferred

the problems of man in nature from the realm of faith and poetic intuition to the intellectual sphere. A critical appraisal of each theory, and hence a continuous inquiry into the nature of reality, became possible. A cosmogonic myth is beyond discussion. It describes a sequence of sacred events, which

one can either accept or reject. But no cosmogony can become part of a progressive and cumulative increase of knowledge...myth claims recognition by the faithful, not justification before the critical...

[T]he doctrines of the Early Greek philosophers are not couched in the language of detached and systematic reflection. Their sayings sound rather like inspired oracles. And no wonder, for these men proceeded, with preposterous boldness on an entirely unproved assumption. They held that the universe is an intelligible whole. In other words, they presumed that a single order underlies the chaos of our perceptions and, furthermore that we are able to comprehend that order.

The speculative courage of the Ionians is often overlooked. Their teachings were, in fact, to be misunderstood by modern...scholars. When Thales proclaims water to be the first cause, or Anaximenes air; when Anaximander speaks of the 'Boundless,' and Heraclitus of fire; when moreover, Democritus' theory of atoms can be considered the outcome of those earlier speculations; then we need not be astonished that commentators in a positivistic age unwittingly read familiar connotations into the quasi-materialist doctrines of the Ionians and regarded these earliest philosophers as the first scientists. No bias could more insidiously disfigure the greatness of the Ionian achievement. The materialist interpretation takes for granted what was to be discovered only as a result of the labors of these ancient thinkers--the distinction between objective and subjective...<sup>4</sup>

Can an assumption be "proved" or "disproved?" In this case the Ionian achievement may more properly be described as the emergence of very deep intuitions which gradually changed a culture's way of thinking and formed a "bedrock of thought" for millennia to come. To make a distinction between subject and object leads to a way of viewing the world, the way of science, e.g. However, there are other ways of "viewing the world" which make no such sharp distinctions; the ways of the Dreaming, meditation, or silent contemplation, for example. The follower of Deep Ecology would wish to make no hierarchy of ways here. Wittgenstein illuminates this discussion in the following passages.

But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No; it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false. (OC, 94.)

The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game: and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules. (OC, 95.)

The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other. (OC, 97.)...

And the back of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which is now in one place, now in another, gets washed away, or deposited. (OC, 99.)

What am I believing in when I believe that men have souls? What am I believing in, when I believe that this substance contains two carbon rings? In both cases there is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey. (PI, 422.)

The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. (T L-P, 6.371.)

Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages. And in fact both are right and both wrong: though the view of the ancients is clearer in so far as they have a clear and acknowledged terminus, while the modern system tries to make it look as if **everything** were explained. (T L-P, 6.372.)

The deep intuitions that people have such as "the intelligibility of the world," or the distinction between subject and object, or "that men have souls" may be, in terms of Wittgenstein's imagery, the "river bed" of a culture's thought or the rock of that river bank. Such views have held "fast for us" for a very long time. But this is no guarantee, let alone proof of their eternal validity. The world of the twentieth century is bricked up from the hardnances of thought fashioned in the nineteenth. "Knowledge" assumes inviolability, yet this knowledge is based upon a very specialized and narrow way of "knowing," dating from the meditations of Descartes. Descartes wanted to establish what can be known indubitably. We form a picture (and it is an image that the man himself provides) of the isolated individual sitting alone before the fire, who through the process of only one faculty, reason, arrives at the certainty of consciousness.

Not through the thinking of enclosed man, but by way of the experience of the child is the approach of Wittgenstein. The question is not "Of what can I be certain?," but "How does the child acquire his or her world-picture?" Wittgenstein draws attention to the universal experience of us all. Very few of us can take Descartes' path; all of us, of necessity, take Wittgenstein's.

Suppose some adult had told a child that he had been on the moon. The child tells me a story, and I say it was only a joke, the man hadn't been on the moon: the moon is a long way off and it is impossible to climb up there or fly there. If now the child insists, saying perhaps there is a way of getting there which I don't know, etc., what reply could I make to him? What reply could I make to the adults of a tribe who believe that people sometimes go to the moon (perhaps that is how they interpret their dreams), and who indeed grant that there are no ordinary means of climbing up to it or flying there.<sup>5</sup> But a child will not ordinarily stick to such a belief and will soon be convinced by what we tell him seriously: Isn't this altogether like the way one can instruct a child to believe in a God, or that none exists, and it will accordingly be able to produce apparently telling ground for the one or the other? (OC, 106-107.)

The child learns to believe a host of things. I.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what is around it. OC, 144.)...

We form the picture of the earth as a ball floating free in space and not altering essentially in a hundred years. I said, "We form the picture, etc.," and this picture now helps us in the judgement of various situations. I may indeed calculate

that here things are more in favour of a bridge than a ferry, etc., etc., but somewhere I must begin with an assumption or a discussion. (OC, 146.)

My four year old daughter urges me outside at night, points up at the sky and asks, "Where is the sky gone daddy?" I reply that the sky has not gone anywhere, it is simply dark. This answer is part of, or blocks into, an entire worldview that Christine will somehow or other piece together. Wittgenstein says, "We don't see how specialized the use of 'I know' is." I do not know that the moon is a quarter of a million miles away. I have learned it. Things fit. "I know that the Earth goes around the sun." No, I have learnt that too, or rather I put my trust in Copernicus and not Ptolemy.

But what thinking processes lie within Christine's question: "Where has the sky gone?" Something is "there," i.e. observable; now that phenomenon is absent. Where has it gone? A logical question. There must be a reason for the disappearance of things. (Must there be a reason? Christine wants to know, or be told, an explanation. Is this a drive on her part, and on the part of all of us, to make the world understandable?)

What intuition is hidden within her question? That there must be an explanation for things that disappear? Or that fathers know? Can "intuitions" be taught? At her age, the form of question, "Where has X gone?" as applicable to teddy bears and dolls is a fairly recent phase. Her parents of course are often asking her where things are, but this seems too simple an answer. We are being driven back to roots here, to the intangibility of question and answer.

It is this anguish to think through his deepest assumptions or to even become aware of them, that strikes me in reading Wittgenstein. His writing acts like a chemical reagent, forcing me to identify the images and ideas in my head, dissolving hardnances, making openings, so that a different world is revealed. For how does he see philosophy? What is he trying to do? What is he trying to do with you and me, his readers? How do we view our life? As a series of moments in time, ending in death? No.

Death is not an even in life: we do not live to experience death. If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. (T L-P, 6.4311.)

[Augustine says, "If only men's minds could be seized and held still! They would see how eternity, in which there is neither past or future, determines both past and future time. Could mine be the hand strong enough to seize the minds of men? Could any words of mine have power to achieve so great a task?" *Confessions*.]

The problem, then, is not a contemporary one. Wittgenstein wishes to slow down our frantic activity, our sharp thinking and our maddening attempts to make things fit.<sup>6</sup>

We cannot read and understand Wittgenstein quickly. We have to journey with him over a wide field of thought, crisscrossing in every direction. Consider the following remarks:

The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (PI, 109.)

We do not know, or rather we know on an intuitive or non-intellectual plane. To get to that level is the point. But we tend to dwell on the surface of words, and do not call upon our deeper intelligence.

It is the business of philosophy, not to resolve a contradiction by means of a mathematical or logico-mathematical discovery, but to make it possible to get a clear view of the state of mathematics that troubles us: the state of affairs before the contradiction is resolved. (PI, 125.)

Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains or deduces anything....One might also give the name "philosophy" to what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions. For the clarity that we are aiming at is complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear. (PI, 126.)

Deep Ecology wants to set the stage.

For the clarity we are aiming at is complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear. (PI, 133.)

That this is not simply intellectual clarity is clear from Wittgenstein's asseverations in **On Certainty** that intellectual clarity is not possible.

What is your aim in philosophy? To show the fly the way out of the fly bottle. (PI, 309.)

Confucius: "The way out is via the door. Why is it that no one will use this method."

My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense. (PI, 144.)

Then the ground is cleared, and presumably, things stand clear.

We can be certain of nothing. We live in a transcendent world.<sup>7</sup> Wittgenstein invites us to turn our words in on themselves and even to deny them their magical power.

What may be our attitude toward this enigmatic world we inhabit?<sup>8</sup> To begin with, one utterly different from that of Bacon or Hobbes. Nature is not to be forced to answer, nor are we here to pursue power. The follower of Deep Ecology invites all to acknowledge and share in this mystery, and to gently relinquish our grand plans and those attitudes of arrogance and self-importance that are its usual company. Let us allow the world into our hearts rather than impose our dubious intellect on the world.

If one picks up the flavour and method of Wittgenstein one avoids those dead-ends in philosophy, those inquiries which lead us nowhere. One such inquiry is the debate over "intrinsic worth versus instrumental value." If we simply saw the world differently there would be no debate.<sup>9</sup> We shall convince very few with words.

We must not be afraid to courageously follow the visions that Deep Ecology holds out to us. I am a part of the ecology. My every breath depends on the Earth. I cannot say where my "body" stops and the "world" begins. Who can? I have degrees of consciousness and awareness. I cannot separate "myself" from what is around me in any but a fictional way, for purposes of demonstration. I cannot form my thoughts and feelings into a

system. There are no ultimate values, but nor is there a lack of value. I have no recourse but to trust the world: my ground is the world and my actions are the sum of my relations with all things.

In our hearts we know this.

A statement which knits together my respect for Wittgenstein's great work and some themes of the Deep Ecology movement is this passage from Cecilia Ostrow:

1. I believe that all life is intelligent (intelligence: awareness with understanding; life: includes rocks, winds, rivers, etc.) Every species has a different perspective on the world. Every species embodies a different quality. I believe that trees are more intelligent than human beings.

2. I believe it is possible to communicate with other life forms.

3. The oldest living ecosystems are the most developed, the most realized. They hold the Earth together. The message communicated by the oldest ecosystems is remarkably the same, although landforms themselves are diverse.

The communication of the oldest ecosystems is like being close to the beating heart of the world; it is not in words so much as in feeling. It is the feeling that your organism has found whatever it needs to endure both life and death: it is the closest thing to a reason for being that I have ever encountered. One step away from that experience, the reason for being is to love and to celebrate with all other forms of life the wonderful energy which gives us all being/form/life.

4. The creations of man are very crude compared to the complexities of Nature around him. It may not be intrinsically wrong to manipulate our environment (the trees tell me this, but I'm not sure). The basic wrong is being blind to the intelligence of the Earth, thinking we are better than the Earth and using our manipulation to separate ourselves from it so we are out of tune with it...<sup>10</sup>

Wittgenstein's vision works alongside the sensibility of the follower of Deep Ecology in establishing limits, balance, sanctions, sense of stillness, and avoidance, as against interference, tampering, resource-gathering, and "information."

The world is an unknowable mystery of which we are a part. We are not separate from Nature. We may and do distinguish between objective and subjective, this is a convention.

There is a correspondence between the depth in the world and the depth in Self.

All things have quality. (Or lack of quality, or no-form.)

The question becomes, How do we relate to this mystery in our words, actions and thoughts? Each must answer for themselves. Philosophy cannot provide the answer. Philosophy sets the stage. It reminds...

#### Notes

\*N.B. All quotations from Wittgenstein are referred to by abbreviations as follows: T L-P, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974; PI, *Philosophical Investigations*, Blackwell, 1976; OC, *On Certainty*, Harper Torchbooks, 1972. The numbers used refer to the numbered paragraphs from each of these works, and hence any passage can be quickly found regardless of edition of the works.

1. This biographical note is based on Von Wright's short sketch of Wittgenstein's life. See N. Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, Oxford University Press, 1977.

2. "Moral extensionism" and "human exemptionalism" are the doctrines of (1) extending moral values from humans to other creatures, and (2) asserting that humans are exempt from the strictures and laws of Nature imposed on other life forms.

3. D. LaChapelle, *Earth Wisdom*, Finn Hill Arts, Silverton, Co., 1978, p. 147.



4. H. Frankfort, H.A. Wilson, J. Jacobsen, **Before Philosophy**, Pelican, Aylesbury, 1968, pp. 251-252.

5. One may easily read into these words the idea that Wittgenstein is hinting at a kind of cultural or anthropological relativism: that what is deeply felt or believed by one culture is nonsensical to another, and therefore since there can be no agreement (since agreement rests on a precept or ground for agreement) there can be not "truth" or "reality" either. Anything goes. I would suggest that Wittgenstein has no concern with this question. He is surely driving us back to the mysteries or origin, back to (or beyond) our intuitions, back to the borderland between Word and Silence.

6. Heidegger draws a distinction between "calculative" and "meditative" thinking. Calculative thinking "always reckons with conditions that are given. We take them into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it neither works with numbers nor uses an adding machine or computer. Calculative thinking computes. It computes ever new, ever more promising and at the same time more economical possibilities. Calculative thinking races from one prospect to the next. Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself. Calculative thinking is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is." (p. 46.) Meditative thinking is part of our essential nature and to lose or forget this would be a calamity. "But for the time being—we do not know for how long—man finds himself in a perilous situation. Why? Just because a third world war might break out unexpectedly and bring about the complete annihilation of humanity and the destruction of the earth? NO. In this dawning atomic age a far greater danger threatens—precisely when the danger of a third world war has been removed. A strange assertion! Strange indeed, but only so long as we do not meditate.

In what sense is the statement just made valid? this assertion is valid in the sense that the approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practices as the only way of thinking.

What great danger then might move upon us? Then there might go hand and hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative planning and inventing indifference toward meditative thinking, total thoughtlessness. And

then? Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature—that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive." Martin Heidegger, **Discourse on Thinking**, Part I, Memorial Address, Harper and Row, N. Y. 1966.

7. I do not use this word in a Kantian sense, but simply as a term opposed to any scientific or materialist interpretation of the world. A transcendent world is a world not subject to limitation.

8. James C. Edwards, in his important study of Wittgenstein, suggests that unlike the classical scientist for whom the world is a riddle to be solved, Wittgenstein saw the world "as a miracle, ...seeing it as a series of occasions for love— inexhaustibly rich and various attentions to the realities— rather than as a setting for the exercise of one's will." (p. 239) Further, "humility marks Wittgenstein's ideal response to things, a response that, recognizing the essential mystery of the world acknowledges that mystery: it does not seek to deny or control it. This sensibility is constantly aware of the insufficiency of any particular conception: it feels the inexhaustible depth of every reality, and gives itself over to that work of patient attention which begins to reveal those depths." (p. 241) James C. Edwards, **Ethics Without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life**, University of South Florida Press, 1982.

9. A bit of crusty Hobbesian impatience with the old paradigm may not be a bad thing either. In *Leviathan* Part I, Ch. VIII, he quotes the following from a scholastic treatise, "The first cause does not necessarily inflow any thing into the second, by force of the Essential subordination of the second causes, by which it may help it work." Hobbes' commented: "When men write whole volumes of such stuff, are they not mad, or intend to make others so?"

10. C. Ostrow, "Ostrow on Deep Ecology," in *Earth First!*, Dec. 21, 1984, p. 24.

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## THE DISEMBODIED SELF: WITTGENSTEIN'S CRITIQUE OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL MAINSTREAM

Jorn Bramann

Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a powerful ruler, an unknown sage—he is called the self. In your body he resides; he is your body. Nietzsche: **Zarathustra**

### I

Consider the following passage from the novel **The Man Without Qualities**, written by Wittgenstein's contemporary and compatriot Robert Musil:

When he built his house and had occupancy, as the Bible puts it, Ulrich had an experience for which, in a way, he had been waiting. He found himself in the enviable position of having to remodel his residence from scratch—in absolutely any way he saw fit. From a stylistically faithful restoration to total recklessness, all possibilities of architecture were at his disposal, and his mind was free to choose among every known style, from that of the Ancient Assyrians to Cubism. So, what was he to choose? Modern man is born in a clinic, and he dies in

a clinic. Hence he ought to live in a clinic as well! This demand had recently been formulated by one of the leading architects, and a reformer of interior architecture had demanded movable walls for all apartments, on the grounds that men had to learn to trust each other by living closely together, rather than isolating themselves from each other. In those days a new time had begun (for that it does constantly), and a new time needs a new style. Luckily for Ulrich, the little palace, in the condition in which he found it, had already three different styles built on top of each other, and it was impossible to do all the things which he was supposed to do. Still, the responsibility of having to decide on how to shape and furnish his house weighed heavily on him...

Well, the Man Without Qualities, who had already taken the first step of returning to the country of his origin, also took the second step to insure that it would be external forces that shaped his life: he left the decoration of his residence to the inspiration of the appropriate decorator shops, convinced that they would take care of preserving all proper traditions, prejudices, and limitations. He himself re-did only some of the old-fashioned items that were already in place—the deer

antlers in the whitewashed hallway, or the reinforced ceiling of the drawing room. Apart from that he simply added whatever struck him as practical or convenient.<sup>1</sup>

Ulrich, the anti-hero of Musil's novel, is a good illustration of the prototypical "Modern individual." The peculiar character of the Modern condition appears in a nutshell in the comic scene in which Ulrich has to choose the appropriate style for his house, i.e., to give an adequate expression of his Self. The peculiarly Modern response to this task is the discovery that for the radically Modern individual there is no appropriate style, no adequate self-expression. While people of previous cultural epochs manifested their existence in definite and unique architectural and other artistic canons, Modern humanity has come to borrow the styles of all ages and all regions of the planet. Modern humanity is more knowledgeable than any culture before them, but they were far less successful in creating their own unique style than their predecessors. Hence the commercial banks with the facades of Greek temples, city halls in the style of Renaissance palaces, railroad castles, or breweries disguised as Campanian sanctuaries. There was, to be sure, a Modernist reaction to this kind of architectural historicism--the work of such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Adolf Loos, the Bauhaus group, or Wittgenstein in cooperation with Paul Engelmann. But Modernism in architecture never became as dominant in Modern culture as, e.g., the Egyptian style in Ancient Egypt. What we have to this day is eclecticism, architectural pluralism: "Modern" architecture remained just one style among many, one possibility among many others; it did not become the expression of the age. Thus, architectural Modernism ("Cubism" in Musil's text) has no particular weight for an individual like Ulrich, it is just one more form of decoration among others from which he has to choose. Although contemporary to his life, it is no closer to his heart than any other possibility, he feels equally distant to all of them. Ultimately, all styles are just so many masks, so many guises to wear; the real Self does not appear in any of them. The radically Modern individual can parade as anything, and thus in a certain sense is nothing. Hence: "The Man Without Qualities." The only way in which the Modern individual can possibly identify himself or herself is by the systematic denial of any external self-manifestation. Its authentic identity, one might say in Hegelian terms, is its systematic non-identity. The Modern Self is radically disembodied.

This radical separation of the Self from any external realization has been one of the most central themes in the Modern Arts. T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland* (which appeared at the same time when Wittgenstein's classic, the *Tractatus*, was published) is a most prominent example, not only in content, but also in style: In this poem the author deliberately juxtaposes a great variety of styles, languages, cultures, *personae*, myths, and ideologies, together with their degenerate derivations--relativizing them all, exposing them as obsolete fragments, chaotic debris, "a heap of broken images." It is the total loss of binding forms, uniting traditions, direction-giving visions which constitutes the Modern wasteland. And in this world of meaningless fragments, discarded expressions, superficial facades, the Self itself remains without substance, without identity. It becomes, to use a term of the early Wittgenstein, "an extensionless point."

"Alienation" has become the common term for this self-experience and self-conception of the radically Modern individual--alienation of the "Self from everything "external" to itself.

Alienation in this sense cannot be described as one of the, if not the, most basic characteristic of the Modern condition. Modern individuals are, and know themselves to be, fundamentally alienated from community (society), from tradition, from formerly accepted authorities, and progressively from each other as individuals. They are also alienated from their own feelings, their instincts, their bodies, and their various daily activities. Considering especially these latter aspects one can say that the prototypical Modern individual is profoundly alienated from himself or herself. Modern individuals, in other words, are unencumbered to the point where they are lost--lost in a void where there is not possible point of orientation, no possible identification. Modernism is a vision of the Self where a long process of emancipation, systematic separation, and finally, alienation, has reached its ultimate end.

## II

The self-experience of artistic Modernism has had its analogues in 20th century philosophy. Significantly, even in schools of thought which in all other respects are as far apart from each other as can be, such as Existentialism and Analytic Philosophy, very similar definitions of "Self" have emerged.

Sartre is particularly explicit in outlining the disembodiment of the Self from everything external. As Ulrich in Musil's novel is equally estranged from all architectural styles, Sartre's critical individual is basically equally distant from all moral, political, or ideological positions. There is ultimately no compelling reason why one should subscribe to one worldview (and its practical implications) rather than another; in the end all such commitments will have to be a matter of arbitrary choice, an act of will unsupported by anything outside itself. For the acknowledgement of even the relevance of reason ("the game of reasoning," as contemporary jargon has it) would have to be based on a prior act of free will. At bottom every individual is absolutely free, "condemned to be free," in Sartre's telling formulation. There is no relying on society, established mores, conventions, authorities, traditions, or even one's personal instinctive dispositions. The validity of all these factors or forces is suspended. What, for the critical individual, remains is a Self supported by nothing, a self "abandoned" in a radical world.

The famous formula of this self-conception is, of course, "Existence precedes Essence." **That** one exists is basic, and **what** one exists as is secondary, and in a certain sense unimportant. Not what one "chooses" to be is what counts, but how one goes about doing so, in what spirit. Existence as such is being-there without qualities. Qualities, to be sure, are unavoidable--as it is unavoidable that one's house have *some* style. But it is not any of these qualities which make an individual an authentic person. Authenticity requires that one be aware of the fundamental lack of any properties of the real Self.

Wittgenstein, as one of the founders of Analytic Philosophy, seems an unlikely ally of such Existentialists as Sartre. Yet, in his early work (summarized primarily in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*) Wittgenstein arrives at a conception of Self (the "subject") which is strikingly similar to the Existence that precedes Essence:

The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human psyche, with which psychology deals, but

rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world--not a part of it.<sup>2</sup>

The subject does not belong to the world; rather, it is a limit of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be found? You will say that this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do not see the eye. And nothing in the visual field allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.<sup>4</sup>

In his *Notebooks* Wittgenstein characterizes the Self as "a point without extension." The Self becomes conceivable only in the act of denial, in its opposition to every thing which is not-Self, the "world." For this reason the Self is a "metaphysical" subject, something which cannot be described, i.e. empirically identified. There is, of course, my empirical Self, my physical and emotional personality. But this empirical Self is in principle not closer to me than any other worldly object: "A stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, my body, all stand on the same level."<sup>5</sup> My anxieties or insecurities, my bodily pain or physical excitements--all are as far away as a rock lying in the field. I am out of touch with my physical, emotional Self. I am out of this world...

An important implication of this Self-conception is the fact-value gap maintained in the *Tractatus*, and with it the same kind of value-relativism that also underlies Sartre's philosophical constructions. Not being part of the world in any significant sense, there is, of course, no good reason for me to bring about this rather than that state of affairs:

How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself in the world.<sup>5</sup>

For it must be all one, as far as concerns the existence of ethics, whether there is living matter in the world or not. And it is clear that a world in which there is only dead matter is in itself neither good nor evil. Hence the world of living things can in itself be neither good nor evil.

In his "Lecture on Ethics" (1929/30) Wittgenstein asserts: "The murder will be on exactly the same level as any other event, for instance the falling of a stone."<sup>8</sup> The facts of the world are neither good nor bad. They are simply there, infinitely removed, as it were, from the Self that can receive neither substance nor guidance from them. The idea that the massive slaughter of World War I, e.g., could be seen as impassively as leaves blown across a field gives a measure of the enormous distance put between the Self and the world, a measure of disconnectedness and alienation which indicates how severe the separation of the Modern individual from itself has become.

### III

The vanishing of the Self as an identifiable, substantial person--so prominent in the works of Modernism and 20th century philosophy--is the final conclusion of a long development of Western thought. It could be argued, in fact, that this development of progressive disembodiment of the Self is the center of the Western intellectual mainstream. The guiding passion of this

development was the emancipation of the "true" Self from such external identification as roles in communities and traditions, feelings and other inconstant dispositions, or one's entire physical nature. The final result of this development was the idea of a Self that has jettisoned so much that nothing was left except the act of denying identity with anything except this act of denial. It seems that with 20th century Modernism we have reached the ultimate extremes and possibilities of this development; one cannot go any further in this direction than we have gone.

For a number of reasons (listed below) it seems high time to critically reflect on this development, and to conceive of ourselves in a different way. Wittgenstein's later work (summarized primarily in his *Philosophical Investigations*) is crucial in this. His analyses center around the two major pillars of Western mainstream philosophy, Platonism and Cartesianism, both philosophies of radical disembodiment. Before I turn to the later Wittgenstein, therefore, a short presentation of Plato and Descartes with respect to their definition of Self is in order.

It has been said that all (Western) philosophy is nothing but a series of footnotes on Plato. One way in which this can be supported is by showing how thoroughly Plato shaped Western views by a seemingly innocuous assumption in the domain of logic. It is the assumption which constitutes the most basic support for Platonism: Plato maintained that all things referred to by the same word must have something in common, an identical element (or number of elements) which justifies the use of the same word. Certain figures in plane geometry, e.g., are called "square" because they all have certain characteristics in common, namely four equal sides and four right angles. It is these characteristics which justify our calling all these squares "squares." And a figure lacking these characteristics cannot be called by this term; they are not squares. Words like "square" have meaning because they designate classes of objects with definite common features. If they could be applied randomly to any sort of object, they would be useless sounds or marks on paper. Our language could not function as a means of communication; it would not really be a language at all.

