

## Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part II): From Earth First! and Bioregionalism to Scientific Paganism and the New Age

BRON TAYLOR

Earth and nature-based spirituality is proliferating globally. In Part I of this study, I argued that although participants in these countercultural movements often eschew the label religion, these are religious movements, in which persons find ultimate meaning and transformative power in nature. Focusing on the deep ecology movement, I further argued that (1) experiences of nature spirituality are evoked by practices as diverse as mountaineering, neo-shamanic ritualising and states of consciousness induced by hallucinogens; (2) earthen spiritualities are often contested and may be viewed as inauthentic or dangerous by practitioners of other forms of nature spirituality, and (3) despite significant diversity, a sense of connection and belonging to nature (sometimes personified as a transforming if not transcendent power) unites these cross-fertilising, and sometimes competing, spiritualities. Part II examines additional forms of nature-oriented religion, searching further for continuities, discontinuities and ironies among its diverse forms. © 2001 Academic Press

### *From Earth First! to Bioregionalism—Kindred Forms of Earth-Based Spirituality*

I begin Part II of this study by comparing the earth-based spiritualities found in the bioregional and radical environmental movements.<sup>1</sup> Most participants in these movements recognise that they share many affinities, and indeed, many participants identify themselves with both movements. Both draw on the diverse spiritualities to be found in the ‘cultic milieu’ discussed in Part I. ‘Pagan environmentalism’ is an apt label for both. Each has had serious internal disputes over countercultural lifestyles and the value of overt pagan ritualising.

There are, however, important differences that keep these movements from fusing completely. Bioregionalists emphasise creating sustainable lifestyles and communities, ones separate from the dominant society. They also tend to be more directly engaged in promoting spiritual consciousness change in various ways, often through overt ritual work, and they are often more hopeful that positive change is possible than are most radical environmentalists. Earth First’ers, however, emphasise political action to defend the biotic diversity of the planet. They are generally less optimistic than bioregionalists that education and ritualising can facilitate a dramatic enough change to arrest species extinctions (see Taylor 1999).

Illustrating the affinities and tensions between these movements, Dave Foreman once praised bioregionalism while complaining that it was ‘mired in its composting toilets, organic gardens, handcrafts [and] recycling’, ignoring the duty to defend the biotic diversity of the planet. ‘Bioregionalism is more than technique’, Foreman insisted. It should also be ‘resacralization and self-defense’.<sup>2</sup>

There are two things to do right now. One is this self-defense of the wild. More of us need to do everything we can to try to ensure that wild places remain, and that’s whether you monkeywrench, or just buy wild land, or whether you work through the political process for better management, whatever. The other is what the bioregional movement is doing: trying to re-connect with our tribal roots, trying to recreate, to

grope towards, that kind of society. . . . I see ecodefense and bioregionalism as being two sides of the path towards whatever society will become in the future, once we're through this catastrophic event that's coming up. (Foreman 1990, p. 65)

Apocalypticism explains why Earth First'ers give priority to ecological resistance over lifestyle activism. Despite differing general priorities, many bioregionalists have taken these criticisms to heart, participating in direct action environmentalism. Meanwhile most Earth First'ers strive to live low impact lifestyles and to support bioregional initiatives. There is a significant and increasing overlap and collaboration among activists in these movements.

### ***Perception, Invention and Expression in Earth-Based Spirituality***

Earth-based spiritualities are based on personal experiences that foster a bonding with nature. These experiences are diverse, take place in different venues and are expressed in plural ways that are sometimes contested. These feelings may be intentionally precipitated through a variety of practices that are themselves a creative bricolage assembled from older religious traditions, especially Eastern and indigenous religions, combined with new inventions, such as neo-paganism, all stirred into an eclectic spiritual stew.

#### *Road Shows and Ecovangelism*

Like evangelistic circuit riders, environmental pagans travel from town to town trying to inspire greater activism in defence of the earth. Some, like Howie Wolke, eschew overtly religious language, speaking at length about the ecological characteristics of the specific areas for which they are campaigning, and speaking more obliquely of the 'intrinsic value' and 'magic' of the natural world, and of the need for greater 'passion' and 'wildness' in her defence.

Others have expressed more openly their earthen spirituality. In a song called 'Magic' the folksinger Dana Lyons speaks of 'feeling love' from the forest. Lyons recalls receiving another song from a tree that is expressing its sadness about its impending doom as loggers approach. Another Earth First! musician, Jesse 'Lone Wolf Circles' Hardin, has expressed both pantheistic and animistic perceptions in his pulsing ballads, urging listeners to dig down deep to connect with their own wild animal selves, which are capable of defending the earth. Joanne Rand's songs, like Lone Wolf's, express the animistic and spiritual perception that our ancestors inhabit this world with us. Her songs proclaim that we are 'never alone' and that 'the ancient ones' surround us and are 'in our bones'.

Still others, including the late Judy Bari and her protégé Alisha Little Tree, wove their critique of patriarchy into overtly pagan songs. They especially liked the Charley Murphy song, 'Burning Times', which equates the burning of witches with the desecration of nature and expresses the ecofeminist conviction that the close, cultural (or 'natural') association between women and nature links them together, whether in destruction or in liberation. Along with diatribes against the timber corporations and corrupt pro-industry governments, their program included a number of deeply reverent songs. One, for example, exhorted listeners to humble themselves before the forest, the rivers and the oceans, so that all could be healed. A more playful ditty celebrated three important pathways to spiritual insight—marijuana, magic mushrooms and trees—and referred to them as the Holy Trinity.

What unites these diverse road show performers is their belief that the arts—especially music, poetry and photography—can transport persons imaginatively into the

wilderness, evoking in them deep, intuitive and mystical knowledge of the sacredness of earth and of all life.<sup>3</sup> For example, Alice DiMicelle, who fuses radical environmentalism with ecofeminist lesbian activism in a song written after spending five days alone in the Kalmiopsis wilderness of southeastern Oregon, sings of the ‘magic’ and ‘miracle’ of nature. In another song used to score a number of movement videos, she urges action: ‘Do what you can, do what you must, but do something to defend the earth’.

