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ENVIRONMENTS, BOUNDARIES, GESTALTS AND WORLD-VIEWS

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

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## EDITORIAL: WHY ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IS NOT ENOUGH

Alan R. Drengson

Two major themes run through the environmental literature of the last three decades. One of these centers on solving problems by means of technical and technological change. Here is where most of the institutional effort has been made. Technical changes do not demand that we alter our basic values, but that we modify our procedures so that we behave in more efficient ways. The other theme centers around values. Here there is an examination of the ends and justifications for actions which affect the environment. Clustered around this center are debates about environmental ethics, whether or not natural entities have intrinsic worth, and how we should modify our actions by means of an environmental ethic--understood as a code. A dominant thrust of this effort is to extend human ethics to the biosphere, for, it is argued, human persons are moral agents dependent on a flourish-

ing biosphere. Thus, obligations to human persons, present and future, give rise to obligations to act so as not to cause the biosphere harm.

In this Fall issue we return to questions which arise out of the failures of the two approaches described above. There is a growing body of critique of modern Western culture which is addressed to its fundamental philosophy or worldview. It is claimed that its values, life styles, and practices are grounded on an underlying, taken-for-granted worldview, which influences all that we do, so that no matter how we technically modify institutions, and no matter how we restructure legal and moral decision making, the end results will be shaped by this worldview, since it conditions our perception and thought. As Buddhist writings have long made clear, actions reflect mind-

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sets; change those mind-sets and the actions, relationships, and quality of experiences are altered.

Western analysts have shown that the modern worldview is a product of historical, cultural, and economic forces, which continue to influence institutional and individual responses. To free ourselves to act in creative ways, so as to fashion new cultural forms consistent with a sustainable ecosphere, is possible only if we become aware and critical of the assumptions that shape the worldview that underlies modern consciousness. There are two main ways to uncover this hidden ground: One is by way of historical and philosophical analysis, the other is through cross-cultural perspectives. Both involve comparing worldviews and use of Socratic inquiry.

Some argue that it is not possible to compare worldviews, without being captive to a worldview which is not itself the subject of comparison. "Every metaphysics conceals a metaphysics," it has been said. In a sense this is true. But we do not have to take a rigid or fixed position. We can adopt an approach that is flexible, dynamic, open and growing in understanding. These describe Socratic inquiry, and so we continue the questioning process in an intense, ongoing way. Learning has no fixed limits, nor does the capacity for appreciating different habitable spaces. "Space" indicates not just a physical area, but also philosophical and spiritual expansiveness.

In this issue the subjects of worldview, basic perception, theory of knowledge, environment, boundaries and ethics are broached in various ways by the different authors. It is important to note that the weight of the argument presented is that environmental ethics and technical fixes are not enough. The environmental crisis shows that something is fundamentally wrong with the cultural adaptations characteristic of modern society. These shortcomings cannot be corrected merely by extending the value systems inherent in that society. Conceived in the usual way, environmental ethics as code is no more than a catalytic converter, but we need to redesign the cultural system. Its basic philosophi-

cal foundations must be changed to conform with ecological realities.

We need to fashion a new ecophilosophy consistent with the constraints of the Age of Ecology. This new philosophy must be free of domination hierarchies and concepts of power-over Nature. It must appreciate and respect diversity. It must celebrate the integrity of whole persons and have a spirit of community which includes other beings. Its Cosmology must embrace practices which will cultivate within us a wisdom born out of contact with our own wild nature in harmony with Wild Nature. Out of this cultivation will be generated an understanding which gives rise to actions of Earth-caring, not because of an externally imposed code, but from an internally realized respect and compassion for all beings.

Practices must be emphasized, for realizing ecosophy requires means for uniting all of our spiritual, intellectual, psychological and aesthetic powers. By so doing we can then nurture new, appropriate, social activities, which will give rise to sustainable patterns of community life-styles. Such activities as appropriate practices are a necessary part of the process of ecological realignment in Cosmology and worldview, for they can reach to depths that will open our Nature sensibilities. Simple but powerful spiritual disciplines such as zazen meditation, described herein by Hans Ringrose, are capable of initiating practical transformational processes. Insight born from these will give rise to new forms of art, play and work, which in turn will give rise to post modern, ecosophic cultures. Ecosophy, while transcultural, is capable of being realized through diverse yet specific cultural forms. This is why ecotopian vision can include both local and global contexts. Such vision will arise from ecosophy realized in specific places, but it will reach global awareness, since the ecosphere is a unified whole.



## WHAT ON EARTH IS ENVIRONMENT?

J. Stan Rowe

### Introduction

Each mode of knowing entrains its appropriate ethic. The inevitable result of the Western epistemology -- scientific, analytic and objective -- is an I-it ethic, sanctioning individuality and self-aggrandizement. The axis that joins mode-of-knowing to ethics is the base of a triangle whose third point, the ontological dimension, is deep belief as to what is real and important. Years ago, in what has too optimistically been called the Age of Reason, humanity appropriated as its locus this point of the triangle.

Ontology, ethics, and epistemology reinforce each other in the three-way relationship. If *Homo sapiens* is the central reality of the universe, and if human rights are the sole focus of ethical concern, then science/objectivism is the appropriate mode of knowing, for what else so effectively promotes human interests and power-over? But if things other than humans are of surpassing importance, as today's events lead us to suspect, then the old ethic and the old mode of knowing are also called into question.

Re-conceptions of reality, of what is centrally important, will open avenues of escape from tradition's species-centered ethic and the mode of knowing that serves it.

What humanity's leading vision and direction will be is today's portentous question. The history of where humankind has been in thought and action and how the race has arrived at the present is interesting but less important. The modern age suffers from a plethora of ideological theories as to where humanity has gone wrong, and from a lack of vision as to what humanity might become. The prestige of science polishes the rear-view mirror, encouraging the explanatory backward glance that searches out past causes. Ecosophy can do better, if it launches an imaginative quest for compelling futures.

### Wrong-way Vision

To see the world inside-out is to see it wrongly. Yet that is precisely the perspective that people have brought to the interpretation of their role on Earth. The new vision, from outside-in, more accurately portrays the ecological reality. It reveals people, society, human institutions, as dependent within the encompassing context of the planet.

How to express this dawning comprehension? New verbal symbols are needed. Old words, carriers of old concepts and thoughts, are unequal to the task. Among the misleading ones are those that refer to human circumstances, to surroundings, to

the milieu. Hence the significant question, What on Earth is environment?

In the following discussion, three points are stressed: (1) As conceptualized at present, "environment" is an obscurant, a grab-bag of elements so hazy in their relationships that attempts at structured thought about them face certain frustration. (2) Before it can be appreciated, studied, defended, and sympathetically cared for, "environment" must be conceptualized as the three-dimensional changing and evolving World Ecosphere: a substantial surrounding reality, a Nature that is palpable as well as mystical, creative, life-producing, and life-sustaining. (3) The sectoral ecosystems that the Ecosphere comprises must be conceived as structured, evolving, and life-encapsulating, and experienced as biophysical/ecological entities, supra-organismic volumes wherein people individually and communally live, move, and have their being as constituent parts of the planetary surface.

### Environment as the Level-of-Integration above the Individual

Of all the words commonly used in discussions of ecological integrity and deterioration, "environment" is surely the vaguest. That it stands for something important is attested by the many agencies and departments of government that busy themselves with managing its parts and by the army of environmentalists eager to defend them.

Yet beyond general statements pointing up, down, and around, to the air, soil, water, food, forests, wildlife, natural resources, wilderness, parks, cities, culture, society, and especially whatever impacts on community health, few agree about the exact referent of the word "environment."

The Australian Environment Protection Act<sup>1</sup> defines "environment" as "including all aspects of the surroundings of man whether affecting him as an individual or in his social groupings". A proprietary essence is distilled by the Canadian Study Group on Environmental Assessment Hearing Procedures<sup>2</sup> in identifying environment as "a collectively shared property." Ontario's Act Respecting Environmental Rights<sup>3</sup> gives a more detailed and representatively chaotic definition, taking environment to mean:

- (a) air, land or water,
- (b) plant and animal life, including people,
- (c) the social, economic and cultural conditions that influence

the life of people or a community,  
 (d) any building, structure, machine or other device or thing made by people,  
 (e) any solid, liquid, gas, odour, heat, sound, vibration or radiation resulting directly or indirectly from the activities of people, or  
 (f) any part or combination of the foregoing and the inter-relationships between any two or more of them, in or of Ontario.

Note that after brief mention of "air, land or (sic) water", the focus is determinedly on people in their cultural setting. This is typical of the strong bias toward socio-economic concerns that tends to dominate not only provincial but also federal Environmental Assessment and Review Processes, deftly substituting people problems for those of the broader sustaining milieu which accordingly suffers neglect.

The difficulty stems from perceptions that humanity is in control of the world, possessing it as property, successfully shaping it through the cultural tools of science and technology. This pre-ecological attitude, popularized particularly by Marxists, conceives "mere" Nature and "brute" Nature as little more than dross until assimilated purposefully by humans into rational-intentional forms. Nature is an erratic, disorderly bitch to be tamed, domesticated, and reformed in the service of humanity. Hence the deduction that the important environment is the built environment, along with its socio-economic culture.

The ecological revolution of the second half of the twentieth century demolished the fiction of human self-sufficiency. True, each individual draws mental and physical support from society and from the artifacts provided in the built environment, but the social context to be vital must also include the life-supporting processes of the world, of natural ecosystems.

Human culture may improve the efficiency of the extraction of materials and energy from Nature, but it is not itself the materials and energy. The community may provide meal tickets for human banqueting, but it is not itself the sustenance. The "socio-economic environment," considered of foremost importance, is in fact attached by the umbilical cord of technology to the planet's vital processes. It is dependent on them and functionless without them. The economy, supported by the Ecosphere and its sectoral ecosystems, will soon be dead unless **Sustainable Environment** attracts more attention than **Sustainable Development**.

Populations and communities and cultures are not integrated levels-of-organization because they omit, in concept and in fact, the matrices that confer substantiality. If those binding and supporting matrices of Nature are added, then populations, communities and cultures are transfigured into substantial ecological systems - into ecosystems.

In order to be consistent with the nature of the organisms that "environment" surrounds, the latter must be as tangible as they but at a more inclusive level-of-organization. This higher level is the definition of an ecosystem, i.e. all the biota within a given volume of World-space integrated with that World-space.

Common language obscures this logic by presenting populations, communities, societies -- all of which are non-volumetric taxonomic categories -- as if they were substantial entities equivalent in status both to volumetric organisms and to the three-dimensional ecosystems that encase organisms. They are not. The categories are as different as the abstract species *Homo sapiens* and an honest-to-God wise human. Further, a false tan-

gibility is frequently granted to the aura of ideas that holds human populations and communities together.

As long as environment is interpreted as referring primarily to people-associations and their institutions in the cultural milieu, as long as it is muddled up with the socio-economic system and such abstractions as Teilhard de Chardin's "noosphere," the tormented world will not get the attention it deserves and needs.

### Environment its own Pejorative

The etymology of "environment" offers no easy path out of the morass created by hazy concepts. The word is derived from the French 'virer,' to turn, whence 'in/viron' meaning to encircle. To encircle implies a centre, suggesting that other things of greater interest lie within. Thus, nebulous "environment" surrounds more sharply defined realities, such as organisms and people, from which at second hand it derives its status. A subtle sycophant, environment used in this way reflects back to people their preoccupation with themselves.

Environment's self-effacement is the source of its problems. If it is merely peripheral, consisting of the secondary odds and ends that surround people, then people are obviously more important than it. Hence, in the crunch when choices must be made, say between more industrial development to enrich and bedizen humanity versus less industrial development to protect and maintain the environment in beauty, health and permanency, the response is, "First things first, and let environment take its chances." After all, which is more important: people or tropical forests, farmers or fertile soils, jobs or environment?

Furthermore, by extension of the same logic, if society does not continually increase industrial development, forcing economic growth both domestically and internationally by fostering trade and consumption, then where will the wealth come from to clean up the environment? The message is clear: "Seek first a vibrant economy, for wealth will cure all ills." In the words of the Brundtland Commission, the key to progress is forceful economic growth.

Flying in the face of such logic are the worsening problems of chemical changes in the atmosphere, of water pollution, soil degradation, and food toxification as economic development intensified by population growth gathers speed world-wide. Today's problems suggest that whatever the people-encircling "environment" may be, its importance far exceeds that conveyed by the weak word. Behind the diffident verbal disguise lies a reality greater than "that which (merely) surrounds organisms." Indeed this latter definition, adequate for biologists narrowly fixated on biota, must be replaced by one more substantial; namely, the planetary ecological system in which organisms are encapsulated as parts.

Recognition of the global ecosystem as the objective thing behind environment's facade will mark a major conceptual advance for the human race.

### The Ecosphere is the Prime Reality

The immediate reality for people on Earth is the layered skin of the planet, no less miraculous for appearing commonplace and simple in composition. It consists of a thin gaseous stratum resting on liquid and solid strata, with organisms concentrated at the phase boundaries. The gaseous layer is the **atmosphere**, the liquid is the **hydrosphere**, the solid is the soil-and-sediment bear-

ing **lithosphere**. Within this three-way matrix, organisms and their surrounds are often said to comprise a communal fourth sphere, the **biosphere** -- a term apt to mislead by suggesting the preeminence of organisms.

Actually all four constituents -- air, water, earth, and organisms -- are essential parts of the one homeostatic whole, the **Ecosphere**: literally the **Home-sphere**. This word for the planetary ecosystem has the double advantage of reminding humanity where it is domiciled, while expressing no prejudice in favour of organisms, hence no denigration of earth, water and air as less than organisms, as merely their environment. It implies equal importance among all components, while also implying that everything existing within the **Ecosphere**, including the human race, is a product of it, a subdivision of it, a part of it, and therefore less important than it. The Whole Home is the prime reality; all else within is fragmentary, disarticulated, lost, and meaningless until conceived and experienced in the context of the **Ecosphere**.

The derivations of the words 'art' and 'religion' suggest that their functions are to seek ways of joining and binding together. Both human quests can fruitfully ponder the questions that ecological insight into the Ecosphere/people relationship poses for articulators and healers: **Who in the World are you? What on Earth are you doing?**

#### **Ecosystems: Sectors of the Ecosphere**

The Ecosphere shell that encases the planet is bubble-thin but four-dimensional in space and time. Like the air masses, soils, and oceans that are parts of it, the Ecosphere can be sectioned into particular ecosystems, by conceptually imposing boundaries. Each ecosystem is a layered "box" abstracted from the Ecosphere, its air layer overlying a soil and/or water layer and with organisms encapsulated at the solar-energized interface. Each ecosystem, like a larger version of the microcosm aquarium or terrarium, is a segment of the Ecosphere, a part possessing a higher order of organization and integration than its constituent air, water, sediments, and organisms.<sup>4</sup> Note that ecosystems are neither organisms nor super-organisms. Ecosystems are **Supra-organismic**; they are different from and more important than organisms.

The Ecosphere is realistically conceived as comprising a hierarchy of ecosystems, like boxes within boxes, defined at various scales -- zonal, regional and local -- for purposes of contemplation, study, and ministrations. These sectoral ecosystems -- simplistically named seas, continents, mountains, plains, deserts, forests, lakes, rivers, settled lands, farm fields, towns, according to prominent natural or cultural features -- possess an importance that far transcends their contents.

The myriad forms of evolved life are the historic fruits and contemporary components of these evolved volumes. Humanity came into being within regional ecosystems -- forest, savannah, grass-land, seashore -- as symbiotic parts of them, co-evolved with them, inseparable from them, along with a host of companion organisms of equal merit and importance.

Living things arose within the ecosystems that the Ecosphere comprises. Thus the truth: Life is a phenomenon of the Ecosphere. Life is not something possessed by organisms, except in a limited and incomplete sense. From this a corollary: "Ecosystems have organisms" is a more discerning idea than the conventional "Organisms have environments."

#### **The Heavenly View**

Another Copernican revolution began when the electrifying moon-shots of the world came back from outer space, for they provided visual proof of a supra-organismic reality -- a sun-circling cloud-swathed blue-and-green globe in whose structure, processes, and functions people participate, along with a host of other life forms.

The outside view, the heavenly view, cast humanity in an ecological perspective that could not be ignored. In the beginning was the World. In and from it, by some generative miracle, dependent people emanated.

Consider how this vision could have enlightened knowledge, philosophy, science, art, had it been granted four hundred years ago! Suppose people had been given the heavenly view to see the Earth whole before, immersed in it and feeling around like the blind men with the elephant, they had built up their fabled ontology, deciding that this fragment and that fragment, this piece and that piece was separate, autonomous, real.

With such transcendent insight at the time of Galileo, the geniuses of the race could hardly have failed to recognize the Ecosphere as the Unity, the Whole, the reality to evoke wonder and valuation above all else.

After the impact of that recognition, the arts would surely have taken a truer path, at least to the extent of diluting the humanistic narcissism that today is killing the world. Science too, the servant of humanity's questionable quest for power, might have escaped its narrow stultifying focus on human welfare and its naive faith in coercion of Nature as The Way.

Seeing the world whole, the race's thinkers might have brought their reductionist analytic skills to the task of better understanding the evolutionary processes in the history of the Ecosphere, viewing with amazement its contemporary functional unity, identifying the major components -- atmosphere, ocean, continental platforms, plant and animal assemblages -- and anatomizing these in turn, but **always aware that they were perceiving parts of a magnificent Whole**.

Eventually, by dividing and subdividing, the savants would have come down to themselves, to humankind, one of the Ecosphere's interesting species, hundreds of millions of protoplasmic "cells" tumbling about the surface of the planet like curious leukocytes, a self-conscious constituent gifted with glimmerings and premonitions of the part/whole relationship, the matter/mind relationship, the mind/spirit relationship, a part apparently intended to be the conscience of the world and its caretaker.

But this is not human history. It has not yet happened. Humanity's thinkers, submerged in the Ecosphere, were unaware of the surrounding Whole. Inside it, they could not comprehend their medium. They did not perceive that things other than their kind might have important functions, purposes and roles in the context of the larger unsensed reality.

So they interpreted as separate entities all the light-reflecting objects perceived, starting with themselves as most important and working outward to other things with properties most like themselves: animals and plants. Latest in the scheme of importance came the peripheral odds and ends of air and climate, soils and sediments, salt water and fresh water, surface and subsurface rocks and minerals. When the utilitarian aspects of such parts were recognized they were called "raw materials" and "resources;" when their life-enhancing properties drew suffi-

cient attention they were dignified as "environment". In the 1980s they are deemed worthy of protection -- "by forceful economic growth" in the words of the Brundtland Report.

The view from the outside came 400 years too late. By the time it arrived scientists had already accepted that the planet and the universe outside it is a dead machine, a conglomeration of little balls made up of little force fields. Disciplines budding off from physics developed their own purblind fields of materialistic expertise, their own autonomous objects of interest that soon were set in cement; their practitioners assured of certain certainties as to the nature of reality and that which merited study.

Dazzled by the popularity and power of the natural sciences, the social sciences and humanities followed suit, accepting the ontology of disarticulation and its matching epistemology of objectivism. Universities and governments were departmentalized to manage the fragmented world.

So it is that the truthful vision recently gained is confounded by a tradition foreign to it, written out in millions of books and treatises which assume as axiomatic that the bits and pieces of the Ecosphere are free-standing entities whose God-given purpose is to service the species that has arrogated for itself the specific epithet sapient. "The proper study of Mankind is Man." "The Earth is our Heritage." "Resources were put here to be used." Such ideas, conventionally believed to be wise, are nonsense.

### Thinking the World to Pieces

Glimmerings of ecological comprehension suggest that the fragments studied in physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, theology, and the other disciplines are indeed parts, that evolutionarily and functionally what have been named atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and all the associated protoplasmic bundles that "biosphere" comprises have no separate reality except as wrong ideas implanted by a crude culture in infantile heads. Humanity has used its consciousness to think the world to pieces.

How difficult it is to comprehend that the only unity with which people are in close touch is the Ecosphere, one of whose properties is the phenomenon called life. Life is not a property of complex protein molecules arranged in double helixes, nor of the ordered mixtures of substances that constitute protoplasm. **Life is a property of the skin of the planet and of the ecological systems that the skin comprises.**

One-eyed biology, lacking depth perception, has misled by conceiving a world divided into the animate and the inanimate, the organic and the inorganic, the biotic and the abiotic, the living and the dead. The divisions are not only wrong, they are mischievous for they devalue essential parts of the Ecosphere. What would qualify as animate, organic, biotic and alive without beneficent sunlight, water, soil, and air? These components are as vital, as animated, as important, as the organisms whose life-giving sustenance they are.

### Synthesis

The implications of the idea that the whole globe is an ecological entity -- the Ecosphere -- of which people as individuals and as communal groups in their built environments are parts, remains to be assimilated. This is today's primary task.

A beginning is to perceive humanity as one kind of dependent deep air animal, living at the bottom of the atmosphere in a confined solarium, despoiling the renewable means of its sustenance, crying "more growth, more growth," injecting unnatural resources from underground into the life-space, roiling up the sediments, rendering the surroundings murky, denaturing the paradise that produced it, and all in the name of human welfare.

People exist within and as parts of the Ecosphere that over eons produced them, nourished them, sustained them, regenerated them, and will continue so to do as long as its healthy functioning is unimpaired.

People stand in the same relationship to the Ecosphere as the fetus to the woman; the welfare of both are interdependent but the priority of importance clearly rests with the mother, with the larger surrounding and nourishing system.

Re-conceiving vague "environment" as something real and substantial, as the enveloping four-dimensional Ecosphere, gives new meaning to environmental protection. It confers intrinsic values not only on all organisms but equally on air, soil, water, and on the **unity** of these. It casts two-dimensional land-area in the perspective of three dimensional ecosystems that interact locally, regionally, and globally, providing insights to the intrinsic worth of the planet's surface.

Most importantly, the concept of Ecosphere as the prime reality can begin the cure of the disease of homocentrism by turning attention outward, ecocentrically. It lifts the human imagination above the slough of despond that is the outcome and heritage of philosophies and religions selfishly turned in on the human species, myopically fixated on nothing greater than individuals, societies, communities, cultures. It provides a new standard against which human ideas, moralities, and activities can be evaluated. Do they sustain the natural systems and processes of the World that themselves sustain all life? It offers a choice: Is humanity to be the conscience of the planet or its despoiler, its cosmetician or its cancer?

No longer can the one and only question be, Is this particular technology, science, art, culture, development, good for humanity? A more momentous question takes precedence, Is it good for the Ecosphere? This in the future must be the ethical test of public policy and of individual intent.

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# ON ECOREGIONAL BOUNDARIES

David McCloskey

## I

While climbing recently in the Pasayten wilderness in north central Washington, we spotted something so out of place that it stopped us in our tracks. Standing on a peak on the U.S.-Canadian border on the solstice--that border between spring and summer--we gazed at the strange sight of a narrow, cleared line running straight up and down eight thousand foot peaks. On the visible summits stood boundary markers, and on the sheer slopes and valley floors a twenty-foot wide swath cut through the forest, straight-lined like a rifle shot. Turning toward one another we exclaimed, "You mean they mow the border?" Why should two nations at peace, we wondered, feel it necessary to inscribe the 49th parallel in the heart of a wilderness? Such a literal imagination--a pure metaphor of domination, a Cartesian blueprint grid--imposing its own imperial vision on sacred landscapes. We pondered the herculean efforts required to clear-cut such steep and hazardous slopes, and the use of herbicides to keep the vista open. Why, in the days of satellites which can pinpoint location down to a foot, is it necessary to maintain this cleared boundary line?

Upon writing to the International Boundary Commission, I learned that old treaties between the two countries mandate a clear, line-of-sight vista along the 5,526 mile border, with over 8000 numbered monuments and reference points. In order to mark legal jurisdiction over their respective territories, the U.S. and Canada not only clear-cut the longest unguarded border in the world, but also poison the ground itself!

This is the kind of arbitrary political "line on a map" that bioregionalists abhor. Whether it be the 49th parallel or other myriad jurisdictional boundaries, the natural integrities of the land are severed, the wilderness desecrated. Surely the winds aloft and the fires in the earth below, as well as trees, birds, salmon, and native peoples do not acknowledge such arbitrary boundary lines as significant. Far too often such lines on maps bear little relation to the life that passes over, under, around, and through them.

Now, borders and boundaries in general tend to have a bad name among some people. The critique of boundaries rests on two negative aspects: one, their arbitrariness, and two, their exclusiveness, which leads to conflict. The first is an ecological critique of political borders, and the second an ethical critique of all borders; though the two are often linked or confused, it is important to distinguish between them.

It should be noted, however, even granting the main thrust of the first argument, that not all boundaries are arbitrary political fictions. Where I live, for instance, county boundaries often seem to make rudimentary sense as they generally follow watershed lines north and south, while their eastern border follows the crest of the Cascade mountain range. In some areas of America, as well as Europe, Asia, and in other traditional culture areas, boundaries may also reflect geographic and cultural realities.

## II

Are all boundaries necessarily bad? The critique of boundaries often spills over from ecology and politics into ethics. What sense does it make, ask moral critics, to replace political boundaries with ecoregional ones, if the old nemeses of conflict and war are not diminished? Perhaps it's boundaries themselves which are the problem.

The liberal critique of boundaries suggests that they are inherently negative not only because they are often arbitrary, and stand in the way of efficient management of global resources, but also because they imply a kind of jealous exclusivity which inevitably leads to conflict. Driven by power games and armed to the teeth, political entities draw this border here and that boundary there and constantly fight over them, drawing us all into the maelstrom. It's a Hobbesian "war of each against all," a nightmare we live out daily. The Berlin wall stands out as a demonic parody of all such barriers. The sad litany of hatred, war, and even potential nuclear holocaust are laid at the door of political boundaries. Wouldn't a world without borders be closer to the ideal? Isn't it time we grow up and leave tribalism and the past behind? Shouldn't we be "One World Family?" Isn't global consciousness and world citizenship infinitely preferable to old petty parochialisms and warring "brotherhoods of blood and soil?" How else, besides leaving borders behind as the source of conflict, can we win through to a world without war?

The discussion of ecoregional boundaries has to contend, therefore, with a far-reaching indictment of the nature of boundaries that equates all of them with political borders, and then suggests that they are all bad. There seems to be a tacit agenda among such globalists to sweep away all kinds of boundaries as inherently negative and regressive. But such a sweeping condemnation leads to a basic confusion we need to sort out before we can hope to clarify the true nature of boundaries, and specific contributions of the ecoregional vision to the debate.

The rejoinder is two-fold: political and ecological.

A. Naively identifying boundaries per se with political conflict, and especially with contemporary nation-states, confuses cause and consequence, conflates nations and states, and ignores the crucial question of scale.

First, boundaries are not in themselves the cause of conflict but only its expression--they stand forth as crystallizations of old attempts to negotiate a settlement to endemic conflict, a way of parcelling out common territory so as to live and let live. Second, the state does not equal the nation. There have been many kinds of states in history; only in the modern era have nation and state become synonymous. We would do better to critique the state as the organized means of violence in a territory, and save the nations, which are peoples descended from a common root. Third, globalists who would sweep away all boun-

daries as bulwarks of petty, provincial, backward-looking traditional cultures in favor of "world-order structures" as the foundation of lasting peace and global civilization need to explain how this is possible without increasing standardization, concentration, bureaucratization, technical rationalization--in short, centralization? And how, in practice, is this old thrust any different from imperialism, cloaked under new guises? For whether it be imperial nation-states or the global corporations which are rapidly replacing them, the results remain the same--primordial ties of kinship, the life of the local community, the strength of cultural traditions, the viability of species, habitats, and resources, all become victimized, part of the unwritten history of each place.

As Korr (1986), Sale (1980), and others remind us, the problem of human conflict is not resolved by building ever-larger units of administration. (The utopian image of a world without conflict is a chimera, for conflict is a fundamental social process within as well as between societies. Indeed, even the dream of a "global community" is misplaced, a contradiction in terms; from a sociological perspective community has always implied face-to-face consociation and a whole life lived in common in a place.) National and global centralization often destroys freedom and diversity by erasing boundaries, as well as raising levels of potential conflict to a lethal scale. What is needed to ensure the fate of nations and the Earth is to decrease scale: to decentralize to smaller regional communities so as to localize inevitable conflicts, and keep them from endangering the whole irredeemably.

It is the ecoregion (Bailey, 1980) which is uniquely suited for this role as it mediates in many ways between local and planetary life. Ecoregionalists seek to preserve ancient freedoms and protect ecological and cultural diversities on more appropriate scales. Without a rich diversity of peoples and places, species and habitats, there can be no freedom, no right to be for species, persons, or communities. The human spirit is not the product of a monolithic world-culture; rather, it is the expression of freedoms that have emerged through a great and changing diversity of peoples, regions, and their conflicting cultural traditions. Indeed, the human spirit is rooted precisely in all those mysterious ties that bind people to place and to one another over time.