What seems patently true of such well-defined terms as "square" seems, albeit less obviously, true of most words, at least of all nouns and adjectives. The objects called "apple" must all have a characteristic which makes them apples, and the objects called "bananas" must have different characteristics which make them a different kind of fruit. The objects called "art" or "work of art" also must have something in common by virtue of which they can be classified as art. Again, without such a common characteristic we would not only be unable to distinguish different kinds of object from each other, but we should also fail to understand the meaning of such often used words like "apple," "banana," or "art." Thus, there **must** be something in common in a class of objects referred to by the same name, whether we can readily pinpoint such a common element (or elements) or not. It is the philosopher's primary task to find these common elements, particularly in cases where these common elements seem rather elusive, and yet important, such as in the case of "art," "justice," "truth," etc.

The presumed common element (or elements) of a class of objects referred to by the same word was called by Plato an *eidos*, which eventually became translated into "essence." Philosophers are to search for the "essence" of things, and thus to establish authoritative definitions of such things as art, justice, freedom,

etc. The above basic assumption and its implication for concept formation is called "essentialism." Essentialism is the heart of Platonism.

It should be noticed that an essence is a different kind of thing than ordinary objects. While actual squares (drawn on paper, built in concrete, etc.) all have a definite size and color, the essence of all squares has neither. The essence of squares (four equal sides plus four right angles) is an abstraction. Actual squares can be perceived by our senses, the essence of squares can only be thought. Actual squares are physical, essences are mental. Actual squares are percepts, essences concepts. Actual squares are a multitude of different things, an essence is always the same. And since it is often not easy to identify what a certain class of objects have in common, an essence can be described as being hidden "behind" the confusing variety and multiplicity of actual phenomena. But since they are the defining characteristics which "make" an object what it is, the essences are in a sense more "real" than ordinary, physical things. Besides, while actual squares come into being and eventually perish, the essences are eternal. Essences, in other words, are not only different, they have an existence of a superior sort.

In this way, Plato proceeded from an innocuous logical assumption to quite dramatic metaphysical conclusions. From a definition of definition he arrives at a theory of two worlds: the world of physical objects on the one hand, and the world of eternal essence on the other. The former is the inconstant world of mere "appearances," the world to which people with insufficiently developed mental faculties will cling. The latter is the more solid world of eternal ideas to which all philosophically-minded individuals will aspire. The former is the world of illusions and slough, the latter the world of knowledge and active enlightenment, where minds, freed from the prison of physical bodies, will dwell among unearthly ideas. While inhabitants of the physical world are like prisoners in a cave who think that the shadows of things are real, philosophers will be free to leave the cave and bask in the sun of the Good...

Western philosophers did not follow Plato in all details of his thinking, of course, but two elements of his philosophy have persisted through more than two-thousand years of philosophy: Essentialism, and a pervasive mistrust and contempt of everything physical, especially the human body. (The latter, incidentally, was usually coupled with a similar mistrust and contempt of women, women being perceived as more closely associated with the physical and the human body, more "earthy," and less inclined to engage in the flights of abstract thought.) Thus, when the later Wittgenstein questioned the basic logical assumptions of Platonism, especially Essentialism, he began to undermine one of the most crucial foundations of the entire Western tradition. It will be seen shortly what implications his criticism had for the definition of Self.

Although Descartes is known as "the father of Modern philosophy," in one respect he simply continues, although with renewed vigor, the Platonic tradition of bifurcating reality into the physical and the mental. He concentrated, however, more than Plato on the application of this division to the human individual, thus giving rise to a plethora of philosophical problems concerning the relation between Body and Mind. Cartesianism, his version of the radical dualism of "thinking substance" and

"extended matter" has thoroughly influenced philosophical projects into the 20th century.

Descartes wrote at a time when the remnants of the medieval world had finally collapsed, both socially and intellectually, and when intellectuals felt a strong need for new foundations for a new beginning. One feature which characterized the Middle Ages was a fairly strong identification of every individual with his or her social role. The question "Who am I?", if it came up at all, could easily be answered in terms of social status and its implied functions. When the traditional feudal order, which supported this identification, had broken down, the question of personal identity assumed an unusual urgency. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a good illustration: The drama of Hamlet's career consists exactly in his profound doubts about all the things he is expected to do by the more conservative members of the royal court. He, in contrast to all the others who simply follow tradition, is a person who experiences the anxieties of one who sees a difference between acting out preconceived roles and living one's own life. He perishes in and because of that conflict.

Descartes' philosophy emerges from the same context. His key writings begin with the resolution of radically doubting everything which tradition has handed down to the present. Traditional wisdom, if not proven false already, is seen as utterly unreliable; it is futile to define one's Self in the usual terms. It has to be defined in terms which cannot possibly be doubted. What are these terms?

The only thing which I cannot possibly doubt is that I am doubting, for if I doubt that I am doubting, I am actually doing what I doubt. Doubting is thinking. Therefore, I cannot doubt that I think. Thinking implies the existence of a thinker. I think, therefore I exist. Hence, thinking is the essence of my existence; I am a "thinking substance." But this means that I am not myself when I am feeling, or when I exist as a body. Both feeling and body are external to my true Self. I am identical with myself only as a mind. My mind only inhabits a body, resides in a body like (as Gilbert Ryle later put it) "a ghost in a machine." Body and mind are two separate entities, conceivable in principle apart from each other, but contingently thrown together in the case of human beings.

What seems to have happened is that Descartes was impressed by the separability of the individual from his or her traditional social role, the possibility of conceiving of the individual apart from such external functions as an individual's profession, social status, or some such involvement which could also be otherwise. Descartes then proceeded to postulate a similar separability between an individual's physical existence and his or her "inner" Self, assuming that a person's bodily (and emotional) characteristics are as external to the real Self as a job is to an ordinary individual. As there is no problem in conceiving of a person without even knowing his or her social position (even though such a conception is limited), so for Descartes there is no difficulty in conceiving of the Self without taking into consideration his or her physical existence. The body and what it implies can be considered after, and independently from, the establishment of the essential Self.

On the basis of this self-conception Descartes and consecutive generations of philosophers developed scores of philosophical questions which all turned on the now seemingly problematic relation between the mental and the physical. Prominent among them were the questions: "Given that I am immediately ac-

acquainted only with my own feelings (fear), sensations (pain), and thoughts, how can I know that other people who use emotion and sensation words, mean the same things I do? How do I know that they feel the same things I do? How can I be sure that they are not just bodies without anything inside them? Do I have to conclude that they do by analogy, as they display similar behavior as I do? But then I can never be quite sure...And may it not be possible that I have sensations, such as that of pain or the color red, but that nothing "real" corresponds to them? That there is no outside world? That I am the only being that exists? This seems unlikely in the light of common sense, even crazy. But the theoretical possibility cannot be ruled out, and so, here too, there is an irremediable uncertainty factor..."

Cartesian doubts of this sort have persisted into the 20th century. The early Wittgenstein himself seems to have been in the grip of such ideas. It was in part because of this that he was able to produce the thorough analysis of the Cartesian mind-set, together with its Platonic antecedents, that he delivered in the *Philosophical Investigations*. It is the significance of Wittgenstein's mature work that he finally provided the means for laying to rest all the doubts and speculations prompted by Descartes and Plato--by laying bare and invalidating the hidden logical assumptions of these trend-setting philosophers. And to the extent that all of Western philosophy rests on the basic assumptions of Cartesianism and Platonism, as on their implications for the definition of "Self," Wittgenstein's work is "the end of philosophy."

#### IV

The vast majority of Western philosophers stayed within the confines of Platonism by trying to answer the type of question cultivated by Plato, such as "What is (the essence of) justice?," "What is (the essence of) Art?," "What is (the essence of) Democracy?," etc. Wittgenstein took a radical departure from this tradition by not answering these questions, but by critically dissolving them instead. The Platonic question "What is X?" rests on the assumption that there must be something in common to things referred to by the same name. And the assumption gains a great deal of plausibility by wondering how else words like "art" or "chair" or "red" could have an unambiguous meaning, unless they did name some sort of common element. Wittgenstein, after having been hooked by the Platonic model himself, struggled his way through to saying "Don't assert that there must be something common, look and see whether there actually is!" And what one will find in doing so is that sometimes (as, e.g., in special, well-defined systems like geometry) there may be a common element, but more often there is not. One and the same word may very well be applied to a variety of objects which do not share any features at all--and still be a meaningful term.

To explain how a word can often refer to different sorts of object without losing its meaning, Wittgenstein introduced the notion of "family resemblance" into the debate. Members of a family may all partake in a typical family resemblance, without all having something in common. If the typical feature of the Smith family be a lanky figure, red hair, green eyes, and rather long and straight noses, then one member may have the red hair and the green eyes, while another has the lanky figure and a very long straight nose. These two members have, in terms of family

resemblance, nothing in common, yet they both may readily be recognized as members of the Smith family. In a similar way the word "art" may refer to a variety of objects which may not all have something in common, but which are related to each other through other features which together constitute a cluster of features which are typical for the objects called "art."

(It should be noticed that it may not be because of the presence of certain features at all that a word is applied to a certain object. Something may be called "art" not because of what it looks like, let's say, but because of the way it is used. The "family resemblance" model, in other words, is not to be understood as a new basic model for definitions, replacing the Platonic one by that of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's reference to "family resemblance" is nothing more than a device to get us unhooked from the strong hold that Plato's definition of definition has on us, whenever we try to become clear about certain things.)

The over-all effect of Wittgenstein's critique of Essentialism is liberation from the obsessive notion that there must be something in common among things referred to by the same name, even if generations of philosophers have failed to find out what it is. And with this liberation comes a renewed interest in the actual details of the phenomena under investigation, in the great variety and complexity of the things of the world. And with this, in turn, a contentment with the physical aspect of things, a relaxation of the traditional hostility toward everything related to the "mere senses." Even philosophers become less inclined to roam in the realm of high abstractions, and pay closer attention to what is before our eyes...

While the critique of the Platonic definition of definition implies a general turn away from abstract "essences" to the concrete phenomena of the world, the application of Wittgenstein's insights to the definition of "Self" in particular lends further impetus to the rediscovery, as it were, to our physical, bodily existence. In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein writes: "What am I getting at? At the fact that there is a great variety of criteria for personal 'identity'." What Wittgenstein opposes, again, is the idea that the Self, that which makes me me, is one thing, an essence, which underlies my various external manifestations. The meaning of such terms as "I," "myself," or "my identity," in other words, does not refer to one entity which is hidden "behind" my external appearances, but to this or that aspect of myself--depending on the circumstances. "I myself" may mean "me, as opposed to my double" in a movie, and in this case the criterion of my identity would be my body, perhaps in conjunction with my birth certificate, etc. "I myself" may also mean me as opposed to the role I play as chairman of the board of directors. While I act tough in my professional capacity, it may be that my real self, my personality as displayed most of the time among friends and family members is soft, caring, etc., quite unlike the mask presented in the corporate theater. "I myself" may also mean "I, as a famous scholar" as opposed to me as a paraplegic crippled by a traffic accident. People may have thought that I was finished, that only a ruin of my former self was left, while I point out to them that my physical existence had been insignificant, anyway, that my real life had always consisted in my intellectual accomplishments, etc. "I myself," finally, may mean quite the opposite, namely my body and its instinctual, sexual life--as opposed to the put-on intellectual life that I used to live, and that most of my former friends still are engaged in. In the spirit of D. H. Lawrence I could accuse them and myself for having cultivated over the years a wrong sense of Self, an illusory

identity, something which has kept from view aspects of our lives which are much more weighty than we were brainwashed to believe.

Obviously, all these are quite intelligible uses of "I myself," of "personal identity," and it is clear that the criteria of what counts as the Self change from case to case. It would be gratuitous dogmatism to stipulate that the "real" meaning of "Self" or "I myself" is given in only one of these (or other) cases, or that the "real" Self is something which is common to all of them. Without the Essentialist compulsion we can rest content with the multiple use of "Self," and then contemplate the reasons, and then merits, why some people want to emphasize one aspect of their being, while others may want to emphasize another. There is no reason to stipulate that there is only one "true Self" for everybody at all times. The neglect or denial of the body, for example, may be a wise option for some, but it may be foolish or self-destructive for others. Whether it is the one or the other, in any event, will not depend on a Platonic, Essentialist definition of "Self," but on a variety of circumstances and reasons, involving both the body and the mind.

One of the two most influential parts of *Philosophical Investigations* is Wittgenstein's critique of Platonic Essentialism. The other is his drawn-out critique of Cartesianism, the idea that mind and body can be conceived as two separate entities. Against this Wittgenstein demonstrates in numerous ways that there are only human beings, persons, and that body and mind are aspects of human beings, aspects which cannot be hypothesized into independent entities which then have to be fit together.<sup>10</sup> In logical terms: Concepts of feelings, sensations, or thoughts are irremediably tied to our physical nature, and the "bodies" that play a role in our lives are other persons, inspired beings, not some strange creatures of which it can remain in principle undecided whether they are "inhabited" by a mind, or whether they are some sort of complicated automata externally behaving like myself. The notion of a "human body" has logical primacy over the notion of "body" and "mind." One can talk about the former without ever mentioning the latter, but not vice versa.

A mainstay of the idea of the independent, disembodied mind is the idea of the "privacy" of sensation, and the concomitant idea of a "private language." The idea is that I have, as it were, a privileged access to my own sensations and feelings, that only I can feel my pain, for example, and that therefore only I can establish a reliable connection between the word "headache" and what I feel. Other people have no way of ascertaining what I feel when I say I have a "headache," except by analogy with what they feel. But how can anyone compare what anyone feels? We are all stuck with our own sensations, and thus we have no choice but to give a private definition to words naming sensations.

Among the considerations offered by Wittgenstein to undermine such notions is his question how one could possibly identify a sensation "privately," i.e., without having an external way of checking one's own identification. *If I would determine only on the basis of my memory whether a particular sensation is the "same" as one I have had before, I would have no way of telling whether I am mistaken or not; I could not (as I would have to) establish a reliable connection between the word "pain," e.g., and particular sensations. My "private language," in other words, would hardly be a language.* Wittgenstein also suggests that we are easily led astray by misleading parallels in the "surface grammar" of many expressions, such as the wrong parallel between

"He is in pain" and "I am in pain." It is possible to ask how I know that someone else is in pain, and we would have to answer something like "He is screaming and groaning." One is then tempted to ask in a particular fashion "How do I know that I am in pain?," and one would naturally be inclined to say something like "In my case I don't have to observe my behavior, I know directly whether I am in pain or not." And it seems that I know so with much more certainty, as it is at least conceivable that a third person may be putting on an act. Wittgenstein points out that in such thinking the word "know" is misapplied, that the word has a good use in third-person statements, but none in first-person expressions. For in my own case I can have no possible doubts (as the "private language" advocate himself points out), I cannot possibly be mistaken. But where I cannot possibly be ignorant, it does not make sense to say that I "know." The assertion that I know logically presupposes the possibility that I may not know, that I am denying the possible state of affairs of my ignorance. If I say "I know" when there is no possible not-knowing to be denied, I am not saying anything at all. It would be a case of "language on a holiday," wheels spinning without doing anything...In this way Wittgenstein undermines the whole idea of a privileged sort of knowledge in the case of sensations or other "inner states" or "inner processes." "Inner states" are philosophical fictions generated by misconstruing the grammar of "I am in pain" on the model of "He is in pain."

Wittgenstein's most immediate attack on the mind-body separation implied in the idea of a "private language," however, is his critique of how sensation words come to have meaning. Misled by certain simple cases, as well as traditional theories of language, we are likely to think that a word has meaning by being "associated" with an object, a process, or some such thing in the world. The meaning of a word is that which it "stands for." Thus, sensation words such as "headache" or "tickling" must stand for certain sensations, entities or processes which seem to be more elusive than physical objects, hence "private." But is it really true that we learn the meaning of such words as "headache" or "tickling" by "associating" the word with something we feel? And do we accept as a criterion of someone's having understood the meaning of such words his or her assertion that the right "association" is made in the individual's mind? Obviously not. Sensation words, as most other words, are learned in the context of practical tasks, activities which involve us as physical beings. And the test of someone's having understood the term "headache" is tied up with what a person says in the context of such activities. If someone, moaning pleasurably in response to the stroking of a lover, says "That is the nicest headache I have felt in a long time," then it is clear that the word "headache" is not understood (unless some kind of in-joke is intended). The meaning of the word "headache" is inextricably bound up with certain painful kinds of moaning, with sluggishness, lack of concentrated performance, search for aspirin, relief after taking medication, etc. It is only in connection with the web of such activities, and the bodily behavior which goes along with it, that one is able to give the correct meaning to sensation words. And even though often we feel sensations without giving physical expressions to them, or without doing anything, the meaning of "headache," "tickling," etc. is established in connection with body and social interaction. Cases of feeling sensations without external manifestations are logically dependent on these. Without physical manifestations of sensations it would not be possible to con-

ceive of quietly endured or concealed ones. "Private sensations" are understandable only as special cases of sensation which in principle are public.

Wittgenstein has sometimes been accusingly called a "behaviorist." Behaviorists, however, deny that bodies have minds, or they leave it open whether they have them or not. In relation to those who believe in the "privacy" of the mind, who may even doubt whether a physical reality corresponds to my sensations, behaviorists are simply the other side of the coin of Cartesianism: where the ones doubt the reality of the body, the others doubt the reality of the mind. Both agree that body and mind can be conceived as separate entities.

Wittgenstein stays clear of either one-sidedness. The upshot of all of his analyses in **Philosophical Investigations** is the demonstration that Cartesianism is logically incoherent, that it is impossible to conceive of anything like the body or the mind without presupposing human beings, beings that have a body, sensations, thoughts, and who give expressions to what is on their minds. Concerning seeing human beings as "bodies" in the behavioristic sense Wittgenstein writes:

But can't I imagine that the people around me are automata, lack consciousness, even though they behave in the same way as usual?--If I imagine it now--alone in my room--I see people with fixed looks (as in a trance) going about their business--the idea is perhaps a little uncanny. But just try to keep hold of this idea in the midst of your ordinary intercourse with others, in the street, say! Say to yourself, for example: "The children over there are mere automata; all their liveliness is mere automatism." And you will either find these words becoming quite meaningless; or you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling, or something of the sort. Seeing a living human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another; the cross-pieces of a window as a swastika, for example.<sup>11</sup>

The point, again, is that "body" is a secondary notion, dependent on the primary one of "human being." And if one attempted to see human beings as something other than they are, as "bodies" or "automata," one would have to make up a story so wild and implausible that even philosophers could take it seriously only at the point where they have lost all contact with the world and themselves.

## V

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is an emphatically Modern work.<sup>12</sup> Wittgenstein's later work, particularly his critique of the *Tractatus* in the **Philosophical Investigations**, can be described as Postmodern. There is, to be sure, considerable confusion and uncertainty about the concept of Postmodernism. One thing, however, seems clear: Classical Modernism is tied to an extreme notion of the Self, the radically disembodied Self outlined above. The disembodied Self is the opposite of the traditional Self, a Self embodied in community, tradition, preconceived notions, and totally identical with its body, emotional make-up, and ideological inheritance. While Modernists stress the idea of liberation, Traditionalists emphasize the positive aspects of embodiment and enculturation. Where Modernists see emancipation, Traditionalists see alienation. Postmodernism is bound to imply a certain revision of the Modernist conception of Self in the direction of embodiment.

What is urged on us by Wittgenstein's later work is to see that both Modernism and Traditionalism are misguided extremes, that they are two alternatives which feed on each other's weaknesses, and which both have to be transcended. While an uncritical and total attachment to one's embodiments is open to obvious objections, the total disembodiment which culminated in Modernism is hardly an intelligible response. By the same token: While the idea of extreme disembodiment leads to the philosophical absurdities analyzed by the later Wittgenstein, it is hardly necessary to respond with a conception of the Self which requires slavish attachment to everything into which one happens to be born. Wittgenstein's Postmodernism amounts to the willingness to give up such sweeping and gratuitous generalizations in either direction, and to proceed in a more piecemeal, cautious, and considerably more down-to-earth manner. We will have to find out by looking very carefully at a great number of details to see what we cannot help being identical with, and what we may be able to transcend. Obviously we are not "Minds;" the disembodied Self is a philosophical fiction. On the other hand, we need not be passively weighed down by our sex, race, or national origin, or the idea that may come along with such empirical determinations. We are neither as free as Sartre suggests, nor as bound as Edmund Burke would like us to be. We have to look more carefully than such generalizing philosophers.

Such a Postmodern, post-philosophical approach accords well with the growing awareness of our dependency on body and Nature. Modernism was an outgrowth of Capitalism and Industrialism, a development that had humans lord recklessly over everything in and around them, and that led practically to the replacement of a natural environment by a man-made (hardly woman-made) world. The excesses of this development have now brought to light how dangerous and brittle this man-made world actually is, how tenuous and impoverishing our control over Nature. It is time to ask ourselves once more who we are, what our foundations may be, and what we need to acknowledge and respect. Our profoundly bodily nature is one of the things to be contemplated (together with our ignored social nature). Wittgenstein in his later work has gone a long way in showing how physical we really are.

## Notes

1. *Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979). My translation.
2. *Tractatus* 5.641.
3. *Ibid*, 5.632.
4. *Ibid*, 5.633.
5. *The Philosophical Review* 74 (1965), p. 6.
6. *Tractatus*, 6.432.
7. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916*, 2.9.1916.
8. *Ibid*, p. 6.
9. *Philosophical Investigations*, 404.
10. Cf. John W. Cook's seminal essay "Human Beings" in *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, ed. by Peter Winch (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 117-151.
11. *Philosophical Investigations*, 420.
12. Jorn Bramann, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus and the Modern Arts*, (Rochester, N.Y.: Adler Publishers, 1985).

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# WITTGENSTEIN AND GREEN THINKING

Joe Mellon

1. Wittgenstein could be one of the best friends that green thinkers could hope to have. An absurd thought? I don't think so. I would like to show that Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and mind provide the most natural and suitable background for a truly deep-green moral vision. But how can it be that Wittgenstein's later work could serve to underwrite any moral vision at all, let alone one that is radically ecological? The later work says practically nothing about ethics. Moreover, several recent writers have charged that Wittgenstein is in fact a deeply conservative thinker.

What we need to unravel here is precisely how Wittgenstein's grammatical remarks set us free to ask and answer genuine questions in ethics, questions which express our true intellectual and moral needs. Wittgenstein characterizes what he is up to in the larger work as engaging in "grammatical investigations". Doing philosophy for Wittgenstein is to become doing a kind of "grammar." Now obviously Wittgenstein doesn't mean by "grammar" simply those practices that we would naturally associate with high school language classes. However, he does think that doing grammar in his sense is connected in various ways with what we did in high school, when we studied in a more or less formal way the grammar of our mother tongue or other languages.

"grammar" for Wittgenstein covers a motley of techniques and methods designed to uncover the confusions that we get into in philosophy when we are not sufficiently alert to how our languages actually work. Here is Norman Malcolm's recent synopsis of such grammatical techniques and methods:

1. Giving descriptions of the circumstances in which a philosophically puzzling expression is actually used in everyday language.
2. Inventing simple language-games as objects of comparison.
3. Imagining fictitious natural history.
4. Giving a "psychologically exact account" of the philosophical temptation to use a certain expression (Philosophical Investigations #254).<sup>1</sup>

Such grammatical techniques and methods are meant by Wittgenstein to be a kind of intellectual therapy. Grammar as therapy works by exploding bogus problems. It does this often by exposing the false dichotomies on which such problems may turn. We generate such false dichotomies when we split apart what lies open before us into language and world, mind and body, subject and object, fact and value, and so on. We are seduced into such false splitting and polarizing, when we fail to understand just what sense ordinary notions like 'mind' and 'body' actually do have. Unconstrained by any clear understanding of what such ordinary notions actually mean, we seem to be naturally attracted to certain pictures and fantasies about what such notions mean, pictures and fantasies about their "grammar", as Wittgenstein

would put it. So doing grammar in Wittgenstein's sense is meant to expose such pictures and fantasies for what they really are, and to free us from them.

2. Now our moral thinking itself can often be in the grip of such pictures and fantasies. We split apart head and heart, mind and passion, facts and values, then step off into total darkness. We tend to think that our moral reasoning, in order to be objective, must be strictly and narrowly rational. It must prove convincing to the amoral alien. Otherwise, our moral thinking would simply be a "slave to the passions". Morality would simply be a matter of the powerful inventing and imposing their views of right and wrong on the weak and vulnerable.

We are easily seduced by the thought that examples are not enough; we think we also need arguments. Arguments will provide the rational grounds for our moral appeals. Arguments will convince even the Martian. To proceed by way of examples, however rich and vivid, is mere persuasion, mere change of heart, mere causal process.<sup>2</sup>

So in our moral thinking we seem to fall quickly into a dispute over arguments and examples. Yet we never seem to pause to ask just what notions like 'argument' and 'example' actually mean, and whether what they mean will justify such a radical dichotomy between them. Now Wittgenstein will have none of this. He displays a distinctive refusal to take sides in such disputes. He wants to catch us right on our way into such problems. We are to learn to reject that very first step which altogether escapes notice, the decisive movement in the conjuring trick which we thought quite innocent.<sup>3</sup> Getting us to stop, to quit taking that very first step, is what Wittgenstein is all about in the later work. Stopping means seeing through a certain picture, a picture of how language and mind work. Seeing through that picture means seeing through the false intellectual needs which that picture throws up to us.

Just what is the picture? It is what Wittgenstein at one point calls "mechanism and calculus." It is the primitive picture of mind as mechanism, and language as calculus. It is the picture which suggests to us that the mind, as the region of conscious thought, is something quite mysterious and hidden, and that being able to speak and understand a language is primarily a matter of being able to manipulate symbols according to definite rules. It is the fantasy that feeds current efforts at "computational psychology" and "cognitive science."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the **Philosophical Investigations** Wittgenstein works to explode that picture. From the opening remarks on "Augustine's picture" (1-27), through the remarks on reference (28-64), on general terms and definitions (65-88), on philosophy as working against such pictures (89-133), on rule-following (134-242), on the fantasy of a private sensation language (243-315), right to the end through the criss-crossing remarks on the grammar of various



psychological terms, Wittgenstein is intent on freeing us from such fantasy.