Describing a European road show, DiMicelle explained that her role was to bring persons ‘experientially into the wilderness’ through her music and photographic slides. ‘That was fine with me’, she said, ‘for the wilderness is my church’. Strategically, she places her most mystical music towards the end of the show, ‘because we wanted to send them away with the mystical’.<sup>4</sup>

DiMicelle’s religious experiences, like that of many others involved in earth-spirituality movements, began in childhood. She grew up in a ‘normal dysfunctional’ middle-class family in industrial New Jersey but recalls that nevertheless she could ‘always . . . feel the planet. I always knew mother Earth was under the sidewalk’. The knowledge that she was ‘living in a spiritual world’ helped her to survive in a place that was so badly desecrated, but most of all ‘it was the trees that saved me in New Jersey. I had some connection with living plants’. She also knew that ‘there is life in the soil, even in New Jersey. You can’t take life out of the dirt’. She grew up speaking and singing to trees, she recalls: ‘The maple trees [got] me through, they spoke to me’. Moreover, like Dana Lyons, trees gave her music: ‘My first song, in seventh grade, came from a tree, “Celebrate the Rain”’. DiMicelle now lives in Oregon, watching her new homeland increasingly resemble the desecrated landscapes of New Jersey. Nevertheless, she is hopeful. ‘People are waking up’, she says. ‘The earth is sending out signals, and people are responding’.<sup>5</sup>

For these ecovangelists (a term likely coined by Dakota Sid Clifford, another green balladeer), earthen spirituality is both the source and the goal of the itinerant green touring that is a critical part of contemporary grassroots environmentalism.

### *Wilderness Ritualising*

Songs, poetry, dancing, erotic play, mythic pageants and simple conversation bond activists together and reinforce their spirituality and activism, especially at Earth First! wildlands ‘rendezvous’, where the kinds of spiritual practices described below occur.

*Song and Poetry, Campfires and Rallies.* Song and poetry fests, held around campfires, are the most common and important means of expressing the earthen spirituality and sharp political criticisms common within radical environmental movements.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes more reverent campfires are interrupted and lampooned by inebriated revellers; some revellers view themselves as Mudhead Kachina’s, or trickster figures, doing important ‘spiritual work’ by making sure that participants do not take themselves too seriously. Others participate just for fun or because they think that spirituality is best reserved for one’s own time in the wild. One rowdy interruption occurs when an ‘amoeba’ (made up of an ever growing circle of activists, hands on shoulders and around waists, chanting repeatedly ‘eat, excrete and die’) swirls around the penumbra of the fire, absorbing all in its path. The amoeba expresses humorously the kinship—based on the common experience of eating, excreting and dying—of all life forms.

Other ritual processes, apparently borrowed from the American fraternity system, involving the drinking of shots of Tequila from increasingly intimate body parts, become a form of erotic play. These activists view the body positively and view

sexuality as a delightful aspect of being an animal. Some of them also know about Tantric mysticism, at least enough to be intrigued by it, and learn about sex and spirituality at movement workshops. Some view sexuality and sex play, even gay or group sexuality, as potent if dangerous pathways to greater spiritual connections with the earth's sacred energies. It is not uncommon to happen across, or hear later, that erotic 'experiments' have occurred at wilderness gatherings or at other venues. Sexuality as spirituality is an important aspect of the movement's anti-dualistic attitudes, one that rejects any dichotomy between spirituality and the body.

The various forms of ritualising occurring at movement events and the feelings of connections with nature and fellow activists that occur within radical green groups are, for some, facilitated by hallucinogens and alcohol. Both play a role in earth-focused spirituality, and some consider them to be sacraments. But for greater numbers seeking ecstatic experience at these gatherings, it is the music, drumming and dancing that evokes and intensifies their spiritual experiences. This music is often orchestrated by religious elites comprised largely of musicians and a few ritual experts, mostly wiccan priestesses, on the last night or two of these gatherings.

*Mythic Pageants, Tribal Unity and War Dances.* For over a decade now there has been a growing emphasis on 'tribal' ritualising in the form of mythic pageants and ecstatic dances. One recurring pageant represents a form of radical environmental myth-making. Actors recite a story that follows this basic pattern: primal humans in egalitarian foraging societies were living in spiritual harmony with the earth, but they were eventually driven to the brink of survival and enslaved, first by agriculturists and eventually by corporate elites in industrial society. Eventually, a group of feral humans, led by children waving monkeywrenches (the archetypal sabotage symbol) rise up in rebellion. Empowered by the earth's sacred energy, they dismantle the oppressive regime and bring back to life all repressed creatures, restoring harmonious lifeways on earth. A great tribal celebration ensues, drawing everyone into a great victory dance.

Other times 'tribal unity' or 'war' dances are held separately from this theatrical prelude. Fuelled by hard-driving music and drumming, some activists report mystically fusing with the cosmos, 'losing themselves' and their sense of independent ego, as they dance into the night.

On other occasions, usually in ceremonies designed to honour and support imprisoned comrades or to empower others fighting for specific places, circles are formed. Energy is drawn—down from the moon, from the four directions, and most commonly from earth itself—and is then cast from the group outward to those who are engaged in specific struggles or to persons known to be in need. This kind of ceremony is usually led by one or more of the movement participants who are trained as wiccan priestesses.<sup>7</sup>

Although not all activists participate in this ritualising or believe in the efficacy of it, movement dances and ceremonies go forward. Sometimes movement ritualising is criticised afterward, often for failing to transcend what are perceived to be regressive gender hierarchies and stereotypes, other times for disturbing the nearby non-humans.

*Sweat Lodges, Sacred Saunas and Hallucinogenic Earth Bonding.* Sweat lodges, held at many Earth First! gatherings over the years, have become increasingly controversial. Some activists argue that the rituals steal from Native American cultures. More recently, there has been an effort to remove from sweat lodges symbols that were previously

borrowed from Native Americans and to rename them 'sacred saunas', in a gambit to borrow instead from Scandinavians, who presumably would not object. This switch reflects a general trend in green religion to draw spiritual practices less from American Indians and more from one's own ethnic heritage, however problematic the endeavour might be in its own right.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Ritualising in and Beyond Wilderness Settings***

#### *The Council of All Beings: Neo-Animism and the Consecration of Scientific Narratives*

Perhaps the most important of all the ritual processes is the Council of All Beings, an innovative form of ritualising that promotes mystical identification with non-human species. Since 1988, the creators and followers of the ritual have facilitated this rite widely in Australia, Europe and the United States. Radical environmentalists, sometimes as a follow-up to forest-related roadshows, usually host the Council. It has appeared in diverse venues, including those populated by New Agers, moderate environmentalists, Unitarians, and even liberal Christians.

The Council uses 'experiential exercises' and meditation techniques adapted from Buddhism and other traditional religions as well as from humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Some of the rituals are drawn from Native American vision quests or involve guided meditations based on science, focusing attention on the evolution of the cosmos and life on earth. Neo-pagan chants and songs are also often woven into the ritual (see Taylor 1994; Seed and others 1988). The heart of the ritual occurs when individuals assume the identity of non-human nature e.g., animals and plants, as well as non-animate substances such as air, water and DNA. Some participants report being taken over by the spirits of the being for whom they speak in a kind of shamanic trance. For others, participation is more like animistic performance art. In either case, the process facilitates leaps of moral imagination whereby participants deepen felt understandings of and sympathies for the nonhuman world. Often the ritual ends with the assembled beings endeavouring to impart their special gifts to the humans present, empowering them for the ecological struggles in which they are engaged.