In this critique of the critique, then, I contend that many globalists have great difficulty fairly addressing the question of borders and boundaries, retain hidden commitments regarding unity as willed or forced totality, and reject in practice the notions of natural limits and human finitude.

B. Taking our clues from Nature, the ecoregional vision leads us to recover a more positive sense of the nature of boundaries. Whether it be cells, organisms, ecosystems, communities, persons, or cultures, there is nothing in Nature which does not generate and recognize boundaries. An ecosystem, for instance, is not some fuzzy, abstracted, holistic global oneness but rather a bounded system, even a "patchy mosaic," rooted in a discrete series of highly specific, synchronized exchanges. From a biological perspective, a boundary is less a barrier and more a semi-permeable membrane which distinguishes the "within" and "without" of things, and acts to preserve the identities of "this" and "that." No cell, organism, ecosystem, person, or culture would long endure without such "membranes" to edit the flows of energy and information, and to reorganize them as needed to

maintain vital life-processes. In short, without borders there is no self-regulation.

On a larger scale, think of the manifold internal differentiations of the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere. Consider how in their endless cycling air, earth, water, and the green fire of living things generate boundaries and weave them seamlessly together in the ecosphere. The generativity of such natural boundaries is found precisely in all those edges, zones, fronts, phases, pauses, membranes, and limits which articulate elemental relationships and maintain natural integrities.

Here Nature should be our first teacher, for to ignore natural boundaries is also to ignore the fundamental significance of changes in scale and tempo on all levels of being. Under the guise of what I call "Cartesian space" --an infinite, rational grid that can be imposed anywhere on anything--and "Faustian time"--infinite expectations of progress--modern imperialism knows neither boundaries in space nor limits in time. Eco-regionalism, on the other hand, represents a search for appropriate scales and rhythms, for viable mediation between parts and wholes, for a "right proportionality" of action.

The ethical crux of the problem of boundaries lies here, for when natural limits are ignored and boundaries transgressed, there can be no justice. Life becomes tragic, conflict endemic, and various nemeses (eg. today's converging ecological crises, terrorism, etc.) dog our days, demanding their just due, threatening retribution until we change our ways.

### III

Ecoregionalism seeks to metaphorically incorporate such insights into the generativity of natural boundaries. What is a border or boundary, after all?

A border is the margin or edge, where something begins and ends, opens and closes. A border sets a frame to perception, identity, and action, and links us, in turn, to larger contexts. Borders set out the terms of relationship joining the "within" and "without." The bound is the limen or threshold, a door through which we come and go.

From a phenomenological and cultural perspective, borders and boundaries are not inherently negative. Rather, the bound sets a limit to action, and in so doing carves out an open space in which something new and vital is allowed to come forth. Boundaries are essential for anything to truly become itself. As Heidegger said, the horismos, the horizon or boundary, is the opening in which something is set free to begin its own presencing (1971:154). The bound defines our dwelling place. The boundary, then, is the natural, lived horizon in which diversity bursts forth and surprises us. And the border is the negotiated limen through which we come to terms with these diverse and manifold relationships.

No boundaries, no diversity; no boundaries, no exchanges; no boundaries, no self-regulation; no boundaries, no true unities.

In my ecoregion, for example, driving over Stevens Pass from Everett to Wenatchee is like passing from one world to another. The Cascade crest separates the wet, green, lush west side from the arid, brown, east side, two halves of that larger unity we call "Cascadia." This boundary is self-evident to anyone passing over the threshold.

Passing over and back across the crestline becomes an exercise in reversibility--it implies coming to know your other side. It involves a conversation between the front and back of things,

windward and leeward sides. The Skykomish and Wenatchee rivers, for instance, are sisters, silver threads rising from the same source. Our east side is their west side, and vice versa. As the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty put it: "We are each the other side of the other" (1962: 203).

It is the ecoregional boundary, then, as a reversible threshold that we share in common. For the other side of the familiar is not strange but new or different. Instead of ignoring the other as alien or distorted, we need to imagine the other side of our place as an extended part of our own bodies; or, rather, each side as a contiguous part of that larger, extended body we call "earth." The dialogue we want with our other sides is that mutual pivoting where each reverses position and comes to identify with the other in a true conversation, a turning together round the same center.

In distinguishing different worlds, the Cascade crest becomes a prime ecoregional divide. The divide is like a threshold--a crossing-over-and-back place--which holds its two slopes together in a common embrace. For the divide also joins what it separates. Like the storm cloud which drops rain and snow on either side, it discloses an image of unity by differentiating its parts. Divide and confluence, threshold and node, periphery and center, high and low edges--these and other polarities become prime ecoregional symbols by generating new forms of unity-in-diversity.

Now, to cross over a threshold one needs permission: this is the ethical invitation all borders and boundaries issue to us. It's a matter of common courtesy to request entrance or to invite the other over. Assume there is a guardian spirit standing at each threshold--one must be respectful of the special life it represents. Trust and authentic friendship may emerge on the basis of such mutuality. But it's only a false intimacy or forced unity when one side ignores the boundary or declares it "null and void," thereby ensuring endemic trouble. What any border asks us is this: are you prepared to be here on our terms? To be respectful and reciprocal? To shift your behaviors and act appropriately? Can you enter into this life-world care-fully and joyfully? If so, enter!

#### IV

One difference between the exploiter and the inhabitant is that the former neither recognizes nor respects limits. He is insatiable, alternately childlike or imperial in his drives, and ignorant of the tragedy that befalls his actions. On the other hand, the inhabitant respects the limen--the border or threshold between us. The exploiter is always trying to control diversity from afar by imposing one model on it, and ultimately failing, while the inhabitant knows the manifold ways of being and loves the way diversity bodies forth and surprises us. Today ecoregional inhabitants do everything possible to preserve local life and regional character against the incursions of global monoculture.

A philosophy of boundaries in space and transformations in time should enable us to recognize and respect natural and cultural liminality--the beginnings and endings, insides and outsides, openings and closings of all things. Such a philosophy is also, therefore, a philosophy of natural limits and human finitude, of appropriate scales and rhythms. We need to move toward a new metaphysics of proportionality in theory, and ecoregional identities in practice.

Boundaries are essential to generate diversity and identity, and to articulate these relationships in a larger unity. Now, in struggling with the thorny problem of boundaries, some bioregionalists have opted for replacing "hard," fixed, political boundaries with "soft," flexible ones, but this stance has problems. Ideally, this means that boundaries are not barriers, and imply a transition or marginal zone, as in an ecotone--where prairie meets forest or forest meets the sea. While acknowledging the critique of political boundaries and the significance of zones of transition--whether these be vegetative (e.g. a biotic shift in the ratio of one species to another), climatic, or geological, for instance--such rhetorical insistence on "soft" borders too often means in practice that important boundaries remain inchoate, unable to articulate the diverse character of ecoregions, and to help give needed voice to a people in the place. Some have misinterpreted "soft" borders to mean fuzzy ones or none at all, but this is surely mistaken. Perhaps they don't want to exclude anyone ("am I in your bioregion?"), or because so few are willing to meet the challenge of patient, systematic fieldwork required to discern overlapping natural boundaries, such hard questions are "better left open," or quietly left aside as "they only cause dissension," or even contemptuously dismissed as they lapse back into ideology. But the resolving power of boundaries to help generate new identities and sustain old ones, to preserve natural diversities and to build new cultures, is lessened in the same degree that ecoregional boundaries are ignored.

We have a saying hereabouts: "If you don't know where you are, then you don't know what you're doing." Any place has both centers and peripheries, confluences and divides, nodes and thresholds, and ecoregionalists should be the ones most conversant with them. If we hope to restore the vital ties binding people to place, we need to rediscover appropriately scaled and shared natural frames of reference. But without articulate boundaries, we cannot locate our place in the place together.

Let us return, therefore, to the earlier insight that an ecoregional divide also joins what it separates. A boundary differentiates between habitats and peoples so that we may reintegrate them on a new level. As a medieval maxim put it: "We distinguish in order to unite in a new way." Today more than ever we need, as Rilke proposed, "to border, salute, and protect our lands." Boundaries are as essential to generating and sustaining the life of human communities as in those natural communities called ecosystems, because they articulate a common "household." Any oikos, natural or human, has both centers and bounds. If local and regional communities are to regain their powers of self-regulation and culture-making, they must create their own oikos. There can be no identity without boundaries.

Here lies an intimate connection between ecocultural boundaries and social bonds. The social bonds of family, friends, community, work, religion or philosophy bind us together in different ways; indeed, much of the resilience of social life stems from the complex ways in which these cross-cutting bonds weave the enduring fabric of society. But in any group, community, or culture, how can there be social bonds without boundaries? Any gathering without edges? A social bond endures and grows insofar as it sets viable bounds to our multiple relationships, for this is the very nature of bonding. The ties that bind cannot be infinitely extended without becoming formless. No bonds without bounds!

Now, ecoregionalism calls for a new kind of social bond beyond both ethnicity and bureaucracy. Whereas once we were

members of tightly-knit kinship groups, today these have faded as we have transferred our identities and loyalties to large-scale, impersonal, secondary institutions such as the state, church, or corporation.

Sometimes it's claimed that ecoregionalism encourages a return to tribalism, since this provides traditional models for peoples living in place for thousands of years. As much as we have to learn from indigenous peoples, however, such a return is neither possible nor desirable for several reasons. First, however much we may wish to shore up the family, the primordial bonds of kinship have been so deeply eroded that it's impossible to restore families and clans to their once-central role in community and regional life. Second, even if it were possible it would not be wholly desirable, for the flip-side of the primary group's emotional intensity is its jealous exclusivity (eg. "clannishness"). For tribalism divides the social world into "insiders" and "outsiders" on the basis of inherited traits. The reason is both simple and profound--in a family, clan, or tribe rooted in bonds of blood and marriage, the group includes only those descended from the same ancestors; outsiders have no standing. Inherent in tribalism, therefore, is a kind of ethical dualism in which one owes all obligations to the "brothers" but nothing to the "others." Such ethical dualism is precisely the weakness of the primordial social bond, and it proves so tenacious that it was overcome decisively only by the ethical universalism of the world-religions; only on this basis was it possible to build large-scale civilizational structures. In any case, such invidious discrimination between insiders and outsiders lies at the root of ethical critiques of traditional boundaries.

Surely in the modern era, then, ethnicity can no longer serve as the prime basis of the social bond; that time in human history has irretrievably passed. Besides, we have no wish to encourage warring "brotherhoods of blood and soil." That is why it is also mistaken to reproach the new regionalism as provincial, tribal, or "backwards looking," for in reality it calls us into a new era.

But if ethnicity can no longer do the job, neither can bureaucracy continue to dominate our lives without permanent loss of what is distinctively human and natural. Bureaucracy is the modern form of large-scale association; it provides the indispensable means of mass administration. Bureaucracy is the systematic and rational development of political, ecclesiastical, and economic domination (Weber, 1978). It is the means by which the elites of empires, churches, nation-states, and now global corporations have extended their grasp over tribes and territories. Proclaiming itself as the emancipator of the individual, for instance, the modern nation-state overcomes all contending powers, especially intermediary institutions such as family, village, guild, estate, church, region, and cultural traditions. The former family or village member is assigned a new identity as "citizen," leaving the individual standing alone before the central state as the sole guarantor of his or her "rights." In this dual process of integration of individuals and groups into new "nations," and centralization of administrative power, bureaucratic institutions impose their own characteristic logics of hierarchy, standardization, levelling of opposition, concentration, rationalization, and so forth, destroying in the process most personal, traditional, ecological, ethical, or religious norms. Underneath the "wonderworld" promised by these new utopians and their impersonal, functional, rational bonds, is the "wasteworld" we are all forced to endure--alienated work and lives, eroded

family life, weakened communities, and degraded environments.

Today we need, therefore, a new kind of social bond beyond both the restrictive ties of "tribal brotherhood" and the destructive and empty ties of "universal otherhood" (Nelson, 1969). For these and other reasons, the new regionalism calls us to create a new kind of ecocultural bond, rooted in the place itself, for this is our only true common ground. From this perspective we can glimpse the unprecedented nature of this epoch, and what this historical moment calls forth from us. This is what time it is on the deepest sociocultural levels; and if we do not respond creatively, we may look forward only to the technocratic nightmares of Empire, "post-human being," and an ever-renewed hatred for the mysticism of the green Earth.

Note that new social bonds invite new kinds of boundaries. Remember that boundaries help define the specific character of a place and its people and identify the others with whom we need to carry on a true culture-making conversation. Like a geographic divide, the boundary articulates natural diversity and helps give voice to a placed people by carving out a common ground on which to stand together. To create its own distinctive culture, a people must first be true to the land itself, and grow common roots there. Then they may hope to generate their own moral landscapes--a world of compelling beliefs and symbols appropriate to their own life-place.

Now, culture is this framework of grounded images, metaphors, and symbols which binds a people: it is the inner life we share together. Culture is a group's symbolic system of meaning and value which informs a person's conscience and consciousness, and both represents and regulates a people's relationships with one another and the Earth. Since each life-place has a distinctive character, each culture should also be distinct and appropriate to its time and place. As Jon Furberg observes: "A culture takes its own distinct form from a distinct place--it is the commonly known and enacted imagination of how these people live here" (1979: 3).

In a sense, a culture is like the sounding board of a musical instrument--for the sounds must be bounded or rhythmically contained and given form, if they are to become significant to us; otherwise, they disperse into thin air or trespass upon each other's existence. Ecocultural boundaries generate a resonance chamber which concentrates and clarifies the sounds; they provide a living oikos or household in which we can learn a common rhythm and how to dance together. Culture is like this resonating chamber which enables us to hear ourselves think together, creating the harmonics of community, echoes sounding back and forth, looping through and amplifying one another in true mutual dialogue.

## V

Imagine a world that makes sense. Mentally erase all the tangled lines on the old, industrial-age maps--city, county, state, and provincial boundaries, highways and railroads, the international borders. Let the original face of the place shine through--rivers, mountains, and valleys, coastlines and plateaus, sea and sky. Listen again to the spirits of these places, and pay close attention to what gives them their special character. Learn to tell the story of the place, and ask: how do the maps and models in our heads need to be redrawn in order to help give greater voice to the land itself?

In discerning ecoregional boundaries, we might set out several norms as guidelines.

First, ecoregional boundaries should be natural, not artificial or arbitrary. For an authentic ecoregional boundary is discovered as an emergent out of the land itself, and the reflections of the people living in place, rather than being imposed as a "line on a map" by experts in far distant centers, or by global elites for their own special purposes.

Second, "soft" versus "hard" borders are misplaced metaphors; rather, the problem is whether the boundaries "speak" or not--whether they are inchoate or articulate. For ecoregional boundaries are neither necessarily soft nor fuzzy; while there are few straight lines in Nature, there are many definite and powerful edges--various ecotones, watershed divides, climatic zones, fault-lines and scarps, and so on. Careful attention should be given to such beginnings and endings, for these dramatic turnings in the Earth serve as clear and powerful articulations of diversity.

Third, ecoregional boundaries are multiple, not singular, in nature. Rather than focussing on the political level and allowing that to overrule all other considerations, authentic boundaries must, first and foremost, be ecologically and culturally grounded. Now, the key quality of ecoregions is that they stand forth as bounded wholes in space and time (obviously, distinctiveness does not imply isolation). In spatial terms, the life of the land is carried out on many different levels or "planes." Imagine each of the key dimensions--geographical landforms, geologic formations, tectonic imprints, and soil series, climatic zones and seasonal migrations of high and low pressure cells, hydrologic features, botanical and zoological features such as type, number and diversity of species, their geographic and especially seasonal ranges, ecological features such as habitats, landscapes, and biomes, ethnographic maps of native peoples and their migration patterns, historical maps of modern settlement patterns and current use, and so on, as clear plastic sheets overlaid on a base map of landforms. (Computer graphics may do the job better). An ecoregion emerges, then, as a composite whole where the most significant features converge in a distinct and sustained way.

No one factor, hydrology, for instance, or vegetation, should predominate (sage does not an ecoregion make); overreliance on one indicator species in a biome often fails to sufficiently discriminate key regional differences. No one rule can hope to describe the complexity of all ecoregions--in some places watersheds provide the closest natural approximation to ecosystems, while in other areas landforms, soil types, and vegetation may serve as the most significant cluster. Sometimes rivers may provide key boundaries instead of the drainage divide. And while the consistency of specialized scientific disciplines in mapping ecoregions is important, nonetheless, each represents only one layer, and we need to recompose the parts in order to make sense of the whole. Basic ecoregional boundaries may be discerned, therefore, where the separable layers overlap and converge. Think of an ecoregional boundary as a convergent threshold.

It all requires patient field-work, careful attention to telling details and larger patterns, as well as insight and creativity to discern the emergent whole. What ecoregionalists are after is the configuration or deep gestalt of parts and wholes, a true matrix in which things are naturally woven together. There's a certain delight in watching a new "figure" emerge from the "field" or

background. One spontaneously says "Aha! That's it!"--as if seeing home for the first time.

As Thomas Berry reminds us "The Earth presents itself to us not as a uniform global reality, but as a complex of highly differentiated regions caught up in the comprehensive unity of the planet itself." (1985: 163) Indeed, just as we know the parts of our own bodies, so, too, we should learn the parts of that collective, extended body we call "Earth," and how they work together. For the world is a natural integrity, not a willed unity or forced totality. Watersheds, ecoregions, and macro-regions are the prime natural units through which this larger, collective body articulates itself. Today more than ever we need to learn to move stepwise carefully and respectfully through these mediating levels between local and planetary life.

I live with my family, for instance, in the Snoqualmie watershed in the Ish River country, in one of the four great regions of western North America, Cascadia. My ecoregion is a great bowl of green waters we call the "Ish River" country; it's named after the first peoples who inhabited this area--the Coast Salish, who left their imprint on the names of many rivers such as the Squamish, Samish, Stillaguamish, Skykomish, Duwamish, Skokomish and so on. From the crestlines of the mountain ranges on either side "many rivers flow down to an inland sea," giving life to the land. The waters of this inland sea are shaped like a giant waterbird arcing in flight to the northwest. Its body is Puget Sound, its wings are the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the great Fraser river, and its long curving neck is the Strait of Georgia, heading northwest to Alaska.

The boundaries of the Ish River ecoregion are simple: from the crest of the Olympic Mountains and Insular Ranges on Vancouver Island on the west side, to the crest of the Cascade Mountains and B.C. Coast Ranges on the east; and from around the Campbell River-Desolation Sound area halfway up Vancouver Island in the north (where the glacier started) to below Olympia in the south (where the glacier ended).

The boundaries of this specific ecoregion are characterized by a remarkable commonality in: (1) landscape, (2) climate, (3) soil types, (4) water basins and drainage systems, (5) life-forms in sea, land, and air, (6) native peoples (eg. the Coast Salish), and (7) settlement patterns as well as a shared destiny.

It's the special resonance between these various layers and levels above and below that sets the land to singing, and gives us our working metaphors of wholeness, the rhythms or true measure of place. Remember that it is the emergent life of the place as a whole--cultural as well as biological and physical--that we seek to recognize and represent. This is a new task, one that goes well beyond politics or environmentalism in traditional senses. It is one of the true quests of ecoregionalism.

Fourth, perhaps the crucial factor in distinguishing one ecoregion from another is that the place, species, and peoples have evolved together ("co-evolution"). A shared dynamic unity of formation is the decisive factor in discovering the distinctive character and boundaries of an ecoregion. For instance, the overwhelming fact in the story of the Ish River country is the series of glaciations which carved out the curved lines of our larger body here. Four times the tide of ice flowed down from the north, and four times it ebbed back to its mountain house in the southern B.C. Coast range. This process of shaping the land is not over; indeed, we live during the fifth inter-glaciation, and someday the glacier will come down again. This brute fact

unifies the character of this place, and both differentiates and links it to adjoining ecoregions which remained unglaciated.

Hence, it is essential to note that ecoregional boundaries reveal temporal as well as spatial dimensions. Just as our body has its own rhythms, so, too, lived territory expands and contracts with the rhythms of the day, month, season, and year, and even longer cycles. Rather than being "soft" borders, then, ecoregional boundaries may exhibit a kind of seasonal elasticity; the seasonal migrations of climatic cells of the Aleutian low and Hawaiian high, as they move north and south in the northeastern Pacific Ocean bringing summer and winter weather, are an obvious case in point. The moving border between them up and down the coast from Baja to Alaska is called "spring" and "fall." Indeed, in the weathers above and the waters below one can never hope to determine fixed boundaries as on land. Salmon migrations, the seasonal migrations of many species of birds and mammals, even the long-term march of the trees north and south, with the glacial ebb and flood, remind us of the elemental nature of temporal rhythms. Ecoregional boundaries, therefore, take on the special character of a true borderland, a crossing-over-and-back-place in time as well as in space.

In sum, ecoregional boundaries are natural holistic "emergents." They are found where key levels overlap, forming distinctive patterns. Look to the special ways in which the face of the land, tectonic forces below, weather patterns above, the flow of waters, flora and fauna, native peoples and cultural identities converge and reinforce one another. In emerging from the life of the land as a whole, ecoregional boundaries stand forth as convergent thresholds welcoming us "home."

#### Notes

1. This is not meant to authorize a "lapse back into autarchy;" doubtless, there are, and always will be, problems that need to be addressed at uniquely planetary levels--e.g. depletion of the ozone layer of the atmos-

phere; but in every case, it's the **region** which must play a special role in linking local and planetary actions.

2. Given rapidly changing global climatic conditions as well as continuing ecological degradation, habitat fragmentation, and species extinctions, it's more important than ever to recognize the policy implications of this long-term horizon of biogeographical evolution. See, for instance, the emerging paradigm of restoration ecology as applied to specific ecoregions in Harris (1984) and Noss and Harris (1986). Migration corridors are "rivers of time" linking past and future.

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## WHY I DON'T TALK ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS ANYMORE

Annie Booth

#### Ethic:

1. The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation; . . . The principles of conduct governing an individual or group.

-Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1973)

2. Conforming to a local and mutable standard of right. Having a quality of general expediency.

-Ambrose Bierce, **The Devil's Dictionary** (1906)

As our awareness of the ecological consequences of our activities increases, so too does our quest for a means of mitigating these consequences. When manipulation and management of the natural world fails to provide solutions, we turn to the manipulation and management of the other half of the equation:

the human world. We seek methods which will encourage humans to act upon the natural world in a manner which will not result in the large scale ecological devastation which our traditional manner of interaction has condoned and even encouraged. The fostering of an ecological or environmental ethic is one such method being debated in environmental and philosophical circles. Whether such an ethic is effective, or can even exist, are questions at the heart of this ongoing debate. This essay does not pretend to undertake a complete survey of the idea of an environmental ethic. Rather it focuses on a few representational texts to highlight certain difficulties I perceive in the quest for such an ethic.

At its simplest, an ethic is a framework within which a member of a group or society can determine whether their actions are good or bad, right or wrong, according to the consensual definitions of the group or society. Essentially, behaviour which is

good is that which is in conformity with the larger society's definition of good: their moral code. As Aldo Leopold, an early influential advocate of a land ethic, noted, all ethics are based on the belief that the individual is a member of a community upon which they are dependent, and which is, in turn, dependent upon them (Leopold 1966). Interdependence requires cooperation, and therefore it requires a voluntary limitation on individual actions, and desires in the interest of the greater society. An ecological (or environmental or land) ethic structures this framework in terms of correct behaviour towards natural communities. Precisely what this entails has been the subject of long debate.

Aldo Leopold stated the most basic, yet most problematic, definition of an ecological ethic. Arguing that the boundaries of the community within which a system of ethics operates have broadened over time, he declares that the **land ethic** simply broadens these boundaries a little more to include "soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." (Leopold 1966: 139) Thus, people become members of a much larger society than that of humanity, and must learn to treat all its members with the same respect and consideration that they are expected to demonstrate towards their fellow humans. The idea is appealing, and any number of scholars have debated how ethical and moral concerns might be extended to include animals and the other denizens of the larger ecological community. In their enthusiastic questing after new ecological precepts, however, many scholars, including Leopold, have failed to either recognize or articulate fundamental problems, which raise questions concerning the capacity of an ecological ethics to solve environmental problems.

One problem is that ethics may be imposed from the top down, that is, from the society to the individual. But, to function effectively, an ethic requires individual and personal commitment. It requires a willingness to freely make the personal sacrifices of individual liberty which may be required, and to accept personal responsibility for living within ethical constraints. An ethic which is accepted only because society requires it will be subject to minimal compliance, evasion of personal responsibility, and outright defiance, if the individual or group is sufficiently powerful or arrogant. The ecological ethic demonstrates this problem well, as do debates about abortion, euthanasia, and other thorny "moral" issues.

While as a society we generally agree that it is not a good thing to do environmentally harmful things, as individuals few of us have been willing to actually make the sacrifices necessary to ensure that ecological harm is not done. We do not accept personal responsibility for enforcing such an ethic, particularly within our own lives. Environmentalists argue persuasively that we are exceeding the capacity of the Earth to support the rapidly growing human population and to produce the sophisticated material goods that we in the Western countries demand. Most of us acknowledge the essential correctness of this argument, but we are all too willing to limit the rights of others to such goods. We will blithely advise Third World countries to limit their births **and** to accept a standard of living considerably less than our own. Yet we are not willing to forego **our** rights to large families, cars, and a second colour TV.<sup>1</sup> If we personally decide to limit our own consumption, we do not really require our immediate circle of friends, relatives, and associates to do so. Evasion and outright defiance of environmental responsibility go on far too frequently, as any environmental advocate understands. Thus,

while many of us might claim to subscribe to an environmental ethic, without personal commitment and sacrifice, such an ethic might as well not exist.

One part of this problem is that our ethics stem from our personal values. Or as Leopold (1966: 251) states: "We can be ethical only in relation to something that we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in." Many people describe their desire to protect Nature or natural things in terms of love.<sup>2</sup> Environmental historian Roderick Nash (1985) argues that the catalyst in the 1960's environmental movement, which made it different from any of the past, was an expressed love for the Earth. From love comes respect, and a willingness to care for the Earth. And yet, our love, even where it does exist, is often selfish and self-interested.

Insufficient numbers of people seem to genuinely care about natural communities, outside of their own personal sphere of interest. We are willing to preserve something, but only if we are able to get something in return, such as the opportunity to experience it personally. We cannot love in the abstract, wilderness must be loved in reality. Animals must be admired in the flesh, preferably while doing something interesting or appealing. One critic of environmental circles, William Tucker (1982: 134), cites a number of instances where wilderness tracts were successfully protected from resource extraction. People enthusiastically supported such protection, but then negated that protection in their rush to see what they had so generously spared. Leopold (1966: 108) himself mourned that,

all conservation of wilderness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and fondle, and when enough have seen and fondled, there is no wilderness left to cherish.

Proponents of environmental ethics acknowledge the basic human need for certain natural environments, but argue that we must also not destroy such environments. Based on such self-interested arguments, an environmental ethic seems inherently and irreconcilably contradictory.

An ecological ethic which derives from an ability or willingness to love often fails to adequately address things that do not easily incite such feelings of love in the human heart. It is one thing to admire and love the stag that crashes through the brush, or the graceful Canadian goose. It is quite another to feel affection for the grizzly bear -- especially after the rare attack on humans, or love the gila monster or the rattlesnake. Some people do seem to love these creatures. At best, most of us might manage ambivalence, particularly if such creatures are a considerable distance from our own locality. Nor is it easy to love creatures which "compete" with us, or a natural world which can be capricious and destructive. Yet, if such love and caring cannot be generated, can we act in an ethical manner?

Finally, such questions can only be of interest to those who have a preliminary understanding or awareness of things outside the immediate sphere of human concerns. The majority of humans, at least in the industrialized world, have little to do with the natural world directly, and seem to have even less interest in it. Unable to perceive their direct dependence on the natural world, most people would seem to have little concern, let alone love, upon which an ecological ethic could take hold. All the information in the world may not be able to overcome an essential indifference.

A final, and perhaps fatal, flaw in the concept of an environmental ethic is that it is a human construct which makes reference

only to human interests. Leopold argues, unequivocally, that we are members of a community, one of many such members, all of whom are equally of value and importance. Ethical systems are predicated upon the relationship of individual and community. Yet it may well be that most humans will be unable to think about themselves in such a way. Canadian philosopher John Livingston (1981: 49) writes that,

we cannot conceive of a society (a community of self-interest) that could extend beyond our species. Such a society would have an impossible prerequisite -- an unequivocal acknowledgement of the whole interrelationship between man and Nature.

Such an acknowledgement would require the dismemberment of techno-industrial culture, which has long placed humanity at the apex of a hierarchy of beings. Tucker (1982: 170) delineates this view in his comment on an ecological ethic:

I would like to accept [an ecological ethic], but with one important qualification. That is that our ethical concerns still retain a hierarchy of interest. We should extend our moral concerns to plants, trees, and animals, **but not at the expense of human beings**. Our first obligation is to humanity.

Few humans would disagree with him, for, after all, who in his or her heart does not believe that they are more valuable and worthy than a wood tick or a polar bear? And yet, if we value Nature only to the point at which we must sacrifice it for the benefit of humans, where does an ecological ethic take us, that we have not already been before?

