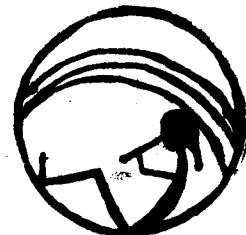


# Ecophilosophy V

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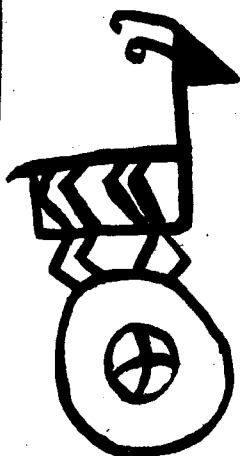
May, 1983



Environmentalism moves unevenly ahead on all fronts. Some of us work on developing an environmental ethics, on paradigm shifting, and deep ecology perspectives. The best of reform environmentalism tries to halt further destruction of ecosystems and wild species through legislation and other means. Some activists, in the tradition of Thoreau and Gandhi, put their bodies on the line to demonstrate against further ecodestruction. Many people live lives of spiritual ecological voluntary simplicity and reinhabitation. A few try to do all of the above. This issue of ECOPHILOSOPHY is dedicated to the memory of Congressman Philip Burton (D, San Francisco) author of the Redwood National Park Act and numerous other parks and wilderness Acts; to the Aussies who are defending the rainforests; and to their American counterparts, Earth First! who stood in front of bulldozers in Oregon, protesting roadbuilding in de facto wilderness.

Michael Zimmerman arranged a section on "Anthropocentrism and Environmental Ethics" for the March, 1983 meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association held in Berkeley, Ca. I chaired the meeting, which was attended by about 50 persons. Zimmerman read a shortened version of "Toward a Heideggerean Ethos for Radical Environmentalism" (ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Summer, 1983).

Baird Callicott read his soon to be published paper, "The Rights of Species." John Rodman provided a very sophisticated critique of the



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papers from a phenomenological perspective drawing upon the experiential first part of Leopold's SAND COUNTY ALMANAC which leads up to Leopold's formulation of "the land ethic." Many in the audience seemed to grow restless not knowing what to make of Rodman's critique. Perhaps they were expecting some narrow analytical and semantical refutation.

A fairly well-known animal rights theorist was also in the audience. He was later heard to remark that all of this environmental ethics/ecophilosophy theorizing seemed "mystical and murky" whereas animal rights theorizing is on solid theoretical grounds. He is right only if anthropocentric metaphysics and ethics are on solid ground which, as I understand it, is precisely the philosophical issue these days.

The faculty of Environmental Studies of York University, Downsview, Ontario, Canada, headed by John Livingston and Neil Everndon, held a symposium on deep ecology on May 2, 1983. Arne Naess was the keynote speaker. They had originally planned a much more ambitious two or three day conference but were unable to get funding. They were able to get some funding to publish the proceedings (which Everndon thought to be somewhat inconsistent).

The Zen master Robert Aitken Roshi and Gary Snyder have arranged a deep ecology workshop to be held in Hawaii this June. They were also responsible for the deep ecology workshop held last spring at the Los Angeles Zen Center attended by Arne Naess. Aitken Roshi and Snyder have been instrumental in channeling the Buddhist Peace Fellowship into deep ecology directions. For an account of their role in bringing Zen Buddhism to the West Coast, see Rick Fields' HOW THE SWANS CAME TO THE LAKE: A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN AMERICA (Boulder: Shambhala, 1981).

Two conferences on ecophilosophy will be held in Australia this fall. One conference will have a fairly narrow academic focus; the other will range more broadly into the practical social implications and ways of life of a deep ecology orientation. For more information write Val Plumwood (Australian National University) or John Seed, Rainforest Information Center, Box 368, Lismore, NSW, 2480, Australia.

The Zen Buddhist John Seed has been largely responsible for bringing a deep ecology consciousness to Australians. He has also been at the forefront of the battles to save Australia's rainforests. He has an excellent tape, available for classrooms or radio, on the direct actions taken in defense of rainforests.

Environmental issues now seem to be central in Australian politics while many of Australia's professional philosophers are actively involved in ecophilosophical theorizing. It would be interesting if Australia turns out to be the bellwether and a microcosm of developments around the earth.

It is perhaps not coincidental that Helen Caldicott--one of the leading spokespersons for the nuclear disarmament movement-- is an Australian physician who became concerned as a result of nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

John Passmore recently reviewed H. J. McCloskey's ECOLOGICAL ETHICS AND POLITICS in the Australian publication, THE AGE MONTHLY REVIEW (March, 1983). Passmore claims that "It is now customary to divide the family of 'ecophilosophers'-- that limited class of philosophers who take environmental problems seriously-- into two genera, the 'shallow' and the 'deep.'"

Passmore claims that McCloskey's book clearly falls into the shallow category. McCloskey misses much of the ecophilosophical writings of the late 1970's and early 1980's. Passmore seems to be increasingly open to the major philosophical points made by deep ecologists; he is bothered by "mystical" approaches. It would seem that John Muir would not sit well with him at all.