To be free of such fantasy is to see through our supposed need to ask how language hooks onto the world, how mind and body fit together, what grounds our knowledge claims, and what grounds our moral claims. To be so free is also to begin to see just how such conceptual splits in our intellectual lives both reinforce, and are reinforced by, various notorious power splits in our social lives. Splitting language from world, mind from body, subject from object, and fact from value both reflects, and is reflected by, the domination of men over women, whites over blacks, rich over poor, and culture over nature. For example, white western cultures underwrite philosophical traditions in which the human body is seen at best as a mode of realization for the all-important rational mind. At the same time such cultures encourage the identification of women, so-called primitive peoples, and even nonhuman Nature itself with the irrational body, an identification which in turn encourages the social domination of women, tribal cultures, and planet Earth itself by the seemingly superior white western male mind.

Of course, grammar, in Wittgenstein's sense, is hardly enough in the struggle against such social power. However, grammar can do at least this much for us: It can help get such power out of our heads. It can rid us of these fantasies of power. That is what they are, of course--fantasies of domination and control. We are deeply anxious and insecure in our social lives. To escape, we fantasize forms of attachment which would secure once and for all our hold on the true, the good, and the beautiful.

Grammar doesn't simply say such fantasies are bogus, It takes on the real work of showing that they are. Wittgenstein's later work is intended to be a series of examples to help us see through, and work our way out of such pictures and fantasies on our own. These pictures and fantasies look as if they make sense. The questions we ask when under their spell feel as if **they** make sense, and we feel we know what it would take to answer them. Doing grammar will disabuse us of these illusions. We are to come to see, and see clearly, that we have passed over into nonsense, when we try to work through what these pictures and fantasies seem to tell us.

3. Now what would it be like to go on after having done the grammar? What would everything look like after fantasy has been dispelled? Most especially, what would the moral life look like, free of picture and fantasy?

**Our forms of life would show forth.** That's the first thing to be said. Grammar comes to rest in our forms of life, without comment, without questions. What this means is that grammar shows us our most primitive practices, all the motley of ways of going on together which we find normal, natural, instinctive, spontaneous, unhesitating, unthinking, unreflective, and without support of any prior psychological states or processes which might provide reason or cause for them. Such primitive practices are small-scale practices, micro-practices, the basic building blocks, if you will, which go into making up ways of living, traditions, and cultures. Forms of life are what compose our natural history. They are the most ordinary facts of living. Crying when hurt is a form of life; so is learning to say "Ouch, that hurts!," instead. Comforting your crying child is also a form of life; so is laughing at someone's joke. These last two are of special interest. They are among the motley of natural reactions which Wittgenstein encapsulates under the rubric "an attitude towards a soul". These natural reactions are the natural reactions we express toward one

another. We naturally and spontaneously live out such a motley of reactions without prior thought or belief. We are not merely of the opinion that we are all living human beings. Belief and opinion are too weak to get at just how deep such natural reactions go. Hence, an attitude towards a soul is not a mental state. It lies deeper. Our mental states grow out of such deep attitudes and reactions. Our inner lives emerge from something more primitive than ordinary adult psychological states and attitudes.

So do our moral lives. They also grow out of our primitive forms of life. Our moral lives are a refinement of our deepest natural reactions and attitudes toward one another. Our moral lives are a developed expression of our deep attitude towards a soul. Moreover, the motley which makes up our attitude towards a soul includes our primitive natural reactions to animals and to nature in general. We naturally respond to animals as kin, as fellow creatures. We naturally stand in awe and delight before nature. Tragically, much in our upbringing works to block such spontaneous reactions to nature. We are taught a range of contradictory attitudes and reactions to animals and the natural world. We begin from a position of what can only be called "reverence", reverence as an aspect of our attitude towards a soul. We go on to have most of it "civilized" out of us. Yet traces do remain. Wittgenstein writes:

It is very remarkable that we should be inclined to think of civilization -- houses, trees, cars, etc. -- as separating man from his origins, from what is lofty and eternal, etc. Our civilized environment, along with its trees and plants, strikes us then as though it were cheaply wrapped in cellophane and isolated from everything great, from God, as it were. That is a remarkable picture that intrudes on us. (Culture and Value, 50)

Flowers or animals that people find ugly always strike them like artifacts. "It looks like a ...", they say. This illuminates the meaning of the words "ugly" and "beautiful". (Culture and Value, 11)

The miracles of nature.

One might say: art shows us the miracles of nature. It is based on the **concept** of the miracles of nature. The blossom, just opening out. What is marvellous about it? We say: "Just look at it opening out!" (Culture and Value, 56)

4. So we are naturally set to treat one another as a "soul" (a living human being), to treat animals as kin, and to treat nature as a miracle. This is in part how our forms of life run on. Yet only in part, says the skeptic in us. For as just acknowledged, there is also that in us which tries to civilize out such natural reactions, especially those toward animals and nature. Isn't such a civilizing tendency a form of life also? Aren't both tendencies in some sense equally "natural" to us? So how can we favor one over the other in our moral thinking? Moreover, how can grammar, in simply showing forth our forms of life, be of any help in our moral lives?

It is certainly true that grammar cannot overturn the naturalistic fallacy, the simple deductive move from what is the case to what ought to be the case. There can be no simple appeal to "nature", to what is the case, in our moral thinking. There is just too much to be found in Nature in that sense, both the good and the bad. So how are we to tell which is which? How can we separate the moral from the immoral?

Now we are quite vulnerable here in the face of such questions. We are ready to take that first step which altogether escapes notice. We are all set to go off in search of "the enchanted key." The bald appeal to Nature won't work; so we feel threatened. Moral skepticism pounds at the door. We must find an answer, we think, which is grand and deep, which will once and for all quell our fears. So in the past this is just what we have done; we have gone searching. We have searched with Plato for a Nature beyond Nature, a Nature which once seen would stun us into moral certainty. We have searched with Kant for principles which even the narrowly rational would accept. We have searched with Mill for a simple moral arithmetic. We have even searched with Hume for a look at how our moral sentiments supposedly spread themselves upon the world.

But if we have learned with Wittgenstein to catch ourselves on the way into philosophy, then we will have none of this. We will have learned to spot the fantasy of control and security which tempts us with false dichotomies between the objective and the subjective, between facts and values, and between what is the case and what ought to be the case. We will be able to resist the fear that without exceptionless, rationally grounded, moral principles, we will simply lapse into moral relativism or subjectivism. We will have learned that **the ordinary is enough**, that staying within our ongoing everyday practices of moral reflection and criticism, we have all we ever need to solve our moral puzzles. For instance, we will see that while being entitled to accept the naturalistic fallacy as a genuine fallacy, we must be wary of misapplying it, for we may be easily tempted into misconstruing the contrast between what is the case and what ought to be the case.

5. Yet I know we still want to ask: If grammar leaves us on the far side of the realism/anti-realism split in moral theory, exactly where is that, and how does being there help us in telling right from wrong? As just indicated, the short answer to this is that grammar leaves everything as it is. It leaves us exactly where we are. It returns us to the ordinary. The trick is to see that we can live with that. We can make do with grammar. Grammar is enough for what ails us.

Now the long answer will need to clean this up a bit. It is true that grammar leaves everything as it is. However, "everything" does not include philosophy. Philosophy will not be the same again.

Philosophical clarity will have the same effect on the growth of mathematics as sunlight has on the growth of potato shoots. (In a dark cellar they grow yards long.) (Philosophical Grammar, 381)

In like manner grammar prunes philosophy. Genuine clarity blocks the growth of false theory. It also cuts back the false growth in other areas of inquiry which is itself the direct result of confusion in philosophy (e.g., the bogus work in areas like cognitive science and sociobiology which can have very harmful effects throughout the culture).

Since doing grammar has such a critical edge, it can hardly be seen as a "conservative" force, that is, as one devoted to defending the social and political status quo. Regardless of what Wittgenstein's personal political leanings may or may not have been, his later work is definitely not conservative. Wittgenstein does not say that our traditions and ways of living, or even our more primitive forms of life, cannot be criticized. His concern is

rather that such cultural criticism, in order to be genuine and fruitful, must not be a result of befuddlement in philosophy. Grammar does leave everything as it is, but an "everything" pruned of false philosophical growth. This includes cultural criticism. Hence, doing grammar should help open up even more vigorous forms of cultural criticism. Rather than having a conservative influence, as sometimes thought, doing grammar should instead have a quite radical one.

This is certainly true in moral philosophy. In the place of false theory, grammatical clarity delivers up a fresh account of our moral lives which is at once richer and more honest. Surprisingly, in doing so, grammar restores to us the so-called ascetic and mystical traditions, for it recovers for us a spirituality free of false platonism and mentalism. We find that we can now make perfectly good sense of various spiritual writings without first buying into Plato or Descartes. We are also able to see how work in action theory and moral psychology, work on the nature of the will, the emotions, and moral responsibility, should naturally connect with various spiritual and ascetic writings.

What happens when doing grammar enters the picture is that important notions like 'action,' 'intention,' 'emotion,' and 'will' get sent to the cleaners. Such a cleansing opens to view a range of moral notions long lost on mainstream western moral philosophers, notions like 'openness,' 'humility,' and 'compassion' which have a natural home in ascetic traditions. This richer conception of ourselves as moral agents, which these recovered moral notions open up for us, takes us far beyond the false dichotomy of seeing ourselves as either mechanically following impersonal moral rules, or as simply making radical moral choices in the void. Iris Murdoch calls this restored ascetic view of our moral lives "the true mysticism which is morality."<sup>5</sup>

Grammar and spirituality are also connected in this way. Grammar for Wittgenstein is a kind of discipline, an *askesis*. Grammar is *askesis* [self denial] of the mind, if you will. We are to learn to resist primitive fantasy [in which we are tempted to indulge]. Such intellectual ascetic work naturally connects with more traditional asceticism. Both are aspects of our moral lives. Both are out to defeat the ego.

6. Finally, grammar flows naturally into genuine green thinking. It can do this either by turning us to certain mystical writers, or by returning us to the ordinary. It can open us, for example, to that line of Christian mystical writers from Isaac of Syria to Thomas Merton who are deeply open to Nature.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Wittgenstein's own deep respect for so-called primitive religions can support renewed interest in tribal cultures, cultures which have so much to teach us about living as a part of Nature.

On the other hand, in forcing us to take seriously our ordinary everyday moral practices and resources, grammar confronts us with **the real work** (in Gary Snyder's sense). For the real work is to flourish. The real work is to locate our present partial examples of value, virtue, excellence, and flourishing, celebrate and nurture them, and make them grow. The real work is to take seriously the traditions of moral seriousness which we have at hand. This means taking seriously the struggles of the various liberation movements now at work in our history. For after all, these movements of liberation are the only traditions of moral seriousness available to us. Such movements supply whatever content there is to our notion of moral seriousness. The movements I have in mind are of course the women's movement, the Third World liberation movements, the peace movement, and

the deep ecology movement. These are the various movements which green thinkers and activists around the world are trying to bring together into one unified moral struggle. This would be a unified struggle against the four deepest forms of oppression: sexism, racism, classism, and speciesism (the human bias against other species).

Now it is no accident that Wittgenstein's later work opens us up to these moral struggles. They have, after all, a common target -- the disembodied white male ego intent on power and control. We are basically in a world of a relatively few wealthy white western males using political, economic, technological, and military power to dominate women, other races, other classes, and even Nature itself. Philosophy as a privileged male domain has not escaped such hubris. A perfect example is Descartes in the *Meditations*, ambitious, skeptical, scientific, disembodied, and cut off. It is precisely the fantasies of male hubris which doing grammar is meant to dispel. So grammar should be seen, I would suggest, as the conceptual moment in these moral struggles; that is, doing grammar will clarify the concepts needed for deep-green moral vision and practice.

To make that clear consider the following:

Grammar is akin to feminism. It is deeply characteristic of modern feminist theory and practice that it rejects all false dichotomies and dualisms.<sup>7</sup> So does grammar. Feminist theory and practice engenders new respect for our bodies, ourselves. So does grammar. Meaning and mind in Wittgenstein's later work are no longer a matter of mechanism and calculus, no longer a matter of inner private mental pointing. Meaning and mind are now a matter of our being naturally expressive, flesh and blood, social creatures. Grammar is deeply responsive to both corporate and corporeal features of our lives. Grammar celebrates the "bodiliness of meaning and mind" (in Fergus Kerr's phrase).<sup>8</sup>

Grammar is akin to anarchism. Deep-green anarchists Richard Sylvan and Val Plumwood argue against the false semantic theory (the "Reference Theory") which spawns the false whole-part dichotomy. So does grammar. Sylvan and Plumwood argue for an anarchist (grassroots-managed) cooperative political economy expressive of our true nature as social and environmental individuals.<sup>9</sup> Grammar returns us to our forms of life, those primitive practices which also reveal us to be both social and self-determining. Anarchist practice celebrates natural organic egalitarian forms of order. So does grammar. It takes our conceptual practices as they come, refusing to turn the organic order of ancient cities into the narrowly rational order of modern suburbs.<sup>10</sup>

Grammar is akin to nonviolence. For Gandhi, nonviolent thinking aims for truth, not victory; nonviolence is patient amidst chaos and darkness; it respects the "enemy's truth." So does grammar. Wittgenstein counsels respect for the deep mistakes and temptations of the philosopher in us. We are not to cheat. Above all, we are to go slow. "Slow cure is all important." (*Zettel*, 382)

Grammar is akin to deep-green thinking. Deep-green theory (Richard Sylvan's term)<sup>11</sup> celebrates human beings as plain members of the natural world. So does grammar. To shock the false rationalism and scientism out of us, Wittgenstein emphasizes the primitive, sometimes even the savage, aspects of our practices. He also encourages respect for what is other and alien.<sup>12</sup> We are only one "tribe" among many. He is also prepared to reject the claim that we are of greater value than the rest of creation.<sup>13</sup>

Now I am not saying Wittgenstein would recognize himself in all of what I am suggesting here. He would probably have deep qualms. His deep personal pessimism would prevent him from moving toward a moral vision of struggle and hope. Yet despite such scruples on his part, I would still claim that Wittgenstein's later work provides the most satisfying background setting for the kind of radical moral thinking we need to do, thinking which is at once feminist, anarchist, nonviolent, and deep-green. Of course, grammar only clears away the rationalist and empiricist rubble. It does not solve any of the really hard practical problems which now confront us. What will feminist sexual practices free of capital and patriarchy really look like? How do we resist nation-state war machines? How do we live simply and resist bad technology? How are we to make room for big wilderness? What are we to make of predation in Nature?

At least after doing grammar, we should be in the right spot to have a go at such problems. We should be sunk down deep in the midst of the moral struggle, embodied, social, historical, limited, richly connected to one another, trying to side with the poor and vulnerable, trying to live lightly, trying to resist.<sup>14</sup> In getting us to this point in the struggle, grammar can be seen to be an expression of our moral respect for one another. It is a refined expression of our basic attitude towards a soul. It is a form of attention, an openness, which can, if we let it, become the great openness, the great openness which in turn is the great compassion and passion for justice.

May our lives come down to that. With this Wittgenstein would surely have agreed.

#### Notes

1. Norman Malcolm, *Nothing Is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of His Early Thought*, Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 107. Commentators like Norman Malcolm, G.E.M. Anscombe, and Cora Diamond all agree that Wittgenstein's frequent description of his later work as merely "grammatical" was meant in part as a counter to what he considered the pretentiousness of earlier work in philosophy, his own included. In contrast to such earlier work which sought after "deep" theories about the nature of meaning and mind, Wittgenstein came to see that all we needed to dispel confusion was to stay on the "surface" of our ordinary terms, to accept them as they actually function in our lives. In this sense, "nothing is hidden; everything lies open to view."
2. Cora Diamond, "Anything But Argument?," *Philosophical Investigations*, 5 (1982), pp. 23-41.
3. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Basil Blackwell, 1953, #308.
4. "Cognitive science," as the dominant paradigm in theoretical linguistics, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence research in computer science, assumes that our mental abilities can be understood in terms of formal information-processing models. John McDowell has called such work "neo-Cartesianism" since it is so similar to 17th century discussions of the mind, with the central metaphor of the clock now replaced by that of the computer. Neither metaphor suggests that we are anywhere close to appreciating ourselves as living flesh and blood creatures in a natural world.
5. Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, p. 101. Iris Murdoch's work has been central in the recovery of ascetic writings for moral psychology. It should be no surprise then to see writers influenced by both Wittgenstein and Murdoch, writers like Peter Winch, D.Z. Phillips, Ilham Dilman, and Michael Weston, show a lively interest in ascetic writers like Kierkegaard and Simon Weil. In this regard, I hope to be able to make good shortly on this claim, that after Wittgenstein we are in a position to make satisfying sense of remarks like this about prayer: "Work hard at that nothing and that nowhere" (*The Cloud of Unknowing*, Chapter 70).
6. Here is Merton in the early 1960's sounding to my ears just like Bill Devall and George Sessions: "As the end approaches, there is no room for nature. The cities crowd it off the face of the earth." Thomas Merton, "The Time of the End Is the Time of No Room," *Raids on the Unspeakeable*, *New Directions*, 1966, p. 70.

7. For example, Rosemary Radford Ruether, **Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology**, Beacon Press, 1983.
8. Fergus Kerr, **Theology After Wittgenstein**, Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 136.
9. See the magnificent paper by Plumwood and Sylvan (formerly Val and Richard Routley), "Social Theories, Self Management, and Environmental Problems," in **Environmental Philosophy**, edited by Don Mannison, Michael McRobbie, and Richard Routley, Australian National University, Monograph Series No. 2, 1980, pp. 217-332.
10. **Philosophical Investigations**, #18.
11. Richard Sylvan, **A Critique of Deep Ecology**, Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, No. 12, Australian National University, 1985, pp. 45-60.
12. Consider his remarks on the Beltane fire-festivals in **Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough**, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. A.C. Miles and R. Rhees, Brynmill, Retford, 1979. Also this remark recorded by Con Drury: "All religions are wonderful, even those of the most primitive tribes." In **Recollections of Wittgenstein**, ed. Rush Rhees, Oxford, 1984, p. 102.
13. Consider the import of these remarks (**Notebooks 1914-1916**, p. 82): "The human body, however, my body in particular, is a part of the world

among others, among beasts, plants, stones, etc., etc. Whoever realizes this will not want to procure a pre-eminent place for his own body or for the human body. He will regard humans and beasts quite naively as objects which are similar and which belong together."

14. Serious resistance will be no joke. As Daniel Ellsberg reminds us about resisting the warfare state: "I don't think we can change these policies without a lot of people--very large numbers of people--doing things that they perceive as taking risks with their careers...It will not be done as a hobby; it will not be done easily, on weekends."

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## CONTEMPORARY CONTROVERSY

# MODERN PANTHEISM: SEEKING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSE: A Response to Monika Langer

Harold Wood

In a recent essay in *The Trumpeter*, Monika Langer states:

Pantheism, whose resurrection Wood advocates, seems to me to be far too abstract and impersonal to effect any genuine reversal of our current approach [of destructive attitudes toward the environment, dualistic thinking, and mistreatment of Nature and womankind]. While the notion of Nature...as Ultimate Being itself may appeal to us on an intellectual level, it strikes me as inadequate to speak to the other aspects of our experience.<sup>1</sup>

Langer's solution is to embrace the Goddess religion advocated by Starhawk and other modern practitioners of Witchcraft, an approach which she asserts does not suffer from what she characterizes as the abstract and impersonal failings of modern pantheism.

In this essay, I endeavor to show that contrary to Langer's assertion, modern Pantheism provides a very real solution to the problems she decries. Modern pantheism is a religious philosophy with deep roots in the pagan and shamanistic traditions of many cultures, but which in modern form is a faith that embraces scientific discovery as a method of spiritual enrichment. As such, it is likely to actually have some large measure of acceptance among the public of the twentieth and twenty-first century, thus forming the groundwork for social change toward a renewed reverence for the Earth and finding a way to live in better harmony with it.

### The Non-Intellectual Aspect of Pantheism

At the outset, the view expressed in Langer's statement that Pantheism is only an intellectual response to Nature can never be accepted by those who have spent time in solitude in the Wilderness, who have truly communed with Nature. Pantheists have found that experiencing Nature in solitude, in a state of open receptiveness, eventually leads to a point where one's personal self becomes identified with the "ecological self," or "Ultimate Being."<sup>2</sup> This "ecological consciousness" must be understood as resulting not from intellectual analysis, but a spiritual catharsis or "peak experience" of the highest magnitude. Unfortunately, in today's global society, too many people lack the opportunity or spiritual education to approach Nature in this way; most urban dwellers simply lack any fundamental contact with wild Nature, and many other persons' only contact with it is in an exploitive capacity. The approach which Pantheism provides to correct these failings of our civilization is one which, far from being merely intellectually analytical, strikes us as individuals in the inner core of our being.

I would venture to say that most Pantheists come to their faith not from an "intellectual" analysis, as Langer suggests, but rather from a deep personal spiritual catharsis of a most passionate kind. But it is true that because Pantheism has a rational side as well, too many persons are mistakenly unaware that Pantheism includes a strong non-intellectual content. Perhaps this has been a failing in the thought of such outstanding modern Pantheists as John Burroughs<sup>3</sup>, Ernst Haeckel<sup>4</sup>, and Joseph Wood Krutch<sup>5</sup>,

who emphasize that Pantheism is a faith compatible with (not identical to) "science and emancipated human reason," partly as a rejection of the anti-evolution dogma of the 19th century Church. Thus, these and other Pantheists nearly unanimously accept a modern, albeit ever-changing, view of the reality of biological evolution. This idea has perhaps been over-emphasized even today in reaction to the frightening tide of fundamentalist advocacy of a literal interpretation of Genesis and rejection of the concept of evolution which has characterized so much of the 1980's.

Pantheism plainly and simply identifies Deity with the various forces and workings of Nature.<sup>6</sup> Pantheism provides a means to experience the divine in Nature, by recognizing the sacred **within** the natural world, completely apart from anthropomorphic attributions. In Pantheism, it is possible to "see" the Deity, literally, by experiencing Nature. Such experience leads to ecstasy and joy, not a dry intellectualism. As John Muir put it, "No synonym for God is so perfect as Beauty. Whether as seen carving the lines of the mountains with glaciers, or gathering matter into stars, or planning the movements of water, or gardening--still all is Beauty."<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, the personal experience of wonder, awe, reverence, and other emotionally sensitive responses to the Universe which many Pantheists have, are not known or understood by many people due to lack of personal experience. Even those who seek to revise social attitudes toward better relations with the natural world frequently fail to recognize that a personal, even religious experience with Nature, such as that advocated by modern Pantheism, holds the promise of ecological recovery and a spiritual renaissance which far transcends the technical and "let's leave it to the experts" approach of "reform environmentalism."

Langer argues that "the restoration of holism requires that we recognize the interdependence of thoughts, images, words, actions, and feelings. We must reintegrate matter and spirit, mind and body, Nature and culture, self and others, individual and community." This is a comment with which Pantheists entirely agree. For example, nineteenth century pantheist and biologist, Ernst Haeckel, who, incidentally, coined the term **ecology**, insisted that Pantheism must necessarily support a monist view of God and the world:

Dualism, in the widest sense, breaks up the universe into two entirely distinct substances--the natural world and the immaterial God, who is represented to be its creator, sustainer, and ruler. Monism, on the contrary (likewise taken in its widest sense) recognizes one sole substance in the universe, which is at once "God and Nature;" body and spirit (or matter and energy) it holds to be inseparable. The extra-mundane God or dualism leads necessarily to theism; and the intra-mundane God of the monist leads to pantheism.<sup>8</sup>

What Pantheism advocates is a holistic view of the world which rejects the dualistic world view that separates humans from the rest of Nature. What is needed is a form of self-knowledge which recognizes that our "self" extends beyond our immediate bodies to intimate involvement in all the processes of air, water, and other organisms. "This planet, this microcosm, is our own flesh--the grass is our hair and the trees are our hands and the rivers our own blood...the Earth is our real body..."<sup>9</sup> From this viewpoint, the crucial problem of our time is not merely the survival

of "civilization" as we know it, but the health and survival of the planet, a planet threatened by a paroxysm of biological extinctions, a frightening affliction in the atmosphere, a poisoning of its land and water, and a profound suffering of living things engendered by the onslaught of humanity. The protection and restoration of the global environment will result not through the imagined intervention of anthropomorphic deities, nor by playing games in our minds about imaginary gods or goddesses, but rather through a maturation of human beings and their behavior, which will necessarily include that mystical approach to science which Barbara McClintock calls "embracing the world."

### Pantheism and Science

This mystical approach to science is at the very root of Pantheism as articulated by its foremost Western expositor, Benedict de Spinoza. For Spinoza, science is "a necessary ingredient" in our spiritual question, by providing a key to understanding Nature (God). As George Sessions explains:

While we will have need of certain practical applications of the new science, e.g. to the areas of medicine and education, and even to engineering, Spinoza makes it clear that the main thrust of the sciences is to be directed to the single supreme goal of self-enlightenment ("Therefore, as is apparent, I want to direct all the sciences to a single field and goal, this being the attainment of the supreme human perfection which we have described.")<sup>10</sup>

By contrast, Langer argues that to her, "science," at least as presently constituted, has no place in revising social attitudes which are responsible for reducing our planet's capability to support life, and that the solution is the Goddess religion advocated by Starhawk and others. I am constrained here to point out that Starhawk herself, in *The Spiral Dance*, states: "I would like to see the Goddess religion of the future be firmly grounded in science, in what we can observe in the physical world."<sup>11</sup> I thus must assume that Starhawk has no quibble with the scientific method as such, as distinguished from the Cartesian-Baconian worldview or the mis-application of science by technology. But Langer does make some statements about "science" and more particularly a "scientific consciousness" which fundamentally misconstrues the critique offered by Morris Berman, upon whom she relies, about the "Cartesian paradigm."