#### *Advanced Ritualising in Earthen Spirituality*

The Council itself is viewed by many as a rite of initiation into earthen spirituality. Deep Ecology and other green retreat centres are experimenting with what are considered to be more advanced forms of green ritualising.

Some of these practices are borrowed from New Age gurus and groups. Given the penchant of many to emulate indigenous societies, the work of anthropologist Michael Harner has been influential. Harner promotes what he calls 'core' shamanism, a kind of trance-like soul travel that he says he adapted from indigenous shamans. Harner and others call this practice neoshamanism, which involves ritualised, meditative breathing and is said to induce paranormal experiences, 'shamanic journeying'.<sup>9</sup> These experiences may foster spiritual or communication with 'power animals' or other 'intelligences' in nature. As with the Council of All Beings, neoshamanism has an animistic dimension: wisdom may be sought and provided the human seeker by such animals. Other participants may journey widely through the cosmos, perhaps connecting with ancestors or remembering past lives. These experiences enhance the awe and love these activists feel for the earth and the cosmos.

What seems to distinguish these rituals from similar ones held in New Age enclaves is that they usually include a 'sacred intention' for planetary healing and for participants to find clarity about their own earthly duties. Sometimes these intentions are informed explicitly by ecofeminist beliefs and the process is designed to overturn an internalised, oppressive 'logic of domination' that encourages men to oppress women and the earth. Sometimes participants believe that these rituals can magically contribute to earth healing by manipulating the energies of the universe, thereby transforming human consciousness and fostering greater environmental sensitivity.

What is crucial to ritualised experimentation in earthly spirituality is that it is believed to promote a needed global 'paradigm shift', one that resacralises human perceptions towards earth and thereby fosters both personal and planetary healing. One way that earth-based ritualising promotes earth healing is by fostering environmental action.

### ***Direct Action as Ritual of Resistance and Connection***

#### *Bonding with Trees and Earthly Energies*

Environmental action is not only an *outcome* of earth-based ritualising. Direct action resistance also is an important form of earth-based ritual. One example can be seen in the longest 'tree sit' trespass in the history of direct action environmentalism. On 10 December 1997 Julia 'Butterfly' Hill climbed a giant redwood tree that had earlier been occupied by Earth First! activists, extending their desperate effort to prevent the logging of these giant trees. Hill endured El Niño enhanced winter storms, frostbite and a broken toe before descending from the tree named Luna on 18 December 1999, after negotiating an agreement to save it and a two hundred foot buffer around it. Meanwhile, she had become, even if briefly, the most famous radical environmentalist in the world. Her campaign was carried over the Internet and was broadcast widely by print, radio and television media in the United States and abroad. She spoke often of her spirituality, and more than in any previous example of environmental resistance, the media reported this aspect of her motivation.

Some were intrigued by her nickname, reporting that she had adopted it after an intense childhood experience with butterflies. Hill also explained in her interviews that, although she had grown up in Arkansas, she had been sent 'by the spirit' to the redwoods, via a vision quest, after a life-threatening injury convinced her of the meaninglessness of her prior, everyday experience.

She reported another profound epiphany upon arriving in the redwoods:

The first time I entered into a redwood forest—it was Grizzly Creek—I dropped to my knees and began crying because the spirit of the forest just gripped me. The knowledge, the spirituality, the power that has no words, that power that makes your hair stand on end, see? The power that gives you goosebumps. (Custer 1998, p. 8)

She became even more connected during her tree sit. As the *San Francisco Examiner* reported,

Julia 'Butterfly' says she is so attuned to her host that she believes she has felt its tears with her bare feet and body. Butterfly [reported], 'I was scared at first, and then I just started paying attention to the tree, drawing strength from the tree,' she said. 'I could see all her scars and wounds, from fires and lightning strikes. I was making a spiritual connection. . . . Eventually, I took my shoes off so I could feel the tree and started free climbing around,' she said. When Pacific Lumber started logging the steepest part of the ridge and hauling logs out by helicopter, 'I found myself crying a lot and hugging

Luna [the name given the tree when first occupied during a full moon] and telling her I was sorry. . . . Then, I found out that I was being covered by sap pouring out of her body from everywhere, and I realized, ‘Oh, my God, you’re crying too.’ The sap didn’t begin pouring out until the logging started.<sup>10</sup>

This article, which provides an unusually detailed exploration of the kind of earth-based spirituality that often motivates environmental action, included Hill’s animistic assertion that ‘Trees pass information on how to hold up hillsides and how to grow, and they also know how to communicate feelings’. The reporter also noted that Hill, with the exception of wearing wool, is a ‘vegan’, consuming neither meat nor other animal products. For most vegans, this choice to reduce animal suffering is an important aspect of their spirituality.

Hill is not the only activist to report mystical experiences during direct action protests. Some five years earlier, Alisha Little Tree also experienced a profound bonding with a redwood that she occupied during an eleven-day tree occupation. Sitting on a massive redwood tree stump along a river in Northern California’s Sinkyone wilderness, she explained how her perceptions changed as a result of that experience:

I stopped being a vegetarian after that tree sit because I connected with that tree so intensely. . . . it has really changed my whole reality. Now I’m thinking of beings not as conscious creatures, but as life-force. There’s a really strong life-force in all of us, and in this forest in these trees. Connecting to the tree is not [hesitating] it’s like just being [pausing] it’s not like you talk to the tree, because it can’t hear, but there’s this feeling, I don’t know how to describe it, [it is] like a deep rootedness, very powerful, not superior to us, but certainly not inferior to us and more primitive or less evolved than us.<sup>11</sup>

When asked why this experience led her to renounce vegetarianism, she replied, ‘Because I just started to appreciate the incredible life-force in plants . . . and the line between animal and plants blurred. Its all just different forms of life-force’. Like Little Tree, many activists speak of epiphanies in nature, of feeling intensely a ‘life force’ that infuses and imbues all living things with value and evokes feelings of awe and reverence.

Little Tree’s path to Earth First! is also of interest. It illustrates the ways that countercultural streams can forge earthen spirituality and shape a radical earth activist. Her pilgrimage story emerged in response to my question about why she had become a vegetarian. She responded that she was an alienated teenager in Sacramento, California, who became a ‘Grateful Dead hippie’ and also hung out with punks. The punks were vegans, refusing to eat any meat or dairy products in order to reduce animal oppression. She became one, too. In 1991 she became even more politically radical while protesting the Gulf War. Her protest group then visited an Earth First! direct-action base camp. There, because of ‘the tribal context’, she ‘connected to people like never before’.

But it was earlier experiences that had awakened her to earthen spirituality. As an eight year old, she became interested in ‘crystals and New Age stuff’, and after reading Ram Dass’ *Emmanuelle* a few years later (at about age 13), she ‘got into loving the god in everybody. I was “woo” to the max . . . trying to find something inside myself I knew that was there, a spirituality, a holiness. I know I’m holy. Anyway, these people [the Earth First’ers] added another element to it’.