A newsletter called "The Deep Ecologist" is published by John Martin, 10 Alamein Ave., Warracknabeal, Victoria, 3393, Australia. Their No. 5 issue was published in May, 1983; send them \$4 for a subscription.



Paul Shepard (Pitzer College, Claremont, Ca.) is one of the true mavericks and original thinkers in the eco-philosophy arena. While others work in more or less recognizable grooves, Shepard continues to plot his own path, drilling where, as Einstein put it, the board is thickest. His latest book, NATURE AND MADNESS (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1982) is no exception.

In the preface he surveys his ecological intellectual journey beginning with his MAN IN THE LANDSCAPE in 1967 (well before most of us had even begun to think about eco-philosophy and environmental crisis. This contains incisive criticism of Schweitzer's Reverence for Life position and implicitly of the animal rights position as well as discussion of Judeo-Christian Greek anthropocentrism.

MAN IN THE LANDSCAPE was a study, he claims, of nature aesthetics, but he soon realized that was "too fragile and wayward to bear much of an ecological ardor." He doesn't mention his 1969 anthology, THE SUBVERSIVE SCIENCE, which contains classic articles and is, many claim, the best ecological anthology to be published during the early 1970's period. His introductory essay "Ecology and Man" is one of the classics of this period (along with Garrett Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons", White's "Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis", and Gary Snyder's "'Four' Changes").

"Beginning again, in THE TENDER CARNIVORE AND THE SACRED GAME (1973)," Shepard tells us, "I sought a more durable model for ourselves in the deep history of ancestral hunter-gatherers." Shepard struck pay-dirt in this area and, along with Gary Snyder, has done as much as anyone to illuminate the 10,000 year history of global environmental crisis in the making. His next book, THINKING ANIMALS(1978) was an intricate detailed exploration of the hunting/gathering consciousness which results from bonding to wild plants and animals and natural ecosystem habitats. In THE TENDER CARNIVORE, Shepard proposes ecological utopian directions for humanity which I discuss in my paper, "Education, Ecophilosophy, and Utopias" scheduled for publication in the next issue or two of JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. His long, fascinating discussions of the maturation and education of children in hunting/gathering societies in THE TENDER CARNIVORE, provide the basis for his subsequent books, THINKING ANIMALS and NATURE AND MADNESS.

Shepard is convinced, and I think he is right, that "a history of ideas is not enough to explain human behavior." Similarly, a logically air-tight formulation of a non-anthropocentric ecological metaphysics or an impeccably formulated "environmental ethics" is not going to solve our problems, even if such things are possible although they would have some use and value just as the formulation of paradigms has some value.

However, our problems seem to channel down ultimately to human psychology, or states of consciousness, or more generally to the state of being of the whole organism. And these states are dependent, to a large extent, on the nature of our culture and the attitudes it fosters in us towards other humans and the non-human environment.

In NATURE AND MADNESS, Shepard focuses on the issue of child-rearing. He asserts that "the sense of a normative psycho-genesis became a compelling idea(together



with)... the prospect of general, culturally-ratified distortions of childhood, of massive disablement of ontogeny as the basis of irrational and self-destructive attitudes toward the natural environment." "In connecting ecological havoc to warpings of this ontogeny, I (will) describe where I think such a healthy ontogeny should lead." Historian Donald Worster aptly describes NATURE AND MADNESS as a "bold, original account of modern environmental destructiveness as a failed development of self."

Shepard has certainly not written the last word on normal human ontogeny and its relationship to the pathology of our contemporary human condition, but he has cleared the vista and pointed the way for what may prove to be the most fruitful scholarship in our times. Those doing serious research in ecophilosophy cannot afford to ignore Shepard's writings. Other works which relate directly to human psychology, and normal human ontogenesis and its relation to environmental crisis are Theodore Roszak's PERSON/PLANET; Morris Berman's THE REENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD; Dolores LaChapelle's EARTH WISDOM; Jamake Highwater's THE PRIMAL MIND; and Richard and Val Routley's "Social Theories, Self Management, and Environmental Problems" in Mannison, McRobbie, and Routley, ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY (Canberra; Australian National University, 1980). See also the chapter, "The Outlook of Organic Society," in Murray Bookchin's THE ECOLOGY OF FREEDOM (1982).



Another major task for intellectuals, related to the above, would be in the area of developing and articulating the paradigm shift away from the anthropocentric, mechanistic, linear cause-and-effect worldview to the new/old organic ecological worldview. Fritjof Capra has done much of this important work in *THE TAO OF PHYSICS* and *THE TURNING POINT*. Roszak's *WHERE THE WASTELAND ENDS* and Jacob Needleman's *A SENSE OF THE COSMOS* are also very important. See also Needleman's new book, *THE HEART OF PHILOSOPHY*, although thus far Needleman does not seem to appreciate the ecological dimensions of the shift.

Other recent books which deal with paradigm change are Bruce Holbrook, *THE STONE MONKEY: AN ALTERNATIVE CHINESE SCIENTIFIC REALITY* (1981). The flyer says this book "takes a place of honor alongside the work of Roszak, Schumacher, Capra, Zukav, and Castaneda" but this is too grandiose a claim. It lays out the paradigm problem well, but essentially fails to deliver on its promises. The main paradigm problem Holbrook discusses is a comparison between Western and Chinese medicine. It is weak on the ecological nature of the paradigm shift.