Langer argues that I have uncritically accepted the dominant scientific paradigm, and that I fail to recognize that "modern scientific consciousness is fundamentally alienated." She then departs on an explanation of how what she calls "modern science" in its definition of reality and its birth was inextricably "bound up with the development of industrial capitalism," leading to a whole complex of evils: "abstraction, opposition of subject and object, experimentation, quantification, technological manipulation, exploitation of humans and the environment, materialistic accumulation, and the fetishism of commodities," which has been destructive of ourselves and of the planet as a whole. She concludes: "To think that we can radically alter our way of life while retaining our scientific paradigm, is simply to deceive ourselves."

This view can be dealt with rather satisfactorily with the simple observation that Berman's critique is not directed toward "modern science" at all but rather to the Baconian-Cartesian

paradigm.<sup>12</sup> What Berman advocates is not what Langer calls "returning to the very roots of our pre-scientific attitude to the world," but the development of a post-Cartesian variety of science, suggesting the work of such scientists as Gregory Bateson.<sup>13</sup> There are few scientists today who would accept the Cartesian-Baconian view of science, although that view is clearly a part of the history of science. Langer argues that "Scientific consciousness--our modern scientific consciousness--involves a definition, and even a construction of reality." She asserts that science pretends to be objective but is inevitably value laden.

But of course science is value laden! While certain 17th century philosophers may have thought science to be "objective and value free," such a view is simply not in accord with modern scientific understanding, as Berman recognizes.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, Langer's view of "Science" with a capital S, as if there was one single monolithic thing called "Science," is simply not in accord with reality. In fact, there are thousands of variant scientific disciplines, each promulgated by all too-human scientists, and far from reaching some overall consensus about either the nature of reality or the appropriateness of technology in our world, scientists and their various disciplines are quite frequently in profound disagreement with one another. Langer asserts that "modern science considers the thinking of earlier times muddled, misguided, superstitious, animistic, and childish, while congratulating itself, by comparison, on its own sophistication." That self-evidently does not fairly represent the current thinking of most anthropologists (although it may have been true of an earlier breed), who have been involved in an effort to advance cultural survival. Another example which belies Langer's assertion is the modern scientific discipline of ethnobotany, which is focused upon the medical discoveries made by indigenous people. Langer's critique of modern science clearly continues to apply to certain disciplines, but it is unfair to castigate all of science, since plainly many scientific disciplines contradict other disciplines. Moreover, many scientific principles must be engaged, if we are to halt pollution and destruction of Nature which characterizes our century.<sup>15</sup> If "modern science" has in certain forms brought us an environmental calamity, in many cases it is some form of science which has identified the environmental problem in the first place.

The Pantheist's approach to science, rather than one of "power over" Nature, is one of "open receptiveness." In fact, it is clear that the whole thrust of Spinoza's orientation is opposed to the Baconian-Cartesian tradition which Langer cites as the root of the alienating, control-oriented development of "Science." As George Sessions has written:

Spinoza looked to science primarily as a technique for self-knowledge and knowledge of God/Nature; Bacon, Descartes and Leibniz saw its value primarily as a technique for material human progress through mastery and domination of Nature. There can be no domination over Nature for Spinoza; man is a finite mode of an infinite system and his knowledge of Nature must necessarily remain incomplete and actually quite limited...Descartes sees Nature as a vast valueless machine to be altered at will; Spinoza sees God/Nature more in the sense of a vast organic divine Being. And whereas Descartes saw animals as non-conscious, non-feeling machines, Spinoza makes it clear that all beings exist for their own sakes, for their own particular and individual forms of completion and self-realization, and not for the sake of anything else.<sup>16</sup>

An example of one of the scientific disciplines which belies Langer's characterization of "Science" as always and intrinsically leading to exploitation of certain categories of humans and the planet is the modern science of ecology. The dominant Western paradigm of the God/Nature/Man relationship and its absolute subjectivism has now run head-on into the facts of biology. As Sessions states:

The science of ecology, based upon and buttressed by the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics, makes it clear that ecosystems, and ecosystem components, are not so much raw material to be shifted about and modified at man's whims...As ecologists are now fond of pointing out, "Nature knows best," meaning by this that any major man-made change in a natural system is likely to be detrimental to that system.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, "ecology" as a science is not value-free; that is indeed why it has been called "the subversive science," diametrically opposed to the manipulative forms of science which Langer and I decry. But just because it is not value-free does not mean that ecological science does not have something to contribute to either personal or planetary salvation, when viewed in the proper light. The science of ecology is like any science, capable of being abused, but if used with wisdom, capable of providing a tool which could lead to the salvation of the planet.

What the planet is clearly in need of now is a new way of thinking about Being and Beings which is "both scientifically and philosophically sophisticated at its base."<sup>18</sup> This kind of scientific sophistication does not have to be a kind of monolithic, big-institution Science that frequently deserves criticism. But science as Pantheists practice it, incorporates individual involvement, such as is common in many aspects of field biology, where "amateur" botanists, birders, entomologists, and others frequently add to the body of scientific knowledge, while personally enriching themselves in the process. In fact, even modern astronomy depends on contributions from such amateurs. Given this possibility of involvement in the scientific enterprise in an enriching, non-manipulative way, I cannot accept Langer's characterization of all science as inherently antagonistic to living in ecological harmony with the Earth, no matter how destructive certain scientifically-derived technology may be.

Part of the on-going process of discovery is the recognition that we do not understand how everything in Nature works and ultimately never will; a Pantheist accepts, respects, and appreciates the mysteries of the Earth and the universe. A scientific explanation of a rainbow does not make it any the less beautiful, nor, ultimately, any less mysterious. Knowing the ecological interrelationships of a flower makes it more beautiful, not less. Science may not be the only method of acquiring knowledge, and there are insights and discoveries which can be made with a bit of imagination and inspiration (which of course are also aspects of science). Such an approach is one which is fundamentally in accord with the open, receptive, mystical approach to science which, far from being an isolated phenomena as Langer implies, has been advocated by not only the scientist Barbara McClintock, as Langer recognizes, but by such notable philosophers and scientists who are clearly in the mainstream of Pantheist thinking as Benedict de Spinoza, Ernst Haeckel, John Muir, John Burroughs, Loren Eiseley, Joseph Wood Krutch, Rachel Carson, Paul Ehrlich, and others.<sup>19</sup>

## Symbolism and Celebration

Langer further argues that Pantheism is "too abstract." But Pantheism actually provides a method for a most tangible approach to the worship of Nature, "not as a Being separate and apart from us, but as Ultimate Being itself, or which we humans are a part," as John Burroughs states. Just one example of such a tangible focus is what John Muir called the "biography of a raindrop," what John Seed and Johanna Macy call "the vast poem of the hydrological cycle." Whatever you want to call it, a celebration of the water cycle brings forth a rich spiritual dimension, consistent with modern scientific understanding, which enhances personal experience, far from depriving it of vitality. Rather than merely using a bowl of water in a Witch's ritual as one of the Four Elements, as Langer and Starhawk advocate (or propitiating a Rain God or Cloud Goddess, or debating the relative merits of sprinkling or immersion in Christian baptism), the "hydrological cycle," as Seed and Macy present it, provides an opportunity to celebrate our ecological selves.<sup>20</sup> If the "hydrological cycle" seems more abstract than a bowl of water, then it seems to be that is only due to a failure of imagination, an unwillingness to perceive with our hearts and minds, as well as with our eyes and ears. The point here is that water really is not so much a "thing" which can be represented by putting it in a bowl, but is a constantly-changing system on Earth, the water planet, constantly changing forms, from solid, liquid and gas, to serve an immense variety of roles in biological, geological, and atmospheric systems. The miracle of water is heightened even more by a scientific awareness that it is one of the few combinations of chemicals which actually gets less dense, when it goes from the liquid to solid state; a property which makes life on Earth as we know it possible. As Loren Eiseley said, "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."<sup>21</sup>

The danger with placing water in a bowl as part of a religious ritual, to my mind, is that it circumscribes it, objectifies it, impounds it, makes it viewable as a mere "commodity" rather than as part of something larger of which we ourselves are a part; only a smaller version of the artificial reservoir which destroys wild rivers. If the presence of water in a ritual helps us to think about the other aspects of the water cycle, that is well and good, but the approach suggested by Starhawk and Langer appear to concentrate on water as one of the "Four Elements," which is simply an allegory that is at most the beginning, not the ending, of ecological awareness. I stand by my previous statement that "Earth, Air, Water, and Fire do indeed have relevance to modern man in his ecological predicament, but they are better understood as cycles in ecological systems, not as static elements." To do that properly, we will need to understand that there are many natural and artificial chemicals which interact with Earth, Air, Water and Fire, to the good or to the ill, and at least some modest awareness that there are not four "elements" but over 100, which in turn combine in thousands or millions of combinations.

For Pantheists, the more relevant symbols to our own spiritual quest and ecological predicament are those described by scientific revelation, such as ecological and meteorological cycles and systems. As John Seed states:

In order to establish an ecological identity we first need to understand intellectually that we are part of nature, that we have no independent existence, that we are part of all of the cycles of nature and that by disrupting and polluting these cycles we

are destroying ourselves. But knowing this is not enough--we have to widen and deepen our selves so that we deeply recognize our interconnectedness with all of life."<sup>22</sup>

This intellectual and emotional understanding can be experienced in a multiplicity of ways. Pantheism is not abstract, because it enjoins us to experience a thousand million Presences of Nature. We may enjoy meditating upon the vastness of the Universe or marveling at the views possible with the electron microscope, or visualizing the cycling of water through the hydrological cycle, as part of our religious devotions, but we can be just as spiritually preoccupied in merely listening to the wind in the trees, stroking the fur of a cat or dog, enjoying sexual relationships, or running for cover when a mountain thunderstorm is crashing thunder and lightning, wind and hail all around us. When I stand under the stars, I enjoy the sight with not merely intellectual, but also physical, emotional, and spiritual faculties. In this regard, the sensual approach to worship is not considerably different from that advocated by Starhawk, except that it celebrates the actual experience, not a ritual dedicated to the experience.

Pantheism is a religion which offers a thousand daily reminders of our object of reverence, not through symbolic ideas such as icons, graven images, gods or goddess, or art, but through the daily encounter with various aspects of Nature. A Pantheist devotion to these daily miracles, it seems to me, can and will necessitate a profound reversal of our way of thinking of Nature as "a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry."<sup>23</sup> By increasing human awareness and understanding of Nature--not as an abstraction, but as something within which "we live and move and have our being," we will achieve spiritual growth as individuals and in society as a whole. As John Burroughs has stated, in Pantheism, the divine "becomes the one and only ultimate fact that fills the universe and from which we can no more be estranged than we can be estranged from gravitation."<sup>24</sup> Such a concept seems to me to be hardly "an abstraction," but guides us closer to Ultimate Reality than all the various symbolisms of gods and goddesses which history provides us.

## Pantheism and Antropocentrism

Langer asserts that Pantheism is "too impersonal" to affect any change of thinking. But if Pantheism has an internal weakness, it is not that it is "too impersonal" but that it is too personal. Like John Muir, Pantheists find the best place of worship to be a most solitary and personal one in the temples of Nature. As Michael Cohen states, "The trouble is that Muir's religion is by its very nature a solitary one, in its practice and in its revelations. It may be that there can be no church of the wilderness. Perhaps there can never be more than one worshiper, since two people create a society."<sup>25</sup> Pantheist devotion, whether of the water cycle or of some individual phenomena of Nature, must perhaps be in its most intense form only that of an individual human being communing alone with Nature. In this apparent weakness there is strength; for Pantheists the "congregation" cannot be limited to the particular arrangement of human figures in a circle, as is practiced in the Goddess religion which Langer advocates, but is understood to include the wider community of living things and other phenomenon of Nature. This is not to say that the communal mode of worship which Starhawk and Langer advocate

does not have value, but only that peak religious experiences tend to occur in solitude. While sitting in a circle performing Starhawk's rituals is undoubtedly an improvement over sitting in rows facing a monologue from a clergyman, why should we settle for either form of tradition? With Thoreau, I ask, "Why should we not have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion be revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?" For Pantheists, the focus of worship becomes everyday Nature as an object of devotion, experiencing the divine in Nature itself, in all its multiplicity of characteristics, rather than adhering to the ancient and necessarily "revived" symbols which had meaning to a culture of another time.

Langer's view, by contrast, holds that the image of the Goddess--which she states is anthropocentric (probably she intended to say "anthropomorphic"?):

[A]ctually strengthens Starhawk's symbols, instead of weakening them as Wood claims...To counteract the abstract, impersonal attitude which characterizes our present scientific approach, it is imperative that we cultivate what Berman calls 'participating consciousness'; and what could be more fitting to encourage this than images suggestive of a personal relation, evocative of what Norman O. Brown termed 'the magic of personality'?

The most fundamental mistake here is the acceptance and advocacy of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism.<sup>28</sup> Langer's argument is that the Goddess symbol is helpful in facilitating women's self-empowerment in Western patriarchal societies. She notes that the longstanding Judeo-Christian male symbolism of God has rendered women psychologically dependent on men and their authority, while simultaneously supporting and legitimating male interests and patriarchal sociopolitical institutions.

This is a telling argument, with which I entirely agree, but the solution of replacing patriarchy with matriarchy shares the identical defect of anthropocentric feeling and thinking. As Jean Pearson points out:

Patriarchy wouldn't have overthrown Matriarchy if Goddess religion had been a tolerable approach to life...One chief root of the problem lies in personal history--because nearly everyone has had some problem with Papa and/or Mama in growing up, to symbolize the ultimate power as either God or Goddess will always evoke some rebellion or rejection. If we can forego the human male or female aspect of divine power, then the negative childhood experience of powerlessness and the subsequent rage for power-over will not be evoked. We have to raise our concept of the ultimate power or spirit beyond the limitations of the human sexes, just as we have to grow beyond the desire to reduce all meaning and reverence to human forms.<sup>27</sup>

To counteract the sometimes admittedly negative aspects of a male image of Deity by simply replacing it with a female image seems to be as helpful as replacing one brand of dogmatic fundamentalism with another. What is really needed is spiritual growth which transcends any such anthropocentric emphasis upon culturally-conditioned ideas about gender.

In seeking a way toward such spiritual growth, we need to find ways to transcend the questions of human sexual politics. The debates of modern life so frequently revolve around which par-

ticular group of humans should have the most power, or who has the keenest insights, that we fail to address the real question. The crucial questions from a planetary point of view are neither human political nor scientific questions, but "spiritual" questions of how to value a natural order larger than humankind's own order; how to accept, not sullenly, but gladly, the necessity of sharing the Earth with other living beings; how to re-direct the destructive power with which both men and women threaten the rest of the biosphere.<sup>28</sup>

What people need now is a personal "self-esteem" that thrives regardless of gender, an esteem which will grow from a renewed understanding of our role as a part of the biosphere. In this sense, self-esteem ironically flows from an increased species humility for human beings, through a recognition that our ecological self must survive if our individual bodies are to survive. Such a self-esteem will be manifested when we give up the arrogance which our species has so frequently maintained against the natural world, and when we achieve a willingness to respect other forms of life for their own unique value. To accomplish such a broader self-esteem, it is fundamental that we must remove anthropocentric thinking and anthropomorphic images from our religious symbols.

The essence of the Pantheist conception of Deity is to refuse the ascription of human-images upon it. Irv Thomas has pointed out that having personified God, "We of course had to give it gender, for who can visualize an androgynous human being."<sup>29</sup> Thomas goes on to conclude that "It is probably immaterial whether it were masculine or feminine, for either would have been a lopsided warping of nature's reality." (And now I might add, human reality as well.) He agrees that the imposition of a masculine Divinity surely accentuated the impulse to power and control, and that feminist writers are correct in making us aware of the link between a male God and a power-focused, male-dominated society. But, he concludes, "They seem not to have seen through to the deeper source of monotheism, itself." The problem is simply that "in deifying the human image, with explicit creative power over all of Nature, we tend to transfer such power by simile to ourselves. To put it crassly: By lusting after a God-image of our own likeness, whose power to create and destroy is not subject to denial, we legitimize our own raping of this planet and its natural blessings..."

Thus, a personal human-like Divinity, whether masculine, feminine, or berdache,<sup>30</sup> cannot reverse humanity's domination of Nature. But I must point out that Langer explains that the image of the Goddess is not merely some type of Super-human Being; rather She is described as "weaver, birth-giver, earth and growing plant, wind and ocean, flame, web, moon and milk," all of which "speak to the powers of connectedness, sustenance, healing, creating." She quotes Starhawk as stating: "The Goddess represents the awareness of the world and everything in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance."<sup>31</sup> According to Starhawk, "When I say Goddess I am not...proposing a new belief system. I am talking about choosing an attitude..." But the difficulty with Starhawk and Langer's image of the Goddess here is that the "representation" or "symbol" which their Goddess is intended by them to evoke is not necessarily in accord with actual images of the Goddess which have been historically held. As Merlin Stone recognizes in *When God Was a Woman*, female deities were sometimes associated with the Sun rather



than the Moon, and the Earth was sometimes considered a male deity and not as "Mother Earth" at all.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Starhawk and Langer's "goddess" is only that of one image of the goddess of a particular culture.

If the Goddess "symbolizes" an awareness of the world as "alive, dynamic, inter-dependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies," the view of Nature which observation reveals (i.e. modern ecological science and the "new physics") does not merely "represent" or symbolize such aliveness, but fundamentally is ("to exist in actuality") all these things. Cultures may come and go, and scientific understanding may change, but that will not change the fundamental reality of Nature.

Finally, Pantheists, while denying human sexuality or personality to Deity, celebrate the sexuality of not only maleness/femaleness, but also other multi-sexual roles in Nature. Langer argues that the concept of the Goddess incorporates maleness along with femaleness, just as a pregnant woman may hold a male infant within her womb. But why try to fit Deity into such a strictly human image, when the diversity of Nature is so much greater? Sexuality abounds in Nature, and so does asexuality. Not only do wild plants and animals play diverse roles for male and female, which are to some degree duplicated in various human cultures through the ages, but some species do things we could never do, such as actually change sex from one year to the next.<sup>33</sup> Pantheists can celebrate the diversity of sexuality, because Nature is filled with fascinating examples of sexuality which go far beyond that of limited human experience.

To be sure, some natural phenomena are difficult to view in a sexual context at all; at the atomic, or galactic scale the very concept of sexuality breaks down. In fact, to consider the moon and Earth female--even symbolically, as Starhawk does, simply reinforces an anthropocentric culture which not only cries out for change, but is not even an accurate depiction of many of the historical goddess religions. I submit that we can enjoy the poetry of natural objects without constantly impressing such anthropomorphic characteristics upon them.

The alternative is to experience Nature for the psychic benefits it offers. That experience may be heightened more by an overlay of current scientific understanding of the phenomena than by labeling the objects according to cultural preferences.

Langer would not be alone in arguing that ultimately it is impossible to escape from culture, that all our perceptions and experiences, even when we are in the wilderness, and even when appreciating a scientific explanation, are molded and twisted by culture. It is of course true indeed that culture will influence our perceptions of Nature. But it seems to me that the problem of cultural transformation is not really so grandiose. If we paid more daily attention to the natural world, as distinct from the cultural world, we will begin to give that world more value, and learn to safeguard it.

#### Conclusion

Pantheism is a concept which by denying personality to the Deity, simply places ultimate value in the natural world itself. It does not pretend to be value-free, but that does not prevent us from taking advantage of some of the discoveries which various scientific disciplines have provided. Pantheism offers not a religion of symbolism, but the Real Things: the Divinity of Nature. Pantheism promotes a worldview which goes beyond the scientific view, which enriches our understanding of the natural world by recognizing that Nature is not merely a storehouse of

useful commodities but is sacred, and is part of ourselves. In a real sense, Pantheism is less abstract than the complicated "images, symbols, and myths" of either the Goddess of Witchcraft or the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. For modern Pantheists, Nature is the source of religious inspiration, with the ever-changing understanding of it required by modern science, not the human inventions of churches and bibles, or covens and ritual incantations.

#### Notes

1. Monika Langer, "Feminism and the Magic of the Goddess: An Appreciation of Starhawk." *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 23-27. All further references to Langer herein are to this article.
2. "A basic principle of pantheism is that of extended identity. This principle holds that to know one's self you must be able to sense, establish, and sustain relationships beyond the self...In the Pantheist view, it is a mistake to limit the self (of "I") to the ego, or to any one aspect of the psyche...To have an identity or self in any lively sense of the word means understanding the contingencies of other identities and appreciating the relations connecting life to life..." Silas Goldean, "The Principle of Extended Identity," reprinted by Universal Pantheist Society, P.O. Box 265, Big Pine, Ca. 93513. Also appeared in *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1986, pp. 22-24.
3. John Burroughs, *Accepting the Universe* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1920).
4. Ernst Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900).
5. For a description of Krutch's approach to pantheism, see my "Pantheist Prophets: Joseph Wood Krutch" in *Pantheist Vision*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 1986.
6. William Morris, ed. *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 948.
7. Edwin Way Teale, *The Wilderness World of John Muir* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press) pp. 318-19.
8. Haeckel, *op cit.*, p. 20.
9. David Abram, "Notes from Thami Valley," essay available from Way of the Mountain Learning Center, P.O. Box 542, Silverton, Co. 81433. Also published in *The Trumpeter*, as "Deep Ecology and Magic: Notes of a Sleight-of-Hand Sorcerer," Vol. 4, No. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 27-30.
10. George Sessions, "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man in Nature," *Inquiry*, Vol. 20, Fall 1977, pp. 481-495.
11. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979) p. 190. Despite Langer's contention otherwise, I do not dispute the fact that Goddess religion provides some valuable spiritual insights; I only assert that Goddess religion is not consistent with ecological understanding, which is something Starhawk claims for it. *Mythology, folktales, and fiction* all can contribute to a new ecological vision, but should be recognized for what they are. In addition to the resurrected myths pertaining to goddesses, witness the modern revival in an ecological context of the Greek god Pan in such literature as D.H. Lawrence, "The Death of Pan" in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* (Viking Press: New York, 1964), and in Tom Robbins' popular novels, *Another Roadside Attraction* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), and *Jitterbug Perfume* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984).
12. Morris Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981) pp. 45-46, 187.
13. "...In general I believe that the archaic tradition, including dialectic reason and various psychic abilities that all of us possess, are important things to revive. But for the most part, I see our immediate future in a post-Cartesian paradigm, not in a premodern one." Morris Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981) p. 270.
14. Although Berman recognizes a post-Cartesian view primarily in Batesonian metaphysics, he points out that this view also exists in Quantum Mechanics and at least some types of ecological research. See Morris Berman, *op cit.*, p. 16. Fritjof Capra explains the modern view of physics quite eloquently: "In transcending the Cartesian division, modern physics has not only invalidated the classical ideal of an objective description of nature but has also challenged the myth of a value-free science. The patterns scientists observe in nature are intimately connected with the patterns of their minds; with their concepts, thoughts, and values...Although much of their detailed research will not depend explicitly on their value system, the larger paradigm within which this research is pursued will never be value-free." Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science,*

**Society, and the Rising Culture** (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) p. 87.

15. Ecologist Paul Ehrlich has stated: "I am convinced that such a quasi-religious movement [such as the deep ecology movement], one concerned with the need to change the values that now govern much of human activity, is essential to the persistence of our civilization. But agreeing that science, even the science of ecology, cannot answer all questions--that there are other ways of knowing--does not diminish the absolutely crucial role that good science must play if our overextended civilization is to save itself. Values must not be based on scientific nonsense...Given the present level of human overpopulation, only a combination of changes in basic values and advances in science and technology seems to provide much hope for avoiding unprecedented calamities." Paul Ehrlich, **The Machinery of Nature** (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986) pp. 17-18.

16. Sessions, op cit., p. 507.

17. Sessions, op cit., p. 491.

18. Sessions, op cit., p. 494.

19. See generally George Sessions, "The Deep Ecology Movement: A Review," **Environmental Review**, (Summer, 1987), wherein Sessions describes the questioning of anthropocentrism by numerous scientists.

20. See "Gaia Meditations" in John Seed, Johanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess, **Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council of All Beings** (Santa Cruz: New Society Publishers, 1988).

21. Loren Eiseley, **The Immense Journey** (New York: Vintage Books, 1959) p. 15.

22. See John Seed, op cit.

23. Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address," in **Discourse on Thinking** (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) pp. 49-56, cited in Langer, op. cit.

24. Burroughs, op cit., p. 107.

25. Michael P. Cohen, **The Pathless Way: John Muir and American Wilderness** (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) p. 150.

26. Morris Berman, upon whom Langer so greatly relies, also recognizes that the achievement of the "restoration of holism" does not require adherence to anthropocentrism. See Morris Berman, **The Reenchantment of the World**, op cit., Ch. 6, fn. 43, p. 330.

27. Jean Pearson, personal communication, Aug. 14, 1987.

28. Joseph Wood Krutch, "Conservation is Not Enough" in **Voices of the Desert** (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1955).

29. Irv Thomas, **God and Belief: The Pantheist Alternative** (Big Pine: Universal Pantheist Society, 1986). Thomas is referring here to the common western European attitude toward sexuality. Some scholars have pointed out that some cultures definitely have alternative "androgynous" gender roles, such as the berdache of the American Indian. See Walter L. Williams, **The Spirit of the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture** (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986). In reality, this gender role is something of a "third sex," and also occurs elsewhere in the world in a number of cultures. The existence of more than two gender roles in human society further points to a defect in the underlying anthropomorphic assumptions of both the god and the goddess approach to thinking about the nature of Deity.

30. See note 28.

31. Starhawk, **Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics** (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).