She continued by further exploring what could be called an axiology of embodiment: ‘I think there is knowledge in our bodies that tell us what’s right’. She added that this knowledge can come in many ways, including through dance and song, but that

however it is discerned, ‘the knowledge is in our bodies, because our bodies come from Earth . . . [and they] know how to keep us alive’.

Graham Innes is an Australian radical environmental activist whose spirituality connected him directly to the earth. While buried up to his neck in an Australian logging road providing access to a rainforest that he sought to protect, he experienced

a slow dawning of awareness of a hitherto unknown connection—Earth bonding [when the Earth’s] pulse became mine, and the vessel, my body, became the vehicle for her expression . . . it was as though nature had overtaken my consciousness to speak on her behalf. (in *Seed and others* 1988, pp. 91–2)

I asked Little Tree whether she knew of Innes and his experience, knowing that an account of it had been published in *Thinking Like a Mountain*, a book describing the Council of All Beings. She responded that she had read about it before she did her tree sit and that ‘I’m sure that it affects my perceptions about what happened between me and the tree’. This is a striking acknowledgment of the suggestive power that the experiences of others can have (expressed through conversation, the arts and books) in opening persons to spiritual experiences in nature. Perhaps hearing about or from Little Tree, Innes, John Muir or others who had been transformed during direct action ‘rituals of resistance’ shaped Hill’s own spiritual sensitivity.<sup>12</sup>

### *Ritual Circles and the Metaphysics and Magic of Resistance*

Sometimes activists experience the earth’s sacred energies, or life force, during direct action resistance to deforestation or other environmental defilement. They may also do so during what might be called ‘magical direct actions’, where the goal is to seek, explore and direct the sacred energy of the forest (itself an expression of the earth’s energy) towards specific ends. In a way similar to some of the earthen ritualising discussed earlier, direct action might be directed towards personal healing (e.g., helping persons to transcend their anger and manifest the loving energy of the universe) or towards planetary healing. This action may help activists reach out to their most bitter adversaries through a kind of *prayer-as-energy-manipulation* that seeks to focus the loving energy of the universe in an ecologically salutary way.

During the summer of 1997, for example, I spoke with three men deeply involved in the direct action defence of the Headwaters Redwood Forest in Northern California.<sup>13</sup> A small man calling himself ‘Reverend Fly’ spoke about some very intense conflicts in the woods, asserting that ‘because we’re unpredictable’, the cops and loggers ‘are really scared of us. We walk and get there before they do in their trucks. They know how strong we are. . . . They know our motives come from another energy level. They don’t grock [understand] that [we act] from love.’<sup>14</sup>

As they spoke about the spirituality of activism, the men described ritual circles they have sat in while engaged in their activist encampments and how these circles have helped them get in contact with the spirit, the consciousness, of the forest. Fly explained that

What we know about Redwoods is that they sprout; they hold on to each other. Its part of this continuous, spouting, living being, or consciousness, that once covered millions of acres. And all of this knowledge has been chewed up and chased into small pockets.

He then described experiences with other activists, how during a meditative circle in the redwoods among ‘the tall ferns’ the forest ‘echoes like a cathedral’. On one such occasion,

I don’t know what kind of woo we’d been engaged in at the time, this cold, icy breeze came through the camp, washed over our knees, a long rolling moan, and every one stopped talking—then afterward—we said—‘did you hear that? That was no breeze.’ I didn’t try to give it a name. There’s lot of old energies, old pain, there, that I can’t name. Their memory is fucking old. And lots of the spirits that have dwelled there a long time—they have a lot to say.

Goat, who was also in that circle, added, ‘I felt such [deep, forest] consciousness in that group—heavy consciousness. We were addicted to it. Talking about conjuring about things—we were even praying for [Charles] Hurwitz’, referring to the Texas tycoon who controls Maxxam Corporation and Pacific Lumber, the logging company they were fighting.

Their activism is all about love and healing, Goat explained. ‘In the circle we’d sing out, “We love you Hurwitz—we’ll take you in here any time.” It was amazing, there was a pretty pure love and intent. It was the most love I’ve ever tried to conjure up for such a dick-head.’

Redwood forests are transformational, and time there is sacred. ‘Back in there’, Fly continued, ‘you are on forest time’. Goat added, ‘You get wood-like—We called the encampment Ewok village’. These activists spoke of forest time as ‘strong medicine’ that ‘takes hold of a person’. As Fly put it, ‘Nobody can go in there and not be transformed’.

Indeed, those involved in the resistance can be empowered by the spirits of non-human world. Fly and Goat, for example, discussed an activist who was in charge of ‘ground control’ during backwoods actions. He ‘became an animal’ and could ‘evaporate’ in the face of their enemies. Fly commented and Goat agreed, ‘He’s totally a shaman’. This idea, that the ability to elude capture is a shaman-like skill, is reminiscent of ecoteur Peg Millett’s ‘flight in the desert’ after being ambushed by FBI officers while attempting to topple a power line.<sup>15</sup>

For these activists, cultivating spirituality is not narcissism—it is activism. A former Greenpeace activist, Goat explained that in Europe, spirituality changed consciousness fast enough to save the whales. Moreover, he explained, ‘You have spiritual experiences in direct action’. It’s like ‘getting naked with the pagans in the woods at the Ruckus camp’, he said, referring to direct action training camps held throughout the United States by the radical environmentalist ‘Ruckus Society’. ‘I was looking for a spiritual path when I left Greenpeace. I’ve just started finding it’.

When asked what he meant by spirituality, Goat answered, ‘It is honoring the universal power, the flow, the power far beyond me, [the power] that I exist in’. Asked for his understanding of spirituality, Fly replied,

I guess I dovetail a lot with what brother Goat was saying. I feel really nascent in spirituality. I’m just coming out of the self-hating industrial energy I was raised in. [Spirituality is] when I know what the trees are saying, when I know what my friends are thinking, when they aren’t speaking. It’s not just a hocus-pocus thing, it’s just that somehow I and the people I’m with open ourselves to other energies or to a higher vibrational level. People call them all sorts of things. Ghosts. Fairies. Telepathy. It has [convinced] me that I have a divine purpose. My growth is removing layers of illusion, from spirit, from places, from the illusion that [we] are separate from each other, and from the rocks, and everything else. It’s curing me of the illusions of linear time, of causality, opening my awareness to all beings, all time, all space.

Then, like all good mystics, Fly cautioned, ‘The more words I put on this the farther we can go from the reality I refer to’. And then he offered his spiritual prescription: what we need to do is ‘just sit down, shut up, breath, have eye contact, touch’, and falling silent, he put his hands on the earth in front of him.