An ecological ethic, then, is not something we can separate from ourselves. It is applied by humans, based on values determined and articulated by humans (self-interested love), and extends only to those things that we value. Indeed, it may make no sense whatsoever to talk of ethics outside of the human sphere. In part, an ethic can be seen as a contract of mutual benefit: an individual adheres to an ethic in exchange for something else extended by a second individual or group. In an ethic, there is an expectation of reciprocity, an exchange for mutual good. While we depend upon wild Nature, and take from it our living, can we describe this as a direct and mutually beneficial exchange? Livingston (1981: 54) thinks not:

In all ethics there must be the fundamental assumption that the underlying values, beliefs, duties, and obligations are fully, mutually understood, accepted and shared. In speaking of ethics in the non-human context, we are jabbering into a void. Nature does not need ethics; there is no one to hear.

I do not think that there is a functioning environmental ethic. For those of us who try to live within the means of our natural

communities, and to protect their integrity, there does seem to be something, an ethos, or even a sense of love, at work, however self-interested it may be. But I do not think that this can be translated into something as formalized and defined as a code of ethics. It is much deeper, perhaps less subject to articulation and description, than are ethics or rules.

Our authentic sense of good and evil comes not so much from the human society in which we live, with which we may be in direct opposition, but from somewhere deep within ourselves. How to encourage this within all humans remain the problem and the question. An ethical system, however "environmental" and carefully defined, does not seem capable of the task. Even Leopold (1966:210), father of the first land ethic, allowed that we must "admit at the outset that the thing we need must grow from within." Ay, there's the rub, and the reason I do not talk about environmental ethics anymore. But I do talk about ecophilosophical ideas, and ideas about our relations with the natural world. I believe there may be answers to environmental problems in such conversation.

### Notes

1. Indeed, in the developed countries of the U.S., Canada and others, there is an increased interest in producing "our own" children. Fertility clinics and technological interventions such as "test tube" babies have become big business, indicating the desperation of well-to-do couples to have their own progeny. Yet most of these couples would probably emphasize the need to lower the population numbers elsewhere.

2. Perhaps the most striking recent expression of this is the 1988 film *Gorillas in the Mist*, which examines Dian Fossey's work with gorillas. It becomes explicit in one emotional scene, when the silverback of the group Fossey is studying is killed by poachers, that her feelings toward her study subjects were those of love. The slaughter of the gorilla was the murder of a friend. Fossey was noted for her intense commitment to the gorillas.

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## ECOSOPHY AND GESTALT ONTOLOGY

Arne Naess

It is a maxim of ecology that everything hangs together. A certain kind of segmented worm starts to "swarm" 54 minutes after

sunset. Masses of them at the same time. What triggers this joint endeavour? It is three days after a full moon in late October. An



example of a biological clock.<sup>1</sup> How does it work? Of course, we know next to nothing about how and why. But, clearly, things hang together and form complexes of vast dimensions. A dominant attitude is that of regret: Because things hang so much together, what we do as humans has innumerable consequences which are unintended. Many of them prove to be detrimental for humans, at least in the long run. A simpler world would suit us better? A world of things easily separated? So many seem to feel.

For the ecosopher, vast complexes of interrelations is a characteristic of our existence which we joyfully acknowledge, contemplate, and study. Because of our severely limited knowledge, this complexity can get us into difficult situations, sometimes causing death, but the hanging together with 'everything' is experienced and conceived as a positive value. We participate and take care.

There is a distinction used in philosophy that is highly relevant in this connection: that between external and internal relations. If I use the expressions 'my body' and 'my telephone number', the latter exemplifies an external relation between myself and a number. If I get a message that my number, together with all others of a certain class, is going to be changed, I am going through this without essential change in myself. But my relation to my body is of a different character, at least as I see it. I am essentially not the same self if I get a new body, or my body gets a new self. The relation between me and my body is internal. Some people, for instance Martin Luther, seem to have a different conception. He conceived himself to be somehow imprisoned in a body. He hoped to escape from it after death. Luther seemed to conceive of the relationship as external. The general tendency in natural science is to conceive of things as externally related.

In what follows I shall try to explain a way to conceptualize human spontaneous experience of reality. How are things (in the widest sense) related to each other in spontaneous experience? [My answer is part of a total view I call 'ecosophy T'. Probably there are some other humans who feel at home with a total view similar to ecosophy T, but I would feel badly if someone forced himself or herself to understand and appreciate it in my way.]

The term 'spontaneous' needs a couple of comments. If I say "The water looks yellow" or "The water seems yellow" I mostly imply that perhaps it is not really yellow. As the basis of the utterances there has been a spontaneous experience expressible by 'yellow water' or 'yellow water!' 'surprising yellow water!'. The use of 'looks' and 'seems' tends to reveal a moment of reflection, doubt, inquiry. This is a criterion of non-spontaneousness. Instead of 'spontaneous' one may say 'immediate', but the latter term is heavily burdened with philosophical theories, which might reduce the value of a spontaneous interpretation of 'spontaneous'.

The central term of the ontology to be explained is 'gestalt'. It is generally associated with the maxim 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts, or the sum is externally related to the parts of the sum. A usual demonstration consists in putting three dots on the blackboard. If not placed too erratically a triangle is spontaneously experienced ('seen'), and a triangle is more than just the three dots.

An elementary example of a kind of gestalt, in the ontological sense I prefer, is that of a well known melody. 'Kind of' is important because melodies in general can scarcely form a gestalt,

only individual occurrences of a definite melody. Only they are parts of reality, i.e. genuine contents. If a person hears a 'part' of a well known melody, the spontaneous experience is colored by attitudes towards the melody as a whole and by many circumstances past and present. The spontaneous experience constitutes a unity which can, more or less imperfectly, be described and expressed by referring to a comprehensive class of things (*entia*).

Before the advent of gestalt theory, the dominant term was 'association': a part of the well known melody is associated with the rest of the parts and with past experiences, for instance a pleasant or unpleasant outing or concert. A cloud of associations surround the perception (hearing) of the part *itself*. This conceptual framework implies a series of experiences, the part of the melody *and* the associations. The gestalt frame recognizes one single experience. It can be reflected upon and analyzed. The part "itself" is just an abstraction. Genetically it is explained taking account of a host of other spontaneous experiences, a whole web of interrelations with indefinite borders. What we do is to clarify abstract relations between spontaneous experiences. Introducing a distinction; concrete content/abstract structure: the spontaneous experiences are the concrete contents and the abstract structures their interrelations.

When listening to a melody, or a more complex unity of music, for instance the 5th Symphony of Beethoven, there is a succession of spontaneous experiences. They all have as an aspect a color or atmosphere specific to the melody or to the symphony as a whole. Instead of saying the whole is more than the sum of the parts, some other maxims are relevant: 'The part is more than a part.' That is, if the melody is well known, the part is part-of-the-melody, the character of the whole melody colors the experience of the part, or largely determines the spontaneous experience of the part. More bluntly, 'there is no spontaneous experience of the part merely as part.' It is internally related to the melody as a whole. But there is no definite spontaneous experience of the whole, either. We may therefore also say 'There is neither an experience of a part, nor of a whole.' But we are left with the important abstractions which interpersonally are communicated by referring and pointing to musical notes, discs, videos, etc. The 'whole' 5th Symphony may be printed on 100 pages, the first page is one percent of the 'whole,' a very small 'part.'

The proposed terminology is to say that there is a gestalt, or rather sets of gestalts, made up of series of spontaneous experiences, by different people, related to the 5th Symphony of Beethoven, defined interpersonally through published musical notes. What I then suggest is that the content of reality, in as far as it is experienceable by humans, is a manifold of gestalts. In order to stress the distinction content/structure I contrast concrete contents of reality with (fully) abstract structures of reality.

The examples used in the foregoing smacks of epistemological and ontological idealism, subjectivism, and even solipsism. But this is due to the mistaken assumption that ideas, subjects, egos are not subjected to gestalt scrutiny. Subjects are not conceived as 'things in themselves,' *Ding an sich*. But let me use an example that seems less elusive.

**Hallingskarvet** is a mountain in Norway, a small part of which can be seen from the train running between Oslo and Bergen. It is about 25 miles long and here and there fairly broad. Many people know Hallingskarvet well and it plays a role in their life. A vast set of spontaneous experiences may appropriately be

called 'experiences of Hallingskarvet.' Structurally and abstractly it is defined through maps. When people agree they have been to the places on Hallingskarvet, they refer to the maps. They map the structure of reality. When, for instance, skiing on Hallingskarvet in fog and wind the spontaneous experience is not only of what (little) you see, it is an experience of Hallingskarvet. It makes for a particular eagerness to assess where one is at the moment, where the nearest precipice is located. In short, a fairly intense awareness of the mountain and its 'dangers,' i.e. the possibility of not finding a proper way down and of rushing down the many near vertical cliffs. The spontaneous experiences will be colored by a manifold of aspects of the mountain. The experiences will have a pronounced gestalt character.

Between gestalts there is a fundamental relation of comprehensiveness. The character of the second, slow, movement of the 5th Symphony is dependent on the different character of the first and third. The spontaneous experience of the second movement is for people who know the whole symphony, intimately colored by the whole. The gestalt of the second movement is less comprehensive than the gestalt of the whole symphony. The same holds of every movement. One may in a way say that the gestalt of the symphony is more 'comprehensive' than that of his small pieces for the piano. It is, therefore, better to talk about subordinate and superordinate gestalts, when the structural unit of the first is part of the structural unit of the second. The movements of the symphony as gestalts are subordinate under the gestalt of the whole. But as spontaneous experience of reality this gestalt is again subordinate under more comprehensive ones, like the experience of a concrete occasion of listening or performing as a member of the orchestra.

The gestalt ontology is a conceptual framework adapted to humans and others as conscious living beings. The world we live in spontaneously cannot be degraded as merely subjective, because it is the only world that has a content. Of course, if I say "The stick is broken" as a description of such a content, new contents may comprise the description "The stick is not broken," because both expressions may be interpreted to refer to intricate relationships, e.g., between optical and tactile experiences. If the stick was put halfway down in water, we would, after acknowledging certain relationships between experiences, say that the stick looks broken, but is not broken. The relationships make it important to introduce constructs like 'the stick itself,' but that can never be experienced as part of the content of reality. The relations are more or less characteristic of reality, but not part of its content. The 10 millionth decimal of Pi is now discovered, and it is in an abstract way characteristic of the relation between the diameter and circumference of circular things, but the universe is too small and bumpy to contain something that would confirm the 10 millionth decimal.

Without going into philosophical niceties I conclude that our life experience is not of 'things in themselves' (*Ding an sich*, Kant), not 'things for me' (*Ding an mich*). Life experience is the experience of gestalts, and a conceptual framework is adapted to the spontaneous experience of the content of reality.

What has all this to do with ecosophy? The relation is somewhat indirect: What may be called the dominant way of conceiving reality is roughly that of a vast supermarket stocked with individual things related extrinsically, like primitive atomistic conceptions. The relations are not conceived to be mechanical and Newtonian any longer, but are still largely seen as extrinsic

relations between things in themselves. The deep ecology movement is inspired by ways of experience which violently clash with the dominant way.

An example: There is a proposal to build a road through a large wood. The preservationists reject the proposal. But the proponents honestly say that the area spoiled by the road itself will be less than a thousand part of the area of the wood. The preservationists answer that the heart of the wood, or the wood as a whole, is degraded. (The wood as spontaneously experienced is not the same, if you are deep in the wood and encounter a road. The greatness and majesty, the dignity and purity, is lost, etc.) But that is only subjective. Objectively, the wood is a multiplicity of trees etc., and a road is a tiny intrusion. (Even more objectively, as microbiology and biochemistry teach us, the whole area is a great complex of externally related molecules without colors and anything we as subjects fancy is out there in the external world.) The preservationist will admit that there are trees in the wood. They are subordinate gestalts, as are many other features of the wood. But the wood as a whole is an extremely valuable superordinate gestalt and clearly vulnerable to 'development' whatever the fraction of the area that is destroyed. The atomistic view is obtained by systematic delearning the gestalt view dominating the child's experience.

Clearly the economics of the industrial societies is such that most consequences of gestalt ontology are classed as undesirable. The atomistic view helps the valuation of woods in terms of market prices, of extrinsic parts, and of tourism. "A tree is a tree. How many do you have to see?," see "as a tourist," presumably.

The delearning of taking spontaneous experience of superordinate gestalts seriously makes life progressively less rich, narrowing it down to a mass of externally connected details. The more people are adapted to the supermarket conception, the more dangerous is the appeal to the right of majority opinion. It seems that, for example, the concept of ecosystem, and its corresponding gestalt experiences, popularized from the start of the deep ecology movement, are still not 'internalized' and influential among policy makers. Thus, the Barents Sea, one of the richest ecosystems of the world, has been treated in a narrow fashion as a resource of marketable fish. If one species is nearly extinct, we may concentrate on some others, one at a time. The result is one of the great environmental disasters of the century.

There are many causes of such a mistaken policy, but one seems to be the lack of clear and forceful thinking in terms of wholes rather than fragments. The supporters of the deep ecology movement will profit from the up-keep, further development, and forceful articulation of gestalt perception and, more importantly, gestalt ontology. It must be defended by relentless counterattacks against allegations of subjectivism: The dominant objectivism leads, if used consistently and linked to natural science, to the confusion of the content of reality with the useful, but immensely abstract structures invented by mathematical physics.

Simple 'holism,' the insistence to take wholes seriously, is not enough as a competing point of view. The argumentation must refer to experience, and spontaneous experience in particular. And it must acknowledge hierarchies of wholes and their non-external, non-extensional, internal relations. The term 'gestalt' may not be used, or sparingly, if more traditional terms are found. But that is often quite difficult.

## Notes:

1. *Ecology*, Life Nature Library, 1963, p. 80.

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# TOWARD AN ECOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY FOR PSYCHOLOGY

Deborah A. Kleese

## Introduction

There is an irony in the failure of psychology to develop an ecology of behavior. From its inception as a scientific discipline, psychology has been intrigued by the relationship between the person and the environment--the world "out there." Many of the traditions in psychology's early history focused on how environmental events are translated and interpreted by the individual; later movements reversed this perspective and attempted to understand how the biophysical environment transformed the person. It would seem as if the field of psychology had chipped away at the boundary between self and world. Subdisciplines have evolved that are defined by "ecological" or "environmental" perspectives. Yet, to use Barker's analogy, both theoretically and practically psychology seems to stop at the "skins of its subjects" (Barker, 1969, p.31). At best, it offers "dismantled fragments of the environment" (Barker, 1969, p.32).

This separation of the person and the environment is easily identified in the way psychology traditionally posed its questions. For centuries, a recurring *leitmotif* in the field had been the "nature-nurture" (heredity-environment) debate. The very way in which this dichotomy was framed is a telling statement about psychology's *modus operandi*. Nature was conceived as the genetic make-up of a species, something *internal* to the organism. Nurture, on the other hand, was seen as a constellation of experiential events, imposed on the subject through an external mediator. Even more contemporary fusions, which acknowledged interaction between nature and nurture, tended to envision these constructs as independent entities. There were few attempts to comprehend nature-nurture as an inseparable unit within which organisms become defined.

Perhaps psychology's failure to clearly develop and practice an ecology of behavior can be understood by examining the scientific culture within which psychology evolved. The prevailing world views that have dominated the field of psychology have largely been antithetical to certain ecological perspectives. This article will attempt to explain some attributes of such an ecological perspective, to describe how psychology reflected certain cultural traditions that are largely anti-ecological, and to suggest some current developments within the field that may signal the emergence of an ecological epistemology.

## Attributes of an Ecological Epistemology

Before evaluating dominant contemporary worldviews in psychology, it is necessary to define characteristics of an ecological epistemology. Since epistemology concerns the study of how we know, i.e., the origins, means and limits of knowledge (Marx and Hillix, 1963), then an ecological epistemology implies understanding the origin and validation of knowledge through application of an ecological perspective.

Literally translated from the Greek, ecology means the study of living things in their home. The term implies interactions within and between organisms (e.g., Miller, 1988; Bateson, 1972); the establishment of networks or webs of relationships (Wickcr, 1979); and maintenance of adaptive relationships (Wickcr, 1979; Bateson, 1972). Characteristic among many ecological perspectives is a "systems" approach. Odum (1989) suggests that an ecosystem is open--"things are constantly entering or leaving" (pp.38-39). Also, the system is characterized by forces, properties, flow pathways, interactions and feedback loops. Finally, homeostasis becomes a major organizing principle of ecological systems.

The nature of the system that will be utilized here to define an ecological relationship, however, will not be a mechanistic systems approach. In his critique of traditional systems theory, Wilden notes that the systems themselves become regarded as "...entities or objects in 'neutral space', like atoms in the void or galaxies in the cosmos" (1980, xxxix). It is **bounded** systems that become the object of study and relationships between boundaries. The ways in which boundaries are represented, or the kinds and meanings of boundaries, are rarely considered.

As pointed out by Worster (1977) in *Nature's Economy*, throughout its development as a science, ecology has taken many different twists and turns. Worster maintains that the field of ecology is still split between "...the organic communal ideal and a more pragmatic utilitarianism" (pp 256-257). In fact, by the 1960's, Worster asserts, ecology's dominant paradigm embraced the view fostered by A. G. Tansley, creator of the term "ecosystem." Borrowing from field and systems theories in physics, ecology was reduced to thermodynamics and bioeconomics. Energy in Nature became interpreted through an economic model, with the stuff of Nature defined as producers or consumers:

In their most recent theoretical model, ecologists have transformed nature into a reflection of the modern corporate, in-

dustrial system. and to a great extent, ecology today has become "bioeconomics": a cognate, or perhaps even subordinate, division of economics. (Worster, 1977, p.292)

Further distinctions have been offered between "shallow" and "deep" ecological approaches (e.g., Devall & Sessions, 1985; Tobias, 1984; Naess, 1988). Naess describes a shallow ecological approach as one embodying a "management of resources" ethic, which sets humans apart from and superior to the rest of the biophysical universe. Under this approach, environmental systems are perceived as "goods" and hence become understood through the traditional economic frameworks of technocratic-industrial societies. The lens of deep ecology, in contrast, views the world while holding two fundamental norms: 1. an extended sense of identification and 2. biocentric equality. The former refers to an expanded notion of self. Naess's concept of an ecological self goes beyond interaction between self and other to include an extended sense of identification of self with other organisms and parts of the biophysical universe -- i.e., self **embedded** in social, economic and natural settings (Naess, 1987). The latter norm implies that all Nature has intrinsic worth; humans are not considered to be superior to the rest of Nature, nor can an organism's or system's existence be justified purely by its anthropocentric utility.

All features of an ecological approach, then, seem to involve interdependent **relationships** within organisms, between organisms, between organisms and their external biophysical settings and relationships at the boundaries between the organism and the "other." These networks of relationships are further embedded in time and place. An ecological epistemology would seem, therefore, to place our understanding within a context-- a context defined by the interdependent relationships established by organisms with each other and other events, within a particular biophysical setting at a particular time. Furthermore, the nature of these relationships need not be hierarchical or linear; reciprocal and emergent relationships, where an organism influences and is thereby influenced by "the other" signify circular patterns or loops as well. One must also add a value dimension to these relationships, since, as both Worster and Naess imply, a mechanistic notion of ecology is insufficient to define the nature of the relationships.

Worster found mechanistic philosophy highly compatible with the atomistic social ethic of England and America. The same individualistic worldview permeates psychology. Much as alternative views surfaced in ecology's history, psychology, too, showed the promise for a nonmechanistic ecology of behavior. One must turn to these traditions to understand both the potential and failure of early ecological models for psychology.

#### Early Precedents for Ecological Perspectives in Psychology

There were various seeds within psychology from which an ecological epistemology might develop. Two of these subdomains of the field will be briefly examined: the comparative psychology of T. C. Schneirla and the gestalt tradition.

##### 1. The Comparative Psychology of T. C. Schneirla.

Several comparative psychologists used ecological perspectives in order to understand the development and organization of behavior (ontogeny) in a wide range of species. The work of Schneirla, later in collaboration with Tobach and Rosenblatt, emphasized what these researchers referred to as a "complex mosaic" of factors in the understanding of behavior:

...It is our position that individual development and socialization are attributable to the **fusion** of maturation and experience, hence that the functional interaction of influences from structure, physiology, and experience is a far more intimate one than that conceived in conventional views which represent the 'innate' and 'acquired' as readily separable in behavior(17). Both the inseparable nature of the chief developmental factors (maturation and experience) themselves and the significant differences that exist in their patterns of relationships at different stages of individual development and at different integrative levels should be recognized by any theory for the study of social behavior. (Schneirla & Rosenblatt, 1972, p.514)

Schneirla is best known for his field studies on two species of Panamanian army ants, as well as for studies on the development and social interaction between cats and their kittens. His investigations on the raiding patterns of the doryline ants provided detailed information on the biological and environmental factors controlling this behavior. On the basis of his observations and subsequent laboratory studies, Schneirla proposed a complex feedback system involving behavioral activities, biological processes and environmental influences to explain regulation of the ant colony (Schneirla, 1972; Schneirla & Piel, 1972). Schneirla suggested that alternation by the colony of nomadic phases with nonmigratory static phases was:

...the product of reciprocal relationships between brood, worker and queen functions, and not of a special timing mechanism or 'biological clock' endogenous to the queen. The cyclic pattern of army ants therefore is based upon numerous structural, physiological, behavioral and environmental factors capable of interacting under the conditions normal to the forest environment. (Schneirla & Rosenblatt, 1972, pp.480-481)

In his other work with mammalian species, Schneirla and his colleagues also focused on the behavioral **interrelationships** between parent and offspring. The basic assumption of Schneirla and others (e.g., Schneirla, 1946, 1951; Schneirla & Rosenblatt, 1972; Tobach & Schneirla, 1968; Rosenblatt, Turkewitz & Schneirla, 1968) in explaining the complex synchronization of behavior between parent(s) and young in mammalian development is that changing relationships within and between parent and offspring account for social behavior. Rather than focusing on physiological characteristics inherent to either the parent or offspring, these researchers focused on the **patterns** of parent-young relationships arising during ontogeny. Much of Schneirla's work addressed issues of "innate" and "acquired" behavior. Rather than polarizing behavioral development in an either-or fashion, Schneirla and others couched ontogeny in terms of experience, seen as an integration of intrinsic, physiological factors and external events:

The environment does not merely elicit preorganized mechanisms of behavioral adjustment, but is itself implicated in the development of such mechanisms. (Schneirla, 1972, p.164)

The work of these researchers has had little impact on the field of psychology as a whole, mainly because their work is largely known in the areas of comparative psychology and animal behavior/ethology and not in mainstream psychology.

## 2. The Gestalt Tradition.

The gestalt tradition also sought relationships between the person and the environment. Exemplified by Koffka, Heider and Lewin, for instance, gestalt thinkers attempted to understand the ecology of behavior. Lewin's notion of "psychological ecology" is illustrative of attempts by psychology to place its subject matter **within** the environment (Lewin, 1951). In describing the nature of field theory in the social sciences, Lewin emphasized the importance of the field itself:

The structure of the organism, of the group, of the setting, or whatever name the field might have in the given case, has to be represented and the forces in various parts of the field have to be understood scientifically. The process is but the epiphenomenon, the real object of study is the constellation of forces. (173-174)

Lewin purported that reasonable predictions of behavior, or appropriate interventions, for that matter, must be based on analysis of the field as a whole, including psychological as well as non-psychological aspects. The concept of the life space was used to depict the relationship between an object and its surroundings (Lewin, 1936). Here, Lewin's intent was to discover the means to represent both the person and the environment in common terms as part of a larger total situation. His application of the mathematical discipline of topology to an understanding of "psychological regions" was an attempt to find common laws between Nature and psychological events.

However, both Lewin and another influential gestalt theorist, Fritz Heider, acknowledged that events originating outside the person assumed less importance than events having their source within the person. Heider used Angyal's term "heteronomy" to contrast government from the outside with autonomy, or self-government (Heider, 1958). On the other hand, Murray's notion of "press", as discussed by Heider, tends to provide a central position for heteronomous events. Murray conceived of press as environmental conditions to which an individual is exposed; these presses can be beneficial or harmful. Both Murray and Heider acknowledged that the world outside the person is a source of many events that are both evaluated by the person and influence personal and interpersonal behavior. Interestingly, both Murray's work and the work of others (e.g., Kelley, 1967; Jones, 1979) reveal that in understanding behavior, people tend to attribute causes of events to dispositional variables--- events originating from "inside" the person--- rather than to situational events arising from the environmental context. Ironically, this "attribution error" has operated on psychology as a discipline as well, and has tended to shift interest in the field away from the contextual aspects of behavior to a study of the self, the perceived locus of control.

Kurt Koffka (1935), also in the gestalt tradition, distinguished two very different environments: the geographical and the behavioral environment. An instructive Gestalt parable served as the basis for this distinction, a distinction that is central to ecological thinking in psychology:

On a winter evening amidst a driving snowstorm a man on horseback arrived at an inn, happy to have reached a shelter after hours of riding over the winter-swept plain on which the blanket of snow has covered all paths and landmarks. The landlord who came to the door viewed the stranger with surprise and asked him whence he came. The man pointed in

the direction straight away from the inn, whereupon the landlord, in a tone of awe and wonder, said: 'Do you know that you have ridden across the Lake of Constance?' At which the rider dropped stone dead at his feet. (Koffka, 1935, pp.27-28)

The meaning of the parable lay in Koffka's fundamental questions regarding how behaviors occur in an environment and what relationships exist between behavior and environment. For Koffka, a key to an understanding of these relationships lay in imposing order on the behavioral as well as the geographical environment:

Life and nature are brought together not by a denial of one of the most outstanding characteristics of the former but by the proof that this feature belongs to the latter also. And by this kind of integration gestalt theory contributes to that value of knowledge which we have called reverence for things animate and inanimate. Materialism accomplished the integration by robbing life of its order and thereby making us look down on life as just a curious combination of orderless events; if life is as blind as inorganic nature we must have as little respect for the one as for the other. But if inanimate nature shares with life the aspect of order, then the respect which we feel directly and unreflectively for life will spread over to inanimate nature also. (Koffka, 1935, p. 17)

Another useful gestalt contribution came from Jacob von Uexkull, reported by Thure von Uexkull (1984). Von Uexkull distinguished between two perspectives on Nature: the objective environment (the *Umgebung*) and the ambient environment (the *Umwelt* or bubble of awareness surrounding each individual). These perspectives are associated with very different outcomes. While the objective environment is a shared reality for all creatures, the individual, through such human attributes as language and subjectivity, is often separated from the *Umgebung*. In contrast, the *Umwelt* involves a partnership between the individual and Nature, the violation of which effects both the violating partners.

Jacob von Uexkull's formulation, as interpreted by Thure von Uexkull, implies that we act on the objective environment, but we perceive the ambient one. As a consequence:

We are not just users in the cycle of nature, the disturbance of which threatens our material basis of life; each of us is a part of nature, surrounded with that soap-bubble, which allows us an orientation for our activity...Our ambient therefore has the function of a second skin which cuts us off from our environment and simultaneously connects us to it. (1984, p.31)

Drawing upon the tenets of the gestalt psychologists, environmental psychology began to emerge as a bonified subdomain. Barker (1969) regarded the environment not as "... an unstructured, probabilistic, and largely passive arena ..." but rather as an eco-behavioral entity. Wicker (1979), expanding on and interpreting Barker, asserted that the environment is well structured and nested within a complex of interdependent systems; interdependence, rather than independence, is thought to typify the relationship between persons and their immediate environments. Proshansky (1976), in writing about environmental psychology, argued that this field would not rely solely on the hypothetical-deductive model that informed most of psychology; rather, he argued that an environmental psychology would

follow a holistic methodological path focusing on the absolute integrity of person/physical setting events, the distinction between behavior and the perception of behavior, the content of the relationship between person and environment, the temporal aspect of this relationship and, finally, the social, cultural and physical context of the relationship.

Ironically, the shift from theory to practice tended to shatter the gestalt or field; proponents of an ecological approach either fell prey to the attribution error by focusing on the "P" variables--cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects inherent in the person, or set rigid boundaries between the "P" variables and the "E" variables--events external to the person, including the social or physical environment. Hence, bounded phenomena, either "P" or "E" variables, became the focus, with the transactions between these entities and the examination of the boundary itself, becoming lost.

The Americanization of the European gestalt tradition further distanced this approach from its holistic roots. Many of the most influential translators of gestalt psychology had attempted a merger with behaviorism to create the highly positivistic field of social psychology. Their view of environment was objective, not ambient. Kurt Lewin was particularly concerned with the "psychological environment." He recognized environment as a source of barriers and boundaries to one's region of free movement, a realization reached during his experience in the trenches of World War I (Heider, 1959). Heider similarly viewed environment as a potential barrier, the absence of which is necessary for a person's intended action to succeed. By weighing the dispositional and situational sources of a person's behavior, one attributes causality either to person or environment (Heider, 1958). The resulting dualism is a direct embodiment of the separation of person and environment found generally in Western culture. Furthermore, central to Heider's work is the core theme of modern, Western psychology, namely the importance of personal understanding and control over the environment. Finally, Heider, much as Lewin, tended to think of environment in terms of the social rather than the physical environment.