32. Stone reports "accounts of Sun Goddesses in the lands of Canaan, Anatolia, Arabia and Australia, while Sun Goddesses among the Eskimos, the Japanese and the Khasis of India were accompanied by subordinate brothers who were symbolized as the moon...in Egypt not only was the ancient Goddess Nut known as the heavens, but her brother-husband Geb was symbolized as the earth." Merlin Stone, **When God Was a Woman** (New York: Dial Press, 1976) p. 2.

33. David Policansky, "Evolution, Sex, and Sex Allocation," **Bioscience**, Vol. 37, No. 7, 1987, pp. 466-468.

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## VALUING DIVERSITY:NO ONE CAN SPEAK FOR ALL

Monika Langer

Harold Wood's response to my article "Feminism and the Magic of the Goddess: An Appreciation of Starhawk" deals for the most part with a two sentence comment I made regarding Pantheism. As the brevity of that remark indicates, the intent of my article was not at all to attack Pantheism. Rather, I was concerned to show the ways in which Wood's critique missed the essentials of Starhawk's position. The sincerity of Wood's beliefs was not then, and is not now, at issue. Pantheism is evidently satisfying for its adherents; yet the fact remains that many others do not find it an adequate response to the fundamental crises of our time. Whilst I have not myself adopted the symbol of the Goddess, Wood's attack on Starhawk's **The Spiral Dance** prompted me to point out why the Goddess is such an appropriate and compelling symbol for numerous women today. The claims which I made to that end did not entail a universalism or any kind. As Patrick Corbett noted in his detailed analysis of religious and secular ideologies, "it would be idiotically pretentious for anyone to try to speak, at once, for all."<sup>1</sup> As in my earlier article, I do not here propose to discuss Pantheism; rather, my intent is to clear up several misunderstandings vis-a-vis my previous article which surface in Wood's response to the paper.

Misunderstanding emerges from the very beginning of Wood's article. Having cited my cursory comment concerning the inadequacy of Pantheism for ushering in any profound, multidimensional reversal of our present stance, Wood declares: "Langer's solution is to embrace the Goddess religion advocated by Starhawk and other modern practitioners of witchcraft...In this essay, I endeavor to show that contrary to Langer's assertion, modern Pantheism provides a very real solution to the problems she decries. To characterize my approach as one of decrying problems and embracing "the Goddess religion" as solution, is doubly misleading. In actual fact, I deliberately eschew that way of thinking because, like Neil Evernden, I maintain that thinking in terms of problems and solutions "characterizes our conventional worldview and condemns us to continue in this path of existence;" "even to speak of problems and solutions predisposes us to a particular stance in the world, and to particular kinds of understanding."<sup>2</sup> Lest my point nonetheless be dismissed as a mere verbal quibble, it is worth recalling Heidegger's assertion that "words and language are not wrappings which things are packed for the commerce of those who write and speak. It is in words and language that things first come into being and are."<sup>3</sup>

Starhawk herself stresses that, depending on our choice of words, language either perpetuates or transforms our awareness, as I noted in my previous paper. Following Starhawk, I emphasized the interdependence of images, emotions, thoughts, words, and actions in maintaining dualism or restoring holism. Although I commented on Wood's allegation that Starhawk's symbols lack relevance to contemporary problems, I refrained from criticizing his use of the term "problems," preferring to focus on the significance of Starhawk's symbolism for facilitating a much needed holistic approach. In light of his recent misinterpretation of my position, it became necessary to raise the language issue here.

Wood's misconstruction of my stance is doubly misleading, for I do not myself embrace any religion and, in my earlier article, I explicitly noted Starhawk's warning not to reduce the Goddess to the fulcrum of a new belief system. Thus, I emphasized the multifaceted symbolic significance of the Goddess in Starhawk's position. I went on to claim that Starhawk's symbols are especially fruitful for facilitating a fundamental shift away from the dominant, scientific paradigm. I emphasized the relevance of Starhawk's approach for countering the pervasive tendency to abstract from, devalue, and manipulate reality. All this does not in any sense imply that Starhawk's position constitutes "The Way," so to speak. Indeed, Starhawk herself stresses the value of diversity, as I noted in my defense of her position. Consequently, to construe her stance as advocating a content for adoption, spells a severe distortion of Starhawk's own approach. Appreciating the latter means that "no longer do we tell ourselves stories about the one truth, or the set of rules that everyone must follow...instead, we say that we each have our own path to find...The ethics of imminence encourage diversity rather than sameness in human endeavors, and within the biological community."<sup>4</sup> In passing, I would also note that having "some large measure of acceptance among the public" does not by any means indicate the presence of "the groundwork" for such a radical reorientation of our relationship with the world, as Wood seems to suggest. The Heideggerian meaning of "preparing the ground," to which I alluded in my article, involves a meditative thinking which is irreducible to the notion of "acceptance" and even incompatible with the concept of "the public." Such writers as Jung and Jung, Zimmerman, and Evernden provide the kind of relevant elaboration of Heidegger's position which lies beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>5</sup>

In his presentation of the Pantheist position Wood, citing Ernst Haeckel, suggests that a rejection of dualism entails adoption of monism which, in turn, leads to Pantheism. Far from "agreeing with this crucial point of modern Pantheism," as Wood supposes that I do, I question its assumptions. To criticize dualism and call for the restoration of holism does not imply adopting monism or Pantheism. Moreover, in my estimation the universalist connotations of monism render it inappropriate for furthering that appreciation of diversity which is so essential in Starhawk's position. Wood goes on to say that I accept and advocate anthropomorphism. This misrepresentation of my actual stance rests largely on a most unfortunate error in the text of my paper, coupled with the fact that I did not think it necessary to point out the distinction between **anthropomorphism**, i.e., the attribution of human form or traits to the nonhuman, and **anthropocentrism**, i.e., the consideration of everything in terms of humanity as central fact, sole value, ultimate meaning or universal telos. From the context, as Wood guessed, it is apparent

that the relevant passage of my text should have read: "Further, her anthropomorphism [not "anthropocentrism!"] actually strengthens Starhawk's symbols...images suggestive of a **personal** relation, evocative of what Norman O. Brown termed 'the magic of personality'."

The issue of anthropocentrism has received extensive consideration over the last several years, particularly in the literature focusing on ecological concerns.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the acceptance or rejection of anthropocentrism is one of the most decisive features in distinguishing reform environmentalism from deep ecology. As a supporter of the latter, I stressed in my earlier paper the need to abandon the pervasive utilitarian, manipulative and technocratic approach to the world. So firmly has anthropocentrism become established in our very perception and understanding of the world, that the requisite reorientation involves a fundamental change in all aspects of our experience. The historical interdependence of anthropocentrism and sexism<sup>7</sup> makes such a radical transformation all the more difficult to accomplish; nor is there any single, privileged way of bringing it about. Among the **many complementary ways** contributing to this crucial change, the symbol of the Goddess has particular appeal for many women in virtue of the fact that it encompasses a **plurality** of images and counteracts the sexism of the dominant paradigm. There is no question, however, of my--or Starhawk's--desiring to anthropomorphize all meaning, as Wood's reference to Jean Pearson suggests. Nor is it a matter of **advocating** anthropomorphism, as will be evident from my earlier comments regarding diversity. Similarly, my response to Wood's allegation that I embrace the Goddess religion as solution, suffices to show his misinterpretation in claiming that I propose "the solution of replacing patriarchy with a matriarchal religiosity."

Starhawk herself deliberately tries to forestall the distortion which--as in Wood's case--reduces her position to a counteracting of "the admittedly negative aspects of a male image of Deity by simply replacing it with a female image." Thus she insists that:

The Goddess is not one image but many...She includes the male in her aspect...Yet the femaleness of the Goddess is primary not to denigrate the male, but because it represents bringing life into the world, valuing the world...The image of the Goddess strikes at the roots of estrangement...Many people will prefer the concept of imminence without the symbol attached...I prefer the symbol to the abstraction because it evokes sensual and emotional, not just intellectual responses. However, I recognize that there is a danger in the use of any symbol--that people will forget the principle that it represents. The Goddess could be taken as an object of external worship in a context no less hierarchical and oppressive than that of any religion or patriarchy. Let us be clear that when I say Goddess I am not talking about a being somewhere outside of this world, nor am I proposing a new belief system. I am talking about choosing an attitude: choosing to take this living world, the people and the creatures on it, as the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, to see the world, the earth, and our lives as sacred. To say something is sacred is to say that we respect, cherish, and value it for its own being.<sup>8</sup>

From the foregoing, it will be seen that Starhawk's symbol of the Goddess is the very antithesis of an image which would evoke a "rage for power-over." Incidentally, I would question several of Pearson's assumptions in the passage which Wood cites on this issue. For example, there is no reason to suppose

that "Patriarchy wouldn't have overthrown the Matriarchy if Goddess religion had been a tolerable approach to life." Nor does some childhood experience of powerlessness vis-a-vis one's parents warrant the claim that an anthropomorphic Deity "will always evoke some rebellion or rejection." That claim becomes particularly tenuous in the case of Starhawk's Goddess, given that the latter symbolizes "integrity of self and integrity of relationships," rather than "rules or authority."<sup>9</sup> By the same token, eschewing an anthropomorphic Deity is no guarantee that the "rage for power-over will not be evoked." Perhaps Pearson would grant this last point, since she states that personal history is the source of "one chief root of the problem" [my emphasis]. Thus, she seems to leave open the possibility that other factors could give rise to the same result even in the absence of anthropomorphism.

In his critique of Starhawk's anthropomorphic symbol of the Goddess, Wood seems to suggest that anthropomorphism leads to anthropocentrism--an implication which I have attempted to dispel in this paper. Understandably, therefore, Wood calls for "spiritual growth which transcends any such anthropocentric [anthropomorphic] emphasis upon gender." He goes on to say:

In seeking a way toward such spiritual growth, we need to find ways to transcend the questions of human sexual politics...The crucial question from a planetary point of view is not a human political question, but a 'spiritual' question of how to re-direct the destructive power with which both men and women threaten the rest of the biosphere. We need ways to eliminate the kind of thinking which glorifies and rewards power (in the sense of 'power-over' as distinguished from 'inner strength') itself...Arguably, all persons need some sort of self-empowerment, in the sense of self-esteem...but as Langer points out, such self-empowerment is not 'ego-power'...But the power I speak of here is not that thought of in a social or personal sense, but in an ecological context...In that context, then, what we need is not so much 'empowerment' but its opposite, a humility for our own species, a reverence for the earth itself, a willingness to accept the universe...

This complex passage raises a number of crucial issues. The first of these has to do with the notion of the spiritual and its separation from the political. I would agree with Bill Devall that it is best "at this time in Western history, to avoid the term 'spiritual' because it carries such a heavy burden of dualism."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Starhawk notes that it ("spirit") "implies that it is separate from matter, and that false split...is the foundation of the institutions of domination."<sup>11</sup> Further, it seems to me that Starhawk is correct in explicitly refusing to split "the spiritual and the political." Thus, she states in her "Prologue" to *Dreaming the Dark* that it "is a book about bringing together the spiritual and the political. Or rather, it is a work that attempts to move in the source where that split does not exist."<sup>12</sup> Wood is quite right that we need to abandon the thinking which legitimates coercion, i.e., "power-over." Yet to say that this "is not a human political question, but a 'spiritual' question," is to remain caught in precisely the kind of fragmentation which Wood himself seems to deplore.

The refusal of Cartesian dualism means that there is no longer any allegedly "spiritual" realm beyond our everyday lives to which we could withdraw. Moreover, as feminists have consistently emphasized, the traditional divorce of "personal" and "political" is simply untenable: the personal is profoundly politi-

cal. In an article devoted to this issue, Rob Walker makes the telling observation that "the illusion that politics and everyday life are separate...is deeply embedded in our culture."<sup>13</sup> The consequences of retaining that illusion are very grave indeed. As Walker says, it makes for a mystification which "provides the perfect environment for authoritarianism"<sup>14</sup>--the very "power-over" which Wood is seeking to abolish. I am in agreement with Walker that "by treating politics as something 'out there' we perpetuate the structures that put it beyond our control. This suggests that democratization depends on breaking down the distinctions between the private and the public, the personal and the political."<sup>15</sup> In short, if we are to move beyond thinking in terms of "power-over," as Wood rightly declares that we should, then we must make the crucial connection between so-called political questions and so-called personal questions. Nor can there be any separation of the allegedly "spiritual" from "human sexual politics." As Walker points out, "structures of patriarchy...are evident everywhere once one is sensitized to them."<sup>16</sup> Writers such as Carolyn Merchant, Susan Griffin, and Brian Easlea<sup>17</sup> have shown that questions of human sexual politics, the exploitation of Nature, and the threat of nuclear war are inextricably interconnected. Failure to recognize those interconnections dooms us to perpetuating our present destructive practices. The kind of positive power which Wood contrasts with "power-over," must indeed be "thought of in a social or personal sense." The social, personal, and ecological are interconnected. As Starhawk stresses, "there are no things separate from context."<sup>8</sup> Further, Starhawk's emphasis on respecting and cherishing the world, the Earth, other creatures and our lives, shows that her notion of empowerment is not in any sense the opposite of humility and ecological concern. In stressing that everything is interconnected, Starhawk is emphasizing the very ecological context which Wood rightly deems so important today. Contrary to Wood's claim, therefore, I would maintain that Goddess religion is in fact "consistent with ecological understanding."

The notion of ecological context brings us to the question of the nature and status of science. Wood's misconstruction of my position gives me the opportunity to clarify a few points regarding this issue. In my earlier paper, I did not intend to imply a rejection of science; nor did I intend to suggest that science is monolithic, or that it cannot help revise attitudes. Like Starhawk, I find many of the recent developments intriguing and **potentially** fruitful in helping to bring about a recognition of dynamic interconnectedness. As Starhawk points out, "modern physics no longer speaks of separate, discrete atoms of dead matter but of waves of energy, probabilities, patterns that change as they are observed; it recognizes...that matter and energy are not separate forces, but different forms of the same thing."<sup>19</sup> From the fact that Starhawk welcomes such developments and stresses the need for concreteness ("what we can observe in the physical world"), it must not be concluded that she "has no quibble with the scientific method as such, as distinguished from the mis-application of science by technology." Nor should it be concluded that I would like to replace science with Goddess religion. Further, I did not intend to suggest that there are not numerous "variant scientific disciplines" and plenty of disagreements within each of these. However, as Ruth Hubbard notes,<sup>20</sup> those disagreements largely operate within a tacitly assumed framework which, I suggest, is fundamentally Cartesian. As wood himself distinguishes Spinoza from Bacon and Descartes,

he seems to agree that the "Baconian-Cartesian tradition" has been destructive of Nature. Our disagreement would then centre on the extent to which that tradition still informs the dominant paradigm of our Western culture. In any case, if it were so apparent that science is value-laden, there would be no need for the profound feminist critiques of science by scientists and philosophers such as Ruth Hubbard, Sandra Harding, Evelyn Fox Keller, Carolyn Merchant and Brian Easlea. Even the modern science of ecology, which Wood explicitly mentions, needs to be distinguished from deep ecology. As Neil Evernden explains:

The ecologist is forced to treat nature as essentially non-living, as a machine to be dissected, interpreted, and manipulated...as a science ecology is concerned, not with experiencing or appreciating nature, but with predicting and controlling the living material of the world...ecology has become a branch of classical physics, in spirit if not in exact content...Ecology can help one to criticize inefficient exploitation or destructive utilization of nature, but it cannot help illuminate the experience that inspires one to be an environmentalist.<sup>21</sup>

Wood over-simplifies, I suggest, in regarding as essentially positive "the scientific method as such, as distinguished from the mis-application of science by technology" or the misuse of science by politicians and social leaders. Once again, I would stress the **interconnectedness** of a society's science, technology, politics and leadership. The predicament goes much deeper than misuse or mis-application--though these factors undoubtedly also play a part. Alan Drengson has perhaps put the matter most succinctly:

In short, modern science-technology represents a specific world view that was born in modern times during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries in Europe...This reductionist, mechanistic, desacralized view of Nature is the one we have inherited in the 20th century...Science as a worldview has aimed at abstract, generalized descriptions of natural processes, which are supposedly value-free, and which can be expressed in terms of quantified, mathematical formulas...In part the explanatory power of modern science achieves success by leaving out large areas of our experience, but it also conditions our expectations and tends to narrow the experienced gestalts that constitute our consensual reality. Science allied with technology has aimed at prediction and control of natural phenomena...Our culture has generally adopted this attitude toward Nature.<sup>22</sup>

In closing, I would add that neither Starhawk nor I recommend becoming "locked into a creed," as Wood suggests. Earlier, I noted Starhawk's explicit disavowal of any attempt to reduce the Goddess symbol to the fulcrum of a new creed. Like Wood, I surmise that he and I do not differ radically in our intentions, since we both emphasize the urgent need for abandoning the destructive power-over approach. In keeping with Starhawk's

celebration of diversity, let us agree to differ in our respective ways of responding to the crucial questions facing us today.

#### Notes

1. Patrick Corbett, *Ideologies* (London: Hutchinson, 1965), p. 9.
2. Lorne Leslie Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and Environment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) pp. 140, 143.
3. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 11.
4. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), pp. 37-38.
5. Jung and Jung, "To Save the Earth," *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 19, No. 2/4, Summer 1975, pp. 108-117; Michael Zimmerman, "Toward a Heideggerian Ethos for Radical Environmentalism," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 1983; Evernden, *The Natural Alien*.
6. See, for example, Alan Drengson, *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1983, pp. 1-2; Drengson, *The Trumpeter* Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1984, p. 3; Heryk Skolimowski, "The Dogma of Anti-anthropocentrism and Ecophilosophy," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Fall 1984, pp. 283-288; Arne Naess, "A Defense of the Deep Ecology Movement," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Fall 1984, pp. 265-270; Bill Devall, "Reply to Skolimowski," *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1986, p. 15; Naess, "Deep Ecology in Good Conceptual Health," *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1986, pp. 18-21.
7. See, for example, Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).
8. *Dreaming the Dark*, pp. 9-12. See also p. 38.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 34. See also pp. 35-42.
10. Bill Devall, "Reply to Skolimowski," *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1986, p. 15.
11. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, p. 4.
12. *Ibid.* xi.
13. R.B.J. Walker, "Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life," *After Bennett: A New Politics for British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1986), p. 331.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 329-330.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 332.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
17. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*; Susan Griffin, *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981); Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Brian Easlea, *Witch-Hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy: An Introduction to the Debates of the Scientific Revolution 1450-1750* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980); Brian Easlea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).
18. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, p. 35.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
20. Ruth Hubbard, "Have Only Men Evolved?" in *Women Look at Biology Looking at Women*, Hubbard, Henifin and Fried, eds. (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), pp. 9-10.
21. Evernden, *The Natural Alien*, pp. 20-22. See also pp. 5-24.
22. Alan Drengson, *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1984, pp. 1-2.

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# PAGANISM AS RESISTANCE

Christopher Manes

I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river, Is  
a strong brown god. T.S. Eliot  
Only a god can save us. Martin Heidegger

It is probably no coincidence that Iceland was both the last outpost of paganism in Europe, and the last bastion of resistance to the rise of European feudalism. The relationship between Iceland's religion and its independence evidently was not lost on the Norwegian King, St. Olaf, who schemed to Christianize the Icelanders as vigorously as he did to subjugate them. History proved his strategy effective, though it took a little longer than he had hoped--265 years after he met a watery death at the hands of pagan Vikings unsympathetic to his church-going megalomania. Similar patterns linking primal religions to non-hierarchical, Earth-harmonious ways of life, are woven into the fabric of history, from the Ainu of the Japanese archipelago, to the Indians of the Amazon basin. In its unrelenting march across the globe, civilization consistently represents paganism as an obstacle, somehow intimately associated with independence from central power.

What did St. Olaf and the thousands of other proselytizers for civilization know that we do not? If the general goal of radical environmentalism is to resist the ever-widening control of Technological Culture over Nature and human nature, we should examine civilization's perception of paganism to see if it holds any knowledge we can use strategically. In an unthematized way, we can already see a connection. The rise of radical environmentalism and neopaganism occurred almost simultaneously, no doubt in response to the same concerns over the desecralization of the Earth that modern culture represents. Coincidentally, the official "rebirth" of paganism in Iceland, under the auspices of Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson, took place in 1972, the same year the Norwegian thinker, Arne Naess, wrote his historic article laying out the concept of Deep Ecology. (St. Olaf would turn in his grave, if he had one.) The large number of neopagans in the radical environmental movement confirms the fact that people involved in the struggle against accumulated power sense an affinity between Deep Ecology and "The Old Ways," as Gary Snyder calls the primal religions. The purpose of this article is to thematize that affinity. In particular, I want to consider what paganism offers for resisting the way power works in today's hierarchical society, not only in terms of philosophy, but in actual social practice.

"Paganism" itself is too broad a term, including as it does not only the animism of hunter-gatherer tribes, but the rather stuffy polytheism of agricultural states like Egypt, Greece and Rome--which proved all too compatible with centralized power. For the former, then, I reserve the term "primalism," meaning the entire religious complex of preagricultural peoples, including animism, animatism, shamanism, and ancestry worship. For

what Professor Drengron calls "third wave" religions (see his article in the Winter 1988 *Trumpeter*), that is, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, I'll use the term "ethical religions." This is meant to emphasize the fact that all these religions concentrate on humanity's ethical nature. They all concern themselves with generating "moral" or "right" behavior, and create institutions to encourage or enforce that end: monasteries, churches, schools, courts. I realize this is a reduction. Certainly some ethical religions, such as Buddhism, have proved less serviceable to the accumulation of power than others. Moreover, there are different forms of each of these religion: Meister Echart's Christianity is quite unlike Jerry Falwell's. Nonetheless, taken as a whole, over a long historical process, the ethical religions have been and remain vectors of civilization and its power.

To see how civilization makes use of religion, therefore, we begin with the ethical religions. The most obvious way in which they are implicated in the power relations of organized societies is through the support their cosmologies give to civilization's values. Even a brief look at these cosmologies indicates that they all represent the universe as a hierarchy--if not in actual physical terms as in the Bible, then in ethical terms as in Buddhism. The universe has an order, proclaim the ethical religions, and humans can discover it through revelation or self-examination. By their content, then, ethical religions lend metaphysical credence to the "orderliness" of civilization and its power relations, providing it with a universal analogue to its various historical forms.

But beyond the specific details of cosmology, the very attempt to represent the world totally in terms of some principle of order fixes the world in a valuational framework. The values may vary with the particular religion--so that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam see the world as expressions of God's goodness, tainted by its contrary, sin; while Hinduism distinguishes *Atman*, the divine within man, from the illusory reality around him; and Buddhism emphasizes the all-encompassing effects of desire, and their relinquishment through *nirvana*. In the very process of valorization, however, regardless of the form it takes, a problematical relationship between humanity and Nature is created, which is intimately associated with civilization. As Heidegger says in his "Letter on Humanism":

[P]recisely through the characterization of something as "a value," what is so valued is robbed of its worth. That is to say, by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object for man's estimation. But what a thing is in its Being is not exhausted by its being an object.

By converting the world into values, the ethical religions play an indispensable role in the way power relations work in hierarchical societies. In the discourse of civilization, the hierarchical

projects of states are validated in terms of value, so that the real action of these projects--the accumulation and spread of power--disappears from view under the shimmer of ethics. To give an example, sexual behavior became a locus of values in the early stages of organized society. A biological act was transformed into a social means of regulating human bodies (what Michel Foucault calls "bio-power"), through the promotion of such values as increasing population, the economic productivity of the nuclear family, or in more recent times the industry of pleasure--as supported by increased consumption. The particular values are not of fundamental importance and critical thinking need not--indeed, should not--take them seriously. What is important is the fact that civilization relies on a "totalization" of value; that is, values represented as universally applicable--to everyone, everywhere, at all times. Through totalized values, organized societies have at their command a medium in which to propagate the kind of human behavior upon which they depend. Whether that means plowing a field, working in a factory, or dropping an atomic bomb, the discourse of civilization can find an alibi in values--such as God's commandments, "progress," of humanism in its traditional or more arabesque forms (e.g. Murray Bookchin's "social ecology" and its apologetics for civilization's power structure in such giddy definitions of man "as natural evolution knowing itself").

We tend to think of power only in terms of its ability to repress behavior. The king's army puts down an insurrection, the police arrest a criminal, a principal expels a student--this is tangible power. But, as Foucault has so convincingly argued (in *Discipline and Punishment* particularly), the power of organized societies is also generative. It causes people to act in certain ways, not only by the limited means of coercion, but by creating a field in which such actions are "just," "moral," "good," "civilized." Values envelop the members of organized societies, and act as alibis for the accumulation of power, which defines civilization.

I am suggesting that the ethical religions are more than just a convenient repository of metaphysical concepts and images that civilization draws on; they are, in their axiological structures, creations of civilization to be used as alibis for the accumulation of power. Some of these alibis are painfully obvious today. The agrarian states, for instance, adapted late pagan theogeny into the concept of the divine origin of kings. When Christianity made supernatural copulation disreputable, feudalism used Christian doctrine to construct the divine right of kings. The historical alibis are endless, but once their mythological source falls into desuetude, we can discern a singular process occurring all along: organized societies using values to accumulate and augment power.

The situation becomes confusing when new, more efficient forms of social domination develop new, more efficient alibis, such as nationalism or the Enlightenment concept of "the natural rights of Man." The result is that the ethical religions momentarily take on the role of opposing the further enveloping of Nature and human nature in civilization's power. A complexity also arises in the fact that some, if not most, of the myths that displaced the ethical religions still act as alibis for power today. Therefore, the many thinkers who have analyzed the role of religion since the 17th century find themselves reconstructing history according to a universe of discourse surrounding these prevailing myths. The gradual eclipse of religion in the waxing power of science is presented as "progress" in actuality (by tradi-

tional humanists), or *in posse* (by Marxist historians). Even Max Scheler, whose description of science as *Herrschaftswissen*--"knowledge for the sake of domination"--influenced Heidegger and initiated the questioning of scientific neutrality, still saw the rise of modernity as a radical shift away from the relatively benign religious values of the Middle Ages. This stance has introduced itself into the environmental debate in the form of arguments for Christian stewardship, whose advocates (followers of Teilhard de Chardin, Wendell Berry and others) claim to be the answer to the scientific reductionism destroying the environment. (And perhaps it is--what it is not, however, is an answer to the general power relations of civilization, which have other ways of destroying the environment besides science: the sublime Christian metaphysics of medieval feudalism, for example.) To "explain" the declining fortunes of ethical religions in the last three centuries, there is no need to delve into the teleologies of "progress," the dialectics of history, or the rising tide of nihilism. One has merely to look at the surface of events to see the operation of power finding more complete methods of domination. We might reverse Scheler and characterize civilization as *wissenproduzierende Herrschaft*--domination that produces knowledge--whether scientific or religious is hardly decisive.