In a follow-up letter I received a few weeks later, Fly added, ‘My articulation, my voice for social change, comes from the elements, from the energies present in a situation where there is wrongness’. Working intentionally with such energies has led him to involvement with a ‘Pagan Anarchist Network [of] spiritual working groups from all over California who are either finding guides so that they may conduct ceremonies in the forest or are preparing solidarity rituals in their home spaces’. He concluded by articulating his understanding of the connections among ritual, magic and environmental action, ‘Yes, tactical magic is underway’.

### *Understanding Direct Action as Ritual: Stirring Scholarship into Earth-Spirituality Stew*

Some activists make the connection between ritualising and direct action by studying scholars who have focused on ritual. Thus does scholarly work contribute to the bricolage of contemporary earth-based spirituality. This is true not only of Michael Harner and Theodore Roszak, who promote animistic spiritual experiences, but also of the writings of Mircea Eliade which are appropriated to affirm beliefs that humans can learn to recognise sacred places.

More surprising, activists describe as ritual their direct action campaigns. Sometimes they even cite ritual studies experts such as Ron Grimes to show their awareness that rituals of disobedience and resistance can promote life-transforming experiences as well as personal and social healing.<sup>16</sup>

Earth First’ers are relatively well educated group<sup>17</sup> whose participants often study the natural sciences and anthropology to learn about small-scale societies and their putatively sustainable lifeways. Adopting a certain interpretation of tribal societies, radical greens are often enamoured with foraging societies, viewing them as more egalitarian than, and ecologically superior to, agricultural or industrial societies. There is often a keen interest in ritual and rites of passage, and curiosities about how such rites might be integrated into activist communities. Both monkeywrenching and civil disobedience are described as transformative ritual actions, and sometimes rites of passage to adulthood are invented that involve such acts of resistance.

### *Science as Nature-Based Spirituality and the Ascent of Scientific Paganism*

Despite the pronounced nature mysticism and occasional distrust of rationality and science found among radical green groups and participants in earth-based spirituality, nature spirituality can be compatible with science, which can even inspire proper spiritual perception. Indeed, contrary to Colin Campbell’s (1972, p. 122) belief that spirituality in the cultic milieu is grounded in ‘unorthodox science’, the science drawn upon for contemporary green spirituality is increasingly, although not exclusively, orthodox (namely, congruent with prevailing scientific views).<sup>18</sup>

Jaspar Carlton is one of the most passionate advocates of science as a basis for an activism-inspiring, earth-based spirituality. He is a former Earth First! activist who founded the Biodiversity Legal Foundation, one of the most effective groups using litigation to defend endangered species. Strategies that he helped pioneer are

now increasingly emulated by a growing number of grassroots, biodiversity-defence organisations in the United States.

In the summer of 1992, as we sat in a mountain meadow in Colorado's San Juan Mountains, Carlton reflected on the increasingly overt spirituality of radical environmentalism. He asserted that a *preoccupation* with spirituality has reduced the movement's 'scientific competence and effectiveness'.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, he claimed, that the movement's strength lies in its 'spiritual connection, in the woo woo'. For Carlton, spirituality and natural science are mutually dependent: Those who are 'truly spiritual' can 'feel the living wilderness [and] know the land so well that they understand all the plants and their ecological place and thus actually become a part of the habitat of the ecosystem'. Commenting on activists in the meadow who were trampling the rare, blue lupine, Carlton bitterly stated, 'I can't respect those trashing these plants. We are in a sacred area here. All this stuff is sacred. We need sensitivity to the smaller life forms'. The crucial question for humans today, Carlton continued, is 'biologically, legally, morally, how ought we to manage our sacred wilderness ecosystems?' We will not be able to figure this out, Carlton believes, if we cannot 'integrate science and spirituality', for 'science without heart is worthless'. There are many ways to resist environmental destruction, he says, but 'you gotta listen to the music [and be spiritually attuned] before you can join the dance of resistance'.

Carlton's attitude was mirrored by a number of scientist-activists I subsequently interviewed. For some scientists, the intricacies of nature, learned through scientific investigation, evoke feelings of awe and reverence akin to those gained by activists engaged in direct action, wilderness pilgrimages, neo-shamanic trips facilitated by 'sacred' hallucinogenic plants and other green rituals. Perhaps the best published example of this science-based, spiritual epistemology can be found in *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (1998), a book by the University of Washington biologist Ursula Goodenough. As more and more scientists express awe and reverence for nature and become involved in earthen spirituality and ritualising, we may be witnessing the emergence of a new religious movement that can be called 'scientific paganism'.

There are various pieces of evidence for such speculation. Writing during the early 1990s about the overlapping reciprocities between the feminist spirituality and New Age movements, Mary Farrell Bednarowski suggested that,

the New Age movement and various kinds of women's spiritualities operate out of similar worldviews—a holistic universe in which all parts are valued and internally related to the whole and to each other. These overlapping worldviews of relationships and correspondences are not so different, moreover, at least in spirit, from that of the contemporary ecology movement. (Bednarowski 1992, p. 177)

New Age theorists generally believe that they are basing their spirituality on 'new physics' or quantum theory, which illustrates scientifically the interrelatedness of all matter and energy (see Albanese 1992). This recognition is said to be precipitating a paradigm shift in human consciousness such that the universe, earth and all its denizens, severally and together, will be recognized as sacred and treated accordingly.

### *Deep Ecology, New Physics and the Greening of the New Age*

Environmental and political progressives have criticised New Agers for their otherworldliness, naive optimism, ecological ignorance, exploitation of and romanticism towards Native Americans, and lack of concrete political action to redress social and environmental injustices. Yet radical green activists are often influenced by New Age

ideas and sometimes participate in their ceremonies and workshops. By participating in these New Age processes, ecologically minded and politically radical greens have contributed to an 'ecologisation' of some New Age religion. Mutual influence occurs through conversation and modelling, as persons in the cultic milieu cross paths, communicating their concerns and ideas for right action.

I have witnessed such dynamics at Council of All Beings rituals and at neo-shamanic workshops, where New Age and radical greens sometimes meet. There are often initial tensions between them, but by the end of these ritual processes, participants have considered new perspectives. It is not unusual then to find 'New Age' devotees staffing the front lines of anti-logging or blockades or otherwise becoming environmentally involved.

Some New Age literature reflects growing alarm with environmental degradation and encourages environmental action. For example, James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy* (1993) and its sequels stress the potential for a transformation in human consciousness but make clear that the desired transformations are dependent on the preservation of sacred forest ecosystems.<sup>20</sup>

The novelist Daniel Quinn also fuses radical green and New Age ideas. In *Ishmael*, a noble gorilla eloquently articulates the radical environmental myth of a fall from an egalitarian, foraging paradise, blending this with a New Age-like prescription that humans resacralise their attitudes towards nature as the first, necessary step toward reharmonising life on earth.<sup>21</sup> In *The Story of B*, Quinn's heroes and heroines are revealed to be animist missionaries, subverting 'totalitarian' monotheistic (sky-god) agri-cultures, justly earning the 'antichrist' label used by their Christian enemies to justify their violent repression.