Ecological and environmental psychology emerged from the "inside out." The world views that gained favor in the field of psychology were immersed in a subjectivist tradition that has dominated the field since the eighteenth century. Baumeister (1987), in tracing the ascendance of the concept of selfhood in Western culture, suggests that during the past two centuries, self became not only increasingly separated from the societal context, but also in conflict with society. The very means of attaining an objective approach within psychology likewise has been accomplished through the lens of the subject. Emerging from this tradition rather than from an ecological paradigm, it is no wonder that ecological psychology and environmental psychology took such an anthropocentric bent. It is through an examination of the prevailing world views in the field that one must now turn to understand both the genesis of the self-centered bias, as well as the subversion of ecological thought.

### World Views in Psychology

Both Sampson (1978, 1983) and Altman and Rogoff (1987) have examined predominant world views that have informed the field of psychology. Sampson's Paradigm I and Altman and Rogoff's review of trait, interactionist and organismic approaches provide insight into the ascendance and dominance of

self-centered biases in psychology. Altman and Rogoff (1987) have identified four world views that have predominated in psychology: trait, interactional, organismic and transactional. Trait approaches, according to these authors, are akin to Dewey and Bentley's self-action approach to knowledge and Pepper's formist world hypothesis. All three perspectives assume the existence of basic stable and inherent properties that characterize and govern phenomena. In psychology, traits identify the "essence" of the person; cognitive structures, personality and other self-centered psychological processes become central to an understanding of behavior, independent and largely impervious to physical and social contexts. Classical trait approaches are rarely used in contemporary psychological research and theory. Most traitlike theories now attempt to understand the role of situational variables in influencing personal characteristics. The role of environmental context is still regarded as a secondary factor in understanding behavior, however.

Interactional approaches, which recognize the importance of both external and internal elements for behavior, still exert the dominant force in contemporary psychology, according to Altman and Rogoff. Environmental events and situational factors have a rightful place in the construction and validation of theory. However, the nature of this interaction is mechanistic:

To use an analogy from Dewey and Bentley (1949), interactional world views treat psychological phenomena like Newtonian particles or like billiard balls. Each particle or ball exists separately from the others and has its own independent qualities. The balls or particles interact as one ball bangs into another ball, thereby altering their locations. The goal of interactional research is to study the impact of certain particles and balls (environmental and situational qualities) on other particles and balls (psychological processes and behaviors). (Altman and Rogoff, p.15)

As Altman and Rogoff point out, interactionist models also reinforce mechanistic assumptions by regarding the observer as separate from the thing observed. Such an approach is highly compatible with traditional scientific procedures that demand objectivity, data replication and the discovery of immutable general laws. Psychology's adoption of the natural science model, with its assumptions about the timeless, universal and acontextual nature of psychological principles or laws provided Sampson (1977, 1978, 1983) with the framework for his critique of this "pure" psychology. For Sampson, it is the societal norms, or what he refers to as "the common currency and orthodoxy of the time" (1983, p.16), that have infused psychology with its particular ideals. The grounding of psychological theory in a historical-cultural context is seen most clearly, perhaps, in the ideal of independence. Interactionist perspectives that regard variables as separate, independent elements foster internal cognitive models that value autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency. Interdependence, foreign to this perspective, becomes perceived as a character flaw. This individualistic ideal becomes the field's standard for gauging mental health. Sampson (1978) notes:

In general, our contemporary views of mental health emphasize a self-contained, individualistic ideal: The person who possesses all the qualities from whatever listing of positive traits we choose. For example, self-actualization, autonomy, or mastery (Jahoda, 1958). We have difficulty in thinking of these traits as functions that can be located within

an interdependent collectivity rather than within the single individual. Thus, the burden for good health is the individual's; he or she must come to possess all that is good and desirable. (p.775)

It is both the legacy of trait perspectives and the continued emphasis of independent person variables in the prevailing interactionist world view that have helped shape psychology's ideals. The notion of individual mastery permeates a myriad of psychological topics and has driven the content, structure and interpretations in contemporary psychology. Besides the domains of personality and mental health, Sampson (1977, 1983) provides further examples from equity theory, androgyny and moral development.

The next perspective, organismic world views, rejects the analytic framework of an interactionist approach, focusing on **relationships** between personal and environmental variables. The totality of complex and reciprocal relationships among elements within a system---the "whole"---is the unit of study and is characterized by emergent properties that are not evident by an analysis of the individual elements comprising the whole. The gestalt tradition that exerted such a strong influence on environmental/ecological psychology reflected an organismic worldview. However, as Altman and Rogoff note:

Although the whole cannot be completely described in terms of its parts---that is, one could not predict the nature of the whole in advance from knowledge of the properties of its parts---an eventual understanding of the whole does permit a better understanding of its parts and of the relation of the parts to the whole. (1987, p.19)

Proponents of organismic views still adhere in their research and theory to scientific conventions of objectivity, replicability of findings and generation of universal principles. In his critique of the values inherent in the naturalistic conception of science, Sampson (1978) notes that psychology has mirrored the epistemology of the natural sciences. Roughly akin to Altman and Rogoff's interactionist and organismic worldviews, Sampson calls this approach Paradigm I. The goal of this perspective is to arrive at abstract and universal principles. Additionally, it abstracts or removes the knower from what is known, regarding the outcome of this objective procedure as the derivation of "pure" facts.

Sampson's evaluation of the works of Merton, Mannheim, Rossides and others has led to his assessment that Paradigm I science was borne and fostered by the Protestant ethic and capitalistic society. A consequence of the liberal, Protestant worldview, according to Sampson, was the value placed on individualism:

As Ratner (1973) and Merton (1957) have suggested, the individualistic thesis places the burden of responsibility on the individual's own experience and understanding; salvation as well as social control are based on individual efforts, instruction and study. Individualism also facilitated the development of an analytic and atomistic scientific model. Just as the natural universe was composed of basic and fundamental elements, society itself was broken down into its constituent elements, namely, individuals. (1978, p.1336)

Notions of interdependency become anomalies to Paradigm I thinking. Interestingly, Sampson sees the Kantian emphasis on

the primacy of reason and mentation as the prevailing view in psychology and the source of the field's subjectivist bias, what he refers to as a "truncated subjectivism":

In the cognitivist versions of psychology, the subject stands forth as primary: the actor is abstracted from the contexts of action; any substantial reality to the material world is reduced to subject-dominated categories. I refer to this as psychology's truncated subjectivism. Its truncation is revealed in its identity of subject and object. (1983, p.87)

With truncated subjectivism, mental transformations or events of the person are thought to determine the understanding of material events. According to Sampson (1983) such an approach precludes a "subject-object dialectic" (p.88). He regards Piaget's notions of assimilation --accomodation as possibly coming closest to achieving this dialectic, although Piaget still paints mentation as dominant, since his developmental stages increasingly rely on abstract principles and increasingly abstract conceptions of objects.

It is Paradigm II, in Sampson's scheme, that allows knowledge to be regarded as time- and place-bound, embedded in specific and changing contexts (Sampson, 1978). He draws on Wilden's ecosystem models to allow interdependency between the individual and the "other"--- Nature (Sampson, 1983). The present distorting ideology, which abstracts/extracts people from the larger ecosystem is bound to lead to destruction of the environment; people fail to perceive the importance of the relational unit and therefore overexploit Nature and, inadvertently, themselves. The alternative framework for psychology that underlies a Paradigm II approach, what Sampson refers to as "critical systems theory," is rooted in the works of Dewey and Bentley and in Maruyama's mindscapes (Sampson, 1983). Such an approach is also reflected in two recent perspectives in psychology, Altman and Rogoff's transactional worldview and Rosnow and Georgoudi's contextualism.

#### Alternative Perspectives: Transactionalist and Contextualist

Altman and Rogoff define the transactional approach as "...the study of the changing relations among psychological and environmental aspects of holistic unities" (1987, p. 24). Unlike the organismic approach, which concerns itself with an understanding of reciprocal relationships among elements, a transactional worldview regards the person/environment whole as "...composed of inseparable aspects that simultaneously and conjointly define the whole" (p.24). Altman and Rogoff's use of the term "aspect" is not synonymous with the "part" or "element" in an interactionist framework; the latter imply independent units that operate in a linear or reciprocal fashion, while the former term implies dependent and mutually defining features of a system, constantly in flux.

A transactional approach strives to understand how person and environment co-exist and conjointly define and create each other within broader temporal and spatial relationships:

Whereas organismic world views define each component of a system separately and examine their relationships in order to understand the whole system, transactional world views define every aspect of psychological wholes in terms of one another, not as separate elements. The relations among

aspects of the whole exist, therefore, in their very definition, not in the influences of separate variables on one another. (1987, p. 25)

In transactional approaches, universal regulatory principles are not stressed, although psychological events can still be seen as purposive, intentional and directed toward a final outcome or goal. Such goals and purposes are not reflected in the limited, invariant principles that typify organicist perspectives, but can be regarded as dynamic, changing notions that are best understood within a particular time, place and culture.

Similarly, Rosnow and Georgoudi (1986), in their contextualist approach to psychological knowledge, see human actions as "...embedded in a context of time, space, culture and the local tacit rules of conduct" (p.4). The authors point out that while organismic and trait theories regard purposive action as an inherent property of characteristics or systems within the individual, a contextualist approach perceives purposive or goal-directed behavior as a function of interpersonal relationships. Patterns of interrelationships, rather than individual traits, account for the construction and definition of self.

The use of transactional models in the research of environmental psychologists was discussed by Altman and Rogoff. They point to cross-cultural perspectives that have grounded the settings within a web of history, meaning and place. Amos Rapoport's complex use of the term "environment" in describing physical settings in various cultures; Saile's work on understanding the meaning of homes to the Pueblo cultures; the "environmental autobiographies" of Rowles, where residents' attitudes, perceptions, feelings and attachments to place are understood within the context of social relationships that change over time; and the work of Stokols and his colleagues, where a "taxonomy of place" examines the physical properties of a setting in conjunction with the psychological, sociocultural and subjective meanings attributed to place (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). Rosnow and Georgoudi provide examples from many subdomains of psychology; Lerner and Lerner's "goodness of fit" model presumes that the **relationship** between the child and his or her context, rather than individual attributes of the child or setting *per se*, inform us about adaptive development within a given point in time. A contextualist position in personality theory, too, is examined. Traditionally guided by interactionist views that espouse relatively enduring, stable characteristics of the person, personality theory can benefit from approaches that attempt to understand how shifting contexts and timeframes within which people **interact** can reveal the malleable or "volatile" nature of personality (Rosnow and Georgoudi, 1986).

Lykes's examination of women's experiences and perceptions of self also proposed an alternative framework for understanding the self. Rather than formulating notions of self that imply an autonomous, individual entity, Lykes's model proposes a "self-in-relation"---i.e., social interactions, especially within gender-specific and sociocultural contexts, contribute to how notions of the self are constituted (Lykes, 1985). Lykes offers a model of self which maintains individuality while embedding the self in social interaction; she calls her synthesis "social individuality." This view, which grounds one's sense of self in collective experiences and links the sense of self with lived experiences, seeks to go beyond traditional interactionist views in order to understand the interpenetration of subject and object.

## Implications for an Ecological Epistemology in Psychology

As long as interactionist or, at best, organismic views continue to dominate the field of psychology, the inseparable link between person and "other"---be it Nature or social relationships---cannot be adequately understood. Approaches that reinforce a self-centered ethos will fail to truly understand person-environment relationships and will inadvertently lead to the erosion of interactive systems. By abstracting individuals from the larger ecosystem, people may fail to perceive the importance of the relational unit; Sampson writes:

Basically, if in the name of its own survival an organism destroys its environment or its "other" (e.g., through exploitive human relationships), it lays the foundation for its self-destruction. Any organism that destroys what it takes to be opposite to itself (e.g., the environment, nature, others) destroys itself in the process. (1983, p.124)

The kind of ecological model that one chooses will determine whether interactionist or transactionist world views prevail. Odum's notion of an ecological system is akin to field theory; the emergent properties result "...from the functional interaction of the components" (p.30). Although properties arise that cannot be predicted from the study of isolated components, the parts still become a major area of focus within this systems approach. Wilden's (1980) ecosystem model of communication is defined primarily within a transactionalist context:

Epistemology is a question of where you draw the line, and there are only a restricted number of loci through which to draw it... The line drawn between 'organism' and 'environment' by our conventional model of reality is such a line, and, like all such lines it is a fiction. Unfortunately, we think that it is real. (p.219)

The models that we construct to understand human development have typically been the same systems we use to understand the universe. If we continue to fall prey to the fundamental attribution error and to ascribe major importance to our self-contained actions, it will be difficult to establish a true partnership with the "other," be it Nature or society. We need to expand both our theoretical and research frameworks to allow the possibility to understand self-in-Nature, rather than to perpetuate a self-Nature dichotomy. A comprehensive ecological epistemology seems to be possible in the field of psychology, given new developments in transactional and contextualist perspectives. Human behavior, when perceived as disconnected from the ambient environment, frees people to act in a way that separates the person from context and consequences. The basic conception that humans are separate from Nature and free to dominate it for their own ends has been deeply engrained in our dominant social paradigm (see White, 1967; Devall & Sessions, 1985; Pirages, 1978; Milbrath, 1984). Psychology has reinforced such notions. Just like the rider on Lake Constance, we think we are on solid ground; but perceptions vary from reality. The array of global environmental and social problems indicate that we are on shaky ground indeed.

Psychologists have pointed out that, as perceiving subjects, what we see is not always what is; as a field, we have the responsibility to examine and challenge our own perceptions about how we see the world. The task of an ecological psychology is to provide both the context for understanding our illusions and the



momentum to explore the richness and complexity of the relationship of person-in-Nature. A new environmental ethic may be based not just on the way we act toward the biosocial and biophysical universe, but also on how we understand the nature of the relationship between the two.

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## WORLD VIEWS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Gilbert F. LaFreniere

### I. Introduction:

#### World Views and the Philosophy of History

The majority of individuals living in any culture are motivated by a particular world view, "some profound cosmological outlook, implicitly accepted, impressing its own type upon the current springs of action."<sup>1</sup> As cultures develop and assimilate the ideas and institutions of other cultures or of earlier stages of their own development, complex and synergetic world views evolve. Such is the climate of thought within which we function in the late twentieth century: a ferment of beliefs in the great religions, scientific and technological progress, inevitable economic growth, and most recently, in insurmountable ecological restrictions to human activities and in the possibility of a new philosophy and ethics of Nature. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the study of world views and philosophies of history is a prerequisite to effective public education in environmental ethics. The study of world views indicates that an ailing civilization should consider the causes of cultural illness rather than simply treat the environmental problems which are its symptoms.

During the 1970's, a shift of interest from environmental preservation and maintenance of environmental quality to concern for appropriate technologies defined a major watershed in the environmental movement.<sup>2</sup> Following the energy crisis and its attendant preoccupation with economic problems, public commitment to the original goals of the movement diminished, perhaps due in part to the lack of credibility of environmental writers, who depicted unrealistically short time spans for environmental degradation. Another factor was the setting by Congress of unachievable deadlines for rehabilitation of the environment.

Can alternative technologies be integrated into a society in which little change will occur in fundamental values which influence the treatment of Nature? Although soft energy alternatives may be ecologically preferable, it is also important to change the outlook and social behavior of people who will be using energy. Cultural values -- ideals, customs, and institutions which evolve out of the particular historical experience of a society living in a specific geographic area -- usually require generations to develop. Once established, however, cultural values may perpetuate themselves in relatively rigid patterns for many centuries, as in the case of religions. Thus, social behavior learned during an era of abundance may cause great harm later, as resources are squandered in the pursuit of economic growth.

It is probable that a change in values associated with the emergence of a new, ecological world view will be slow and difficult.

Changes in values and behavior related to Nature would require the jettisoning of certain existing attitudes based upon beliefs about physical and metaphysical reality. A thoroughgoing change in our relations with the natural world would necessitate, moreover, that the present complex of world views held by Western civilization be replaced by a new world view based upon ecological principles. This opinion has been expressed eloquently in William Ophuls' *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity*.<sup>3</sup> In order to assess the practicability of hopes for radical cultural transformation, we need to understand the structure of the present Western world view.

A world view includes an explanation of God, Nature, humanity, society, and history, and thus includes a philosophy of history.<sup>4</sup> The speculative philosophy of history, as opposed to critical philosophy of history or the historian's craft, attempts to formulate universal principles based upon the recognition of patterns in history. Although formal philosophers maintain that philosophies of history cannot be proven logically, such conceptions have always enjoyed widespread popular belief.

In Western civilization, Christianity is the religious nucleus about which a complex configuration of values and institutions has developed since the early Middle Ages. Two distinct but interacting patterns of events have characterized the evolution of Western civilization. First of all, Christianity has displayed an impressive ability to adapt itself to changing social conditions through the reformulation of dogma and the creation of new institutions. Secondly, the culture of Western Europe has demonstrated an unparalleled capacity for scientific discovery supporting technological innovation and concomitant economic development. The long term interaction of these two powerful forces, a protean religion and an irresponsible technological and scientific drive towards increased control of Nature, has produced affluence and self-confidence on the one hand, but an embarrassment of social and environmental ills on the other.

Since Lynn White, Jr.'s 1967 essay, "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,"<sup>5</sup> intellectuals have debated the merits of Western Christian culture as opposed to other cultures regarding attitudes and behavior toward the environment. Rene Dubos' *The Woeing of Earth* (1980) attempted to absolve Christianity and the West of environmental guilt by noting that virtually all cultures have more or less severely impacted their surrounding environments.<sup>6</sup> What appears to be lacking in most such rebuttals of White's thesis is any clear sense of the considerable in-

teraction which has occurred between competing philosophies of history within the Western tradition. From classical antiquity to the present, ideas of cycles, providence, and progress have competed for the support of Western intellectuals. All three of these essential components of Western world views have been seriously entertained in the twentieth century, although the ideas of providence and progress have dominated popular belief.

Now, the possibility of a new world view presents itself as an outgrowth of ecological knowledge. Political philosophers, sociologists, religious leaders and historians continue to write books about the new value systems required to bring about environmental reform, but without having made clear the obfuscating tangle of beliefs about ultimate historical reality which inhibits formation of an ecologically-based world view. It is possible that such an ecological world view can be established, but it will not come about without understanding the various meanings of history which Western humans have constructed.

## II. Philosophies of History in the World Views of the Western Tradition: Cycles, Providence and Progress

It is arguable that the Western European civilization which has existed for the past millennium is a culture quite distinct from Classical civilization, a fact illustrated by the enormous difference in philosophical attitude between them. The central concept of any world view involves an explanation of the perceived relationship between culture and Nature, or, in other words, between human beings and the environment. Interpretations of this relationship are strongly conditioned by the prevailing philosophy of history. What is common to the Greek philosophers and their Roman successors is the view that human history is either a pattern of cyclical recurrence or a meaningless flux of events.

### The Idea of Cycles: The Dominant World View of Classical Antiquity

The classical historian J.B. Bury has asserted that the cyclical world view "was so widely current that it may almost be described as the orthodox theory of cosmic time among the Greeks, and it passed from them to the Romans."<sup>8</sup> Related to this view was the idea of *Moirai* (loosely translated as "fate"), which meant "... a fixed order in the universe ... to which men must bow ..."<sup>9</sup> For the Greeks, the natural environment was "... the sphere of activity of the gods."<sup>10</sup> Explicit attempts of people to change the natural order of things, particularly by any major physical alteration, was punishable by the gods as *hubris*, the sin of excessive pride and confidence. While hesitant to tamper with Nature, the Greeks nevertheless took satisfaction in the beauties of the natural environment, and were even aware of the effects of ecological imbalance, as illustrated by Plato's observations on deforestation and soil erosion due to overgrazing of the hills of his native Attica.<sup>11</sup> Plato also formulated a chronology for cycles of cultural decay and renewal.

The city state or *polis* was the glory and tragedy of high Hellenic culture. The failure of the *polis* culminated in the Peloponnesian War and the transmutation of Greek secularism into a tradition of metaphysical idealism dominated by Plato. The submergence of the independent Greek *polis* into the Hellenistic empires, including Rome, was accompanied by a concentration of large populations in urban centers such as Antioch and Alexandria. Warfare and slavery lowered living standards of the

masses. As Rome declined during the three centuries after Christ -- the result of climatic change, environmental degradation, disease, cultural decadence, and the pressure of bordering nomadic peoples -- Christianity emerged in the same milieu of oppression and suffering as did mystery religions and proselytizing philosophies.

### Providence and the Medieval World View

What is regarded by Christians as a rise of religious passion in declining Rome has been characterized by secular humanists as "a failure of nerve." The essence of the new world view of the Christianized Roman Empire is succinctly summarized by Gilbert Murray:

Anyone who turns away from the great writers of classical Athens, say Sophocles or Aristotle, to those of the Christian era must be conscious of a great difference in tone. There is a change in the whole relation of the writer to the world about him ... It is a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort; a despair of patient inquiry, a cry for infallible revelation; an indifference to the welfare of the state, a conversion of the soul to God.<sup>12</sup>

For a thousand years the actions, art, and thought of Western Europe were dominated by the Christian world view and its essential concept of time, the idea of providence. As an organizing principle of history, the latter idea implied that life on Earth is a vale of tears in which human souls are tested until the day of judgment. The natural environment is a stage upon which the cosmic drama of sin, redemption and salvation is played. Nature, the Great Chain of Being, is intrinsically good since it is God's creation. Christian ideas about the environment owe much to the Judaic tradition, particularly the ideas of creation and "human dominion over and stewardship of the natural world, with ultimate responsibility to the Creator."<sup>13</sup> Although God's creation is good, Christians are nevertheless urged to worship God rather than the things of this world. This emphasis raises the question that if Nature is given only a derivative value, how seriously can Christians take the destruction of the natural environment? Furthermore, if the natural environment is to be destroyed or transformed to a "new heaven and a new earth"<sup>14</sup> with the Apocalypse and Last Judgment, would Christians not find the ultimate destruction of the existing environment acceptable as part of the scheme of things? Expectations of a more perfect Cosmos in the millennial future certainly do not encourage preservation of the old, imperfect natural environment.

The providential world view was comprehensively formulated by Saint Augustine in the *City of God*. According to his theory, "... the whole movement of history has the purpose of securing the happiness of a small portion of the human race in another world."<sup>15</sup> It posits a beginning of history (the creation) and an end (the Last Judgment), and thus is both linear and teleological. These elements were to be integrated into the modern idea of progress.

### The Modern World View and the Idea of Progress

The accumulating achievements of Western technology, and the development of the scientific method in the seventeenth century, led to reassertion of humanist and secularist values and a new world view successfully challenged the long established providential view of reality. It gave rise to a new philosophy of

history, the idea of progress, which proposes "that civilization has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction."<sup>16</sup> The elements of linearity and teleology introduced in the Christian scheme of history were integrated into the new world view: "Providence could assume a disguise as 'natural law,' and St. Augustine's City of God became the human race progressing culturally and materially."<sup>17</sup>

The "desirable direction" towards which mankind is supposedly progressing has generally been construed as an increase in human knowledge, human happiness, or both. The concept of progress involved continued expansion of human knowledge of the environment. Thus, like the classical idea of cycles and the medieval idea of providence, the idea of progress is a philosophy of history or organizing principle entailing a determinable pattern of events.

Sociologist Robert Nisbet, in his *History of the Idea of Progress* (1980), attempts to prove that the idea of progress has been the thematic philosophy of history in the Western tradition since classical antiquity. But only elements of the idea of progress can be recognized in classical and medieval thought.<sup>18</sup> Nisbet's work is politically conservative and anti-environmentalist in tone, arguing for a revival of faith in a progressivism based upon rapid economic growth.<sup>19</sup>

The appearance of the modern idea of progress in the seventeenth century would not have been possible outside of the optimistic intellectual climate of opinion produced by the scientific revolution. In its earliest formulation by Bernard de Fontenelle, the idea of progress emphasized the inevitability of the social accumulation of knowledge. Fontenelle was also aware of the contributions of science to society, which he evaluated as "a principle for social progress."<sup>20</sup> Social and moral improvement based upon the accumulation of knowledge was for Fontenelle a distinct possibility but not a certainty. It remained for two younger Frenchmen, A.R.J. Turgot and the Marquis de Condorcet, to state emphatically that progress, in social values and morals as well as in knowledge, was a necessary outcome of human nature. Turgot and Condorcet thus provided the modern world with the myth of the inevitability of progress, particularly the notion that progress is immanent in the historical process itself, thereby representing a secular manifestation of Cosmic will.

The last two centuries fell heir to the belief in inevitable progress, which has dominated historical conceptions of the West until recent decades, in spite of a mounting accumulation of contrary evidence. The idea of progress survived the social abuses of the nineteenth century and even the disasters of World Wars I and II by shifting focus from general social progress based upon the achievements of science and technology to a preoccupation with material and economic progress alone, regardless of their social and moral consequences. The seeds for this reductionist vision of progress had been sown during the Enlightenment by French and English economists, who argued that human happiness, the goal of progress, "consists in the greatest possible abundance of objects suitable to our enjoyment and in the greatest liberty to profit by them."<sup>21</sup> Adam Smith's "hidden hand" of the free market place has been guiding us along the path of "progress" ever since. Although such ideas were fruitful during an era of ecological abundance, they are clearly outmoded in our own era of ecological scarcity.<sup>22</sup> There exists, however, another conception of human progress which also has its roots in the French Enlightenment and which may assist us in for-

mulating a new world view appropriate to an era of diminishing resources and amenities.

Midway through the eighteenth century, the *philosophe* Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote three *Discourses* which challenged the prevailing view that human morals would improve gradually with the accumulation of knowledge, improved technology, and material wealth. Rousseau maintained that the social changes associated with such developments would corrupt behavior and morals by appealing to human pride and competitiveness at the expense of feelings of empathy and fraternity. He saw the virtues of cooperation and community challenged by a dehumanizing competition for wealth and status, long before the Industrial Revolution made such conditions a reality. The antidote to the poisonous social effects of the process of rapid cultural development was, for Rousseau, twofold. First of all, human beings must not allow their understanding and application of physical laws to overshadow their primary responsibility as human beings: to know themselves and to understand human nature as a basis for creating the good society. Secondly, people must avoid living in massive, commercialized agglomerations, but instead decrease their material wants and live cooperatively in small agrarian communities within which the sense of the common good (or general will, as Rousseau termed it) of the community is accessible to all citizens.<sup>23</sup>

Rousseau's conception of progress is based upon the construction of an ideal model of society (an idea of what society ought to be with a given knowledge of the nature of man) as a goal towards which man can work, and which might be refined and improved with further knowledge of human nature. Whereas Fontenelle had emphasized the accumulation of scientific knowledge, and Turgot and Condorcet had stressed the immanence of progress in history, Rousseau's progressive vision was an exercise in utopian thought. Like Plato's *Republic*, St. Benedict's *Rule for Monks* and Thomas More's *Utopia*, Rousseau's writing was critical of an existing society and concerned with the construction of a better society. Although utopian thinkers vary in their objectives, they have in common the purpose of envisioning a world in which humans would somehow be improved, whether spiritually, in morality, or in their social relations. Movement towards such utopian goals would be a kind of progress in that utopias "... have served as a flash of perfection ahead, enticing man to strive for it, to improve his way of life."<sup>24</sup>

In summary, three ideas of progress grew out of the thought of the Enlightenment. These include Fontenelle's idea of the progress of scientific knowledge, Turgot and Condorcet's belief in historically determined progress as a substitute for the Christian millennium, and Rousseau's use of utopian models as a principle of progress. To these three ideas of progress I have given the terms scientific, millenarian, and utopian, respectively.<sup>25</sup> Many of our contemporaries still believe in the scientific and millenarian ideas of progress, although others have abandoned these conceptions of progress in the face of two world wars and the threat of nuclear holocaust. Both the scientific and millenarian ideas of progress implicitly assume that environmental problems will be solved in the course of scientific and technological development. Only the utopian idea of progress acknowledges the end or goal of progress to be undetermined and subject to control by human choices. This is evidenced in Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* as a model in the tradition of utopian progressivism. As we approach the twenty-first century, such

models will increasingly attract the attention of economists and politicians in search of guides to the future. As ecologically ethical principles are implemented over long periods of time a new world view incorporating utopian progressivism is likely to displace the outmoded scientific and millenarian beliefs in progress. However, during the period of transition to an era of scarcity, it is likely that fears generated by the loss of faith in material progress will reinforce those psychological tendencies which buttress belief in the idea of providence. Thus, the new world view may arise within the context of a modified idea of providence.