Ethical religions may be able to resist some forms of power accumulation threatening the environment, especially those associated with the modern myths that displaced the central role of religion. But ethical religions can never offer resistance to civilization as a whole, because they count among its many children--more beautiful, perhaps than the dreary scientific offspring that disinherited them, but kindred nonetheless.

(This does not in any way suggest that people who practice ethical religions do not fit into the radical environmental movement. A Deep Ecology perspective can arise from many sources, as Devall and Sessions explain in their book, *Deep Ecology*. Ultimately, resistance is a personal commitment related to action, not ideology.)

Civilization uses religion. But what is the reason for its antagonism toward primalism? Simply put, organized societies have never succeeded in using primal religions to accumulate power. In fact, as Drengson noted in the article cited earlier, the elements of primalism that live on in polytheistic paganism and ethical religions act as loci of resistance within those religions, emerging from time to time, for example, in the writings of Meister Eckhardt and St. Francis.

We can distinguish a number of general characteristics of primalism that retard its assimilation into hierarchical societies. Again, within the broad range of primal religions, there are probably exceptions to those characteristics; but on the whole they apply.

1. **The world is alive.** Primalism generally conceives of a world spirit, under numerous names, which is the origin of all things and to which all things return. This not only includes humans and animals, but stones, waterfalls, mountains, and so forth. The world, therefore, is a community; the same force that animates people brings forth the cherry tree, the scorpion, and the cliff. This corresponds with our *factual* knowledge of biology, geology, and cosmology,--a knowledge which unfortunately has been assimilated into the valuational framework of civilization's myths. In the observation of Nature, there is not one scrap of evidence that humankind is any more unique or important or "creative" than lichen (unless of course one defines

these concepts tendentiously). This view of the world is unserviceable to civilization's need to totalized values.

2. **Time is cyclical.** In particular, the world does not have a *telos*, a universal goal governing everything that happens (or at least such a *telos* is not intelligible to us). Even if, as is often the case, primal myths include a catastrophic end to the world, this is usually represented as a prelude to a reconstituted Earth, beginning the cycle again. (This kind of myth bears a striking similarity to the Big Bang/Closed Universe theory, which has received so much scientific attention recently.) Primalism, then, does not supply a universal principle that organized society can use as an alibi for its projects.

3. **This life is more important than the next.** The field of comparative religion traditionally views primalism as "undeveloped" because its mythic narratives give only the vaguest portrayals of the afterlife. This misses the point: primal peoples usually are not very interested in life after death. This life is sufficiently full to hold their attention. Elaborate concepts of the afterlife seem to be the product of societies under the influence of groups whose concentrated power and abstracted, specialized way of life generate speculation about their souls' ultimate fate, as part of their obsessive desire to transcend Nature. The Egyptian aristocracy is a case in point, with its ludicrous monuments to death.

These aspects of primalism render it indigestible to organized power. But more importantly, primalism avoids the kind of totalization of the world which civilization requires. Value in primal religions (e.g. as presented in the *Havamal*, an Old Norse shamanistic text) does not pretend to be universal truth that should envelop every individual at all times. Killing causes strife, but sometimes it is necessary. Stealing is bad, but some people deserve to be plundered. Adultery usually causes problems, but it will not consign anyone to hell. In other words, the values of primal peoples usually present themselves only as observations of what often happens to men and women trying to get along in this contingent world, not as metaphysical injunctions. This is, no doubt, one of the reasons primal peoples never felt the urge to proselytize as those of ethical religions do.

4. Finally: **The structure of primalism is non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian.** Religious institutions either do not exist or are limited in authority. They are rarely involved in regulating behavior. Shamans, witch doctors, priestesses, and sibyls are invested with a certain amount of power, but generally it is negative and discontinuous, repressing rather than producing certain activities. These religious figures are not leaders in the sense of possessing and enforcing a continuous regime of power over the community. Even in their roles as "wise-men," these figures hold only discontinuous power, for their knowledge comes into play only in certain unusual circumstances, such as famine or plague. In contrast, the wise-man or guru or master of the ethical religions totally envelops those who seek his knowledge. It is another example of organized power, as the incredible behavior it generates (asceticism, self-mutilation, abstinence) should suggest.

Primalism has demonstrated its historical incompatibility with the forms of power that have plundered Earth. Does it offer, however, a viable opposition to civilization's present form: Technological Culture? Obviously, a primalism reconstructed from scholarly knowledge is not the same as the primalism that inhabited the natural world. But perhaps a future primalism can assist in the reinhabitation of that world.

First, on the large scale, the experience of space, time, and value in primalism is as valid today as it was for our ancestors. If Deep Ecology is to articulate a new vision of the world--one that is not another totalization easily converted into an alibi for power--then the fact that civilization rejected primalism suggests that its worldview, its localized ethics is a good place to look for a model. Ideas like the Gaia hypothesis and bioregionalism seem to be steps in that direction.

Second, primalism also seems to resist Technological Culture on the personal level. The practice of primal rituals is subversive. This is suggested negatively by the hostile response it elicits from privileged speakers of hierarchical power, such as ministers and scientists. And positively, primal rituals screen out the "techniques of the self" (to use Foucault's phrase) with which Technological Culture envelops us--psycho-therapy, improvement of productivity, consumerism. Rituals have no "purpose," if we mean this in a technological, economic sense. But in their attentiveness to natural cycles, to biological space, to localized values (the rising of the sun over *this* place, the birth of *this* child, the coming of *this* spring), they nullify the regime of totalized experience.

One must be careful, of course, in offering answers to the environmental crisis rather than action, insofar as such answers can help fuel the totalization of the world that civilization uses to keep intact the "circuitry" of power--among institutions, fields of knowledge, and techniques of the self--responsible for 10,000 years of environmental abuse: manifested as agricultural states, feudalism, capitalism, socialism; as medical science, humanism, "social ecology." If by resisting civilization's power relations, intellectually and physically, we can short out its circuitry, we will need no answers. As an open form, useful in exposing civilization's alibis and undermining the techniques of the self which Technological Culture encourages, primalism has the potential to assist radical environmentalism in forging this ethics of resistance.

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# ECOSOPHY, POPULATION, AND FREE NATURE

Arne Naess

## I. Introduction

The title of this paper is not self-explanatory. I shall briefly indicate what I am driving at. (1) Ecology, as a science of inter-relations of all beings, has since the 1960's gained dramatically in significance for practically every question humans raise about their future. The bulk of scientific data is overwhelming. We recognize that a main problem in the 1990's will be the wise use of data and the mobilization of political and individual will to support wisdom of interaction with all beings, in a word, we shall need **ecosophy** as much as we need ecology. By an **ecosophy** I mean a total view inspired in part, at least, by fundamental ecological insights.

(2) I shall start by describing some views of **ecosophy** that I expect many will feel at home with. I will then apply them to a major subject of practical reflection today, that of ways to stabilize, and even, in the long run, to reduce the total human population of the Earth.

(3) One of the strongest arguments in favor of population reduction in the long run concerns the urgent need to stop the shrinking of wilderness areas. In Europe, except the European part of the Soviet Union, there is very little left of large areas worthy of the name of wilderness, but in Europe we talk about areas of free Nature and the desirability of protecting them. One of the goals is to secure viable populations of big carnivores, even in areas with scattered human population. After all, it is not the complete absence of humans in wilderness that is decisive, but the absence of interactions of certain kinds. In short, the term free Nature is not meant to be a substitute for wilderness, but a term that embraces similar complaints and similar hopes concerning the richness and diversity of life on Earth.

So much about the title!

## II. Total-Views and Their Articulation as Systems

In environmental conflicts some people are more able to influence decisions in environmental affairs than others. There is a philosophical justification for a much firmer stand than is usually taken by so-called experts whose views are influential, but of course rarely decisive. Wise people show in action that they are fairly well integrated persons, as opposed to some body who acts as a mere functionary, for instance, as a mere expert.

Humans are sometimes called bundles of contradictions. And, certainly, we often surrender to impulses that seem to be incon-

sistent with our value priorities or assumptions about social or other realities.

Nevertheless, as persons, we at least implicitly presume that we have certain consistent value-priorities. Most of these form conclusions from premises which are in part factual hypotheses or assumptions, in part valuations

The term "priorities of value" may mislead because it does not point to the vast number of hypotheses that a person presupposes, when announcing the value priorities.

The term "philosophy" may mislead because it points mainly to the fundamental and near fundamental norms and hypotheses. But in an **ecosophy** the decisions in particular situations are decisive.

The term "total" view has to some extent the same weakness as "philosophy." It may, however, be declared that by totality is both suggested fundamentalness and practice.

What practical importance does the total-view concept have in environmental conflicts?

My experience is that insofar as the conflicts are colored by debate and throwing bullets of information against each other, those who combine factual arguments with value priority arguments and fundamental principles are likely to win--at least in the long run.

A philosophy of wilderness is inevitably part of a completely general philosophy. Philo-sofia is love of wisdom, and wisdom must show up in wise action as implementation of wise decisions. Knowledge is not enough for any wise decision, it is not only a knowledgeable decision. Decisions, if they are to be wise, must take **everything relevant** into account and this includes not only facts but basic rules or norms. Because knowledge of what will be the immediate, not to mention remote, consequences of an action is limited, the decision will in general be made on the basis of uncertain premises of very different kinds. Therefore, in principle the premises of any decision whatsoever are **all embracing**. Let us take the question of wolf/human relationships as an example.

In wolf/human philosophy we neglect astronomy and astrology, implicitly asserting that the first is irrelevant, and the second perhaps a more complicated verdict. We cannot neglect politics, and politics is from a cognitive (knowledge and acquaintance-related) point of view based on political philosophy.

Standard cost/benefit analysis cannot do the whole job. Factual analysis cannot do the whole job. Factual analysis presupposes norms in order to arrive at proposals for decision. Benefit

for which ethically acceptable goals? For which long-range global goals? Adequate wolf policies require consideration of ultimate or fundamental norms, and their application to local and global strategies of action. The question is: Cost/benefit in relation to which ultimate norms?

It is clearly the responsibility of the highly educated (in the limited sense of university education) to articulate the norms and hypotheses beyond standard cost/benefit analysis. But, unfortunately, experts and researchers with such education have a tendency to avoid norms and values at a fundamental level. One of their ways of justifying this is to proclaim that technology and science is based only on facts and hypotheses, not norms, not on sentences with unavoidable, irreducible exclamation marks. This claim of "objectivity" is an illusion well worth inspecting in some detail.

Given that chains of derivation cannot be infinite, they must start with definite statements. One can justify A with B and C, but at a definite time, in a definite situation, one has to stop somewhere, taking certain norms as ultimate or fundamental. In methodology there are rules of procedure, in logic there are rules of inference. They can be derived from fundamental rules. A rule as a kind of norm is properly expressed with an exclamation point, not a period. That a rule, if followed, has certain consequences may be expressed by a sentence ending with a period, but a sentence saying that the rule or the consequence is good should properly end with an exclamation point. Most rules assumed to be fundamental seem to be absolutely obvious, but sometimes derived rules seem more intuitively obvious, for instance in arithmetic. In normative systems, the fundamental norms which constitute kinds of rules normally appear to be obviously valid to those accepting the system. One may say that they tend to be accepted through intuition, like the basic rules of logical inference. In the philosophy of mathematics and metamathematics, controversies exist about competing systems (constructivist, logicist, formalist, intuitionist, etc.) in which intuitive acceptance plays an inescapable role.

The importance of the above stems from the widespread, unsupportable view that if one is a scientist one starts and ends with factual statements, sentences ending with a period. But one never gets going without methodological and logical rules, and some of them cannot be validated within one's system. Unvalidated rules are necessary to validate a claim that such and such is a fact. To show that a fundamental rule (R<sub>1</sub>) is useful, successful, or valid, one must include these properties in the conclusion one infers from premises, say observation sentences. But how, from those premises, does one reach a conclusion? Only by rules. So one either uses R<sub>1</sub>, going in circles, or a new fundamental rule, R<sub>2</sub>, whereby the same trouble as to how to "prove" that rule is encountered.

The appreciation of the necessity of taking some rules as fundamental in scientific work makes it easier to accept that we have to do the same in handling normative systems. Here the most important rules are of an ethical character. However, that should not make one call them "subjective" or "expressions of feeling." There is less agreement, it seems, and certainly less clear disagreement on fundamental ethical views than on methodology and logic. The statistics of agreement or disagreement do not, however, make them subjective or objective in any strict sense.

For simplicity of discussion we need some kind of model to facilitate the complex pattern of argument. We propose an

"ecosophic" model in the form of a "normative system." A normative system is not a psychological system showing how we actually think and how people or institutions actually arrive at decisions. It is not a causal or genetic system. It shows logical priority: a premise is logically prior to a conclusion. In it fundamental value priorities form ultimate premises. The term is used for a set of norms and hypotheses arranged to show what is derived from what--rarely by strict logical inference, but derived in a loose way from premises.

In a normative system three levels may be distinguished. One contains ultimate or fundamental norms and hypotheses. A second consists of intermediate norms derived from the first level sentences, plus further hypotheses. A third level contains sentences expressing concrete decisions in specific situations. The situations are described by factual assertions, or hypotheses.

A model of such a system is not constructed once and for all, but articulated as we continue to debate the merits and demerits of alternative decisions, using what we already have articulated and adding what is needed to reach new decisions.

In the illustrations the use of exclamation points and full stop signs needs elucidation.

The sentence "Less Taxes" may function to express an announcement that less taxes are desirable, or that there should be less taxes, or that it is ethically or morally mandatory or obligatory that there should be less taxes. All these "mood variables" are included in my use of the exclamation point, or, with the term from modal logic, the !-operator. There is also a more fundamental use covered. For example, if God is supposed to have said "There be something!" when so far there has been nothing. The announcement is not announced anybody. The full stop, on the other hand expresses some kind of a factual assertion or a description (not prescription).

By introducing a distinction between the exclamation point and a full stop at a fundamental level I unhappily may strengthen the assumption that the distinction expresses a kind of absolute, a distinction that is in principle and eternally unavoidable. This is not my opinion, but at this time and in our climate of debate, I think the distinction may serve clarification.

Let us imagine there is a systematization of a total-view called "ecosophy T." Actually there are only tiny fragments worked out. One of its norms has been thus formulated: "Ecological policies should not imperil the continuation of evolution, including speciation on Earth!" A hypothesis concerning the same topic says that the peril is yearly increasing. Against such an hypothesis some people have recently claimed that continued speciation is increasingly secured by several, mutually "isolated Nature reserves, or, essentially, through an archipelago of reserves." They then argue that, "speciation will occur in such a system because of the isolation between the reserves." A prominent researcher in this field, Michael Soule, has this to say:

The flaw in this reasoning is that reserves are much smaller than real big islands, and that it is likely that a species will go extinct in most of the reserves long before the evolution of significant differences. Extinction appears to be very common in small reserves or on small islands. Of course, if the reserves are managed intensively, it is possible to rescue such species before they go extinct, but the very tools that we use for rescuing species, namely introducing individuals from one population into another (artificial gene flow, transfers), will prevent speciation from occurring. Ironically, the medicine

that prevents extinction also prevents speciation.<sup>1</sup>

The expansion of human habitats have not always reduced richness and diversity of life. When after the ice-age humans went up the Norwegian coast, they eventually burnt some forests completely. A new kind of landscape developed. It is amusing to note that today there is an increasing opinion which favors protecting some of these treeless areas as part of Nature conservation. Incidentally, the effort to build up forest along the coast does not result in a rich ecosystem because of standardization. Only a few profitable kinds of wood are planted. So a future destruction of this man-made wood would be a plus, perhaps.

I mention this in order to emphasize the complexity of the processes since the last ice age, and to counteract the opinion that very radical views on environmental questions need be hostile to humans.

An example of how seemingly narrow policy questions involve immense or indefinitely wide areas of norms and hypotheses can easily be given. Consider the policies (in Norway) concerning protection of wolves in areas with scattered, small sheep owners.

Some relevant norms to this context are:

**A1** Severe suffering endured by a living being X is of no less negative value than severe suffering endured by a living being Y, whatever the species or population of X and Y!

The term "living being" is ambiguous. It includes the human species, but, until further notice, we are to think here mostly of nonhumans. The norm A1 is highly relevant to discussing the severe pain of mauled sheep and other domestic animals attacked but not killed by wolves.

A second example of a norm in Ecosophy T:

**A2** Humans have an obligation not to place their domestic animals in a situation where there is a significant risk of severe suffering!

A more precise formulation will take into account the difference between a sheep owner in a very rich community and one in a region of general human hunger and deprivation. Obviously there cannot in such cases exist any obligation of the kind intended in norm A2.

Who is responsible for the suffering of sheep in a mixed community including wolves? Laws against killing wolves may be thought to make the lawmaker to some extent responsible, therefore obliging him to help protect the sheep by, for instance, financing shepherds.

Scarcely covered by the norm A1 is the general decrease of life quality of a group or herd of sheep that has suffered after a wolf attack. This decrease is, in part, reflected in a decrease of economic value of the affected sheep on the market. But that is another matter. As for a definition of "life quality," we limit ourselves to referring to recent literature on the subject.

It is argued by people who support conservation of wildlife that, given that there are more than two million sheep in Norway but only a handful of wolves, the violent death or suffering of a sheep should not be taken as seriously as that of a wolf. A very doubtful norm. We would rather accept the following:

**A5** The negative value of the severe suffering of an animal belonging to a large population has no less negative value than that of an animal of a small population!

This norm seems to go against the grain. It is human to treat animals more coldly, when there are masses of them. In years when lemmings are abundant, people hiking with their dog are more likely to let it "have fun" with lemmings, than in years when lemmings are interesting as a rarity. We also reject the view that the sheep is a less developed, "dumb," animal compared to the superbly intelligent and beautiful wolf, and that it therefore deserves less consideration. Beauty or intelligence is completely irrelevant in application of the norm. There are considerable differences in identification among people. Some tend, we are glad to say, to identify positively with the underdog or ugly duckling; others identify with the winner, the clever, the intelligent, the beautiful. This influences our attitudes toward spectacular predators. Some, not all, take into account the suffering itself and our responsibility.

**A6** If a traditional sheep area, by decree from central authorities, is to be considered an area where wolves are protected, it is up to the central authorities to arrange for fair and swift compensation for losses, and/or financial support for hiring shepherds!

The last norm is, of course, highly controversial. It is, however, in accordance with main trends in "green" politics and with principles of a welfare society of the Scandinavian non-socialist, social democratic type. Norway has ratified the great Bern treaty of protection of wild animals, including wolves, but the rules are usually evaded by clauses concerning "special circumstances."

In short, wolf protection policies involve every question related to interaction between humans and animals; furthermore, they involve every major question of general ethics, politics, cultural anthropology, and, of course, economics. Questions of war, peace, and independence are involved because there may be a choice to be made considering the possibility that Norway may be occupied in the future, like it was during the second world war. Cultural resistance towards the occupier is highly dependent upon self-reliance, and local self-reliance is easier with a lot of sheep than with a few wolves.

### III. Long Range Population Reduction

Two issues are of special relevance here: (1) The reduction of wilderness, or more generally free Nature, through wanton destruction with no long range considerations; (2) The reduction of wilderness through seemingly inescapable expansion of human habitats through mere multiplication of the number of humans.

In what follows, it is the latter process I shall consider. The basic population question for a philosophy of life may be thus formulated: What is the relation between the magnitude of the human population and the outlook for maximum satisfaction of human basic needs and aspirations? Are 10 billion, 1 billion, or 100 million seemingly a good number?

There are other ways of forming the question. Population considerations center around (1) bulk, (2) distribution, (3) per capita interference with Nature. Ecosophy demands that the present state of affairs be studied in relation to these dimensions, and the present state be confronted with the basic norms and hypotheses of a total-view.

As to basic goals in individual human life, there are three different families of ideas. We may name them using the terms

pleasure, happiness, and perfection. Our problem may then be formulated as follows: What bulk, distribution and interference is required for maximum attainment of the supreme human goals of pleasure, happiness, or perfection?

As to collective basic goals, I postulate richness and deep diversity of cultures. There should be space for independent developments in various non-predictable directions.

I am going to conclude from a considerable amount of hypotheses and norms, that the maximum satisfaction of values is more likely with a **smaller bulk** than at present, as well as a different distribution, and also a considerably smaller amount of interference per capita than in contemporary industrial countries. That is, reduction of human population is required for the sake of humans, abstracting from considerations of other living beings.

This conclusion #1 is important mainly because many people think that population reduction is only meaningful if done for the sake of non-humans, or because of lamentable necessity, the limitations of the planet.

We take for granted that we all agree that an increase of the bulk of the population, a wider, indiscriminate distribution, and a necessary increase of interference per capita in poor countries, will further reduce the already rapidly dwindling areas of free Nature. It is a welcome and important result of our reflection, that maximum satisfaction of human needs and aspirations does not require billions of individuals.

The welcomeness and importance of this conclusion should be duly experienced, before taking the results of factual investigations covering the efforts to stabilize population: Namely, the following vaguely formulated considerations result.

If your personal motivation for preaching population reduction is mainly concern for non-human life forms, for continued evolution, and for the planet, is it not dishonest to concentrate on reduction for the sake of humans themselves?

It is not dishonest to use even 90% of argumentation in favor of humans, provided one honestly believes in what one says. Working through argumentation for a great, long-range goal, those arguments which carry most weight must be used for what they are worth.

Perhaps one may add that the adoption of arguments to the particular group one happens to talk to, may be overdone. If a politician campaigning in 10 districts too clearly selects different arguments for his party program in each district, adapting himself too closely to local needs and desires, the charge of dishonesty may be well founded. But in our case, the program of reduction of human population, this danger is remote.

Is procreation to be considered a human right? It should, I think, but then the term must be understood to imply only one child. Perhaps one might insist that the set of human rights is not eternal, but changes, and that as long as there is a deep discrepancy between (1) the procreation habits and many human rights, e.g., to nourishment, home, space and (2) between the procreation habits and the limits to growth, there cannot be a human right to procreation. If this position is taken, it seems that we would have to announce that procreation is a **privilege**, like driving a car. This is, I think at the moment, to go too far. But in practice, in determining social obligations, such as paying taxes, procreancy will be treated as a privilege. The welfare state gets the difficult problem of seeing to it that the opportunity of procreation, like that of education, does not depend heavily on level of income.

How many women in the third world want no more children than they have? The World Fertility Survey reported that circa 1980 about half of all women interviewed said they wanted no more. Nevertheless, men may insist that they should have more, or they simply make the women pregnant as part of their life style and sign of virility. Anyhow, if the men do not demand more children, absence of contraceptives may cause millions of children to appear.<sup>2</sup>

"If women determined freely how many children to produce, and they were able and willing to take the necessary precaution, the Earth might by now only have 1 or 2 thousand million people." But that sentence is a striking counter-factual conditional.

Suppose we could interview the women about their fundamental beliefs and values, and suppose we could explain how we view the ecological situation on Earth, and suppose they believed us, what would their attitude be? Would it strengthen their inclination to have no more children? I suppose so.

An interesting counter-argument: Millions of Islamic and Christian women take each child to be a gift of God. This is a kind of fundamental belief within a total-view. So, if fundamentals should be taken seriously, as I argue, would not this strengthen the women's inclination to have more children? I suppose so. From a global point of view I tend to think that I would recommend a second intermediate view, this time, by supporters of the deep ecological movement, who are themselves of Islamic or Christian faith. One way of argumentation: God's potential gifts are innumerable, and we are in principle incapable at all times and under all circumstances of enjoying them all. To win a war, for instance. We cannot all the time win a war. So, there cannot be a norm all the time to get pregnant, in order to get a particular kind of gift.

Enough of these quasi-rational considerations!

The efforts of population planning of the rich countries may be seen from two angles: (1) The kinds of efforts involved, and (2) the magnitude of each. If we use the yardstick of war-time efforts, the magnitude expected is that of "adequate to solve the problem." Let us consider efforts to support family planning in poor countries as an example.

From recent Chinese data we may accept that at least 100 full-time personnel per million inhabitants are required "for organizing the communication and education program" concerning family planning.<sup>3</sup> There are very few organizers operating outside of China in poor countries. At least 100,000 more are needed. This is not a very big number considering the immense task, and it is a task for rich countries to help establish such a personnel force. As many as possible of the organizers should have some training in argumentation from the basis of total-views. In that way, the fundamental goals of human existence would more clearly partake in fixing the concrete goals of the family plans.

Sincere respect for a deeply different culture from one's own does not imply active support of those traits of it which, from the point of view of one's own culture, contradict central norms or hypotheses. More difficult is the problem of how to behave in relation to those in opposition to their own culture, who embrace a norm we find central, but which is considered invalid in the foreign culture. Can we permit ourselves actively to support the opposition? What are the consequences of the support, is it perhaps counter-productive?

For example, it can be argued that the fertility of the Masai is obviously not sustainable. We think we see undesirable consequences for their children. They will face significantly worse living conditions and be incapable of continuing their nomadic traditions: It will be of no avail to change pastures because other pastures are already occupied and overgrazed. There will be no space for more nomads. One the contrary, it would be better to embrace a one-child plan for the next years. It is on this basis, as an effort to support their culture, that it is permissible to support the Masai who already agree, and to help them to increase their influence.