Some of the strongest evidence for a nascent ecologisation of New Age religion is that many of the most important centres for New Age thinking have begun to embrace deep ecology and to express alarm about environmental decline. Some of these thinkers and institutions were pioneers in contemporary efforts to consecrate scientific cosmological and evolutionary narratives, for example, Fritof Capra, with his Elmwood Institute;<sup>22</sup> the Naropa Institute (of Colorado); the Institute for Noetic Sciences; and more recently, the Epic of Evolution Society, inspired by the work of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme and supported by many scientists, including E. O. Wilson and Ursula Goodenough.<sup>23</sup>

A mid-1990s brochure from the Institute for Noetic Sciences illustrates this increasing fusion of the cosmological New Age emphasis on transforming human consciousness to a deep concern for planetary biota:

We are explorers and the most compelling frontier of our time is human consciousness. Our quest of a vision for humanity which integrates science and spirit and illuminates our connectedness to each other, to the Earth, and most particularly to our inner self. . . . All life forms are sacred. The outer world that we experience is closely aligned with our inner lives. We have the capacity to examine, research and understand our inner world as rigorously and thoroughly as we have our outer world. We have a unique historical opportunity for individual and societal transformation as a result of the convergence of Western science, the major religious traditions, and diverse cultural traditions. . . . As we deepen our personal lives, a new collective energy is generated that results in glimpses of healing, wholeness, clarity and connection. . . . We are personally and collectively seeking to expand our minds, deepen our values, recover our spiritual lives and use our full capacity as human beings to affect the world around us. . . . Our vision is a cautiously optimistic one [and when you join us] you know you are part of a meaningful whole.

Founded in 1973 by Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell, the mission of the Institute is 'to expand knowledge of the nature and potentials of the mind and spirit, and apply that knowledge to advance health and well being for humankind and our planet'. By the mid-1990s, it reportedly had over 50,000 members. Although the initial orientation may have been cosmological, with its expressed concern for nature, it is drawing closer to an earth-focused spirituality akin to the deep and radical ecology movements.

Another recent development is the 1998 formation of the 'Epic of Evolution Society'. It was established to promote the 'evolutionary epic' as an ecologically salutary myth for our time, one to which people of widely divergent spiritualities and cultures can adhere. It is one of the most interesting initiatives of a nature-based spirituality yet to unfold, and one that fits the rubric of 'scientific paganism'.<sup>24</sup>

In a striking, related development, a draft 'Earth Charter' has been making its way through a long process of consultation and revision that proponents hope will lead to its ratification by the United Nations.<sup>25</sup> Heavily influenced by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, its language provides another example of the consecration of scientific narratives in an ambitious effort to inculcate nations in reverence for life on earth. Its promoters hope that the ratification of the charter will yield more ecologically responsible international resource regimes.

### *From Humpsy (Humanistic Psychology) to Transpersonal and Ecopsychology*

Although a detailed discussion of green psychology is impossible here, it is important to observe that leading figures in Jungian and transpersonal psychology have endorsed deep ecology, including James Hillman.<sup>26</sup> Part of the greening of humanistic and transpersonal psychology can be seen in a growing body of literature now called 'ecopsychology'. This new movement is working out its theoretical framework while contributing to earth-based spirituality movements. Ecopsychology offers a diagnosis for an assumed human estrangement from nature and offers prescriptions designed to help industrial humans re-connect to earth. Often these prescriptions include ritual practices derived from and similar to those found in New Age groups, overlaying them with an overtly environmental intention and meaning, often with pantheistic and animistic overtones.<sup>27</sup>

The blending of ecopsychology with a radical environmental-style deep ecology can be seen at two conferences sponsored by the International Transpersonal Association, one in Ireland in 1993 and another in Brazil in 1995. Both conferences included an eclectic mix of New Age/transpersonal psychology proponents. The one in Ireland, for example, included Ram Dass, Stanislav Grof and Roger Walsh, along with such radical environmentalists and indigenous environmental justice advocates as Vandana Shiva, Winona LaDuke, Millilani Trask and David Abram.<sup>28</sup> Ralph Metzner, the ecopsychologist most responsible for the effort to build bridges between the New Age/transpersonal psychology and radical environmental subcultures, reported a few years later that his bridge building had limits. A number of Transpersonal Association Board members felt that he had taken the organisation too rapidly in a radical environmental direction. Partly as a result, further conferences have not been held.<sup>29</sup>

### *Trends and Tendencies in Earth-Based Spirituality Movements*

There is a continuum among earth-based spirituality movements from those groups oriented to paranormal and mystical realities to those explicitly incredulous about mystical experiences. Some earth-based spirituality involves communication with non-human or superhuman beings, paranormal journeys and altered states of consciousness. Others express awe and reverence towards evolutionary processes that are

conceived in purely naturalistic terms. In a diagram (see Fig. 1) this continuum can be seen in the axis between ‘supernaturalistic’ and ‘naturalistic’ nature-spiritualities. There is also something of a parallel continuum between those whose spiritual focus is cosmological and those for whom it is earthly. In this diagram specific nature spiritualities are depicted with open boundaries, illustrating the bricolage and reciprocities among various forms of earth-based religions.

Despite differences over what might be considered paranormal or even paranatural phenomena and whether devotees dwell more on cosmological or biological processes, there is a feeling or perception around which these diverse forms increasingly converge. It can be stated succinctly: *The earth and all its life forms and processes are sacred. We belong to them and they to us—we are kin. We should, therefore, act lovingly, reverently, and respectfully toward them. We must not unnecessarily injure these beings and processes when we take from them what we need to live.* In *The Story of B*, Daniel Quinn captures such a formula, ‘The world is a sacred place and a sacred process . . . and we’re part of it’ (1996, p. 189),<sup>30</sup> as do the new physics and systems theorists Fritof Capra and David Steindl-Rast in *Belonging to the Universe*. The following text under consideration in early 2000 as an official Sierra Club poster, printed over a graphic with a person’s legs intertwined with a tree, further suggests that a convergence towards earth-based spirituality is underway<sup>31</sup>. The full poster is reproduced in Figure 2, and it includes the remarkable prose:

This is not about getting back to nature.  
It is about understanding we’ve never left.  
We are deep in our nature every day. . . .  
This connection is as personal as it is fundamental.  
It can’t be proved with theorems and diagrams.  
You either feel it or you don’t.  
Sierra Club members feel it. . . .

Maybe it came to you on a mountain trail, or on a riverbank, or at a windowsill watching a spider’s unthinking intelligence unfold. Simply put, it’s the sudden conviction that there is something out there, something wonderful. And it is much, much bigger than you.

A revelation like this could easily overwhelm a person.  
We choose to let it inspire us. . . .