### III. World Views in the New Context of Environmental Ethics

Environmental ethics is a field of study still in the process of defining itself. This is so because only in recent decades have people generally become aware of the moral significance of the environmental consequences of their actions. Aldo Leopold's *Sand Country Almanac* (1949) seems to be the preferred starting point for the formal exploration of environmental ethics, because he suggests responsible treatment of Nature for its own intrinsic value as well as for prudential reasons.<sup>26</sup> The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess set these two motives for environmental ethics in opposition as shallow ecology contrasted with deep ecology.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the present variety of ideas concerning environmental ethics can best be considered as a spectrum of positions, concepts, and goals arranged between the extreme of shallow ecology as a position designed to maintain the existing cultural paradigm of the technological society through environmental management, and the opposite pole of deep ecology as requiring a cultural transformation and change in world view, including abandonment of the idea of progress (in its scientific and millenarian modes). Certainly, recurring and overlapping environmental dichotomies have been with us overtly since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Rousseau vs. Voltaire; Jeffersonian agrarian democracy vs. Hamiltonian industrialism; John Muir vs. Gifford Pinchot; or in general terms, Nature vs. culture; steady-state vs. economic growth; preservationism vs. conservationism.

The ecologist David Ehrenfeld has enriched our analysis of shallow versus deep ecology with his study of the anthropocentric-ecocentric dichotomy in *The Arrogance of Humanism*. Ehrenfeld's indictment of modern secular humanism as arrogant and unrealistically anthropocentric is an expanded critique of the assumption that human reason and its offspring, science and technology, are capable of solving the ecological, cultural, and social problems which humans have created for themselves in recent centuries. The essential manifestation of our anthropocentric world view is the technological society, with its utopian promises of efficient, rational manipulation of nature-as-machine. The ideology central to this world view is the modern idea of progress. Ehrenfeld concludes that "there has been too much progress," by which he really means process or development without long-term amelioration, aimed towards partial solutions which generate unintended consequences.<sup>28</sup>

A pattern emerges of dramatic technological innovations always accompanied by a general and logical belief in more dramatic innovations yet to come. The degree and kind of expectation vary -- no one person can sum it up. Humanity is

on the march; earth itself is left behind.<sup>29</sup>

The views of John Passmore in *Man's Responsibility for Nature* are typical of the shallow ecology end of the spectrum of environmental ethics. Passmore argued that we need to expand the moral consciousness of Western civilization to include nature as well as culture as subject to moral judgment. However, he saw no need for a transformation of Western culture and its anthropocentric world view. Nature should be cared for and preserved for the sake of humanity, not for its own sake.<sup>30</sup>

Shallow, anthropocentric ecologists and deep, ecocentric ecologists need to arrive at a common basis for environmental education and action. Both the party of humanity and the party of nature may have to accept that the basis for normative judgments applied to nature should be "a set of rules for man's behavior based upon the limits and obligations imposed by natural ecosystems."<sup>31</sup>

The recognition of our growing knowledge of ecology as a basis for expanded and revised ethical judgment contains a challenge and a threat to existing ethical norms which grew out of an anthropocentric morality. The humanistic, Christian, and scientific traditions contributing to our present pattern of ethical norms gave rise to the world views emphasizing historical perspectives of cycles, providence and progress. Today it is a cliché that the values of classical humanism revived during the Renaissance have all but vanished from Western civilization, leaving only institutional forms to be filled with new cultural contents. The legacies of Christianity and the scientific revolution are alive and well, thereby providing our own age with revitalized rationalizations for the significance and truth of the ideas of providence and progress. Neither Christianity nor science, however, has been spared the influence of economics during the past two centuries. The revolution in economics, particularly the development of the free market system expressed in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is considered by Robert Heilbroner to be the most powerful force to shape modern society, "fundamentally more disturbing by far than the French, American, or the Russian Revolutions."<sup>32</sup> Only in this context of the domination of modern world views by economic growth can we grasp the dynamic changes in content and function of the ideas of providence and progress which have occurred since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution.

The economic materialism depicted in Robert L. Heilbroner's *The Worldly Philosophers* and later work<sup>33</sup> deserves recognition as the most dynamic component in the world view of the modern West, a world view much in debt to Protestant theology but now able to stand on its own in a secular culture, which allows simultaneous belief in the idea of providence and in economic growth as progress. Many people living in Western societies today adhere to Christianity and are also well-informed as to the "virtues" of self-interest and free enterprise, but how many are aware of the responsibilities to posterity implied by the scientific or utopian ideas of progress, ideas which are a part of the intellectual legacy of the Enlightenment? Even further distant from the popular mind are ecocentric arguments for our ethical obligations towards Nature.<sup>34</sup>

### IV. A Look at the Future

The major impediment to the formulation of an ecological world view has its origins in the arrogance towards Nature as-

sociated with the judaeo-Christian tradition, just as Lynn White, Jr. postulated in 1967. Moreover, Western anthropocentrism has been magnified by the triumphs of the scientific, industrial and technological revolutions. The institutionalization of these achievements has created the most powerful obstacle directly resisting development of a new world view today: the ideology of economic growth which falsely claims to represent an idea of human progress. With the separation of capitalism from its Calvinist roots in the course of the last two centuries, a substantial number of people in America and Europe have learned to view the world through a curious double standard. Economic activity and religious beliefs each allow for highly individualistic behavior which is often contradictory. The accepted rule of modern society is that the two are basically unrelated. Undoubtedly, this convenient compartmentalization of ideas owes much to the dualism of Rene Descartes, who gave scientists philosophical permission to explore and exploit the natural world as a spiritless mechanism, set in motion by a deity transcendently isolated from his creation.<sup>35</sup> Whatever one's beliefs concerning God's relation to Nature, religion, once the keystone of Western culture, has been displaced by economic expediency as the primary arbiter of social behavior.

In sharp contrast to the hierarchical concentration of wealth and power in both democratic capitalism and industrial socialism, the social requirements of a steady-state society, developed in response to increasing ecological scarcity, are likely to include a degree of economic as well as social and political equality.<sup>36</sup> If, as William Ophuls has argued, existing American freedoms, including political democracy and the ideal of individualism, owe much to an era of abundant resources, then different social values, including increased authority of the state to enforce environmentally sound economic activity and reviewed individual concern for the welfare of one's own community, should arise as manifestations of "Metanoia, ... a fundamental transformation of world view."<sup>37</sup> In the short term, this transformation is likely to be at the level of shallow ecology. I think that it is highly optimistic to expect a deep ecology belief system to evolve even in the long run.<sup>38</sup>

The ideologists of economic materialism, posing as prophets of progress, have succeeded to such a degree in convincing most of us of the inherent worth of economic individualism, unlimited technological innovation, and economic growth that few citizens are aware of the real causes for the existence of institutions and mental habits, which have grown up during three centuries of unparalleled resource exploitation and cultural revolution. Ideas do have consequences. The majority of Americans has been indoctrinated with a set of rationalizations which explain the effects of a relatively brief era in Western history as an infallible social philosophy which will produce the same abundance if applied in the future and in the Third World. Thus, it is a faith based upon the historically recent technological and economic successes of the West, and the economic ideology apparently responsible for those successes, which stand in the way of building an ecologically and morally responsible culture in the decades and centuries ahead.<sup>39</sup>

A prerequisite for **metanoia** might be a succession of economic failures as attempts to apply the old capitalist ideology and institutions (and their Marxist variants) to the new conditions of ecological scarcity meet with gradually tightening ecosystem constraints and shortages of minerals, fossil fuels, water and recreational space. In conjunction with a declining standard of

living due to increasing absolute costs of most goods, our inability to solve resource and environmental quality problems will lead to more serious consideration of political, social, technological, and economic alternatives, but the responses are more likely to be prudential than moral. An economic party of the environment, anticipated by E.F. Schumacher and Robert Heilbroner, will gather strength as the existing world trade system proves its inability to cope with a changed world.

A disconcerting series of political and economic failures will cause increased suffering and alienation of the lower classes of America and Europe. Members of all social classes are likely to become more attached to religious beliefs offering personal salvation as Western optimism succumbs to a failure of nerve, a loss of faith in established secular ideals and institutions not unlike that which was experienced in the late Roman empire. Increasingly, the Third World will also pose a severe threat to the West, as it rapidly overruns its ecological carrying capacity. The likelihood that survivalist groups, mystical cults, political demagogues, and the power of military forces will thrive in such a social climate has led some futurists to envision a coming "dark age" in which some form of monastic community may be required to preserve the best of our cultural heritage through a period of troubles.<sup>40</sup> If this brief hint at some probable aspects of life in the twenty-first century seems too pessimistic, the possibility of nuclear warfare should remind us that it is not a worst-case scenario.

A potentially positive aspect of the coming age of cultural transformation is that, peaceably or violently, population growth and resource use will eventually stabilize and decline, eventually ushering in a drastically changed world of societies adjusted to the limited carrying capacity of the planet. The most important characteristics of this new world will not be the kinds of soft technologies which are used but the religious, political, social and economic context within which they are applied. Unfortunately, the longer the transition takes, the more devastating will be the environmental degradation and reduction in carrying capacity. If planned for now and quickly implemented, these new societies could exist in a steady state at a reasonable level of amenity. Otherwise, they are likely to deteriorate to survivalist polities or tribes living in a worse than Hobbesian state of nature.

The proliferation of value systems, including that of economic materialism, in contemporary Westernized societies is evidence of the dissolution of old world views. A moral vacuum is created, since ethical behavior, including the virtue of cooperation, has usually been taught by religious institutions applying a particular world view to daily activities. Such traditional values are in conflict with the imperatives of both capitalist and socialist industrial societies. Given such a conflict of values, the new environmental ethics will be learned and implemented with great difficulty. The power of religious fundamentalism and economic ideology to resist the teaching of an ecological basis for social, economic and political reform is enormous. Most men are assured by established "truths" rather than the search for truth. As the British writer Colin Wilson put it: "Truth, it seemed, had no power of intensifying life, only of destroying the illusions that make life tolerable."

How then, can we overcome the inertia of outmoded world views and their environmentally damaging effects of population growth, rapid consumption of resources, destruction of wilderness, and environmental pollution? As a citizen and environ-

mental professional in Santa Barbara, California during the 1960s and '70s, I was much impressed with the educational role played by the Santa Barbara Community Environmental Council. In keeping with the national trend since the late 1970s there has been a shift in emphasis in their activities from the teaching of ecological values and environmental politics to showing how environmentally sound technologies can be integrated into our society. I see this trend in the environmental movement as a potentially harmful one. The environmental crisis is clearly part of a larger cultural crisis which can be resolved only by fundamental changes in the values and attitudes which reflect the outmoded world views of the modern West. As citizens we must take more seriously our increasing responsibility for the common good of society in the context of ecological limits to economic growth. However, to implement environmental ethics, we must move beyond this merely prudential, instrumental view to reconsider our ethical obligations to Nature. Once these responsibilities are realized by our mass cultures, if ever, population growth, conventional economic growth, consumerism, and the destruction of ecosystems will be looked upon as immoral. There are two ways in which we can take responsible action now to effect positive change.

First of all, the academic community must infuse political debate with questions of environmental ethics in order that the implicitly assumed value systems of citizens be made explicit, thereby opening and expanding public debate concerning the deeper meaning of environmental problems. A perusal of contemporary newspapers and magazines suggests that we are continuing to treat environmental symptoms without seriously considering the cultural, social and economic shifts necessary to insure the transition to an environmentally benign society. Fears of economic disaster and social unrest make serious debate over these concerns unthinkable to such conservers of the status quo as most professional politicians and businessmen, the power elite of our society. Secondly, given the inertia of existing educational, social, economic, and political systems on the one hand and the dehumanizing and anti-ecological imperatives of our technological society on the other, ethically enlightened and responsible citizens must also implement a private and local course of action. We need to build active community environmental councils as centers for teaching new values as well as the use of new appropriate technologies.

The philosophers George Sessions and Henryk Skolimowski have recently explained how contemporary education, i.e., the "educational establishment," is impoverished at two levels by meeting the exigent demands of a snowballing technological society.<sup>42</sup> At the more superficial level, value relativism and vocational overspecialization have disaffiliated higher education from the teaching of Western humanistic ideals, resulting in a subjective value vacuum devoid of core cultural values. At a deeper level, "the humanistic anthropocentrism of the Western liberal arts orientation has been deeply implicated in the global environmental crisis."<sup>43</sup> Skolimowski has argued that the paramount function of education is "to further the world view and values of a particular social paradigm," although education may also provide critiques of and alternatives to that paradigm.<sup>44</sup> Thus, our educational system is fractured into at least "three cultures," in which the teaching of the sciences, humanities, and environmental ethics roughly correspond to the needs of the technological society, reaffirmation of the anthropocentric roots

of the technological society, and the presently weak but growing ecocentric critique of that society.

Given this dilemma in contemporary public education and the tendency to teach environmental studies as efficient, pollution-free management of resources, the teaching of deep ecological values must be expanded beyond the limited readership of advocacy publications and the few courses offered in our colleges and universities. Those of us committed to ecology as a subversive science, one which offers the possibility of an alternative, steady-state society for the twenty-first century, must continue to establish or revitalize locally active community environmental organizations. These centers of ecological learning and holistic science could well become increasingly important as quasi-monastic communities in a world of uncertainty and cultural transition. Such communities, which we might call *ecosteres* on the basis of their debt to ecological principles and the utopian model of the Christian monastery, may furnish the future steady-state society with the same guidance that monasteries of the Dark Ages provided to the rising medieval culture of Western Europe.

#### Notes

1. Alfred North Whitehead quoted in Henri Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p. vi. Another useful definition of world view is "the presuppositions of thought in given historical epochs," in John C. Greene, *Science, Ideology, and World Views* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981). Clarence J. Glacken, in *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought From Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), has written a history of Western attitudes toward Nature. However, he does not focus on philosophy of history or metanoia, changes in world view. Carl Becker, *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932) provides a delightful introduction to world views and philosophy of history.
2. Allan Schnaiberg, *The Environment: from Surplus to Scarcity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), documents the origins and transformations of the environmental movement in great detail.
3. William Ophuls, *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1977).
4. Concerning the elements included in world views, see Franklin G. Baumer, *Modern European Thought* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977), p. 11- 19.
5. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science*, 155 (1967): 1203-1207.
6. Rene Dubos, *The Wooing of Earth* (New York: Scribner's, 1980).
7. The cyclical philosophy of history is powerfully expressed by Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1926, 1928). A combination of the ideas of cycles, providence, and progress is found in Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London and New York: Oxford, 1946). A useful survey of philosophies of history is John Edward Sullivan, *Prophets of the West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970). A focused approach to modern world views is W. Warren Wagor, *World Views: A Study in Comparative History* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1977).
8. J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), p. 12.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
10. J. Donald Hughes, *Ecology in Ancient Civilizations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), p. 48.
11. Plato, *Critias* III B-D.
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16. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

17. Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 7.
18. Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books 1980). Warren Wagar, reviewing Nisbet's book in the *American Historical Review* (June, 1981): P. 568, concluded that "Bury stands challenged but not overthrown." Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), concurs with Bury regarding the modernity of the idea of progress and also warns of its environmentally destructive potential as an outmoded ideology.
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26. Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (New York: Ballantine, 1970): pp. 237-64.
27. Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: a Summary," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95-100. More recent analyses of this dichotomy include George Sessions, "Shallow and Deep Ecology: A Review of the Philosophical Literature," in *Ecological Consciousness: Essays from the Earthday X Colloquium*, Ed. by Robert C. Schultz and J. Donald Hughes (Washington: University Press of America, 1981); R. Routley, "Roles and Limits of Paradigms in Environmental Philosophy" (Canberra: Australian National University, 1982); and Alan Drengson, *Shifting Paradigms: From Technocrat to Planetary Person* (Victoria, Canada: Lightstar Press, 1983).
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29. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
30. John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (New York: Scribner's, 1974), p. 4-5, 173-95.
31. T. O'Riordan, *Environmentalism* (London: Pion Limited, 1981), p. 11.
32. Robert Heilbroner, *The Wordly Philosophers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 19.
33. Robert Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect: Updated and Reconsidered for the 80's* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980).
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35. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) presents a useful summary of the Cartesian, mechanistic world view and the ecologically destructive vision of progress to which it gave rise.
36. See, for example, Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom* (Palo Alto, California: Cheshire Books, 1982).
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38. Environmental scenarios for the twenty-first century and beyond range from Heilbroner's pessimistic *Inquiry*, with which I am basically in agreement, through Warren Johnson's *Muddling Toward Frugality* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1979), an optimistic vision of achieving steady-state cultures, to the technological utopianism of Herman Kahn's projections of business-as-usual.
39. Eric Hoffer's classic analysis of fanatical adherence to belief systems, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1963), provides some useful insights into the nature of metanoia or changing world views.
40. Robert Vacca, *The Coming Dark Age* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973). Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s novel, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961) brilliantly portrays a more terrible dark age following a thermonuclear holocaust.
41. Collins Wilson, *Religion and the Rebel* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 9.
42. See George Sessions, "Ecophilosophy, Utopias, and Education," *Journal of Environmental Education* 15 (Fall, 1983): 27-42.
43. Sessions, "Ecophilosophy, Utopias, and Education," p. 27.
44. *Ibid.* Henryk Skolimowski paraphrased by Sessions from "The Aims of Education in the 21st Century ... That is now." Presented at the *Eco-Philosophy and Education Conference Educational Futures International*, Santa Barbara, CA, October 15-18, 1981.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN LATIN AMERICA: IN SEARCH OF A UTOPIAN VISION

Eduardo Gudynas

## Introduction

Many people in Latin America, since the late 60's and especially in recent years, have denounced the intense exploitation of natural resources, forest clearcutting, wildlife extinction, increased pollution, and urban marginalization taking place there. They have suggested several measures to handle this crisis. These voices have emerged from government and non-government agencies, from biologists, sociologists, wildlife conservationists, planners, and from the common people.

The discussion first focused on what to conserve, and how to conserve. Today, a new question is emerging: Why conserve? This situation has resulted in the first ethical evaluation of environmental work in Latin America. Environmentalism remains a controversial field. The reason for this situation is that the ultimate objectives of the environmental movement are not clear, and common positions are shared only by a fraction of the groups. But this only speaks at a superficial level, and this is not an anomaly isolated to the environmental movement, but is a more general situation, also detected in economics, politics, planning, and so on. Present thinking is utilitarian and pragmatic, and transcendent principles are excluded. Science and values are separated by a wide gap, and there is no vision of the future based on new metaphysical grounds. As there is nothing like an utopian vision, we might feel stoical submission to an inevitable fate is all that is open to us.

The objective of this paper is to attempt an initial response to this problem, which I conceive to be rooted in an ethical crisis. In this analysis I suggest that this is a result of the lack of a shared utopian vision. I will first examine the ethical setting of environmental problems on the S.A. continent. Then, I will briefly deal with some cases from my own work. I will close with some suggestions for future research and practice.

## Ethical Dimensions of the Environmental Movement in Latin America

Initial interest in environmental problems in Latin America emerged in different disciplines (e.g. biologists, wildlife environmentalists, public health officials, planners, etc.). Most of them were concerned with the destruction of specific wilderness sites, or the extinction of particular noteworthy species of animals and plants. In later years, the issues broadened, and new people were added to the movement, as we now faced other serious problems such as urban poverty, nuclear wastes, and chemical pollution. Aware of the present diversity of positions, I will distinguish two main approaches. Although this is an oversimplification, it will nevertheless be useful for this discussion.<sup>1</sup> I distinguish, then, between the environmental managers and the antihegemonic groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGERS are characterized by a strict conservation position, and want a better management of present development practices, so as to reduce adverse environmental impacts to a minimum. They stress the technical approach to environmental problems. They lack historical perspective and do not see environmental work as a tool to produce historical changes. Their relationships with other social groups is minimal. Furthermore, they give little attention to ethical reflections on these issues. Some of the most commonly uttered moral imperatives from this group are: "We ought to conserve natural resources for future generations or present use;" and "...because of a scientific imperative." In this group I include many government agencies but also large non-government conservation organizations. We must acknowledge that these groups are doing valuable work in some particular cases. They have reduced the rate of environmental destruction in some areas. They have also obtained good results in protecting some rare and endangered species. However, in my view, they are dealing with symptoms, and have not reached the basic causes of the disease in either their thinking or actions.

ANTIHEGEMONIC GROUPS are a more diverse set, including politically motivated persons disillusioned with traditional parties, religiously motivated groups (notably Catholic grassroots groups), minority groups (particularly feminists and anarchists), and a mixed group of people primarily interested in environmental issues. The antihegemonic groups stress the ethical issues, but not the technical ones. They have a deep involvement in social issues, and work closely with other grassroots movements. The ethical reflections of these groups is not well organized, and often has little theoretical support, but it is intense. Thus, one could expect these groups to produce fresh new positions on these matters. They share a basic questioning of present day development styles, and they search for alternative pathways. In everyday life they try to follow their ethical and historical concerns. They consider the environmental movement as a tool of historical change. In fact, most of these groups appeared first in the social arena, and only recently evolved into the environmental dimensions. They are more interested in certain aspects of urban life, e.g. pollution, poverty, nuclear wastes, and there is still some distance between them and those in wildlife conservation and the science of ecology.

## The Social Dimension of the Environmental Problems

The social dimensions of Latin American environmental problems have been described in particular by the antihegemonic groups. Early environmental concern by the late 60's was directed to wildlife conservation and natural resources management. The expansion of the ecological viewpoint to the political and social arena was resisted by S.A. governments, and

environmentalists were accused of trying to thwart development. Nevertheless, antihegemonic groups introduced an environmental ethics that tried to show the relationships between the natural and social dimensions of the problems. I will present some recent examples of this relationship that have been argued for in the region:<sup>2</sup>

1. There is the relationship between poverty levels and environmental disruption, both in rural and urban settings;
2. There is the issue of access to land and its distribution, which is exemplified by problems that range from very small owners overexploiting the soil, and causing severe erosion, to very large farms that engage in extensive forest clearcutting;
3. There is also the issue of war, particularly in Central America, where intensive bombing and use of chemicals causes not only human casualties, but also drastic environmental damage;
4. Finally, there is nuclear technology: There are nuclear reactors both working and under advanced construction in Brazil and Argentina; there has already been a serious nuclear accident in Brazil; and there is a project for a nuclear waste dump in Argentina close to the border with Chile.

These kinds of problems justify the increasing interest in ethical problems by environmentalists. The recent evolution of this process leads me to stress some emerging characteristics of the movement, that are useful for this analysis:

A. A new feature of the situation is that most governments and government agencies are now speaking in favor of conserving natural resources.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that they are carrying out effective actions.<sup>3</sup> This raises the question of whether an "environmental discourse" is entering the ideological apparatus of the State, as defined by Althusser.<sup>4</sup>

B. The environmental movement, whichever tendency under consideration, is still a small social force in Latin America. In general, there is as yet only weak relationships with other social forces such as political parties, labor unions and other grassroot movements.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps exceptions are the alternative environmental labor union movement "R-Cause" in Venezuela, and the participation of environmentalists during the recent transition to democracy in Brazil.

C. The environmental movement is also a highly diversified social force, and there is poor coordination among its members. Although I have distinguished two main perspectives, within each one there are several tendencies. Furthermore, the consideration of environmentally related social problems is still a matter of controversy. Liaison and networking efforts have had limited success and are advancing slowly.<sup>6</sup>

D. There is a gap between the declared ethical setting and actual everyday practice. Most people would say that we should "protect Nature," but few behave this way in their own lives. This inconsistency is observed in many other fields.

Beyond the above cited problems, the environmental movement is healthy in the sense that is steadily growing. Furthermore, since it is a frontier movement, new and noteworthy approaches would be expected to develop from within it.

The social dimensions of environmental problems and the different approaches proposed by the above groups, leads me to distinguish two ethical postures. Inspired by Arnae Naess' distinction between shallow and deep ecology, I will distinguish

between shallow and deep ethics.<sup>7</sup> I will later discuss the reasons for this. I will now briefly characterize each one.

SHALLOW ETHICS conceives of moral imperatives as restricted to humans. It stresses individual options over social options. It supports a fragmented vision of reality, and a gap between values and practice (that is to say between ecology and values, politics and values, and so on). Ethical reflection related to Nature is reduced, and the environment is relegated to resources for human use. It holds that humans have the wisdom to manage Nature.

DEEP ETHICS conceives of moral imperatives as inclusive of humans and Nature, living and non-living. It has a holistic ecological approach to reality, acknowledging its complex structure and processes. It also stresses the social dimension of moral issues, and consequently the historical and ecological responsibility of the environmental movement.

Environmental managers generally support a shallow ethics, not only in the ecological arena, but also on social, cultural, economic and political issues. Their procedures follow the Latin American "development paradigm" as described by Mansilla,<sup>8</sup> a concept convergent in some aspects with that of ideology, and with that of "developmental progressivism."<sup>9</sup> The development paradigm is characterized by a view of history as a linear process, always progressing, with human activities becoming more and more efficient, exploiting Nature, which has no rights. This is rooted in "collective pre-conscious" values. These include: (1) obsession with the economic, technological and material features of culture; (2) a science developed in one direction, supporting continued material progress through new and more sophisticated technologies; (3) criticisms which are directed to environmental problems in a minimal way, since these are considered negative and threatening to the present order. As these postures are rooted in collective unconscious structures, they are irrational and immuned to criticisms. The critical breaking point of the paradigm is when other humans are conceived as resources to be exploited, and then this reveals the tight connection between social and environmental issues.

Deep ethics calls for a transition from this paradigm to a new one. I understand deep ethics to include not only a deep ecology, but also reaching into other perspectives and fields. The growing awareness of the close relationships between social and environmental problems now enables us to enter the realm of deep ethics. This new alternative paradigm is part of an emerging utopian vision.

The examples cited here support the view that there are few, if any, common ultimate objectives shared by all environmental groups. The overall goals are not clear. A similar situation exists in other fields, such as economics and politics. There are several schools that each attempt to find new development styles on a human and ecological scale. This turns into intensive discussions about ethics and about the dichotomy between practice and ideas. This debate supports the idea that the problems the environmental groups face are only symptoms of deeper social problems.<sup>10</sup> I consider that this basic problem is the lack of a shared utopian vision.

### The Utopian Vision

As pointed out by Cardoso, we are in the paradoxical situation of living in a time when we know that utopia is possible.<sup>11</sup> We

have the knowledge, the technological power, and the human resources, but we lack the essential confidence to undertake the utopian project. This crisis explains the gap between specific activities, such as politics and economics, and ethics and feelings; the dissociation between abstract knowledge and human feelings; the dissociation between what is done, and what we consider ought to be done. We can describe our times as characterized by the lack of utopian vision, which was destroyed mainly by philosophers and writers such as F.A. Hayek and K.R. Popper.<sup>12</sup> Humans facing every day reality realize they have limits, but it is precisely these "limits" that turn out to be major challenges for forward and transcendent movement. The limits of the possible move with action, and in fact throughout human history these "limits" have changed. As pointed out by Mannheim,<sup>13</sup> and also by Lenk,<sup>14</sup> utopia is like an explosive power that pushes action toward the utopian vision. Mannheim shows that the utopian vision is also fed on the negative features of present society, and it looks to transform this situation. Thus, we place the utopian vision in the category of transcending limits. Utopian vision is not interested in understanding present times as part of the past, but to transcend the past and the present to a new future.

We have no utopian project by means of which to guide our movements. Yet, it has the promise of showing how, from the present reality, an "impossible" future could emerge, and it gives us a sense of the direction we should take to get there. Utopia will be always at least one step ahead us. We will never be quite able to reach it, because after each step we advance toward it, the vision as a dynamic project, moves ahead as well. Thus, utopia turns out to be an "impossible dynamic." We must know what is impossible to realize what is possible. There are not realized utopias, only many possible projects for moving in their direction. Utopia and present order have a dialectic relationship, because utopia summarizes what has not been done or consummated, and that makes a given order to break out of, and it promotes changes leading to a new order, which in turn would promote further utopian visions. In this respect I share somewhat Heller's Marxist concept of 'radical utopia,'<sup>15</sup> which does not permit us to define precisely the societal structures or functions of utopia, but only to delimit the values. However, I do not endorse all of Marx's. I stress the issue of values here, for utopia cannot be entirely described within the present order, for it requires a new one.

Marcuse has pointed out the relationship between utopia and fantasy.<sup>16</sup> Fantasy, as conceived by Freud, is a dynamic process that links deep unconscious structures to conscious reality.<sup>17</sup> The fantasy is not a goal, but a sequence, or a process in which the people participate. This explains why utopia is also the expression of desires and wishes often repressed by every day reality. This was also shown by Mannheim, viz. that utopia can be viewed as a reaction to the collective unconscious that support a given order. This explains the relationship between utopia and ideology, and it helps us to understand positions like Popper's, as completely immersed in the ideology of the present order. This present order is supported in collective structures, either the collective preconscious or the social imagination. The link between utopia and fantasy also leads to another point: Art can be a utopian force, which is an idea also expressed by Marcuse. In our highly planned, materialist and technological societies, art is still one of the last frontiers for free ranging fantasy which can lead to utopian projects.<sup>18</sup> Marcus also restricted

the idea of utopia to actual limits of change, and thus referred to the "end of utopia."<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, he later considered that utopia is blocked by the present order.<sup>20</sup> But the limits imposed by society (i.e. rooted in current ideologies) should not be confused with the utopian vision, as the later transcends these limits.