Population stabilization and eventual reduction is a necessary condition for the richness and diversity of human cultures. This seems obvious enough.

#### IV. Experts Unavoidably Support Ecologically Nonsensical Decisions

People who are considered to have political power often complain that their range of possible decisions is considerably overrated. It is not realized how many pressures, in how many directions, are severally limiting the presumed power. Experts or others who are asked to furnish facts and give advice to these so-called powerful people are usually thought of as people telling exactly what they think would be the best decision (in the long run). This is a dangerous illusion.

I am not here claiming that policy makers are daily making nonsensical decisions, but I regret that they do not, at least once a year, admit through the mass media that the decisions are nonsensical from a long-range, global or fundamental point of view.

Given the power distribution within a policy making group, the question facing the individual participant is how to choose between a set of decisions of unequal degree of nonsensicalness. The "rationality" of the choice is therefore a rather narrow one. The ecologically concerned decision maker supports the least nonsensical, not the most nonsensical decision, within the avoidable set of choices.

An example: The conservative government of a small but very rich industrial country published in 1982 a program of economic policies for the next 20 years, that is from 1982 to 2005, taking into account the somewhat dark outlook for the rest of the 1980's. The government announced the necessity of reducing public expenditures; but what about private consumption? Essentially only three choices seemed to be at hand: to decree to say nothing about private consumption, or say unreservedly that it could increase, or to say some cautious words about increase. The only ecologically responsible decision was to announce a decrease in private consumption, but that was impossible for a conservative government at the time. The decision chosen was to say that the rate of increase of private consumption should be dampened. This is like a leader of an expedition who sees that they must not go further towards the north, but must turn south, saying that they should go less far toward the north.

The main ecosophical norm implied is that of universalizability: You should not recommend a level of consumption that you cannot seriously desire others could have. Evidently, others, including people in non-industrial countries, cannot reach the level of consumption, including the level of sheer waste, of the small rich country, without catastrophic consequences for all. Consider, for instance, the use of paper. There would

be no trees left, and substitutes would require unwise energy consumption.

The important point is that the majority of people directly influencing environmentally central decisions are clear about the long range non-sense of the policies they support, but their set of politically and socially realistic alternatives is more limited than suspected by the public.

Experts have a double responsibility to the public: (1) to announce a verdict concerning given alternatives, and (2) to announce their own personal verdict independently of the given alternatives.

What I hope is that the undesirably cramped position of the policy makers should be clarified from time to time by direct announcements in the mass-media. This would help people who are further away from the decision making process to support ecologically sound but today unpopular policies.

My hypothesis may of course be doubted, that the majority of decision makers are today clear about the unecological character of their decisions. Statistics are meager, but the studies I have made suggest that the hypothesis is tenable applied to Europe.

There are means today to get the decision makers to tell about the pressures which determine the character of their decisions, and thus to enlighten the public in a valuable way.

#### The Brundtland Report

Decision makers, and their advisers in environmental conflicts, are people caught in a web of constraints such that they cannot talk **in public** as integrated persons. They must talk as functionaries, in the sense of entities which function within a narrow framework determined by non-personal circumstances. To speak in private, spontaneously as a more or less honest individual, integrated person is hazardous: What if friends publish what they say privately!

In talking about excess human population, decision makers must take care not to act merely as functionaries. What have they said about population, as members of the World Commission on Environment and Development? The 22 commissioners were officially supposed to express their own opinions. It is important, however, to remind oneself of the heavy constraints and their resulting status as functionaries. Therefore, what the 130,000-word final report says about the central population problems is next to nothing. A careful review of the report published in *Earthwatch* suggests that this is due to the personal "religious beliefs of one or two" of the commissioners.<sup>4</sup> From my admittedly limited experience I suspect that the beliefs in question are those that are officially required, and not personal beliefs. If the commissioners were both able and willing to speak their own minds, and base what they say on their total view as integrated persons, the report would, I suspect, have a revolutionary content. But speaking as functionaries, the report, as the review notes, "says little besides declaring that people are a resource which requires health care, education and, occasionally and where appropriate, contraceptives."

An international social science project is needed through which we can get to know more about the total-view of the 22 commissioners, and of the thousands of others who influence environmental policies, in relation to views characteristic of the deep ecological movement, for instance, the views formulated in my ecosophy T. The people interviewed should be assured that not a word of their answers would be published without their per-

mission. I suspect, however, that many important answers would be approved for publication. The interviewer must be known and respected by those interviewed, otherwise the interviewed cannot be expected to make a real effort to cooperate with the interviewer.

### V. Necessity of Western Self-Criticism

When we who are privileged members of the rich European countries extol the desirability of population reduction, it is fair to start with what should be done here, before telling anything about what should be done in the third world. Otherwise, we have a new type of neocolonialism. We in Europe have destroyed most of the free Nature that was once here. But we accomplished the worst a long time ago. A few people were ashamed about what was happening. Plato complained: "Compared to how the forests were previously, what is now left is like the skeletons left of a sick man."

Because the major devastations have been accomplished before our century through the great leap of population, let us say, from 1650, contemporary people in Europe mostly feel innocent and preach population moderation outside Europe. Clearly, the third aspect of the population situation, interference per capita, is especially relevant in Europe.

Let me mention a TV program in this connection, because such programs may in the future be one of the most important factors in saving wilderness. The program, excellently focussing on a big beast with impressive horns, looking very fierce, namely the European bison, really exposed a unique sequence of wilderness devastation. You saw through a sequence of maps of Europe after the ice-age how a large primordial forest, from Moscow to Brittany, from Norway to the Mediterranean, gradually was transformed by humans until very little was left. How little? A hundred miles in diameter? No. 8 X 5 Km! You can walk across it in an hour. The patch of primordial wood is within a somewhat bigger area, the Bialowieza-forest on the border of Poland and the Soviet Union. This forest was preserved because Czar Nicolas, General Goring, and other potentates like to hunt there. Poachers and poor people stealing wood were simply shot, I hope not on a regular basis.

The sequence of maps showing how Europeans have treated European Nature should be followed up by a hundred other devices, by which Europeans could be instructed about the reality of their life on this planet. And, of course, with a minimum of moralizing. Just furnishing them with an alternative view should be the main aim. By advertising the program using galloping fierce bison bulls, a large audience is certain to show up. Thanks to the TV monopoly in Norway, a great part of the nation saw the program mentioned above, and would watch subsequent programs of the same character.

My main point is that the fight for preservation of great wilderness and large areas of free Nature depends in part upon how we approach the elites in non-industrial countries. We can only say: "We have destroyed practically everything where we live, and sometimes for trivial or frivolous reasons. You will be wiser, and we ask the favor of helping you to implement your wise policies!"

I am not saying that we should have preserved the primordial forest as a whole, but looking back we can imagine a development such that, let us say, one third was preserved as wilderness,

one third as free Nature with mixed communities, which leaves one third for cities, paved roads, etc. This would probably be enough, and I guess most people with influence in matters of the environment would agree. But of course, it is a wild fantasy, which is, incidentally, an important kind of wilderness!

Statistics talk about population doubling time in years. For some European states this time is not much less than thousands of years. On one occasion 6930 years was calculated as the Swedish population doubling time. Approaching stabilization, the number increases toward infinity. This has a self-congratulating effect among people who are otherwise concerned about the population explosion. But the statistics can, and also ought to be used to point out that a population reduction time of 10% or even 50% is also infinite. For those few countries which now, at least occasionally, have negative growth, the population reduction time is very long indeed. This must be emphasized because mass-media in those countries immediately talk about the country being "depopulated." If, according to statistics, there would be 100 years to go before there is 10% or even a 50% reduction, this should not frighten anybody.

In trying to sharpen the awareness of the past and present effects of the enormous industrialized population, the insistence on long range decrease may be of some help. The question will inevitably be formed: "Why decrease?" and the shortest answer may be "For their own sake and for the sake of others." Next is a discussion of fundamental goals of mankind, and the richness and diversity of life on an extremely rare sort of planet--the Earth.

Critics tend to avoid fundamentals and talk about less basic consequences during the process of reduction: E.g., "too many pensioners compared to workers! We cannot pay them as much as we do now!" This is an important point, and it deserves both practical and theoretical answers. In practice, at least in welfare states, the reduction in numbers of young non-workers (age 0-20 years old) reduces many parts of public budgets, and with amounts perhaps comparable to the larger cost of keeping pensioners comfortable. It also releases a great number of people who serve the young for work in other sectors. But most important are, of course, the fundamental goals that in the long run may be greatly served through reduction.

Which are the major causes of the Environmental Crisis? Like most important questions, this one is vague and ambiguous. Do we mean the deep causes, or only immediate determiners? One of the comparatively clear answers was given by G. Tyler Miller in his textbook from 1972.<sup>5</sup> In short: Over-population, "urban implosion," over-consumption, pollution, blind faith in hard technology, "the bigger is always better syndrome, oversimplification of ecosystems, and short-range perspectives."

### VI. Outlook for the Deep Ecological Movement

Ecosophies, viewed from one angle, are conceptualizations of what is going on in "the deep ecological movement." This term has come to denote an international movement insisting that deep changes of the most diverse kinds are necessary and desirable in view of what ecology has taught us. It is not enough to repair and reform, that is too shallow. The international deep ecology movement may conveniently be said to have started in the early

1960's. One may even say that the work of Rachel Carson and her book *Silent Spring* triggered it. On the philosophical side vigorous thinking centering on environmental ethics has provided the movement with outstanding contributions. But perhaps even more philosophically basic are the underlying perceptions and conceptualizations of reality characteristic of the movement. Powerful slogans attest to a reestablished way to understand reality: "Man not apart," "Small is beautiful," "Let the river live"...Reestablished? Of course, if we use the findings of social anthropology, we understand, for instance, that the "new" human/Nature conceptions adapted to ecological realities are very old. The outlook for the deep ecology movement in the 1990's is bright, for reasons which are in part rather unpleasant to contemplate. Here are some of them.

1. It is now generally recognized that most of the agriculture and husbandry on Earth is unsustainable (in the long run). A decisive change which saves what is left of good soils necessitates deep restructuring of economics, and novel policies with global as well as local perspectives.

2. It is also generally recognized that land use and urban developments must adapt to a world with a thousand million more humans, and that there is no place for them to "till the land," and that in consequence urbanization must go on. The aim to make urban life more satisfying obviously requires deep changes in thinking and value-priorities.

3. It is now clearer, and will soon be more generally recognized, that national parks are not big enough to let evolution of

life forms on Earth continue fairly unhindered. To strangle evolution and perhaps also to let millions of life forms disappear because of destruction of habitats will soon be seen as too big a crime to let happen. But to establish room for continued evolution obviously requires a radical change of policies.

In short, the view that we may just make some changes here and there, but otherwise proclaim "business as usual" will presumably satisfy fewer policy making people. But, of course, whether deep changes will actually be carried out is another matter. What I expect is a continuous strengthening of the deep ecology movement.

#### Notes

1. Quotation from a letter written Oct. 12, 1984.
2. Lester Brown, et al., *The State of the World 1985*, New York: Norton, 1985, p. 215.
3. See, e.g., IPPF Fact Sheet, Sept. 1984.
4. Lloyd Timberlake, "Our Common Future, and How to Find It," *Earthwatch*, No. 27, 1987, p. 2.
5. G. Tyler Miller, *Replenish The Earth: A Primer in Human Ecology*, Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1972, p. 158.

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## THE ELEMENTS OF AN EDUCATION TOWARDS A DEEPER ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Barry King

The need for mass education is questionable in this age when we are so overwhelmed with information already. The threat of global destruction, crumbling ecosystems, and tremendous emotional instability alarms us that something has gone awry within our modern culture. The cry goes out from so many of us for more education. But what good is an educational system that teaches us to be distant from the Nature that is within and surrounding us? What are the elements of an education that can empower individuals with their own feelings and actions? And how can we connect learning with respect for life and values that foster ecological wisdom for our planet? What we need is no more of our present educational system, but instead an educational lifestyle that guides us back to our roots in the planet. This paper will focus on several elements that have been important to my education over the past four years.

Natural lifeways and some traditional societies have three features in common: consensus, community, and experiential learning. Combining these three elements can create a supportive environment where a group of people can learn to help each other's efforts to find balance with Nature. My experience with consensus community and experiential education is derived from three years of living and travelling with the National

Audubon Society Expedition Institute (the Expedition). The Expedition provides college graduate and undergraduate students with the opportunity to travel across America as members of a consensus-run community. Students learn from each other, the people they meet, and the places they come in contact with.

Imagine, if you can, 24 people, most of whom are new to each other, meeting one day for the purpose of studying environmental education within the context of a consensus community. This group of people has a bus, a budget, and the better part of North America as resources for learning. Between the graduates and the undergraduates, twenty to thirty courses are represented. The challenge before this group is to create an academic and experiential learning process that will meet everyone's needs and still leave time for the many personal or group discussions that can arise. Creating a consensus community is not easy. Conversations can take hours before all individuals have had a chance to speak honestly and feel comfortable with the decision being made. But the time is well worth it, when we are able to move free from discomfort, anxiety, and authority. These feelings, many of which I encountered in the traditional classroom, are replaced by feelings of self worth, excitement to learn, and empowerment.

The notion of consensus is foreign to us in our democratic society where the majority rules despite how the minority feels. So what is consensus, and what does it mean to be a member of a consensus-run community? Natural communities, such as the desert I am sitting in, provide an example. Within a desert ecosystem, or community, all organisms fulfill a role, working together towards the common goal of survival. Each individual may have different needs and may seek to live differently from others, but all organisms realize that their health is directly related to the health of the community as a whole. Recognizing the unanimity of Nature often requires a paradigm shift. Recognizing the benefits of consensus to human communities requires a parallel shift. Darwin told us that only the fittest survive, setting the tone for a competitive view of Nature. What I experience sitting here in the wilderness hardly raises my blood pressure the way that my more competitive cultural feelings do. Could Gaia exist within a predominantly competitive paradigm? Examine for yourself the effects that this kind of outlook has had on the human community around you.

In an Expedition community consensus can serve to create an environment where everyone has a chance to affect the decision-making process. I am presently sitting in the wilderness of southern Utah largely due to the efforts we have made towards consensus. Everyone was a part of the decision to be here. All arrangements were agreed upon. At some point or another we were all aware of everything, from how many bottles of fuel we would bring, to how far we would hike in a given day. In essence, we have no leaders, no authorities who dictate what our education will consist of, outside of the flexible guidelines given to us by our accrediting institution. Consensus requires that each individual take the time to think about their goals and how they want to achieve them within the context of community. Emphasis is placed more on the process than on the outcome; a healthy process usually leads to a healthy outcome.

Separating consensus from community is almost impossible. The definition of consensus, like community, revolves around two or more people. Perhaps lack of community is one root of discontent on local and global levels. As the planet teaches us, nothing happens in Nature outside the context of community. Where the ties of human community (and the human community with Nature) have been broken, we find imbalance and catastrophe. In our travels this became apparent to us as we visited different places, especially along Chesapeake Bay.

The Expedition community is intentional. People come to the program with some notion that they will be a part of a community. The feeling and form of that community is a daily and year-long act of creativity. Largely influenced by consensus and experiential learning, the community grows like a person or any other organism. Awkward first steps become fluid motion and maturing action, as challenges are met. Living with the same group of people for months at a time, sharing all the intimacies of life lived out of backpack and bus, helps us to feel rooted. We all come to understand each other. We see each other in many shades of life and learn to support each other. Differences of opinion exist and with work can be respected, and serve to broaden our perspectives. The surrounding desert tells me that diversity provides strength and stability. Another lesson from Mother Earth on world peace? Understanding the diversity in an Expedition community takes work, patience, and honest communication, which is easier to write about than to achieve.

Loving support, warm hugs, and exciting experiences are the rewards. Consensus community life brings us all one step closer to understanding natural communities.

Finally, consensus and community are put together in the context of experiential learning. Our definitions of community are derived from and altered by the people we meet and the places we visit. The wilderness of southern Utah can become an incredible classroom. After twelve days of backpacking here I am acutely aware of much more life than books can describe. Rain has been falling off and on, sometimes in torrents, for the last ten days. I have never seen anything quite like it in the desert. Canyon creeks pulse with muddy water. Croaking frogs, water striders, whirligig beetles, and numerous other life forms rejoice. Everything is mating. Seeds sprout forth from red soil, soil so badly grazed that this community cannot regain its original balance within my lifetime. When the sun does peek through, red sandstone is reflected in the cloudy blanket above us. Ravens playfully dance above ancient Anasazi petroglyphs, as they ride in the wind along cathedral walls. Each morning the sun rises on the shoulder of the snow-covered peak which we have been sharing our lives with daily. Each night we get together to share feelings, ideas, and impressions, while the sun sets behind a mammoth plateau on the western horizon. After living here for twelve days I come to understand the geology, anthropology, and ecology of my surroundings. I also become aware of the impact of modern humans on the deserts and canyons. My unwillingness to leave reflects the impact this wilderness has had on me. Courses in philosophy, environmental psychology, geoscience and outdoor recreation come to life.

In their book *Deep Ecology: Living as If Nature Mattered*, Bill Devall and George Sessions point out that "The type of community most compatible, in our estimation, with engaging in the real work of cultivating ecological consciousness is found in the minority tradition." (p. 18) The minority tradition, such as can be seen in Native American cultures, emphasizes personal empowerment within interdependent communities. The authors contrast a list of elements of the dominant technological paradigm and the minority tradition. When I first read this I was struck by how much the Expedition communities I had been a part of aligned themselves with the characteristics of a minority tradition such as Devall and Sessions outlined. That was four years ago and *Deep Ecology* was then an unfamiliar term to me. At that time I was just becoming aware of my need for an education that would foster my sense of kinship with the planet. Since then I have travelled from Newfoundland to Californian, from Florida to Washington, learning to learn from the people and places I have met. My travels have been exciting and the elements of consensus, community, and experiential learning have provided a clearer path towards healthier relationships with myself, others, and the planet; all a part of creating a deeper ecological consciousness.

About the author: Barry P. Kling is pursuing a Masters with the Expedition with the hope of becoming involved with consensus educational communities in the future. When not at school he skips educational vegetarian sailing charters along the coast of Maine. Anyone interested in learning more about the Audubon Expedition Institute can write to: National Audubon Society Expedition Institute, Northeast Audubon Center, Sharon, Conn. 06069, (203) 364-0522.



## BOOK REVIEWS

**To Govern Evolution: Further Adventures of the Political Animal**, Walter Truett Anderson, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987. Reviewed by Bill Devall, Sociology, Humboldt State University.

In April, 1987, scientists released a genetically altered bacteria onto strawberry fields in Contra Costa, California. This was the first authorized field test in the United States of a genetically engineered organism. A few weeks later similar trials using ice-minus (the trade name of the genetically altered bacteria) were conducted on potato fields in Modoc County.

The night before the field tests of ice-minus in Contra Costa county, protesters pulled up several rows of strawberries in the test fields. The protesters issued a statement saying they opposed release of genetically altered organisms into the atmosphere and saw these field tests as another form of human hubris. Other protesters suggested that no field tests of genetically altered organisms be undertaken without extensive environmental impact assessment reports.

Scientists use several different words to refer to this new technology--recombinant DNA, cell fusion, genetic engineering and monoclonal antibodies. Biotechnology is the most simple term and will be used throughout this article. Biotechnology includes the awesome ability to create new forms of life.

Bioculture refers to all the relationships between humans and domesticated plants and animals as well as relationships with wild creatures. A bioculture includes attitudes, laws, land use habits, and technology used to alter plants and animals or their habitat.

Walter Truett Anderson in **To Govern Evolution** argues that the principle political problem of our era is how to redefine our bioculture. Anderson, a political scientist and author, asserts that "politics is about evolution. Governance is inextricably connected with the growing human responsibility for all the things the word 'evolution' implies: the survival and extinction of species, the changing ecology of the planet, the biological (and cultural) condition of the human species itself." (p. 1) Anderson claims that "...the driving force in evolution (today) is human intelligence. Species survive or perish because of what people do to them and to their environments." (p. 2)

We may wish that humans did not have responsibility for evolution on this planet, but we have already crossed the threshold. Science and technology have presented us with a new order of problems. "We will be required to come to terms with the reality of ever-growing human ability to intervene in nature...This wave of change will compel us to modify some of our most basic biological concepts (parenthood, for example) and will alter the conditions of life for all people everywhere." (p. 4)

Field tests of ice-minus, while dramatic illustration of biotechnology, are really only the next step in a long historical process, underway for many centuries, which is accelerating. Humans are rapidly changing the biosphere. "We do not inhabit the same kind of a biosphere that people of only a generation past inhabited, and we are not the same kind of biological beings that our parents were." (p. 5)

Anderson argues that while humans now are quite able to meddle in evolution, we have not developed adequate concepts of evolutionary governance. He calls for an evolutionary ethic, not just an environmental ethic. Issues of survival and extinction of species is already being legislated anyway. We now have the opportunity to define humanity in a new way and "...to bring new meaning into our private and political life."

"Once we see that there is no untouched nature, that the environments in which we live--not only our homes and gardens, but our continents--are human artifacts, we are in a position to awaken to the reality of that change." (p. 13) Whether we like it or not, humans are at the controls of evolution.

The development of agriculture and domesticated animals always involved transporting genetic information from one place to another. Our use of fire over thousands of years has greatly affected evolution. Humans have power over evolution but are fearful of this power. The recurring myth of Prometheus illustrates this fear that the gods will punish humans who use new biotechnology without approval of the gods.

Anderson explores not only domestication of plants and selective breeding of animals but also the turbulent history of eugenics, gene screening of human parents, use of frozen semen and frozen human embryos and other interventions in human reproduction which raise ethical, economic, legal and philosophical issues. Anderson calls for creation of a global system of governance, "some kind of managerial arrangement to curtail species extinction and genetic erosion, enable the human population to feed and house itself, permit development, and leave a few options open for future generations." (p. 239) The emerging bioculture may include elements from environmentalism and the women's movement, but may include values not yet recognized.

While humans have been intervening in evolution for thousands of years, we are now at the point of knowing that we intervene. Our era marks the end of innocence.

In the postmodern world, biopolitical events are taking place in opposite directions--restoration of ecosystems concurrent with ecosystem destruction. We have changed the scale of interactions from regional to global. There is an escalation of intentionality during this era, that is, more things are determined by conscious human choice. And there is increasing primacy of learning.

Each species, Anderson says, has its own econiche, its biological job description defined in terms of its relationship to other plants and animals. The human species is bound to other lifeforms, but is in a different category from them. Humans are in the center of the biosphere. "The perspective that I offer here is strongly and frankly anthropocentric. Yet I do not see any reason to believe that the human species was destined for this role; other species have their own forms of culture and symbolic communication and might quite likely have advanced to the pan-interactive econiche if *Homo sapiens* had not arrived there first." (p. 346)

Using psychologist Rollo May's theories of power, responsibility and denial, Anderson sees two extreme forms of

avoidance of responsibility for governing evolution. "One is a flight into irresponsible passivity, a caricature of innocence. (p. 322) He cites the extreme anthropocentrism of pro-life advocates as an example of the first type of avoidance and deep ecologists as an example of the second. He sees deep ecology as reflecting "...a profound bitterness and alienation; behind the claim to a superior form of biophilia lurks old-fashioned misanthropy." (p. 325)

Anderson does not explore the extensive philosophical literature on the deep, long-range ecology movement, nor does he explore the different conceptions of Nature--especially between those who see Nature as process and those who see Nature as a collection of potential commodities available for human use primarily. Anderson's account of deep ecology is a caricature.

Anderson takes a kind of new age, Teilhardian view of history without the spiritual overtones of Teilhard's theory of the evolving noosphere. Anderson does not attempt any fundamental critique of political or philosophical concepts.

Many supporters of deep ecology are bioconservatives. That is, they tend to favor preserving biological and ecological status quo, and allowing species to evolve in their own way. Biotechnologists, on the other hand, tend to believe that Nature can be improved by the works of humans.

Anderson is correct in saying that the question is not whether to introduce biotechnology. However, he does not go on to ask whether it can be done while respecting the intrinsic worth of ecosystems and their historical and evolutionary systems in a way which avoids unhappy social, cultural and political consequences? Can we introduce biotechnology while respecting non-anthropocentric values?

Biotechnology presents a great challenge to supporters of deep ecology. When Aldo Leopold called for an environmental ethic based on the "land community" which includes not only humans but animals and the soil itself, he had not heard of genetically altered soil organisms.

Can we include the products of biotechnology--new creatures, new lifeforms--into our circle of compassion? In the famous story of Frankenstein, the good doctor rejected his own creation.

On an even more practical level, animal liberationists are placed in a dilemma with genetically altered mammals. If these mammals were liberated from laboratories they might impact wild, native populations. If they remain in laboratories, they must be under human control.

A great deal of wisdom is needed to make these decisions.

When deep ecologists talk about the self-in-Self and when they say that "the world is our body," they recognize that now "our body" quite literally includes genetically altered organisms.

For many supporters of deep ecology, it is arrogant to assume that humans should be the business managers of evolution. Exploring human potential, for deep ecologists, means exploring our identification with other lifeforms, not seeking to dominate them. A modest but richly rewarding place in the cosmos is the ontological ideal sought by many supporters of deep ecology.

In political campaigns I suspect many supporters of deep ecology will continue to point to the dark side of biotechnology. They will seek to preserve tropical rain forests rather than create new species in the laboratory and will seek to slow down the biotechnology industry. They will criticize the anthropocentrism of promoters of biotechnology. They will favor biotechnology which serves the vital needs of humans, such as research on pos-

sible cures for AIDS, and oppose applying biotechnology to trivial human desires, such as ice-minus experiments which were motivated by the desire of some farmers in California to get their strawberry crop (a non vital human food) to market a few weeks earlier in the Spring.