When you accept your connection to nature,  
suddenly you can’t look at the work  
without seeing something very personal in it.  
You are part of it, and you work for the planet because it gives you joy to do so.  
You work for the planet because you belong to it.

Earth-based religion is escaping its countercultural breeding grounds.

Whatever the extent of this convergence, however, tensions remain. Devotees of the more mystical and supernaturalistic forms of nature-based spirituality, those with a more cosmological or astrological referent, or those that tend to personify Gaia as goddess more than as an ecological process are more likely to be optimistic about humans and their ability to manipulate nature’s energies, mentally or technologically, in a beneficent manner. They are likely to believe that positive social change can be created by ‘magic’, defined within this world view as not an exception to nature’s laws but rather as a path that shapes the future by working *with* such laws.

**Supernature/Cosmos/Paranormal Axis**  
Often with Divinities and 'theory of correspondence'  
Relatively Optimistic Moral Anthropology



**Nature/Earth/Biology/This-Worldly Axis**

Figure 1.

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.—JOHN MUIR Wilderness begins in the human mind.—EDWARD ABBEY*

## This is not about getting back to nature. It is about understanding we've never left.

*We are deep in our nature every day. We're up to our ears in it. It's under our feet, it is in our lungs, it runs through our veins. We are not visitors here. We weren't set down to enjoy the view. We were born here and we're part of it—like any ant, fish, rock, or blade of grass.*

*This connection is as personal as it is fundamental. It can't be proved with theorems and diagrams. You either feel it or you don't.*

Sierra Club members feel it.

*Maybe it came to you on a mountain trail, or on a riverbank, or at a windowsill watching a spider's unthinking intelligence unfold. Simply put, it's the sudden conviction that there is something out there, something wonderful. And it is much, much bigger than you.*

*A revelation like this could easily overwhelm a person. We choose to let it inspire us. Nature, vastly complex and infinitely subtle, is our perfect metaphor. Related to everything, signifying everything, it is the spring where we go to renew our spirit. And it, in turn, asks something of us. It compels us to take responsibility and then to take action.*

*Look, there is nothing inevitable about the future of our environment. A poisoned stream can get worse, stay the same, or get better. It depends largely on what we choose to do. That simple belief, backed by 100 years of effort and result, is what drives the Sierra Club.*

*So, forget the grim cliché of the selfless environmentalist. When you accept your connection to nature, suddenly you can't look at the world without seeing something very personal in it. You are part of it, and you work for the planet because it gives you joy to do so.*

*You work for the planet because you belong to it.*



**SIERRA CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

[www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

Figure 2.

The more paranormal–sympathetic forms of nature spirituality tend to be less apocalyptic in tone, partly because of their belief that magic and miracles are real possibilities.

Those engaged in the most naturalistic forms of nature-based spirituality tend to take the earth and its biological processes as the axis of their worldview of nature. They are likely to discuss Gaia more as a living, biological system than as a goddess. They tend to eschew optimism about human capacities to solve environmental problems. Consequently, they are more prone to apocalyptic expectations and are more likely to think that humans will cause further extinctions and disruptions to living systems. There are no miracles available to halt environmental degradation. Individuals resonating with more naturalistic forms of nature spirituality are more likely to use activism to defend and restore ecosystems as the central, venerating activity, stressing that the laws of nature cannot be overridden by human ritualising or paranormal experiences.

Yet all these diverse nature spiritualities are fused in a quantum universe, sharing the metaphysics of interrelatedness. Since everything shares a common origin (in the big bang), and since everything is interrelated subatomically, kinship and even communion are the appropriate moral sentiments and goals. This worldview provides also a metaphysical basis for many perceptions: animism, sorcery, shamanism, pantheism and panentheism, to name just a few. But the key is a felt sense of ‘connection’, kinship and loyalty to earth and all her life forms and living systems.

### **Notes**

- 1 See [Taylor \(2000a\)](#) for the history and spirituality of bioregionalism and [Taylor \(2000b\)](#) for a critique of bioregionalism as social philosophy.
- 2 Conservation biologist and Earth First'er [Edward Grumbine](#) argues similarly that bioregionalists and Earth First! activists need each other and their complementary emphases. ‘Bioregionalists need to hear from us about big wilderness and we must listen to them about healthy human economies embedded in the natural world’ for ‘if, as Gary Snyder suggests, the bioregionalist vow “is to say to yourself that you won’t move anymore”, then the Earth First! vow might be “defend the territory”’. (Grumbine 1987, p. 27). Both perspectives are critical, Grumbine concludes.
- 3 As artist Karen Coulter explained, ‘We are writers, artists and musicians because there has to be value change. . . . The art and writing . . . sometimes can reach people on an emotional basis that you can’t on an intellectual basis.’ She then mentioned the ‘Warrior Poets Society’ which ‘looks at poetry as a way to monkeywrench things.’ (interview with Karen Coulter, 4 July 1992, San Juan Mountains, CO).
- 4 Notes from roadshow and subsequent interview, 9 October 1992, Oshkosh, WI.
- 5 We need to learn to be attentive to such signals. DiMicelle believes: ‘One of the major problems with the world is that people are too much in their heads. We have to get out of our heads if we are to see that we are all a part of every living thing.’ Voicing a typical criticism of Western religions, which she believes separate humans from earth and lead to environmental exploitation, she asserts that her religion, Earth Religion, has been around much longer than monotheistic ones. ‘I’m really just a witch,’ she says, summarising her spiritual orientation (interview with Alice DiMichele, 9 October 1992, in Oshkosh, WI).
- 6 For movement poetry, see [Fritzing, Coulter and Metzger 1998](#).
- 7 One of these priestesses, known by her earth name, Sequoia, was part of the original Susan B. Anthony Coven (with Z. Budapest) in Los Angeles. She later participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations with Starhawk at the University of California’s Livermore laboratory. Wearing a stud monkeywrench in her nose and driving a motorcycle, she explains that the most decisive moment on her path to earth-based spirituality was direct experience with the energies of redwood trees (interview, 10 February 1994, in Fountain Valley, CA).
- 8 For a detailed treatment of this issue, see [Taylor 1997](#).
- 9 For introductions to neoshamanism see [Walsh 1990](#), [Harner 1990](#) and [Noel 1997](#).