Friedman described a "realizable utopia" as possible, when a person can influence others in such a way as to reach utopia.<sup>21</sup> Actually, this describes a shared project, and actions intending to reach utopia, but it is not a synonym for being realizable. Friedman stated that a "universal utopia" is impossible because of a size problem. Friedman believes that utopias are possible only within small groups. But today we are facing the situation of several coexisting "utopian committees" among many groups, either defined by their scientific interests, or by their geographical origin. I borrowed this concept from Wolfe, and it must be distinguished from the "utopian" vision.<sup>22</sup> The former is a more or less diffuse program for a future, in specific fields, developed by scientists in that field. These "utopian committees" reproduce the fragmented vision of reality of scientists and thus it produces fragmented utopian projects. Some examples of this are the several global reports on development and environmental affairs, e.g. **The Dag Hammarskjöld, The Founex and The Cocoyoc Reports**, etc. These "utopian committees" have had very limited power to change the present situation, and most of the persons involved expended a lot of time and energy trying to convince others that they held the "best" or "true" project. The challenge is to search for common features among these committees, and to share these common features with the public at large. As I conceive of the utopian vision, it is clearly distinct from the "committee" ones, as it lies on a higher meta-level, being deeper and more embracing.

There are clear relationships between the utopian project and societal development. Acknowledging that we can work on a shared utopian project towards a better society, we can distinguish between a eutopic and a distopic society. The first refers to a society actually moving toward a utopia; the latter describes a society without a utopian project. This terminology, developed by Mallman et al., seems more appropriate than that of "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries.<sup>23</sup> Eutopic-distopic are extremes of a continuum from healthy societies to those that limit personal development. Eutopic societies permit the integral development of the person on three levels: personal, interpersonal and environmental. This is a result of the equitable satisfaction of human needs. This suggests that current measures of social development, such as the Gross National Product, have little relationship to personal fulfilment. In distopic societies, the integral personal fulfilment is limited, and there are divisions between persons due to the satisfaction of false needs and the lack of satisfaction of genuine needs.

We still do not have a shared utopian project common to the great majority of social movements, nor even among environmentalists. But here are some projects that could be mentioned as examples: Several locally based self-generated projects in Brazil;<sup>24</sup> the peasant communities in Mexico promoting locally based activities;<sup>25</sup> the several ecotopian visions presented by writers like Devall and Sessions;<sup>26</sup> and the more general and diffuse projects of global scale.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately I am unable, and it is not my intention, to present a common project for the whole environmental movement, but only to sketch some elements that I conceive to be indispensable in the search for such a project. These elements are freedom, every day democratic participation,

and a new social order. Democratic practice require more than merely voting from time to time. It should be felt every day. It is impossible to handle environmental problems in the absence of true freedom. Freedom is conceived as an ancient feature of all living beings and their interactions within ecosystems. Thus, if we acknowledge that solution to the current crises must embrace freedom, we should go back to living with things and not above them. This new social order asks for a deeper ethical posture, which values humans and also Nature. As deep ecology states, the well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life has intrinsic value independent of its usefulness for other human purposes.<sup>28</sup> The goal is to live in harmony with other persons and Nature. The ultimate objective is to recover confidence in long term utopian dreams and to know that societal changes for a better world are possible and action should be undertaken. As Heller notes, utopian projects should be radical; it not only supports our hope that a better world is possible, but that we should make a radical commitment to action (See F.N. #15).

I conceive this effort very close to research, teaching and learning. The close relationship between a utopian project and a new program to understand the world can be found in Moro's (1517) "Utopia,"<sup>29</sup> but also in Bacon's (1620) "Great Instauration."<sup>30</sup> I acknowledge that Bacon's vision presents an anthropocentric relationship to Nature. As pointed out by Bookchin, "Bacon's 'Great Instauration' had been a functioning reality for thousands of years, not merely in class society's attempts to subjugate Nature for the purposes of control, but to subjugate humanity itself."<sup>31</sup> To explore these issues in greater depth would require another paper paying attention to the cultural contexts. However, we must note Bookchin's concern for a new reconciliation between humans and Nature.

### A Case Example: A Latin American Perspective on Social Ecology

At this point I think it is necessary to give a concrete example of how some of us developed a utopian vision with a deep ethical commitment for environmental work. I think that social ecology can provide us with concrete cues on this path, as it deals with a holistic and dynamic vision of reality, in its concern about values and practices, in the context of historical responsibilities.

A Latin American approach to social ecology can be viewed as rooted in a utopian project. It allows for a new practice, a new understanding of the world, a new ethics. Social ecology is also an effort to understand the world, particularly through research, and it aims to share this knowledge with others, particularly through teaching.<sup>32</sup> I will briefly present an example of the development of our current concept of social ecology, emerging from my work and that of my colleagues at CIPFE.

Our initial work followed the widespread "environmental education" strategies inspired by the World Wildlife Fund of the US (WWF-US), e.g. see Liebermann.<sup>33</sup> The results of the programs were poor, as we did not understand the complexity of the everyday life of the persons to which we addressed our work. After this experience, we developed a new program that we defined as "interactive," and this ultimately resulted in our concepts of "social ecology" (see preliminary reports by Gudynas).<sup>34</sup> The interactive program enabled us to know how humans perceive their environment, how they interact with it,

and how they propose to manage it. It clearly shows that environmental work must also be social work.

The present working definition of social ecology, as currently conceived in our group, can be summarized by the following basic postulates:

- A. There cannot be a scientific study of natural ecosystems, without an interrelated scientific social study;
- B. We are interested in processes, not in static descriptions, and the historical perspective is of high relevance, as it helps us to recover the history of human communities, and their environments;
- C. Environmental work is social work, for to promote alternative human-environmental relationships is to promote social change;
- D. Social-environmental work promotion must be done with the people, and not for the people. There are neither teacher nor pupils.

We attempt to develop practices for both individual persons and environmental settings, and we assume historical responsibilities fall upon each of us. Utopian visions emerging in shared settings from social ecology work gives a value framework that help to guide daily practice, and it provides elements for a serious critique of present society.

In conclusion, work that reveals the unified relationships between education, research and practice, can produce a draft for a utopian vision, which involves many of these points. To the extent to which they deal with the relationships among humans, they could permit us to advance on this path of reconciliation with Nature. Here is a challenge for our ideals, and it is our duty to search for such a utopian vision and project.

### Notes

Literature cited includes references to original editions when available, followed by the Spanish version in brackets.

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2. On the social dimension of environmental problems, the following references are listed as examples: J.E. Hardoy & D.E. Satterthwaite, 1985. "Third World Cities and the Environment of Poverty," pp. 171-210. In **The Global Possible: Resources, Development and the New Century**, World Resources Institute, Yale Univ. Press. O.A. Perez, 1987. El silencioso dolor de una guerra escandalosa. Efectos de la guerra en el ecosistema salvadoreño. **Neuva Sociedad**, Caracas, 87:139-148. C. Avelino, 1984. **De Baixo Para Cima. A Utopia No Brazil**. Vozes, R. Janeiro.

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4. L. Althusser, 1970. **Ideologie at Appareils Ideologiques d'Etat**. La Pensee No. 151, Paris. (**Aparatos Ideologicos del Estado**, Nueva Vision, B. Aires, 1984).

5. For comparisons with the social movements see A.G. Frank & M. Fuentes. 1988. "Nine theses on social movements." **IFDA Dossier**, 63:27-44.

6. The diversity of opinions could be seen in the declarations on the participation (or not) in the political arena, and the strategies to follow; see H.M. Ensensberger, 1973. **Zur Kritik der Politischen Okologie**, Kursbuch-Rotouch Verlag, Berlin (**Para una Critica de la Ecologia Politica**. Anagrama, Barcelona, 1974). M. Caldwell et al., 1976. **Socialism and the Environment**. Spokesman Books, Nottingham (**Socialismo y Medio Ambiente**, G. Gili, Barcelona, 1976). H. Kurth et

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32."Social Ecology" has different meanings. My approach is spelled out in full elsewhere (E. Gudynas, 1988, Ensayo de conceptualización de la ecología social: una visión latinoamericana, **Cuadernos Latinoamericanos Ecología Social**, 1:3-17), but it converges with the positions of Devall & Sessions, *op. cit.*, Bookchin, *op. cit.*, and other authors. As A. Naess (1988, pers. com.) pointed out, the deep ecology movement gives high relevance to social issues, although in the published work this is not always evident. Thus, we stress social components, as stated by Bookchin, but after a deep ecological perspective is sketched. I conceive of social ecology as a scientific program, rooted in a deep ecology concern, looking for a science that combines research and action to change the given order. I also stress basic research, particularly with affected communities following "participative research" efforts in Latin America. (See e.g. reports in C. Rodríguez Brandao, 1981, **Pesquisa participante**. Ed. Brasiliense, Sao Paulo).

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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF MAORI COSMOLOGY TO A REVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Robert Hay

## The Modern Condition

To see how far we have travelled from our tribal heritage, I have include a short review of the modern condition. The significance of this will become apparent when the material on the Maori people of New Zealand is presented.

Modern people tend to live in a **built** environment. They inhabit a world of urban demands and human information, separated from the natural landscape and Nature. Their senses are constantly bombarded by the mass media. In their fast-paced, competitive world, they are subjected to noise, traffic, crowding, the presence of strangers, crime and many forms of pollution. They are accustomed to doing many tasks at the same time, with activities usually divided into several compartments. Their thinking is busy, with time compressed into the immediate past and future. Silence and contemplation are foreign to most of us. Because of this, our lives are fragmented and scheduled. Modern people's perception and way of life have departed from the simplicity of our tribal past: we are no longer "whole and mythic" (Leonard, 1972).

In the work world, modern people with specialized skills play the role of interchangeable parts in an economic machine. The bond to work has largely replaced ties to Nature, place and community; ties to the extended family and friends are lessening as people shift from place to place pursuing careers and work. The loss of self-esteem that modern people feel when unemployed is a symptom of the need that we feel for a bond to our work. Materialism and individualism subconsciously create the need for this bond. A "having" rather than a "being" way of living is characteristic of the modern lifestyle (Fromm, 1976). With work often repetitive, the acceptance of dulling routines shows that a large degree of domesticity is normally associated with a desire for consumer goods and a settled existence.

The single family dwelling is one characteristic of modern living: The nuclear family is more easily shaped to meet the demands of the work world. Indeed, modern family life is becoming more and more individualized and work-oriented from cradle to grave. To compensate for this emphasis, modern people typically try to (temporarily) "escape" through such things as alcohol, shopping, daydreaming and holidays.

The need for such escape is partly due to modern society's lack of social cohesion, at both the community and family levels, encouraging people to "pull up roots" and move elsewhere for employment or education (see Packard, 1972). People seldom live in one place for a lifetime, so it is hard to develop a deep sense of place (Hay, 1988). There is a need to escape from the sterility of suburban living and office working, but many places in the world have begun to look the same as the modern West. This enables modern, urban people to change locales and still

feel somewhat "at home," but only at a superficial level. Modern modes of transport and communication aid in this movement.

The creation of nation-states paralleled the drive for industrialization and "working for a living." This development has also tended to reduce modern people's identity and rootedness. Political boundaries seldom follow a natural region or encompass a similar cultural group. The sheer size of some nation-states, with work available in their distant corners, can contribute to the difficulty of maintaining ties to distant family and friends. The rise of nationalism has caused a parallel increase in bureaucracy, centralization and uniform planning (Howe, 1983), often resulting in the segregation of peoples, even within national boundaries.

Waves of immigrants of other races and cultures, and an influx of job-seeking strangers, have been amalgamated to form heterogeneous populations. As is currently being shown in the U.S.S.R., these factors lessen unity: there are not enough common features among such peoples, little bond to their local community, and seldom a deep feeling of "insiderness". There may be patriotism (bond to the state) and ties to one's career, but these lack meaning without rootedness in a place along with a respect for its environment.

Over thirty years ago, psychologist Eric Fromm, foresaw that the modern way of life would be deleterious to the majority of people:

...man has lost his central place, has been made an instrument for the purposes of economic aims, has been estranged from, and has lost the concrete relatedness to, his fellow men and to nature: he has ceased to have a meaningful life (1955, pp. 270-271).

A strong sense of place and/or sense of community is **not** fostered in the world of nation-states, work, and business, as this would provide strong human bonds, which rooted to a local place could not be easily managed.

Instead, beliefs in "value-free" science, and an interpretation of Christianity which gives people dominion over Nature, are promoted by the leaders of modern society, fostering the dehumanization of people and the despoilation of Nature (Drengson, 1983; Glacken, 1967). Berry (1977) describes the leaders of this social movement:

For membership in this prestigious class of rampaging professionals ...the first requirement is that they must be careerists - transients, at least in spirit. That is, they must have no local allegiances; they must not have a local point of view. In order to be able to desecrate, endanger, or destroy a **place**, after all, one must be able to leave it and to forget it. One must never think of any place as one's **home**. One must believe that no place is as valuable as what it might be changed into, or as

what might be got out of it. Unlike a life at home, which makes ever more particular and precious the places and creatures of this world, the careerist's life generalizes the world, reducing its abounding and comely diversity to "raw material."

These leaders' desacralized condition, seeing the world only in scientific, mechanistic terms, and their lack of bonds to one place, allows them to consider the Earth in terms of "resources," using these at their whim with no conscience. It seems that such scientists, technocrats, and business people want to domesticate the whole Earth with their technology (Livingston, 1986), with little regard to the future.

In their eyes, the ever-increasing urban zones **demand** resources: the economic dominance of large cities dictates that the rest of the world must suffer for benefit of urban needs. Urban areas are centres of consumption. Urbanites have become the creators of role models, transmitted globally by the media. The gregarious, approval-seeking, human follows trends, with conforming behaviour maintaining the pre-eminence of urban values. As a result, urban people, and others connected to cities through the media, are becoming more alike worldwide, with local places losing their uniqueness (Meyrowitz, 1985; Relph, 1976).

Urbanism also involves continuous development, as economic "progress" is measured by such "growth." A downtown block may witness many changes in the span of a single year: "place" has become interchangeable office "space" in the city core. On the urban fringe, new housing developments sprawl outward (see Ruswurm, 1977), especially around Third World cities, where shantytowns are commonplace. In incremental stages our local places are changing, while the wild places recede in the distance.

By the time we have become elderly, there may be few places left that resemble those of our childhood. Comments of two elders (in their 70's), from the Cowichan Valley of coastal British Columbia, highlight the personal effect of such changes:

But we feel lost. We feel lost in the area. My husband always says, well, when we were first married, and we went to Duncan, we knew everybody. Just everybody on the street. And we go through Duncan now and we haven't seen a soul we know. It's just a total new face of things. The town has rebuilt...(when we use to) go to town, oh--forty years ago--if you saw someone you didn't know, it was something to talk about. And today, if you see someone you **know**, it is something to talk about (in Hay, 1986, p. 102).

To these elders, the wave of new people, with their modern ideas, seem "out of place" in their rural valley.

In the **functional** relationship to place that has resulted from a modernized way of life, the level of attachment that modern people have for their own place is questionable. It is seldom necessary, any more for their survival, to notice the intricacies of the natural environment. Perception is now directed toward the built, urban, **human** world, and knowledge toward the **work** world. Modern people are trained for a lifetime of work, **not** sensitivity. A shallower sense of place (similar to "liking" a place), with little belonging engendered in a **particular** place, seems to fit the superficialities and transience of modern living (Hay, 1988).

A sense of place to most urban people has become a social construct: people are now more bonded to work than to their home

region, shifting from place to place for their careers. Social ties are formed in each new place. Ties to career and increased mobility has allowed people (and places) to be more easily manipulated to meet the demands of state and corporate interests. The cost of this orientation to the workplace is high. Separated from Nature, with no roots in place, few strong ties to others, and little context in community, modern people are often alienated, frustrated, and neurotic (Fromm, 1976; Leonard, 1972). Signs of social malaise abound in the cities, in high rates of violent crime, divorce, alcohol and drug abuse, suicides, wife and child battering, and mental illness. To be so cut-off from what has been natural to humankind, throughout our evolutionary history, appears to be injurious to the health of modern people.

It seems that in the transition from **human** beings to **working** beings, modern people have "lost their place" on the road to "progress."

As a species, our sense of belonging in nature, our sense of a place in nature, has been utterly destroyed...having wilfully abdicated our place in the life process, we can no longer remember that "place" means "belonging", and that belonging is what living is all about (Livingston, 1981, pp. 84-85).

### The Maori; People of the Land

The Maori originated in eastern Polynesia, arriving in New Zealand at approximately 800 A.D. from the Cook Islands and/or the Society Islands (Orbell, 1985). They called themselves the "people of the land" (**tangata whenua**), and adapted well to the colder climate of New Zealand (or **Aotearoa**, land of the long white cloud). Their food gathering, concentrated in a local area, consisted of seafood, eels, forest birds, and the cultivation of sweet potato (**kumara**). There was minimal trade with distant places in New Zealand, except for greenstone (jade) from the west coast of the South Island.

Over 40 tribes, each with different dialects and customs, were established by the 18th century, often waging inter-tribal wars. In the two or three centuries prior to the first (sustained) European contact (Captain James Cook in 1769), each Maori village would have a fortified site (**pa**) near their centrally-located meeting house (**marae**), for protection against war parties that sought slaves, carved greenstone, and sweet potato stores (see Brailsford, 1981).

Previous to European settlement, the Maori changed the landscape of New Zealand to a degree, burning forests to flush out Moa (large, flightless birds), which they exterminated by the 1600's. By the time of European contact, though, they had learned to live in harmony with Nature. Their medicine men (**tohunga**) would guide their tribe in the conservation of Nature's resources (**tohu**): there were religious chants to appease the spirits (**karakia**) and sacred beliefs (**tapu**) to ensure that enough of Nature's bounty was available for tribal use in the future (Gray, 1988a).

During the period of whaling and early European settlement in New Zealand (1820's to 1850's) the Maori greatly out-numbered the Europeans (predominantly of British origin, and called **pakeha** by Maori to this day), supplying them with foodstuffs in return for weapons, tools and blankets. The Maori mostly used their new weapons against each other in inter-tribal wars, decimating their numbers. They did not do battle against large numbers of settlers, until the New Zealand Wars of 1860's,

fought to determine dominance over land. Because the Maori tribes were not united and had few advanced weapons, they lost these wars and most of their land.

During the main period of European (**pakeha**) settlement in New Zealand (late 1800's), the Maori witnessed the ravaging of their tribal lands on a colossal scale. Pioneers were intent on making land "useful," denuding the tree cover to make way for pastures. Roughly 80 per cent of the original forest is now gone (Cumberland, 1981); in its place over 60 million sheep roam the countryside. Foreign plants and animals (e.g. gorse, Radiata pine, cocksfoot grass, sheep, rats, rabbits, and deer) are everywhere. Pollution now dirties the rivers and harbours and affects intertidal reefs, the primary food gathering location of the Maori.

By the early 1900's, the Maori had lost over half their population through disease. As the survivors were attempting to recover from this loss, the **pakeha** were forcing them to assimilate into a European lifestyle. This occurred when their spirits were at a lull: the Maori had met the challenge of Christianity, but, with the loss of their land they felt diminished as a people. The land was the spiritual basis of their soul (**mauri**); without it their ability to gather food was reduced, fostering dependence on the **pakeha** economic system.

By the mid-1900's few Maori could speak their language (especially significant, as they had an oral culture), and most of their tribal land had been lost. Today the Maori can claim only about 5 per cent of their original land (Asher and Naulls, 1987), and most of the remainder has been changed irrevocably by the **pakeha**. Maori are now in the minority in New Zealand, numbering only 10 per cent of the total population of 3.2 million people. And yet, even with reduced numbers and land holdings, their culture persists.

In the past 15 years, there has been a renaissance of Maori culture, beginning with land marches (to regain their spiritual source), and culminating with the submission of multiple land claims to the government. These claims are based on the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 (between the Crown and Maori tribes), which guaranteed access to traditional food sources and an adequate land base to support their culture.

There are now many Maori learning their language again, and meetings (**hui**) are often held to pass their culture from elders (**kaumatua**) to younger tribal members. Maoridom is united as never before, with strength drawn from each tribe's heritage. This movement has occurred because of the richness and depth of their cosmology: they possess a vigorous culture which refuses to die.

### Maori Cosmology

The term "living planet" could be used to describe the world as seen in the Maori worldview. They believe in a spiritual essence (**wairua**) in all things, animate and inanimate. People are seen as only one small part of a "great chain of being" (and not of any greater importance than other beings). Respect for the spirits in things (shown through their religious practices) and reverence for certain paramount gods (**atua**) is woven into the fabric of their lives, in their thinking, and in their perceptual style. Their gods are considered a family, representing all aspects of the environment.

The Maori account of the origin of the world rivals Genesis in detail (see Alpers, 1962; Yoon, 1986). The supreme being, **Io**,

dwelled in **Hawaiki** (a mythical realm to the east, **not** Hawaii), home of the gods. **Io** allowed Father Sky (**Rangi-e-tu-hei**) to form the heavens. Father Sky then united with Mother Earth (**Papa-tua-nuku**) and had an offspring, God of the Forests (**Tane**). Using personal power and prestige (**mana**) derived from **Io**, **Tane** forced his parents apart to form the heaven and Earth. **Tane** then set about creating the forest, birds, thunder, lightning, and clouds. Gray (1988a) describes how people were created by **Tane**:

In **Tane's** quest to find the female element (**uha**) needed for the creation of a human-mortal-woman, he has to go back to Mother Earth. In order for his earth-formed creation to have life, he has to obtain the spiritual essence. This spiritual essence (physical life principle) would give human kind dominion (**mana**) in the natural experienced world. This was the life-principle (**mauri-ora**) obtained from the Supreme Being (**Io**). **Tane** breathed the breath of life through the nostrils of Breathed-on-Soil-Maiden (**Hine-ahu-one**) and his creation was brought to life. It is from **Tane** and **Hine-ahu-one** that all human life is derived.

Within Maori tribes, people are related to the gods through important ancestors (**tipuna**). Spirits of these ancestors are felt to be present at all times. During speeches (**whai-korero**) by elders on the grounds of the meeting house, ancestors are often referred to and an elder's tribal ranking and **mana** is derived from connections to the gods through ancestral lineage. Genealogy is especially important to the establishment of rank in the chiefly line (**rangitira**).

Within the region that a tribe (**iwi**) inhabits there exist several subtribes (**hapu**); a sub-tribe consists of many inter-related, extended families (**whanau**), often located in several villages, with one or more extended family occupying each village site. Members of a tribe can trace their genealogy to a common ancestor, and to the first canoes which brought the Maori to New Zealand (see Lewis and Forman, 1985). Both kinship ties and the communal lifestyle in one confined locality bond members of a tribe to their place. They are "the people who are born out of the placenta of Mother Earth" (a more literal translation of **tangata whenua**, with **whenua** meaning either land or placenta in Maori; Gray, 1988a). An indication of the extent of their ties to Mother Earth is provided in the following Maori saying:

Mother Earth is the foundation of indigenous people--the land (placenta of Mother Earth) is the well of their soul, knowledge, language, history, and provides nourishment for all generations. (translation by M. Gray)

The Earth thus provides the spiritual ground for the Maori, while links with family and tribe provide support for their day-to-day lives.

Relations form the fabric of Maori social life. Identity is based upon the group, **not** on the individual. This is evident in the seemingly simple question "Who are you?" (**Ko wai koe?**). To answer this, a Maori would recount their entire genealogy (**whakapapa**), since their identity and social standing is based on their ancestry.

Maori identity is strengthened in their meeting house (**Marae**). It is the center of a village's universe; it usually faces seaward, and is protected by hills at the back (Murton, 1987). The meeting house, situated in the center of the village, is designed to symbolize the body of an important ancestor. The apex at the front



is the face (**koruru**), window the eye (**kanohi**), frontpieces the arms (**maihi**), rafters the ribs (**kaokao**), ridgepole the backbone (**tuakoko**), and center post the heart (**ngakau**). Speeches by elders are made in front of the meeting house (called the **paepae**), while meetings (**hui**) and funerals (**tangi**) are conducted inside, surrounded by carvings on wall support beams which represent ancestors. The meeting house is the home ground (**papa kain-ga**) of the village. To tribal members it is their "place to stand" (**turangawaewae**), where they feel a great sense of personal belonging, due to the aforementioned symbolism, the practice of tribal rituals there, and because placenta is buried on the grounds of the meeting house.

Legends of a tribe are skilfully told by consummate orators, connecting village members to their heritage. Place names for a local region do the same (Murton, 1987). Unique topography can become important symbols of a tribe. Prominent features can represent the attributes of ancestors and gods. An example is Mt. Cook (**Aoraki**), the highest mountain on the South Island of New Zealand, and said to be a god by the resident **Ngai Tahu** tribe.

Story-telling and rituals enable Maori people to **participate** in their culture. Ceremonies are conducted at the center of a village's spiritual strength (in the meeting house), and are accompanied by appropriate songs (**waita**). Through rituals tribal members **become** their beliefs, rather than remaining physically detached as in the Western preference for cerebral abstraction (see also Highwater, 1981). Because the Maori have an oral culture, their wisdom and beliefs are transferred through rituals and the teachings of their elders. Songs carry the beliefs and history of a tribe in a poetic form. They are usually sung in a group, with members using movement and body postures to represent the actions of a story. Maori believe in their culture to the extent that a breach of what is considered sacred (**tapu**) can result in illness and even death for the offender.

A strong suspicion of outsiders, and pride in their own tribe, strengthens their beliefs and identity. During the period of inter-tribal warfare, the greeting ceremony (**powhiri**) was devised to separate friend from foe. The ceremony is little changed today. Visitors (**manuhiri**) are first challenged (**wero**) at some distance from the meeting house; at the same time, a war chant (**haka**) is performed by men of the tribe in front of their marai. If the visitors are proven to have friendly intentions, a call to the ancestors (**karanga**) is performed by elder woman (**kuia**). Visitors then approach the front of the meeting house, and elders from both sides give speeches, supported by songs following each speech. Afterwards, all of the resident tribe's people (the **tangata whenua** touch noses (**hongiri**) with the visitors to meld spirits, enabling the two groups to then exchange greetings (**mihiri**) and relate to each other as insiders. This ceremony is sealed through the serving of food (**kai**) to the guests, to show the warm spirit of love (**aroha**) of the hosts (see also Murton, 1987).

Maori cosmology infuses the Maori view of space and time. Conceptions of space differ between Maori and **pakeha** in feelings of attachment to place: **pakeha** have strongest feelings toward the small block of land that they **own**, whereas Maori feelings are based on their meeting house, and on their tribal territory. Geometric space is of little consequence to Maori in their social relations: kinfolk are important through lineage and emotional attachment, with actual distance of little consequence. The New Zealand Maori view of space could have its origin in

their heritage in the Polynesian islands, where relations on different remote islands are thought of as neighbours.

Their view of time is not linear, and compartmentalized into past/present/future. Instead, their view has continuity through an awareness of heritage: ancestors are thought to be present around them, and genealogy, tribal exploits, and the remembrance of wrongdoings against their tribe are all very significant in their lives (see Murton, 1979). Their time sense is also in rhythm with the seasonal cycles of Nature. Even to the present day, communal rituals and special events are not bounded by a modern conception of time: these begin when auspicious and end when complete. A funeral (**tangi**) may last for days, with relatives formally in grieving for months afterwards (Murton, 1979).

Maori language conveys the beliefs of their cosmology: it is less complex in its structure and vocabulary than European languages, and yet more expressive and tied to particular localities. Words for personal, spiritual and emotional states are commonly used. Local place names often have special significance, as do names of ancestors and sacred objects. The extent of their sense of place is shown by contrasting the English question "Where are you from?" with Maori phraseology. They would say either "Where is your **home**?" (**Kei hea to kainga?**), or "Where do you **belong**?" (**No hea koe?**).

In another example involving feelings, the simple English statement "I love you" in Maori is "**E aroha ana au ki a koe.**" "**E aroha ana**" (love, in its widest sense) is a verb form that can be used for past, present, or future; the pronoun "**au**" (I) also **follows** the verb instead of asserting its prominence at the beginning of a sentence as in English. "**Ki**" (to) indicates belonging; "**a**" introduces the pronoun "**koe**" (you). And so, a literal English translation in a linear word order would read: "Loving, I, to you (belong)."

In Maori language the word order does not place people in a primary position, and verbs do not indicate the "doing of something to something else" (i.e. action verbs and their objects). Due to their cosmology subject and object are melded in a whole concept, with the noun **in relation** to that which is perceived/used.