**Models of Man: A Phenomenological Critique of Some Paradigms in the Human Sciences**, James J. Dagenais, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1972, 162pp. Reviewed by Francoise Dagenais, Oxford, Ohio.

This book is a prolegomenon to a new philosophical anthropology. If six of the seven chapters are devoted to critique, it is because present day prevailing philosophy of man, to which a "new" one needs to be compared, is not spelled out as such, but must be disengaged from the models of man offered by the human sciences. The ones which have become "mainline," which are known and taught today in Academia, derive from the taken for granted presupposition that the subject matter of science has to be observable and measurable facts. The trouble with this methodological decision is that, once human being had been studied as an object, scientists forgot that they have, legitimately, studied humans under one perspective and one only. They ended up with the illegitimate notion that man is "nothing but" that object, product of whatever forces their particular perspective illuminated. In so doing, they inscribed in their sciences the well known contradiction between their theories and their practices. The particular interest of these six chapters lies in the careful analysis the author makes of how it all came about. In view of the present day victory, at least in Academia, of the objectivist sciences of man, it helps to be reminded of (or to learn?) the fact that other avenues were open, from the very beginning in certain cases, and still are; to learn that debates, ambiguous figures, critiques and counterproposals, even cries of alarm, were present all along *inside* those sciences themselves. In fact, the author shows how little help philosophy brought to the effort at understanding human being, especially in North America. Yet the majority of the founders of what became scientism were philosophers and the basic presupposition is a philosophical one.

The case of psychology is the most striking. Its history is intricate and the narrowing down to behaviorism did not come at one swoop. Wundt, the grandfather of experimental psychology, still included consciousness in his study of human being. But more striking is the remark that the same year, 1874, in which Wundt published his seminal work, Brentano published his. And Brentano is the originator of the tradition we can trace all the way down to what we now know as Humanistic psychology, whose interest is in man the active subject (vs. man the object-product). The author regrets that Humanistic Psychology, for the most part, has forgotten this lineage, leaving unexplored a wealth of reflection and efforts which could have helped it establish a viable, recognized and fruitful paradigm. Space does not permit following the detailed and well documented history of the human sciences the writer has chosen to review. Each one exhibits the same struggle to come to grips with its complex subject matter, human being. The present state is, for some, unresolved contradictions, for others the victory of the reductionist view. But their history too harbors insights and even whole traditions which, if a dialogue were established rather than this one-sided victory, would permit the human sciences and philosophy to take

their rightful role in the age long effort of humans to understand themselves.

Dagenais' critique of objectivism helps us to understand his own stance which he clarifies in the last chapter. To be "objective," to consider the subject as an object, is already to have "a second look." It consists in "abstracting the objective face of reality which, in its full sense, is first of all and primarily encounter." Once the scientist has performed this operation he considers the object as simply given as he now sees it, i.e. separate, ignoring the fact that it reveals itself in the midst of an encounter. (For an intuitive understanding of what this "operation" entails I refer the reader to the paragraph "Cutting the vocal cords" in Neil Evernden's *The Natural Alien*). This observation, that positivist scientists, i.e. human beings who are scientists, are themselves the **originators** of the abstract (abstracted) reality they study, illuminates the basic contradiction of those human sciences which offer a model of man as the **product** of something else. The author's objection is not aimed at the fact that scientists, or even philosophers for that matter, "abstract" from the complex reality of their experience, but that they do so without notice, so to speak, without reflecting upon that human origin of their endeavor, and without taking it into account. We all are forced to abstract in order to study anything. We cannot look at anything, without looking at it from a certain angle. (Perhaps the fact that sight is the last sense to awake in infants should give us pause. And let us also remember that enlightenment suggests visual metaphor, whereas attunement is necessarily auditory and suggests sympathetic resonance.)

When sciences are in disarray, as human sciences are today, their most enlightened practitioners try to reformulate the fundamental principles of their discipline but, as scientists, they cannot discuss that perspectival principle itself. It is not amenable to scientific investigation. It requires reflection on the ultimate foundations of all knowledge, philosophical as well as scientific. For all of us this originating foundation is our complex, confused, global as well as changing experiencing, what the author refers to as our "pre-reflective, pre-philosophical, pre-scientific experiencing of being." Because of its method, i.e. reflection, philosophy, whether practiced by scientists, by philosophers, or by anybody, is best suited for returning again and again to the task of clarifying this "experiencing in the largest sense" and its changing modes. An important proviso though: Philosophy has to purge itself of its own dogmatism. Mechanistic and subjectivist bias both prevent philosophy from clarifying our experience of embodied spirit. Yet, neither science nor philosophy can be without presuppositions. Both have to work from a perspective. Philosophy's strength is that it can explicate its own presuppositions, once it recognizes that absolute beginnings are impossible. The perspective is thus an option, and it is the option of an attitude. In the case of the author, the attitude is phenomenological, i.e. one of methodologically and rigorously checked opening to "experiencing in the largest sense" of myself and the other in the world. The rest of the chapter explicates this option and articulates it. I can only refer the reader to it, while giving here a summary.

Dagenais finds his experiencing to be one of mutually transforming relationships, with himself, the others and the world. All relationships are both given and a task. For philosophy, reflection on humans and world is the most significant. The author asserts, as does the phenomenological movement in which he participates, "[there is a] grave error we commit in thinking that

the world is primordially an object" and "that the subject-object dichotomy is no more relevant on the cosmological level than it is on the psychological or epistemological level, and perhaps it is even less so." In other words, the world is primordially one pole of an ontologically unspeakable, mutually creative relationship. Or again: Relationship is the given. Our experience of having tried to ontologize the poles in their separateness, while they are only conceptually distinguishable as abstracted from their relationships, helps us recognize the validity of Dagenais' understanding in its other facet: **The relationship, while a given, is also a task.**

Human being has evolved in such a way (or has been created in such a way--whichever one professes) that in the course of our history the task of the relationships has been more and more in our own hands. Mutually creative relationship, without much conscious participation of humans, is what made us survive and be gradually transformed to the point where recognition of this "given and task" is, itself, a given and a task. We now know--but we can ignore--that we can try to sever the mutual relationship, we can "cut the vocal cords" and behave as lords and masters...only to find out that the relationship, being a given, does not disappear, but becomes a destructive one: Our poisoned world destroys us in pace with our destroying the world. We now know that it depends on us whether this primordially given, mutually creative, relationship becomes this conscious partnership of which marriage is the best symbol: To be given to each other to be held, respected and cherished and so be creative of one and other and of the future, to in Dagenais' words, "continue the story."

The author's model of man, thus, is one of a being whose humanity emerges through a process of mutually transforming relationships, which are both a given and a task. Relationships being given others and the world are inescapably present in the study of humans. Man is incomprehensible without his "others" and the world because he is not without the others and the world. Relationship being a task, man's ultimate freedom is whether or not to want to "continue the story." His more proximate freedom is to find and pursue the concrete conditions necessary to orient the relationships, according to his own ultimate choice, as exercised in a perpetually transformed reality. It is a qualified freedom. Limitations, pitfalls, errors and obstacles are many. The invaluable role of the human sciences is to describe the dynamics of those obstacles. Without their description basic understanding would be (and has often been) empty; however, without basic understanding, description would be (and has often been) meaningless.

Much more should be said. Every chapter would deserve to become a book in its own right, in view of the current disdain of history--which forgets that our history is our "story." Remarks should be made about the timeliness of this 1972 book. Otherwise, why bother to present a review of such an "old" book? Since the author explicitly presents his critique as phenomenological, reflection on his method would be in order. Two observations will have to suffice for now. One refers to the apparent contradiction between the author's disappointment at the poverty of philosophy's contribution to a viable model of man, and his reliance on philosophy to go on with the task now. Did something happen which could make philosophy a valuable partner in the search for a paradigm which was, in the last decades, left entirely to the human sciences? The author thinks so. After its centuries of arrogance, philosophy deserved its pur-

gatory. Thanks to one who lived that purgatory more dramatically and more creatively than most, Edmund Husserl, philosophy has been transformed, partly through its renewed relationship with science.

Philosophy no longer pretends to be the last arbiter from which science rightfully liberated itself and science should not dread it. In its phenomenological tradition, inaugurated by Husserl, there is something entirely new which makes both for its validity and for the difficulty of explaining, justifying and practicing it--in view of our long standing habits of thought. It also makes for its sinuous, halting development. Its radical novelty is this: Long ago when philosophy ceased to be the servant of theology, it became the servant of rationality; now philosophy as the "love of wisdom" accepts as its role to simply serve human experiencing, in the breadth and transformations of its knowing and acting. Its vocation is to use rigor and method in its continuous "making sense" of it, that is, without "cutting its vocal cords." Since science too is a human enterprise, grounded in human experiencing, its own vocation is the same, pursued in conjunction with philosophy, since one without the other is either empty or meaningless.

The last observation: It is not difficult to see that the author is on his way to a metaphysics of relationship. He writes that we need "a reflection which has a metaphysical intention but which proceeds with full respect for the structure of the phenomenon experienced and for the structure of the experience in which it is given." (p. 21, emphasis added.) Few people today would not shrug at the name of metaphysics (although there is also a revival of it). Yet moral appeals, be it for social justice, for environmental responsibility or whatever, will be preachy and not gather strength, as long as their correctly intuited worldview is not spelled out. A metaphysics of relationship, being a metaphysics of structure, requires the free play of imagination to articulate its everchanging concreteness. The transformations brought about by the manifold of relationships perpetually creates newness to which human being, in its qualified freedom, is constantly called to respond in thought and action. It is no surprise to find it said in this book that "we shall have to learn an ethics of imagination." (p. 121.) Dagenais' work is an imaginative response to the world in the domain of thought.

Finally: Of course when the testbench of thought shifts from Church authority, to rationality, to human experiencing, a host of new questions emerge about truth. And that is the focus of debate today.

#### Books and Magazines Briefly Noted

**Ecophilosophy: A Field Guide to the Literature**, Donald Edward Davis, R. & E. Miles, (P.O. Box 1916) San Pedro, Ca. 90733, 1988. (\$8.95) This is an extensively annotated bibliography of the growing literature in ecophilosophy. This is an excellent field guide that seasoned researchers and new-comers to ecophilosophy will find of invaluable help.

**Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology**, Bill Devall, Gibbs Smith Publishers, (P.O. Box 667) Layton, Utah 84041. (\$12.95) An outstanding exposition of the practical and theoretical union of deep ecology. The book has chapters on the basics of deep ecology, ecology of the self/Self, deep ecology poetry, life styles, politics, and dwelling in mixed communities.

It is very well written, clear, crisp and uncomplicated in style. A pleasure to read and a great synthesis of the central elements of deep ecology in practice.

**Beyond Environmental Crisis**, Alan R. Drengson, Peter Lang Publishers, New York, late 1988. A philosophical treatment of transformation of paradigm, perception and action related to the Age of Ecology and aimed at ecosophy. The book develops an exposition of what comparative, creative ecophilosophy involves as an art that leads to ecosophy. There is an extensive examination of the ecology of thought and perception, thought and judgement, the interrelationships between values, archetypes, paradigms and practical action. Both historical and contemporary critique are featured. A book of synthesis which provides a careful outline of the major elements of deep ecological philosophy.

**Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision**, Kirkpatrick Sale, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1987. (\$14.95) Sale's articles on ecophilosophy and bioregionalism have appeared in a wide variety of places. He is also author of **Human Scale** an excellent study of appropriate technology, appropriate government, and so on. **Dwellers in the Land** describes the bioregional philosophy in depth. Bioregionalism is a philosophy that seeks to create a world of communities based, not on arbitrary political boundaries, but on such ecological considerations as flora, fauna, land forms and watersheds. Sale argues for an ecocentric worldview, which will restore the harmony between humans and the Earth. He writes that bioregionalism is "not merely a new way of envisioning and enacting a very old American ideal, but also a crucial, and perhaps virtually the only possible means of arresting the impending ecological apocalypse."

**The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment**, Mark Sagoff, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1988. (\$29.95) This book has been praised by a number of people for its powerful demonstration of the inadequacies of cost-benefit analysis as currently applied to environmental issues. It focuses on social policy in relation to environment, pollution, the workplace, public safety and health. The author uses a multifaceted analysis which takes account of the range of values and issues that must be addressed to formulate sound policy.

**Green Thinker** is a British magazine focused on education and Green ideas. Mainly for teachers and curriculum developers, it is full of ideas and for actions for living Green and spreading its philosophy. The magazine is a networking centre for education in ecological concerns, energy studies, alternative technology and peace and development education. It also provides updates on Green teaching around the world. Four issues per year. Canadian Contact: Green Teacher, 95 Robert St., Toronto, Ont. M5S 2K5. Or: Green Teacher, Damian Randle (ed.), Liysawer 22 Heol Pentrerhedyn Machynlleth, Powys, Wales Sy20 8DN. Randle is writing a commissioned book, **Green Education**. In the spirit of Green thinking he is requesting input from friends. The central themes of the book will be: 1. What content would a Green education have?, and 2. What people, projects, schools, classrooms, and publications have Green educators found educa-

tional? He is keen to hear from you. Publication date is mid 89. Suggested and described by Bob Henderson.

**Borealis: The Magazine for Canadian Parks and Wilderness**, replaces **Park News** from which many of the articles in the focus on Parks, in the last issue of **The Trumpeter** were drawn. The magazine is being published by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, an organization devoted to the appreciation and preservation of Canadian parks and wilderness. **Borealis** features high quality photography and articles on various issues facing parks today, as well as other topics related to parks and wilderness. Basic subscription includes membership in the Society, \$23 Canadian. For subscriptions and sample issues write to Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Suite 1150, 160 Bloor St. East., Toronto, Ont., M4W 1B9.

Riley E. Dunlap published "Polls, Pollution, and Politics Revisited: Public Opinion on the Environment in the Reagan Era," in **Environment** 29, July/Aug. 1987, pp. 6-11, 32-37. This is a valuable article and the research it is based on is relevant to the various issues that are discussed in **The Trumpeter**. Dunlap's research shows that "Public opinion on environmental issues in

the 1980s reveals both good news and bad news for those concerned about environmental quality." The good news is that despite the Reagan administration's lack of enthusiasm for environmental protection, the electorate remains firmly convinced of the importance of protecting environmental quality. The bad news is that there appears no simple, easy way to translate this abiding concern into pro-environmental votes and political action.

#### Miscellany

Noted from the **Videa** newsletter: According to recently gathered data by the U.N., the developing World has: 75 % of the world's people, 17% of the world's GNP, 5% of the world's science and technology, 15% of world energy consumption, 30% of the world's food grains, 11% of world education spending, 18% of world export earnings, 8% of world industry, and 5% of world health expenditure. These are sobering figures, for consider, as Arne Naess suggests in his article in this issue, what the environmental impact of the total world population would be if all of the people's of the world had the same impact per capita as those in the rich nations.

## POETRY

### PAGAN

Walk gently.  
Walk in balance.  
Walk as if you know  
How sacred is this Earth.  
Walk in wonder and in silence  
For this is holy ground.  
Walk in reverence and awe  
For this is our beloved Earth.

Walk softly.  
Touch Earth.  
Gather strength.  
Walk as an army of children  
Shining in the sun  
For this is our Mother  
They have despoiled and raped.

Walk like a thousand trumpets  
Like soaring eagles  
Like the rising sun.  
Walk in passion and truth  
For we have come full circle.  
Child-mother.  
Weep if you must  
But gird yourself for battle  
For now we must bleed for her  
Our beloved Earth.

Mary de La Valette

### GAIA

Earth's green skin is velvet today  
With the mist on it  
Crushed velvet with her children's pawprints  
Some days it is silk  
With young winds rippling  
Earth who gave us birth  
Mother  
The first and the last and the greatest of mysteries  
I lie with my face in her skin  
Bonded  
Adoring  
Anguished

Mary de La Valette



## FROM PHOTO OF COURSING WATER

Shine slides through moist fronds  
revealing mud bottom.  
The bank diagonals  
in the rush  
while further on, surface  
glints like rhinestones,  
hurrying as though they'd turn  
to smoke.

I remember leaning over,  
walking the flats,  
peering down to see  
were clam necks stretched,  
would I get cut on a shell edge?

Soon sun that beat  
on my back became  
part of the dismissed landscape.  
I lived with the minnows  
in their darting medium,  
their cool gills brushing mine.

Angela Peckenpaugh

## IRIS

This flower known  
for heraldic emblems  
of nations and families  
is called a flag,  
though to make of it  
a Fleur de Lys is  
to stylize away  
its royal purple tongues.

Japanese screens of iris on gold  
brocade which depict  
the petals in progress,  
their dignity like that  
of women in kimonos,  
their heads bent beneath  
parasols in rain, capture  
more naturally this flower  
whose rainbow we associate with the eye.

Also called orris, the root  
was powdered by those who'd add it  
to a dried bouquet  
to fix it like the Egyptians  
who knew color and scent  
can outlive a century or two.

Iris, ghostly, crowd gutters'  
remembered rains from before  
we were born.  
Yellow flags fly  
where careful hands reconstructed  
war broken plans.  
Fixed in art of east and west,  
strong stems support  
courageous heads.

Angela Peckenpaugh

## IN VISION QUEST

I think of being  
in between daydream and absentmindedness,  
Then slip away  
into mystic vision.

Grandpa fire said  
"why would you want  
to fully recover in  
hospital protective shade  
when our father sun  
can verily sanctify  
your ailing brown body

S. J. Brito

## MOOD HARM

A Dream Bear  
told me that  
a bad mood is  
a fruitless trait  
for it is only fertile  
when cultivated in  
another person's presence.

S. J. Brito

## REALITY

Destiny only becomes  
reality when  
the eye of  
mind can see it.

S. J. Brito

## A GREEN VISION

All Human Beings.  
Other Forms of Life.  
In Peaceful Coexistence.  
With Security from Strife.

Protective of Wild Nature.  
Drawing Lightly from the Earth.  
Together We shall Heal this Planet.  
Greening-- then Rebirth.

Jacob Bohuniczky.

## THE ECO WISE-ICIANS

There once was an eco musician  
Who coexisted with an eco beautician  
They replanted trees  
And whistled the breeze  
Those verdant and deep eco wise-icians.

Allison Gentry

About the poets: **Mary de La Valette** is an ecopoet of the Neopagan Age. Her poetry has appeared in *Earth First! Journal*, *The Animal's Agenda*, and other alternative press

magazines. Her poetry is an offering to Gaia, and pays homage to the magnificence of the Earth and the animals. She is also founder of the Gaia Institute, a nonprofit, tax exempt organization which has produced over 50 TV programs called "Animal Rights," that has been aired on Public Access Channels, in over 400 locations, in 26 states.

**Angela Peckenpaugh** has written several series of poems about the civil war, the circle as symbol, charms, flower lore, love, women artists, and also has rewritten some Celtic lore and Western fairy tales. She has been active in environmental causes and feminism. She has also reviewed poetry anthologies with an anti-nuke theme for *Small Press Review*. She has given many poetry readings.

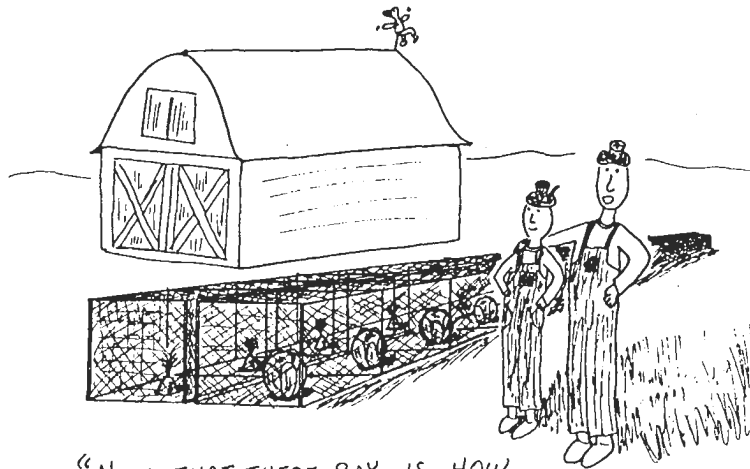
**Silvester J. Brito** is an associate professor of English at the University of Wyoming. He has written three collections of poetry and several articles about life in the West. He is author of a recent book of poetry, *Red Cedar Warrior*, Jelm Mountain Publications, P.O. Box 338, Laramie, Wyoming, 96120, 1987, (\$9.95), which is about the clash between white and Native cultures, as well as an appreciation of Native cultures.

**Jacob Bohuniczky** (also Jim Bohlen) is experimenting with living the green life at the Greenpeace Experimental Farm on Denman Island, B.C.

**Allison Gentry** lives and works on Sixty-One Ranch Ltd, in Cremona, Alberta. She is a graduate of the University of Victoria and has an abiding interest in ecophilosophy and ecological ranching.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CARTOONS

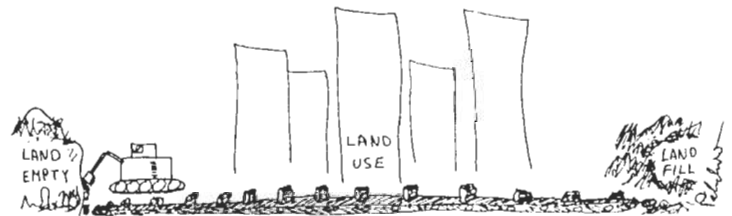
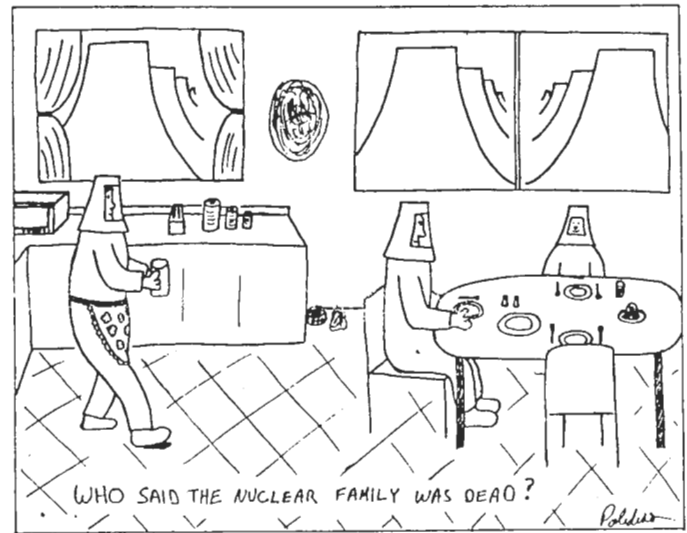
Rick Palidwor



"NOW THAT THERE BOY IS HOW  
YOU GET NOTHIN' BUT WHITE  
MEAT FROM YER PRAWDUCE."



PETRIFIED FOREST



About the cartoonist: **Rick Palidwor** has a B.A. in sociology/anthropology from Simon Fraser University and an M.A. in political science from York University. He presently produces Radio Stage, a radio drama program at CIUT, 89.5 FM, Toronto, which has featured several of his own plays as well as live

comedy performances. His first short story was recently published in The Heckler, Winter 1988, and his cartoons have appeared in several Canadian publications and in the United States.



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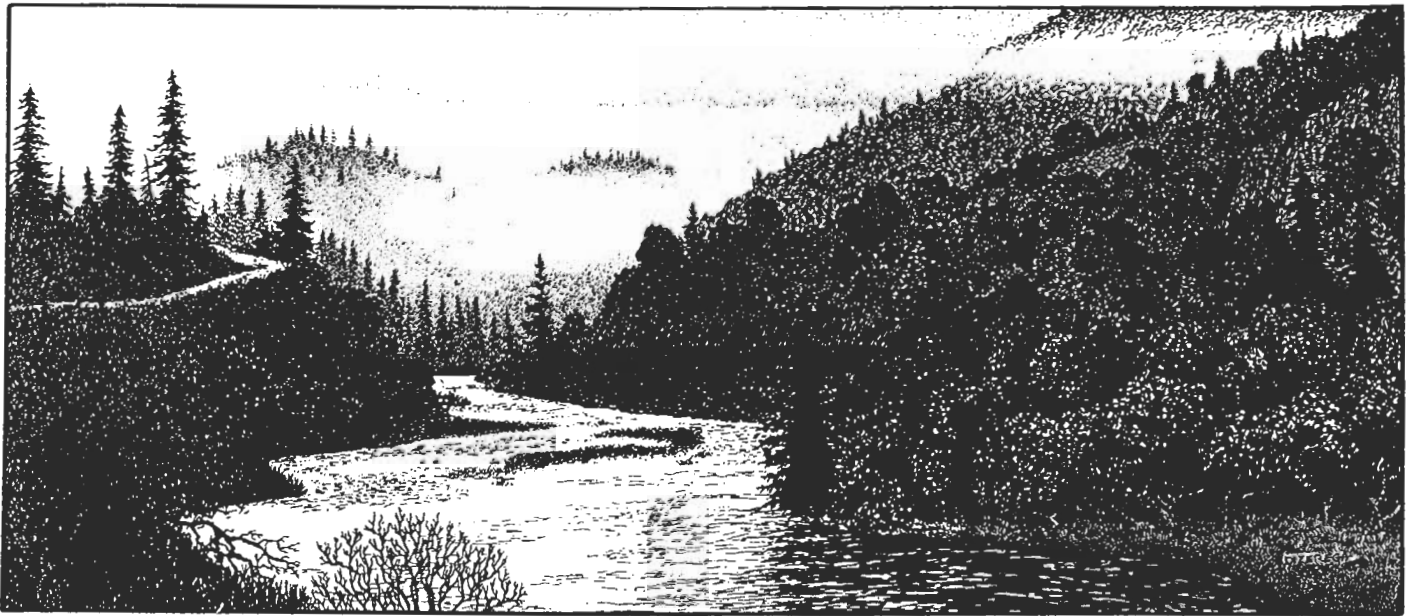
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