- 10 Eric Brazil, San Francisco Examiner, 12 February 1998, p. A1.
- 11 Interview, 6 June 1993, with Alisha Little Tree, Sinkyone Wilderness, CA.
- 12 The parallels between Hill's injury and Muir's life-changing industrial accident are notable. When I asked Little Tree if the experience reported by Innes might have planted a seed, she replied, 'Probably,' adding that although she 'sometimes uses the term "goddess"' for the life force it all 'seems less and less personified, less like something we can name or know, something more like life. . . . And I don't even know what "it" is.'
- 13 5 July 1997 conversation at the national Earth First! Rendezvous, with 'Reverend Fly' (Chris Bennett), 'Goat' (John Sellers), and John 'Jake' Kreilick in the Nicole National Forest, Wisconsin. Fly later explained his name; he is training himself to be a priest of Headwaters, to learn to listen to the spirits and perform rituals, to do magic there.
- 14 Fly later explained that the term 'grock' comes from Robert Heinlein's science fiction novel, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961). If some of the loggers and cops feared them, however, it might also be because radical environmental activists often place icons on logging roads such as pentagrams, skulls and voodoo dolls, evoking in the minds of their adversaries paganism and even Satanism.
- 15 For a description, see [Taylor 1995](#).
- 16 This from a 4 July 1992 interview with 'Doug Fir' or Christopher, one of many Earth First! activists who have participated in the 'Hundredth Monkey' anti-nuclear testing protests at the Nevada test site. His understanding of this story illustrates not only the metaphysics of interdependence that permeate earthen religions but also the way metaphysics provides a basis for a hoped-for paradigm shift that can precipitate a greening of human lifeways. The Hundredth Monkey story, he explained, has to do with paradigm shifts. 'I'm trying to remember if it was a myth that became a scientific experiment, or a scientific experiment that became a myth, but during the '50s, there were studies on these monkeys on an island off the coast of Japan. The scientists gave the monkeys potatoes to see what they would do with them, and they would eat them whether they were sandy or not. Then one day a girl (sic) monkey took her potato . . . and washed it off and ate it, preferred it, showed her friends, then the parents, and they caught on, and pretty soon all the parents, and the whole island washed the potatoes, and then [as if by magic] monkeys on all the other islands begin doing it, even though there was no physical contact.'
- I responded, 'So this shows interconnectedness of all beings?' He replied, 'Oh yes. The magic of these paradigm shift stories shows that a lot is going on we can't easily feel, touch and taste.' A little later, I asked, 'Do you remember the first time we talked and you found out I was a religious studies professor, and you said, "We have to overwhelm them with woo"?' He laughed and replied, 'We first have to find that [woo] in us. We have to transform consciousness, and rendezvous like this help us to gain strength and courage. I've been thinking all year long about this, about revolution, and about what revolution is . . . and it's not external. Gil Scott Heron has this song, "The Revolution won't be Televised." [This means] that the revolution is an internal one, and by the time we find this out it will already be over, there will be no way to capture it, not even on television . . . because it will be a paradigm shift that happens within us.'
- In a remarkable article on shamanism and ritual [Michael Lewis \(1989\)](#) endorsed a similar metaphysic in comments about the 'one percent effect' popularised by Transcendental Meditation. He wrote that the 'one percent effect . . . demonstrates that when 1% of the population in a given area practices meditation, or some form of contemplative activity, crime rates decrease along with instances of mental illness and disease. We literally can [therefore] dream back the bison, sing back the swan.' John Seed, Australian Deep Ecology author and activist and populariser of the Council of All Beings, also refers to this 'one percent effect' (Lewis 1989, pp. 27–8). He did so while asserting that the environmental crisis is so grave that only a miracle precipitated by spiritual consciousness change can prevent massive extinctions and even greater suffering (interview, 5 November 1992, Osceola, WI).
- The Hundredth Monkey story has been attributed to a book by [Lyall Watson \(1979\)](#).
- 17 This impression has been gained by years of fieldwork and received some empirical confirmation in [Kempton et al., and others 1995](#), who in a limited sample found the average education level of Earth First'ers (15 years total) to be only one year less than among Sierra Club members.
- 18 See Part I of this study for an introduction to Campbell's cultic milieu theory.

- 19 Carlton's views are from a 19 June 1992 interview.
- 20 Indeed Redfield himself is increasingly involved in supporting financially a number of progressive, grassroots environmental groups, and such activists, recognising a kindred spirit are strategizing how to involve and solicit donations from him.
- 21 See Quinn 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997.
- 22 For his embrace of Deep Ecology, see Capra 1996 and Capra and Steindl-Rast 1991.
- 23 On the Epic of Evolution and other recent efforts that consecrate scientific narratives, see Barlow 1997 and Rue 2000. See also *Epic of Evolution* newsletter Barlow edits and the 'cosmogogenesis' internet, email discussion group (list serve).
- 24 Even the Tielhard Society, widely seen as anthropocentric and unduly optimistic about humans by radical greens, has come to earth. According to Connie Barlow, a science writer who attends closely to such groups, this society at least informally has adapted deep ecological concerns for non-human species into its overall mission (personal communications late 1997 and 1998). The society has been well received by prominent supporters of the deep ecology movement, some of whom, however, are technophobes suspicious of its scientific orientation. For recent efforts to consecrate cosmological narratives, see Barlow 1997.
- 25 For a journal issue including a 'Benchmark Draft' and much discussion of the charter and the process involved in its creation, see *Earth Ethics* 8 (Winter/Spring 1997).
- 26 During our 2 June 1993 discussion, George Sessions expressed surprise at the rapidity with which deep ecology was making inroads in New Age enclaves, as seen, for example, in the adoption of deep ecology by Fritjof Capra and James Hillman.
- 27 For a clear and representative introduction to the ecopsychology literature, see Theodore Roszak's *Voice of the Earth*. In this extraordinary work Roszak defended the idea of earth as Gaia, an intelligent being, basing his argument on the anthropic principle. He then forthrightly promotes animistic spirituality and a pantheistic world view. For other key ecopsychology works, see Roszak 1972, 1978; Shepard 1982; Walsh 1985, 1990; Fox 1991; Keepin 1991; Walsh and Vaughan 1993; Glendinning 1994; Roszak, Gomes and Kanner 1995; Metzner 1994, 1999; Wilber 1995; Adams 1996.
- 28 For a unique and provocative book promoting animistic spirituality, see Abram 1996.
- 29 Email correspondence, January 1998.
- 30 See also pp. 160, 182–3, 324–5.
- 31 Sarah McFarland Taylor alerted me to this poster's draft-text. Shortly before completing revisions on this paper, in early March 2000, I confirmed with the Sierra Club in San Francisco that the poster is presently under review for possible publication. To make it easier reading, I modified slightly the format but not its content.

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BRON TAYLOR is Oshkosh Foundation Professor of Religion and Director of Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. He is the author of *Affirmative Action at Work: Law, Politics, and Ethics* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992) and is editor of *Ecological Resistance Movements: the Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (State University of New York Press, 1995) and of the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (Continuum International, forthcoming 2003). His last contribution to Religion was "Earthen Spirituality or Cultural Genocide: Radical Environmentalism's Appropriation of Native American Spirituality" (April 1997). He hopes to publish *Dark Green Religion*, a study exploring in more detail the themes of the present study, sometime in 2002.

*Environmental Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, WI 54901, U.S.A.*  
*E-mail: bron@religionandnature.com*