The Maori do not objectify or compartmentalize the world. This is apparent in the way that they counted prior to European contact: there were numbers for one, two, and three (**koe, korua, koutou**), for a small group (**ropu**), a large group (**ope**), and multitudes (**tini**). They did not try to count each particular person or item beyond three, as they did not see any need to do so (Gray, 1988b). Instead, they believed in unity.

The beliefs of Maori cosmology are tied together in a cohesive **whole**. They become tangible through tribal life and rituals. The Maori (traditional) way of life is an example of being **in Nature**, where there is reverence for life and belonging to both place and people. Of prime importance is how this cosmology differs markedly from that of modern technological culture. Maori cosmology is based on a home region, but also encompass a tribe's past journeys, exploits, and beliefs concerning the origin of the world. Their sense of place is deep and significant. It gives their lives meaning. They reciprocate this gift by frequently expressing their love (**aroha**) and respect for the Earth.

Without such respect, their spiritual strength would dissipate. Modernized, urban Maori, who are **not** connected to their culture and meeting house, have lost their soul (**mauri**). They are not rooted in their tribal land or cradled within their extended family. They have gained some benefits from the modern life-

style, but have become casualties of the modern system, suffering ill-health, unemployment, and levels of crime that are much higher than their **pakeha** neighbours. They have become second-class citizens in their own land, the "brown **pakeha**" who are not connected to **either** culture.

However, Maori who have remained tied to their traditional culture, through kinship, communal lifestyle, local resource use, place names, carvings, rituals, language, and ancestry, **still** consider themselves to be the original people of the land in New Zealand, the **tangata whenua**. They are aware that they were born of the Earth, are part of the Earth, and will return to the Earth of New Zealand (their **Aotearoa**), when they die. Because of these beliefs, their tribal places have become the source of their lifeforce (**mauriora**); there is no separation of person/nature or person/world in their cosmology (Gray, 1988b; Murton, 1987; Yoon, 1986).

Their traditional hunter-gatherer/horticultural way of life may have almost disappeared in New Zealand, but many Maori maintain their connections to place and culture in the face of assimilation forces from modern society. Although modernized to an extent, such Maori continue to live in a condition that modern people have lost in their rush toward "progress." These Maori live this way because the few benefits that modern people have accrued from civilization seem paltry in contrast to the depth of their cosmology.

### The Way Ahead

Once a cosmology is developed to give depth to environmental philosophy, the systemic problems of modern society could be dealt with. A more holistic approach to life would restore modern society's ecological and social harmony, providing unity among people and with Nature. Incorporating the principles of a Maori way of life into environmental philosophy could help to restore modern people's "place" in the natural order of the world. To clarify the extent that modern people have distanced themselves from Nature, Table 1 provides a summary of the major features of modern society, in contrast to those of Maori indigenous society.

What modern people term "animism" is the basis of a tribe's lifeworld; what they see only as "myths" are a compilation of a tribe's knowledge and beliefs. In a tribe's world there is wonder for Nature and respect for tradition; in the modern world, there are only facts. A modern view has allowed "civilized" people to both plunder the Earth and dehumanize people into amorphous "masses." The result is rootless, alienated people, who lack unity of purpose and meaningful life.

In contrast, the unified character of Maori cosmology gives rise to a deep sense of place. Maori are reminded of tribal myths by orators, while carvings and place names provide concrete

references to their cosmology. They respect their gods and the spirits in things through religious chants; they conduct rituals (e.g. greetings, funerals, and meetings), and perform songs to solidify their beliefs. Their social identity is based on a series of wholes: extended family/sub-tribe/tribe, with the meeting house being their center, their "place to stand." Their communal lifestyle, revolving around kinship ties, gives them a feeling of insideness and security as part of a group. Their view of time provides continuity in their lives reminding them continually of their ancestors, and their connection to the rhythms of Nature. Their language, perception and local resource use respect the environment of which they are a part. As "people of the land" they already live the principles that environmentalists strive to achieve.

Modern people could try to become **part** of their environment too. A strategy toward attaining such a way of life is offered here for consideration:

- 1) The first step is to build a unified cosmology, linking a person again with extended family, community, place, and Nature. This would also provide the basis for an ethical relationship with Nature. Through a new moral code, they could see that when they pollute and degrade their environment they diminish their lives; ecology would again be a personal concern.
- 2) The second step, one which is often neglected by urban environmentalists, is to work toward making modern languages and thinking styles reflect a simpler life that is rooted in one place, reducing dualism, abstractionism, and objectification.
- 3) The third step is increasing awareness. People could realize that they have formed a taken-for-granted world, and then refrain from relating to Nature, or each other, in a habitual way. They could perceive themselves in **unity** with their environment and in **relation** with the world around them. It is possible (and advantageous) to become sensitive again.
- 4) The fourth step is a re-orientation of lifestyle, toward bioregionalism and ecological harmony, toward local resource use and small-scale community living within Nature, with bonds to people and place (instead of work and state). Time sense and behaviour would then more closely resemble Nature's rhythms.
- 5) The last step is to develop an economic and social order that allows a local orientation to flourish. This order would be based on a new norm for modern people, emphasizing the aforementioned points, toward restoring feelings of union with the Earth and meaning to their lives. Such a change appears to be necessary: modern people could again become less placeless, homeless, and rootless. Through love for one's **local** place, a love and respect for the Earth becomes possible.

If this paradigm shift seems immense, indigenous peoples, such as the Maori, are living proof that whole (and sound) cultures have already been established before and can flourish on Earth once more.

Table 1. **Contrasting Features of Modern and Indigenous Peoples.**

Feature	Modern Peoples	Indigenous, Tribal Peoples
Cosmology	monotheistic and/or mechanistic/scientific world view	animism; related to gods through ancestors; myths
Perception	separation of person/world, mind/body, & people/Nature	part of Nature and place; unity
Thinking style (& languages)	dualism; labels; compartments; belief in "progress" & human dominion over nature	respect for Nature (& spirits); people "in relation" to other wholes
Time sense	linear & clock-like; past/present/future; busy/rushed	"living" time ( <b>not</b> in phases); in rhythm with Nature's cycles; timeless in movements
Sense of place	social & work-oriented; mobile/rootless; fragmented life; alienated	place & community-based; belonging in place/heritage; # of connections in place; deep sense of place
Ethical relation with environment	ownership of land & use of resources; consumptive; I-It view	stewardship; sharing/giving; I- Thou view
Habitation	urban; polluted; crowded presence of strangers; modern-style homes and office buildings	live <b>within</b> nature; low density & communal; use of local materials
Political	nation-states; pseudo- democracies/communist/dictatorships; centralized; control by bureaucracy	tribal territory; chiefly lineage; decentralized; community-decisions
Economy	urban-based; multi-national corporations; capitalism; resource extraction; shopping	local resource use & trading; hunter-gatherer/horticultural
Work	specialization; workaday routine; competitive	personal abilities; tasks done as needed; co-operative
Technology	complicated; scientific	simple; use of local materials
Weaponry/War	military build-up; large-scale, total war	simple weapons; minor clashes, with little loss of life
Medical	doctors/hospitals; long life span; fear of dying	medicine men; community-care; short life span; rejoin earth upon death
Social	nuclear family; workmates; separated from elders; entertainment & leisure activities	extended family; relations; respect for elders; community celebrations & rituals
Personal	individualistic; anonymous; spectator; materialistic	group-based identity; responsible for actions to tribe & gods; participant; conservation

**Note:**

1. A traditional, rural way of life (that is not urban- based would lie somewhere between these two types
2. The above characteristics may not hold true for every type of modern or indigenous society, depending on the degree of modernization/loss of hunter-gatherer way of life.

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# HUMANS AND NATURE IN CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

Abe Masao

## I

"Has man as man, and the finitude of man in its positive aspect, ever been seriously taken into consideration by Buddhist scholars? The extension of *shujo* ('sentient beings') to man, animals, and even, as we find it in Dogen, to all things, makes this doubtful."<sup>1</sup> This question raised by Hans Waldenfels, S.J., leads us to an examination of the problem of "humans and nature" in Buddhism and of the Buddhist idea of "naturalness" or *jinen*.

In the Buddhist way of salvation, it is true that human is not simply or exclusively taken as "human." Human is rather taken as a member of the class of "sentient beings" or "living beings," and further, as clearly seen in Dogen, even as belonging among "beings," living and nonliving. This presents a striking contrast to Christianity, in which salvation is almost exclusively focused on human as "human." In Christianity it is taught that humans *alone*, unlike other creatures, were created in the *imago Dei*, and that thereby they *alone* can respond to the Word of God. The fall and redemption of Nature takes place through and with the fall and redemption of humans. This human-centered nature of

Christian salvation is inseparably connected with Christian personalism, according to which God is believed to reveal himself as a person, and the encounter of humans with God as an I-Thou relationship is taken as essential.

In Buddhism, however, there is no exact equivalent to the sort of human-centeredness and personalism found in Christianity. The problem of birth and death is regarded in Buddhism as the most fundamental problem for human existence and its solution is the primary concern in Buddhist salvation. But birth-death (*shoji*) is not necessarily taken up as a problem merely within the "human" dimension. It is rather dealt with as a problem of generation and extinction (*shometsu*) that belongs to the total "living" dimension. This points to the Buddhist conviction that the human problem of birth and death cannot be solved basically, unless one transcends the generation-extinction nature common to all living beings. Thus, it is in a non-human-centered dimension, the dimension common to all living beings, that the Buddhist idea of birth and death, i.e. *samsara*, as well as that of emancipation from birth and death, i.e. *nirvana*, are to be grasped.

Further, by going beyond the "living" dimension to the "being" dimension, Buddhism develops its non-human-centered nature to its outermost limits. This dimension of "beings," including both living and non-living beings, is no longer only that of generation-extinction but is that of appearance-disappearance (**kimetsu**) or being-nonbeing (**umu**). The "living" dimension, though trans-human-centered, is of a "life-centered" nature that excludes nonliving beings. The "being" dimension, however, embraces everything in the universe, transcending even the wider- than-human "life-centered" horizon. Thus the "being" dimension is limitless, beyond any sort of "centrism," and is most radical precisely in terms of its non-human-centered nature. It is this most radical non-human-centered and cosmological dimension that provides the genuine basis for the salvation of humans in Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, in Buddhism human **samsara**, i.e., succession of births and deaths, is understood to be inescapable and irremediable unless one transcends human-centeredness and bases one's existence on a cosmological foundation. In other words, not be doing away with the birth-death nature common to all living beings, but only by doing away with the appearance- disappearance nature--i.e., the being-nonbeing nature common to everything--can the human's birth-and-death problem be properly and completely solved. Herein one can see a profound realization of that **transitoriness** common to humans and to all other beings, living or nonliving. This realization, when grasped in its depth, entails a strong sense of solidarity between human and nature. The story of a monk who, looking at the fall of a withered leaf from a tree, awakened to the transiency of the total universe, including himself, bespeaks the compelling power of such a realization.

When transiency as such is fully realized and is thereby transcended in the depths of one's own existence, then the boundless dimension of **jinen** or "naturalness," where both human and nature are equally enlightened and disclose themselves each in its own original **nature**, is opened up. It is for this reason that, referring to such familiar Buddhist phrases as "All the trees and herbs and lands attain Buddhahood" and "Mountains and rivers and the earth all disclose their **Dharmakaya** [their essential Buddhahood]," I once wrote: "Indeed, unless all the trees and herbs and lands attain Buddhahood together with me, I shall not have attained Buddhahood in the true sense of the word." Here the non-human-centered, cosmological emphasis of Buddhism is very conspicuous.

The non-human-centered nature of Buddhism and its idea of **jinen**, however, do not imply, as is often mistakenly suggested, any denial of the significance of individualized human existence. In fact, it is precisely the other way around: the very act of transcending human-centeredness is possible only to a human being who is fully self-conscious. In other words, without self-consciousness on the part of human existence, it is impossible to go beyond "human" and "living" dimensions and to base one's existence on the "being" dimension. Humans alone can be aware of universal transitoriness as such. Accordingly, the fact of transitoriness, common to all beings, is a problem to be solved by him as human. Now this self-consciousness is actualized only in an individual self, in one's **own** self. Further, the problem of birth and death is in its very nature the subjective problem **par excellence** with which everyone must cope alone and by him or her self. In this sense Buddhism is concerned in the deepest

sense with the individual self, with the person, i.e., with the human as human.

In Mahayana Buddhism, as a preamble to the **Gatha** "The Threefold Refuge," the following verse is usually recited:

hard is it to be born into human life.  
We now live it.  
Difficult is it to hear the teaching of the Buddha,  
We now hear it.  
If we do not deliver ourselves in this present life,  
No hope is there ever to cross the sea of birth and death.  
Let us all together, with the truest heart,  
Take refuge in the Three Treasures!

The first and second lines express the joy of being born in human form during the infinite series of varied transmigrations. The third and fourth lines reveal gratitude for being blessed with the opportunity of meeting with the teaching of the Buddha--something which very rarely happens even among humans. Finally the fifth and sixth lines confess to a realization that so long as one exists as a human one can and must awaken to one's own Buddha-nature by practicing the teachings of the Buddha; otherwise one may transmigrate on through **samsara** endlessly. Herein it can be seen that Buddhism takes human existence in its positive and unique aspect most seriously into consideration. Thus in this sense one may say that Buddhism is also human-centered.

However, for the human to transcend his or her human-centeredness within his or her own individuality means for him or her to "die" in the death of his or her own ego. For only through the death of one's own ego is the cosmological dimension, the dimension of **jinen**, opened up to one. And only in that moment does one awaken to one's true self--by being enlightened to the reality that nothing in the universe is permanent.

As regards the above discussion, someone may raise this question: Does the doing away with the distinction of birth and death, for instance, in the liberated consciousness actually "do away" with these "realities" themselves? By realizing impermanence as the essence of everything whatsoever, is one thereby freed from its bondage not only psychologically but also ontologically? To answer this question is to be led to the crux of the problem. The "doing away" with the distinction of birth and death means to overcome the dualistic view in which birth and death are understood as two different realities. From what position does one understand birth and death as two different realities? From the standpoint of life or death? Since it is impossible for one really to distinguish life and death as two realities by taking one of the two as one's own standpoint, it must be done from a third position that in some sense transcends both life and death. But such a third position is unreal because it is a conceptualization resulting from looking at life and death from a position external to them. Rather, one comes to reality only by overcoming such a third position and its outcome, i.e., the relative realities of life and death. In this overcoming, realizer and realized are not two but one. Only in this way is Ultimate Reality realized.

Strictly speaking, however, to attain reality one should transcend not only the duality of life and death but also the wider dualities, i.e., the dualities of generation-extinction and appearance-disappearance. Only by transcending the duality of appearance-disappearance, i.e., the duality of being-nonbeing, does one attain reality, because there is no wider duality than that

of being-nonbeing. Herein there is no "centrism" of any sort at all and the limitless dimension of transitoriness common to all beings is clearly realized as such. The oneness of realizer and realized is attained only through the realization of this universal transitoriness. Situating one's existence in the boundless dimension of being-nonbeing, one realizes universal transitoriness as the only reality--including oneself in this realization. Reality is realized by the person who has that awareness of reality which is not a psychological, but an ontological awareness: **the ontological awareness par excellence.**

In Buddhism the non-human-centered and cosmological aspect is absolutely inseparable from its existential and personalistic aspect. Indeed, in Buddhism one can be genuinely existential and personal only when one's existence is based on the boundless cosmological dimension that transcends the human dimension. But this cosmological dimension is opened up, not objectively, but subjectively through one's existential realization of absolutely universal transitoriness. And the mediating point, or place of confrontation, of the cosmological and the personal aspects is the death of one's ego.

Buddhist salvation is thus nothing other than an awakening to reality through the death of ego, i.e., the existential realization of the transiency common to all things in the universe, seeing the universe really as it is. In this realization one is liberated from undue attachment to things and ego-self, to humanity and world, and is then able to live and work creatively in the world. "Awakening" in Buddhism is never for a single instant ever in the slightest something other than, or separated from, the realization of universal transitoriness. **What is referred to as Buddha-nature in Buddhism and is said to be inherent in everyone and everything, is simply another term for the realization of universal transitoriness, or jinen, in which everyone and everything discloses itself as it truly is in itself. And it is from this realization of jinen that the Buddhist life of wisdom and compassion begins.**<sup>3</sup>

## II

The opening question raised by Father Waldenfels concerning the Buddhist understanding of human and their finitude has, I hope, been answered in the preceding section. "The extension of *shujo* ('sentient beings') to humans, animals, and even to all things" should not imply a mere one-dimensional expansion of standpoint beyond the human sphere, but, as stated above, a transcendence of human-centeredness in the direction of the cosmological dimension through the realization of absolutely universal transiency. Moreover, this kind of transcendence can be achieved only by humans, who alone of all beings are self-conscious. The transiency common to everything in the universe is clearly apprehended as what it is by humans alone through their uniquely subjective realization. In this sense "The extension of *shujo* to human, animals, and even to all things" does not obscure the finitude of humans but, on the contrary, makes it clear and unambiguous.

However, Father Waldenfels's question concerning the Buddhist understanding of human finitude seems to me to be intrinsically related to another important aspect of our subject, viz., the issue of the direction of transcendence in Buddhism and Christianity.

In Christianity man's finitude is realized over against divine justice and divine love. "No human being will be justified in His

[God's] sight by works of the law...They are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:20, 24-25). Human finitude is realized in the light of God's righteousness as death, which is "the wages of sin" (Rom. 6:23). Accordingly, faith implies the death of the "old human" as well as the birth of the "new human" in Christ.

Insofar as the death of the human ego is essential to salvation, no distinction can be made between Christian conversion and Buddhist awakening. In Christianity, however, because death is "the wages of sin" it is grasped within the context of human personalistic and responsible relationship to God; due to his own injustice and sin, a man can never be saved by his own efforts but only through faith in Christ as the redeemer, i.e., the incarnation of God.<sup>4</sup> The divine-human relationship in Christianity is thus essentially vertical, with Christ, the mediator, originating in God as the transcendent or supernatural reality. Thus, in the last analysis it is an irreversible vertical relationship with God as the superior. Even the *unio mystica*, in which the human soul joins to God in an indescribable experience, is not altogether an exception. And this irreversible relationship between human and God is inseparably bound to our deep realization of our own finitude.

Viewed from this Christian standpoint, the Buddhist understanding of human finitude may not appear to be clear enough. For in Buddhism human death is not seen as the result of "sin" in relation to something transcendent or supernatural, such as divine justice, but only as one instance of that transiency common to all things whatsoever in the universe. Again, because Buddhism emphasizes that everyone can attain Buddha-nature without a mediator, human finitude seems not to be properly realized.

Does this Buddhist position, however, indicate a failure in its understanding of human finitude? It is clear that Buddhism, especially its original form, did not admit the supernatural in the form of God as creator, judge, or ruler, of the universe. This is so precisely because Buddhism is convinced that human finitude is so deep that it cannot be overcome even by the supernatural. Now, this conviction is a pivotal point for Buddhism. And in this connection Buddhists would put this question to Christianity: Is human finitude a kind of finitude which can be overcome by faith in God? What is the ground for such a faith?

Dependent origination, a basic idea in Buddhism, indicates that there is no irreversible relationship even between human and "God," nature and the supernatural, the secular and the holy. This is especially clear in Mahayana Buddhism, which stresses the relationship of *soku* as seen in its familiar formula "*samsara-soku-nirvana*" (*samsara* as it is, is *nirvana*). Accordingly, "naturalness" or *jinen* is not something merely immanent, nor a counterconcept of the supernatural, but implies the total negation of the supernatural or transcendent. Thus, as I have written before:

It [naturalness] does not simply mean naturalism as opposed to personalism...The naturalness intended by *jinen* is thought to underlie both the natural and the supernatural, creature and creator, human and God, sentient beings and so-called Buddhas, as their original common basis. In the *jinen* all things, including man, nature, and even the supernatural, are themselves, and as they are.

Only in the realization of this kind of **jinen** can one become a real person, i.e., an awakened one who has compassion and wisdom for all things in the universe.

Christianity transcends humans and nature in "God," who, being the God of love and justice, is understood to be supernatural. The Christian loves his or her neighbor as him or herself in harmony with the first commandment to love God, who is one's savior from sin, with one's whole heart. Buddhism, on the other hand, transcends humans and nature in the direction of "naturalness" of **jinen**, which is identical with Buddha-nature or suchness. Thus, the "direction" or "location" of transcendence is not the same in Christianity and Buddhism, although the death of the human ego and the realization of the new man are in each case essential to transcendence.

#### Notes.

1. Hans Waldenfels, "A Critical Appreciation," *Japanese Religions* IV/2 (1966):23.

2. See also A. Masao, "Dogen on Buddha-nature," *The Eastern Buddhist* IV/1 (1971): 28-71.

3. Italics added [Ed.].

4. It is interesting to compare this statement with Soga Ryojin's later remarks. See, "Dharmakara Bodhisattva," section /VI in *The Buddha Eye* [Ed.].

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## ZEN MEDITATION WESTERN STYLE

Hans Ringrose

During a stay at Count Durckheim's Zen Center at Todtmoos-Rtte in West Germany the Japanese roshi Seki Yuho said: "Zen came originally from India to China and became Chinese. From China it crossed to Japan to become Japanese Zen. Now that it has travelled to Europe it is up to you to transform it into a European, a German Zen." Durckheim reflected on this and concluded that zazen itself is bound to undergo mutations in being transferred from an Oriental, Buddhist context to a Western, still more or less Christian, or rather a radically outward-directed post-Christian society, characterized by extroversion, rationalism and achievement, by Erich Fromm's "have-attitude."

This acquisitive attitude to life at the expense of emotional and spiritual values acquires a highly individualized approach to the training in objectless meditation, taking into account the all too underdeveloped, neglected and ignored aspects of inner life, an approach that beyond adaptation demands certain modifications. In this brief essay I hope to elucidate some of the methodological modifications in training which seem inevitable, the required adaptations in the style of meditation, and the creative adaptability demanded from those who act as guides in objectless meditation in our Western context; may I be forgiven for unavoidable redundancies in what follows.

Japanese Zen masters who come to Europe to give **sesshins** try their best to be accommodating, but their adaptations are usually helpful only to quite advanced students, of whom there are relatively few. The great majority of those who show an interest in Zen are totally unfamiliar with meditation as such, and with objectless meditation in particular. The religious matrix of Buddhism which has traditionally stressed a meditative approach to Truth/Reality is lacking in the West. Only in Roman Catholicism has meditation found its place, be it mostly in the sense of pious concentration on scriptural texts and hallowed imagery. Objectless meditation is therefore suspect of being a threat to orthodoxy, rather than a desirable innovative stimulant

to religious observance. A complete ignorance of what the Zen spirit might mean causes many who are estranged from traditional forms of Christianity to imagine it to be some exotic symbol system, which might serve as an alternative to their former church-bound religiosity. Others have outlandish conceptions of Zen as some mystical system, or expect dramatic experiences, visions, paranormal and occult phenomena, or hope to find in Zen a possible escape from the distasteful and meaningless routines of everyday life.

Those who decide to give it a try soon find out that all meditation points inward, and that this untried inward glance is not without risk. Durckheim goes so far as to state that meditation which does not bring about a certain degree of inner crisis is useless and barren. It is therefore of utmost importance that he who acts as a guide to the beginning meditator first of all dispels all such illusions and is able to give adequate and sufficient information, insofar as this is useful at each particular stage of the initiate's development, and in full awareness of all the detours, traps and escape-maneuvers along the way. He must be competent to apply the brakes or to give encouragement where needed. He has an enormous responsibility, and hence needs a degree of skill which can only be acquired by his own long and intense meditative experience.

In the European context his role is quite different from that of the traditional roshi or guru, in that he must be the guide rather than the authoritarian master, which from the very start requires a radical turnabout in habitual attitudes and automatisms. The activation of intuitive perception namely makes it necessary to let go temporarily of habitual modes of awareness, limited to the external and object-bound, and of that exclusively discursive thinking which Western civilization takes for granted. The all-pervading, constantly stimulated "drive to acquire," so typical of our contemporary consumer society, which stunts emotive and spiritual maturation, must be neutralized. The severe tensions

and conflicts caused by this life style, repressed in everyday life, rise to the surface in meditation and may block any intuitive perception of the Reality of Being.

The guide must be able to handle these difficulties and help the meditator to liberate himself from his compulsions. Once more: his competence can only be based on his own intensive and extensive meditative experience, his maturity and his capacity for empathy. Resisting the temptation to play the psychiatrist or psychotherapist, he must guide the meditator to work through his emotional roadblocks instead of sidestepping these. Since these problems are highly individual and varied, the guide's intensely personal commitment is essential.

The training in objectless meditation, to such a great extent based on bodily aspects like correct sitting, correct walking (**kin-hin**), correct breathing and the tonus of the hara, reveals the somatic defects of the Western way of life: awareness of body has traditionally been weak in Western culture, especially in its relation to spiritual life. The body was seen as a burden, as a necessary evil. Hence distorted spines, tension in knees, jaws, abdominal musculature and shoulders, as well as poor breathing are common. Their correction requires patient and sympathetic personal attention: rehabilitation rather than mere correction is needed to eliminate these impediments to meditation.

Finally, there is the important question of the return to the everyday world, to the "ten thousand things," as the meditator is apt to develop a tendency to withdrawal from normal life. The Western emphasis on the transformation of the external while neglecting the inner world, has resulted in T.S. Eliot's "Hollow Man." We still have to learn to share Werner Karl Heisenberg's "Matter is spirit which manifests itself as matter," for in reality the inner and outer world are interrelated to the point of being

one. Discursive perception and intuitive perception are complementary in the sense that discursive perception should serve intuitive perception of the Real, in order to attain a balanced approach to life.

We must be aware of being creatures, beings, and able to live this awareness in order that everyday life may be taken seriously as being full of Meaning. The great figures of the West have seen this, from Meister Eckhart and Theresa of Avila, to Thomas Merton, Mother Theresa, Dag Hammarskjold in our time.

In practical terms: objectless meditation sets itself the task of initiating those who entrust themselves to our guidance into a way of life in which one can remain in touch with one's spiritual institution instead of being a passive object in the stream of circumstances, and so to strike a balance between meditation and personal action, and perhaps even to influence one's environment positively against all the enormous odds.

In short: important as it is to be faithful to the essence of Japanese Zen practice, certain adaptations and modifications in style have proven to be necessary in training Westerners in objectless meditation: a more individually oriented, hence time consuming approach on the part of the meditation leader is required.

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## THE TAO-ILLUMINATIONS AND CORRECTIONS OF THE WAY

Joseph Needham

As a starting-point let us recall that saying of Jesus about the Way. Speaking with his friends and disciples, James, Philip and Thomas, he said:

'And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also; and where I am going you know, and the Way you know.' But Thomas replied, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, and no man comes to the Father but by me' (John 14:4-6).

Here an eternal verity was spoken, though not, perhaps, as fundamentalists might take it, because what it surely means is that love, and sacrificial love too, is the only salvation for individual men and women and for humanity as a whole.

My great disagreement with traditional Christians is that, although concerned with eternal values, they have generally expected to find these values everywhere incarnated in familiar forms; and they have assumed that their own structures of ec-

clesiastical organization would one day be accepted by all the peoples of the world. But this is not to be. The eternal values are there in other forms, and it is these which we ought to set ourselves to be looking for. Love, sacrificial love, ethical beauty, and righteousness, have to be sought for throughout the ages within social and cultural patterns, intellectual symbols and systems which are quite unfamiliar to most of us, but which we ought to learn about. The disinclination, or even refusal, to do this constitutes just that presumptuousness which has been one of the worst features of our Western culture. I should even call it a prime example of that 'spirit of evil in things heavenly' (**ta pneumatika tes ponerias en tois epouraniois**) which Paul warns us about (Eph. 6:12). It must surely be Christian to try to learn in humility from others rather than always assuming the right to teach. By all means let us expound **In principio erat verbum**, but hear and revere at the same time **Tao k'o tao fei ch'ang** "Tao (The Way that can be talked about is not the eternal Way). Since **tao** also means to speak, the **logos** has indeed been one of the translations of the word Tao which philosophers



have favoured; but we may equally take it as the Way, or Order of Nature, God immanent within the world.

The **Tao Te Ching** (Canon of the Way and its Virtue), written some time during the fourth century B.C. and attributed to Lao Tan (Lao, Tzu, Master Lao), is full of poetry which reminds one of the great Christian paradoxes. For example, take the following, referring to the world of creatures:

The Tao gave birth to it  
The Virtue (of the Tao) reared it  
Things (within) endowed it with form,  
Influences (without) brought it to its perfection.  
Therefore of the ten thousand things there is not one that does not worship the Tao and do homage to its Virtue. Yet the worshipping of the Tao, and the doing of homage to its Virtue, no mandate ever decreed.  
Always this (adoration) was free and spontaneous.  
Therefore (as) the Tao bore them, and the Virtue of the Tao reared them, made them grow, fostered them, harboured them, fermented them, nourished them and incubated them--

so one must

Rear them, but not lay claim to them,  
Control them, but never lean upon them,  
Be chief among them, but not lord it over them.  
This is called the invisible Virtue.<sup>1</sup>

Notes are struck here which one recognizes again and again. The Tao is the greatest power in the universe, but it is present in the smallest things, and it operates not so much by force as by a kind of natural space-time curvature. Today we should visualize this as running through the whole range of evolution, cosmic, planetary, biological, sociological. Man must imitate the Tao, which works unseen and never dominates. By yielding, by not imposing his preconceptions on Nature, he will be able to observe and understand. In understanding he may achieve peace of mind, and be a co-worker with the Tao. Again, in another place we read:

The supreme Tao, how it floods in every direction!  
This way and that, there is no place where it does not go.  
All things look to it for life, and it refuses none of them;  
Yet when its work is accomplished it possesses nothing.  
Clothing and nourishing all things, it does not lord it over them.  
Since it asks for nothing from them  
It may be classed among things of low estate;  
But since all things obey it without coercion  
It may be named Supreme.  
It does not arrogate greatness to itself  
And so it fulfils its Greatness.<sup>2</sup>

Is this no reminiscent of the words of Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians?

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true, as unknown, and well known, as dying, and behold we live, as punished, and yet not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Cor. 6:8-9).

God as immanent and in a way also transcendent, is described again in other chapters, where the classical epithet **tzu-jan**, spon-

taneous, self-originating, natural, self-sufficient, uncreated, is applied to it; so that surely we can say it is divine:

(In the beginning) there was something undifferentiated and yet complete.  
Before Heaven and Earth were produced,  
Silent! Empty!  
Sufficient unto itself! Unchanging!  
Revolving incessantly, never exhausted.  
Well might it be the mother of all things under heaven.  
I do not know its name.  
'Tao' is the courtesy-name we give it.  
If I were forced to classify it, I should call it 'Great'.  
But being great means being penetrating (in space and time),  
And penetrating implies far-reaching  
And far-reaching means coming back to the original point...  
The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth, the ways of earth by those of heaven, the ways of heaven by those of the Tao, and the Tao came into being by itself.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, the Tao was always there, within the worlds and galaxies, yet a potentiality and power before any of them came into existence.

Outstanding among the motifs of Taoism are those of water and of the feminine spirit.<sup>4</sup> Water typified for the Taoists two things: first a humility similar to that enjoined in our own Gospels, and secondly a receptive sensitivity in contrast to all commanding activity. Thus the **Tao Te Ching** says:

The highest good is like that of water. The goodness of water is that it benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet itself does not wrangle, but is content with the places that all men disdain. It is this that makes water so near to the Tao.<sup>5</sup>

One is immediately reminded of the parable that Jesus spoke in the Gospel of Luke, when he marked how those who were bidden to marriage feasts chose out the chief seats for themselves. On the contrary, he said, 'When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place...For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted' (Luke 14:7- 11). Again, water is yielding and assumes the shape of whatever vessel it is placed in. It seeps and soaks through invisible crevices. Its mirror-like surface, when still, reflects all Nature. The **Tao Te Ching** says:

What is of all things most yielding  
Can overwhelm that which is most hard,  
Being substanceless it can enter in even where there is no crevice.  
That is how I know the value of action which is actionless.  
But that there can be teaching without words,  
Value in action which is actionless  
Few indeed can understand.

So also other Taoist texts often speak about the 'untaught teaching' and the 'wordless edict'.

Now let me turn to the feminine symbol in Taoism, the Taoist belief in the profound importance of the qualities which since the beginning have characterized the female, child-bearing half of the human race: forbearance instead of domination, mercy instead of aggression, softness and gentleness instead of the imperious and the possessive. All these many contrasts describe the Yin over against the Yang. Taoists greatly emphasized the Yin. The **locus classicus** is in the **Tao Te Ching**:

The Valley Spirit never dies  
 It is named the Mysterious Feminine.  
 And the Doorway of the Mysterious Feminine  
 Is the root (from which) Heaven and Earth (sprang).  
 It is the thread for ever woven;  
 And those who use it can accomplish all things.<sup>6</sup>

The feminine yieldingness, which they believed would bring cooperative happiness in human social relations, was inexplicably connected with the female receptiveness, which they desired to display in their observation of Nature. This was how at one and the same time they came close to religion and science, because the study of the Book of Nature was the study of the way the Tao (God immanent in Nature) worked; and in fact we find that wherever the beginnings of the natural sciences occur in China the Taoists are always there.

I have mentioned the technical term *tzu-jan*, but there are many others characteristic of Taoism, like the word *jang*. This means to cede, to yield up, to give the better place, hence to invite as a host. This conception reaches its highest point in the **Tao T Ching**:

...Therefore the sage  
 Puts himself in the background yet is always to the fore.  
 Remains outside, but is always here.  
 Is it not just because he does not strive for any personal end  
 That all his personal ends are fulfilled?<sup>7</sup>

Such an undominating attitude, so loving and so giving, recalls many Christian stances, for example the words of St. Francis:

You only receive in giving to others. You only find if you forget yourself. You only win forgiveness if you forgive others, and only by dying do you rise again to life eternal.

This is the love which seeks to give itself away, the outpouring, outgoing prodigality towards the other person; but that of course makes it extraordinarily vulnerable, and therefore of necessity such love is sacrificial because it will not count the cost or withhold itself in any way because of the risk of terrible suffering which it knows it is running. Such is the feminine, intuitive, spendthrift spirit, venerated by Taoists and Christians alike.

Masculine aggressivity and greed are castigated over and over again in the **Tao Te Ching**. Indeed, in one place it suggests that all private property is based on robbery:

So long as the court is in order,  
 (Rulers are content to) let the fields run to weeds  
 And the granaries stand empty.  
 They wear patterns and embroideries,  
 Carry sharp swords, glut themselves with drink and food,  
 have more possessions than they can use--  
 These are the riotous ways of brigandage; they are not the Tao.<sup>8</sup>

If I adhere to Christian belief as my own birthright, it is because I find it the most appropriate vehicle of religious experience for me, and I am not seriously disturbed by what the fundamentalists of many persuasions may have to say. If anyone were to ask me what the evolutionary process was all 'in aid of', I should say it was for the development of what we call love, and the Two Great Commandments remain for me the be-all and end-

all of religion. I like to quote what the sufi Abul Fazi Al-'Allami said about the Tao in the late sixteenth century:

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister and sometimes the mosque  
 But it is thou whom I search for from temple to temple  
 Thine elect have no dealings with heresy or orthodoxy,  
 For neither of these stands behind the screen of thy truth.  
 Speculation to the heretic, theology to the orthodox,  
 But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume-seller.

Thus for me there is objectivity in God, not only subjectivity, though we cannot think of God in any adequate terms. All the more must we now and then criticize the mental images which have been formed about the Tao. I am dissatisfied with three of these masks. First, the idea of God as exclusively masculine; secondly the image of God modelled on an earthly monarch; and third, worst of all perhaps, the concept of God as a military leader, a field-marshal.

Let me first take up the problem of sex. I willingly agree that the People of the Book, including ourselves as Christians, can never be expected to renounce the idea of the fatherhood of God in their thought, and especially in their liturgical language. Jesus himself, of course, directly shared in this, and his incarnation took place into the milieu of traditional Hebrew patriarchalism. That was clearly why he had to be incarnated as a man, and why he chose exclusively men for his apostles. In my opinion Christians ought to be much more aware of a feminine element in God, or rather, a parallel feminine component in the familiar imagination which they have of God. Try substituting Mother for Father in all the prayers in our Book of Common Prayer and see how you feel about it.

Perhaps we might gain a little inspiration from the twelfth century. At a time when Taoism had become almost the established religion of the Northern Sung dynasty, St. Francis echoed the devotion to the Valley Spirit by using the word 'mother' in his relationship to his new band of friars. It occurs many times in his messages to Brother Leo, and if they took it in turn to be Superior, it was like saying 'Who's going to be Mother today?' His frequent use of the word 'Sister' for all sorts of objects, animate or inanimate, is another example of his consciousness of the feminine.<sup>9</sup> His contemporary, Joachim of Flora, in the **Everlasting Gospel**, developed a fascinating view of history in which the first period was that of the Father, characterized by the rigour of the law, and the human response one of servile obedience and fear. The second part, that of the Son, was characterized by the rule of grace, marked by filial obedience and dominated by clerics. But the third age, which Joachim thought was trembling to be born in his time, was that of the Holy Spirit, the age of the plenitude of love, in which humans respond in liberty. The most important element in the Franciscan doctrine of love was related to Joachim's theme of radical freedom, because the spirit of love breaks through established institutions, theological prescriptions and personal conventions. But alas, these recognitions of the importance of the feminine in Christian history have been rather rare, and in a number of ways Christian myth and Christian ideology have had very deleterious effects on the feminine half of humanity.

Between the eighth and the fifth centuries B.C., there arose in Chinese culture the perennial natural philosophy of the two great forces of Nature, the Yin and the Yang. The Yang represented

brightness, maleness, dryness, light, motion, the positive, and spring and summer. Conversely, the Yin represented clouds and rain, femaleness, moisture, darkness, rest, the negative, and autumn and winter. The perennial philosophy of China regarded perfection as consisting in the most exquisite balance between Yin and Yang--as the *I Ching* (Book of Changes) says: *i Yin i Yang chih wei Tao* (The Tao is made up equally of Yin and Yang.)<sup>10</sup> The Blessed Virgin Mary has clearly been a manifestation of the Yin, and has represented the quintessence of many qualities that all the Old World civilizations have traditionally regarded as feminine: gentleness, tenderness, compassion, receptiveness, intuition, humility, forbearance, long-suffering. What a contrast these are with the typically masculine tendencies to coercion, domination, manipulation, retaliation, assertiveness, possessiveness, imperious overriding power. In spite of its Yin aspects, never totally lost to sight, Christianity has been on the whole, far too much permeated by the Yang, both emotionally and intellectually. The time has come to adjust this imbalance. As David Ingleby has said,<sup>11</sup> Taoism has been and remains the supreme theory of harmonious relations between Nature and culture; its basic tenet has been that the two principles of Yin and Yang, which corresponded in so many respects to our ideas of Nature and culture, are distinct but complementary. To see conflict between them as inevitable is the product of a delusion about the nature of reality. This delusion is that the human will can only act by opposing natural regularities. One of Thomas Aquinas' great glimpses of the truth was his saying that 'Grace does not abrogate Nature, but supplements and makes up the deficiencies of Nature.' Thus a little more masculinity would be desirable in Christian women, and a great deal more femininity in Christian men. In this way we might hope to attain within the framework of the Gospel of Love, a larger measure of that harmony and happiness which was the Chinese ideal.<sup>12</sup>

Penultimately, I come to another highly unsatisfactory image of God, that of ruthless Caesar, monarch or emperor. In spite of the Byzantine *frisson historique* which one gets from epithets such as Pantocrator, A.N. Whitehead was in my view fundamentally right in the following passage:<sup>13</sup>

When the Western world accepted Christianity, Caesar conquered; and the received text of Western theology was edited by his lawyers. The code of Justinian and the theology of Justinian are two volumes expressing one movement of the human spirit. The brief Galilaean vision of humility flickered on throughout the ages uncertainly...but the deeper idolatry of the fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian and Roman imperial rulers was retained. In fact the church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar.

Hartshorne has described the analogy of God as monarch or 'world boss' as perhaps the most shockingly bad of all theological analogies.<sup>14</sup> Political leaders are, and have to be, more or less impassive, insensitive to the feelings of others, swaying their passions but insulating themselves against these feelings except in so far as it may be convenient to share them. The will of God may of course be implemented through rulers, but it is far better to think of his actions as working through the love in individual human hearts. He is constrained by the very structure of our part of the universe, and the conflicting desires of millions of individuals. We may like to think of God as the only genuine ser-

vant of all, who grieves in all griefs, and longs for the fulfilment of all desires actually experienced, even though he cannot eliminate all griefs or fulfil all desires (because the very idea of this is nonsense). Paraphrasing Pascal's words that 'the heart has its reasons which reason never understands,'<sup>15</sup> one could say that the Tao has its patterns which men only see after they have unfolded. Hartshorne ends by saying, surely rightly, that political imagery is about as far as it is easy to get from such supreme mercy and companionship as God shows towards all that is.

Last of all I come to the image of God as field-marshal. Perhaps this is only another aspect of that undue masculinity which the People of the Book have attributed to Him. We have to declare again and again that the strongest power in the world is that of love itself, which does not work by force to achieve its highest purpose or win its greatest victories. The Tao is the Order of Nature, suffused by love as well as statistical regularities, and the cross was the power and wisdom of God or the Tao. Christians ought to understand that in their religion the supreme manifestation of divine power was in the universal love and complete self-sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth. Evil can only be overcome by love and the suffering which it brings. As it is written on one of the bells at Orwell: **Non clamor sed amor cantat in aure Dei.**

I have spoken already about cosmic love and love among us at the human level, but love is vulnerable, inevitably doomed to suffering, if it were only on account of the terrible fact of transience itself. There is rejection, there is unkindness, there is cruelty, there is evanescence, there is coldness. Anything may happen. In our religion we believe that Christ dared to let go and emptied himself of divine glory when he, the Tao, became incarnate in a human body. Love was denied, love was betrayed, love was crucified--and love was undefeated. That was the 'Way' of the cross. That was the Truth about human relationships, and that was the Life which all men and women must lead, if the patterns of the Tao are to be fulfilled on Earth. And so we come back to our starting-point and look again at the Way or Tao of love expressed in that wonderful collect:

O God, who has taught us that all our doings without love are worth nothing, send down thy Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee.

#### Notes:

1. *Tao Te Ching*, 51 (hereafter TTC).
2. TTC, 34.
3. TTC, 25.
4. An admirable introduction to Taoist philosophy and its symbolism has been written by Alan Watts and Huang Chung-Liang, *Tao; the Watercourse Way*, Pantheon, New York, 1975. See also Watts' *The Book on the Taboo against Knowing Who You are*, Cape, London, 1969.
5. TTC, 8.
6. TTC, 6.
7. TTC, 7.
8. TTC, 53.
9. See Moorman, J.A. *History of the Franciscan Order from its Origin to the year 1517*, Oxford, 1968, and G. Rupp's essay on St. Francis, *op. cit.*, pp. 15ff.
10. See *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 2, pp. 304ff. Cambridge, 1954. This great classic of Chinese philosophy and religion consists of many strata ranging from the ninth or eighth century B.C. to the first century A.D. It thus covers roughly the whole range of Old Testament datings.
11. *The Politics of Depth Psychology*, pt. 2, p. 3, also p. 16.

12. One of the best books that has ever been written about human sexuality is that of Alan Watts, *Nature, Man and Woman*, Pantheon, London, 1958. Another excellent study is that of Philip Sherrard, *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love*, SPCK, London, 1976.

13. *Process and Reality*, pp. 484ff., quoted with commentary by P. Hamilton, *The Living God and the Modern World*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1967, p. 103, and Alan Watts, *Psychotherapy East and West*, Pelican, London, 1973, p. 89.

14. Hartshorne, C., *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*, Archon, Hamden, Conn., 1964, p. 203.

15. *Le coeur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connait point*, (Penses, Espiard ed.), p. 174.

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## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Calvin DeWitt

It is important for the health and survival of human societies that their worldviews are in harmony with the ecological processes maintaining the integrity of Earth. It would be surprising to find a culture that has persisted through millennia that has not incorporated an integral worldview--one that serves to promote a healthy society in harmonious accord with the ecosystems that sustain it. Thus, it is not surprising to find in Judaism and Christianity--religions that have persisted for thousands of years--teachings that are at their base ecological, and supportive of a sustained habitation of Earth. These ancient teachings provide the basis for Christian Stewardship.

While Christian Stewardship is a philosophy toward life and the Earth that is very old, it has seen little emphasis throughout the past few centuries. With the advent of modern science and disruptive science-religion debates, Christendom has been stepping back from its closeness to the Creation and the Creator, shifting its attention toward the individual self and the personal Redeemer. But the growing environmental awareness in modern society is bringing a realization to the church that its long-standing confession of God as Creator often is accompanied by its confessors' standing by or even assisting in the dismantling of the Creator's works. It is a realization much like might be imagined in admirers of Rembrandt who suddenly realize they are bystanders and participants in the destruction of Rembrandt's art.

The wave of environmental awareness is bringing Christendom to see itself afresh in the light of a Creation being degraded, in the light of the scriptures, and in the light of a renewed spirituality. In response, it is beginning to move back to the Creation, to embracing the Creator and speaking out for the Creator's works. It is recognizing that belief in God as Redeemer necessarily requires belief in God as Creator. Christian Stewardship is emerging in Christendom.

Christian Stewardship has three sources: deep and reflective study of the scriptures, diligent learning from the Cosmos, and nurturing a life of spirituality. The scriptures make the repeated observation that people often behave contrary to the harmony and order of Earth and society. They show that stewardship behaviour is not assured by simply being human. Arrogance, ignorance, and greed may prevail, degrading the integrity of Creation; this always leads to death. But stewardship, right-ness, just-ness, those behaviours in harmony with the order of the Cos-

mos and the Creator, these lead to life. Human beings, seen in the scriptures as creatures of choice, are admonished to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Choosing life is the way of Christian Stewardship.

From the scriptures much is learned about stewardship (see DeWitt, 1987; Granberg-Michaelson, 1987; Wilkenson, 1980): people do not own the Earth; all creatures have intrinsic value; endangered species are worthy of preservation; every creature, the land, and all Creation needs its sabbaths of fulfillment; and, people of the Earth should engage in a loving keeping of the Earth and its creatures. Of particular importance is the example of Christ, the one through whom the world was created and is sustained (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17), who "finding equality with God a thing difficult to grasp, takes the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:5-7). From Christ's example, Christian Stewardship is shown to be a work of redemption, restoration, and service.

While recognizing their own worth for teaching and instruction (II Timothy 3:14-17), the scriptures also point to the Creation as a teacher and proclaimer of knowledge (Psalm 19:12-4; Romans 1:20; Acts 14:16-17). Serious study of the Bible itself soon encourages one to learn directly from the Creation. From such learning one comes to realize that environment acts upon and affects living beings, society and human culture; that these in turn act upon their environments, changing and affecting them so that life and environment, in beautiful and continuous coaction, are integrated into the ever changing integrated fabric of the biosphere. Each creature too, shows this wholeness and integrity, so much so that they continuously give praise to their Creator: "Day unto day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge" (Psalms 19:2).

But, there also is spirituality. The scriptures profess that, beyond the knowledge derivable from the scriptures and the Cosmos, there is much more; something that lies much deeper, at the core of humanity. This can be nurtured by the Creation itself, where understanding something of the greatness, beauty and harmony of the Cosmos and its creatures can lead to insight into the workings of the biosphere that elicit an awe and overwhelming humility--a touching and transforming of the heart--a feeling after a Creator.

In helping people to understand something of spirituality, the scriptures profess: "Out of the heart are the issues of life"

(Proverbs 4:23). What constitutes spirituality is discoverable through the scriptures and through immersing oneself in the wildness of Creation: it resides at the level of communion with the Creator, at the level of a growing love that embraces Creator and Creation. Spirituality involves faith, hope, love and assurance, going beyond knowledge and dwelling deeply within the person (Ephesians 3:19; I Corinthians 8:1-3, 13:2; Romans 8:16). Without this depth, say the scriptures, knowledge is meaningless.

Christian Stewardship thus is rooted in the scriptures, is informed by instruction given us by the Cosmos itself, and flows from a communion with the Creator and a caring love for the Creation. A worldview that embraces Christian Stewardship elicits active striving to preserve and restore Creation's integrity, responding to Creation's eager expectation of redemption (Romans 8:19). Christian Stewardship is a caring keeping of the Earth that works to preserve and restore the integrity of the created order, doing the will of the Creator, and seeking for the Creator's kingdom of integrity and peace--a kingdom devoid of human arrogance, ignorance and greed. Christian Stewardship is so living on Earth that the Creator and Creation are respected, that the Creation is preserved, that brokenness is repaired, the integrity is restored. Christian Stewardship is so living on Earth that heaven will not be a shock to us.

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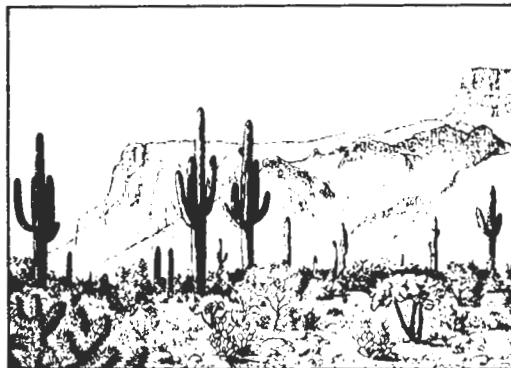
About the Author: **Calvin DeWitt** is Director of Au Sable Institute where he spends each summer. From fall through spring, each year he lives on Waubesa Marsh, an 850-acre preserve he helped establish, near Madison, Wisconsin, where he plans, writes, studies, and teaches stewardship. The Town of Dunn in which he lives is one of wetlands, forests, and prime agricultural lands, all of which he helped preserve through a model stewardship plan, when he was Town Chairman. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he is Professor of Environmental Studies and teaches courses in environmental science, wetland ecology, human population ecology, ecosystems analysis, and land resources, with assistance from Au Sable student, Tara DeVries. He is author of papers in physiological ecology, wetland ecology, and ecosystem modeling and has given addresses to 30 colleges on the theme of Christian environmental stewardship, a theme toward which he directs his life. He is one of the authors in *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*, and a founder and Vice-Chairman of the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology. Most of all, he is an encourager of students to choose a path of significant stewardly service that is respectful of the Creation and joyful before the Lord. The article printed here originally appeared as part of a focus on ecophilosophy, edited by Alan R. Drengson, in *Communities Magazine*, No. 75, Summer 1988. Reprinted with permission.

## POETRY

### FROM WASSON PEAK

Sonoran Desert, Arizona  
*Beth Fox*

The night descends  
like indigo gauze  
desert wind shivering North  
in the margin between spheres.  
It falls lightly,  
draping the Santa Catalinas  
like chairs  
in a vacant home--  
shapes,  
the memory of red rock  
shimmering in March heat  
tacked fast by saguaro thorns.  
They pierce through Night  
to a side I can not rise to  
but watch from lying  
on this stony soil.  
Thirty feet above me  
saguaro end and  
the other face of dark begins,  
the fabric of Sonoran stars,  
sharp spines shooting light  
to the Universe.



## THE SILENCEBRINGERS

*David Sparenberg*

The man who loves the earth  
whose love is genuine  
who faces the old ways  
a fountain of wisdom  
whose heart is magnanimous  
whose mind is alert

a single man standing  
a mountain of character  
a landscape of legend  
who chants to the tall trees  
and wandering stars--

This man says nothing  
He is not a part of  
the ways of the cities  
The blood in his veins  
has an earlier source

He strolls in the quiet  
Olympic Mountains  
He walks through the gentle  
Willamette Valley

The cruel taint of exile  
has smeared a harsh color  
over his features  
But tears of the dark times  
he lifts into splendor  
The words of the wayward  
his heartsong transforms

What is said of this man  
the man who says nothing  
can be said of the woman  
who shares the same purpose:

Their silence is fuller  
than the modern world's noise

## TIKKUN (REPAIR) IN THE PARKING LOT

*Helene Kasha*

Asphalt shopping afternoon,  
three-dimensional parking lots,  
the sky is small, blue and jagged.

A patch is torn from it,  
hangs on shreds on two sides.  
Blue, strange silky substance.

Oh God! the patch is caught in the spokes,  
in the fluorocarbons and containers  
of my supermarket cart.

As I head to the car and drive,  
the sky is dragged, undone.  
The once-majestic curtain is drawn open.  
Beyond, blackness and the rays.

Hey down there, slow down the cart, the car,  
reverse the wheel,  
disentangle yourself,

Shed warm tears,  
they will raise the delicate patch,  
chemically bond and seal where torn.

## THE LAST WORDS OF EUWA, THE LAST WHITE RHINOCEROS

*Helene Kasha*

I need a name -- Euwa  
so they can mourn after me,  
the last white rhinoceros.

What a silly nomenclature they gave us,  
the poachers, the pushers, the philistines,  
Ionesco-the-fool.

I am the last of my kind,  
Lonesome burden.

The grasses will call me,  
the tickbirds seek me,  
and find substitutes in cattle.

I was estrous, beautiful and waiting  
My love, the last male was shot  
They took his horn and left.

Children of man, weep for the white rhinoceros  
I weep bitterly  
Begging  
let no other species vanish  
Be Noah unto them.

Oh, humble thyself before the tomb of Euwa,  
the last of a species.

Extinct.

About the poets: **Beth Fox** is a graduate student in Environmental Education with the National Audubon Society Expedition Institute. She lives in Dalton Canyon in northern New Mexico. **David Sparenberg's** essays, stories and poetry have appeared in a variety of periodicals. He has published **Words on Fire, Not Bodies** (prose) and **The Name is Shalom** (poetry). Both are available from him at 1709 - 23rd Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. **Helene Kasha** is an ecologist and linguist. She lives in North Haven, Connecticut.

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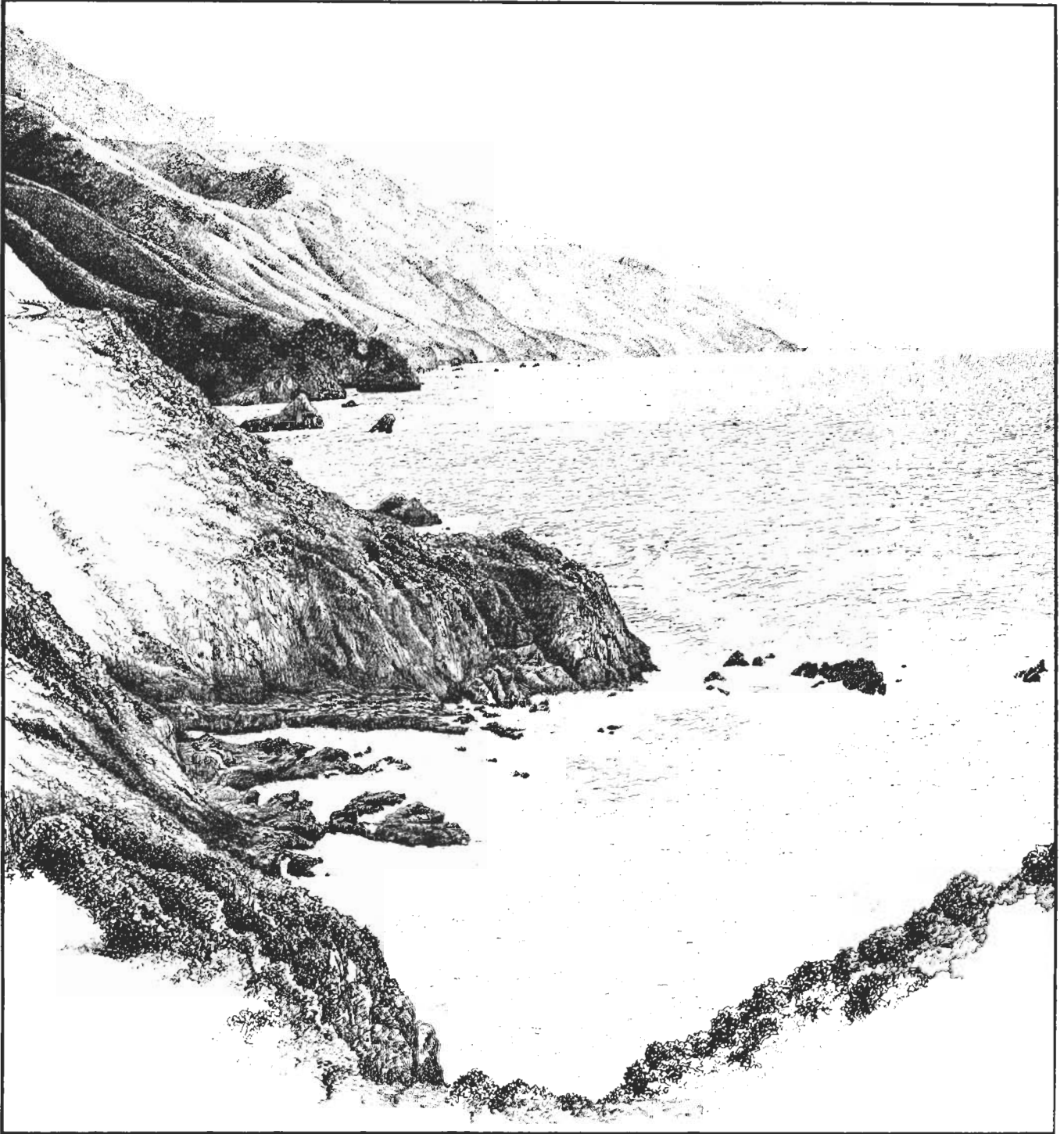
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*The Trumpeter: Dedicated to the exploration of and contributions  
to a new ecological consciousness and the practice  
of forms of life imbued with ecosophy*