Huston Smith in *BEYOND THE POST-MODERN MIND* (1982) also discusses features of the paradigm shift including discussion of the "perennial philosophy", but one feels he hasn't traveled as far as Roszak and Capra. He is also weak on the ecological dimension of paradigm shift. Roszak in *WHERE THE WASTELAND ENDS* and Capra in *THE TURNING POINT* come closest to seeing the full dimension of the shift. See also Gregory Davis, *TECHNOLOGY--HUMANISM OR NIHILISM* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981). Another book which claims that Western philosophy is exhausted and that the environmental crisis requires us to move to a Taoist paradigm is David Hall, *THE UNCERTAIN PHOENIX* (NY: Fordham University Press, 1983).

Alan Drengson has written a new manuscript, *SHIFTING PARADIGMS: FROM THE TECHNOCRATIC TO THE PERSON PLANETARY*. Drengson has been exploring the possibility of a new academic journal devoted mainly to paradigm shifting papers. See Drengson's paper on "Shifting Paradigms" in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS* (Fall, 1980).

The distinguished historian of science, Stephen Toulmin, in his new book, *THE RETURN TO COSMOLOGY: POST MODERN SCIENCE AND THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1982) discusses an ecological paradigm in his closing chapter. The modern "white" and "green" philosophies (spiritual psychology together with philosophical ecology), he claims, are natural heirs of cosmological speculation and natural history. He mentions John Muir and makes essentially a distinction between shallow anthropocentric ecology and deep ecology.

Those philosophers who see the philosophical environmental problem mainly as one of developing an ethics of the environment fail to understand the major scientific/epistemological/social paradigm shift which is now underway. Conceptual analysis will be valuable but certainly much less so when uncritically embedded in the old paradigm. The attempt to solve these ecophilosophical problems on purely logical or conceptual grounds is to fail to realize that this approach is itself part of the old paradigm which needs to be replaced. Certainly the fine paper by Baird Callicott "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature" (ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Winter, 1982) begins to broach the real ecophilosophical issues of alternative worldviews or paradigms. One fears that many western philosophers and other intellectuals are so thoroughly entrenched in their modern Western academic training and methodologies and narrow specialties that they are going to be of very little help toward, and might actually constitute a reactionary hindrance to, the development of an ecological paradigm.



Philosophers and other intellectuals can also help to sort out the issues which divide New Age and Deep Ecology approaches to the future. Some of these issues were raised in my review of Bonifazi's THE SOUL OF THE WORLD (ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall, 1981). The Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chardin, along with Buckminster Fuller, are often cited as the main inspiration for high technology, New Age futures. Recently, the Teilhard scholar, Thomas Berry, has agreed that Teilhard's orientation is basically anti-ecological and this anthropocentric aspect of Teilhard's perspective will have to be drastically revised (Berry, "Teilhard in the Ecological Age," Teilhard Studies, No. 7, Anima Books, Chambersburg, PA, Fall, 1982). I will further develop these ideas in my up-coming review of Skolimowski's ECOPHILOSOPHY for ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS.



Jeremy Rifkin's new book *ALGENY* is an absolutely crucial attack on New Age futures. Darwinian biology is being replaced by Algeny, the genetic manipulation of all life on earth. The Age of Computers is a prelude and crucial step in designing new organisms which will serve as the new energy source for the next leap forward. Rifkin says essentially that we must choose between New Age planetary manipulation and control vs. a Deep Ecology future. Rifkin warns us to choose the ecological future. (For more on Rifkin's book, see Bill Devall's section of this newsletter).



The journal, *ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW* (American Society for Environmental History) is now being edited by J. Donald Hughes of the University of Denver. The most recent issue (Vol. 6,2,1982) contains papers from the first international conference on environmental history. The paper on "The Historical Origins of Soviet Environmentalism," is fascinating and may point out possible pitfalls for the future of American environmentalism.

Some historians have remarked recently that "what we don't need is one more study of John Muir." Actually that is precisely what we do need--a study which systematically lays out Muir's metaphysics and epistemology. Fortunately such a study has been written by Michael Cohen. The book, *THE PATHLESS WAY: JOHN MUIR AND THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS*, has already won a book award and will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press in the spring of 1984. Cohen is now working on an authorized history of the Sierra Club from the end of World War I through 1970.

The third edition of Roderick Nash's *WILDERNESS AND THE AMERICAN MIND* is now available. His chapter "Toward a Philosophy of Wilderness" does not bring out the issues as clearly as one might wish for. Nash seems to back away from Leopold's non-anthropocentric biocentric ethic and argues out of expediency for anthropocentric and economic justifications for wilderness and wildlife preservation. He also seems to want to maintain the shallow environmental wilderness/civilization dichotomy and attacks the bioregional/reinhabitation proposals of Raymond Dasmann, Peter Berg and Gary Snyder. At the end of his book he dilutes the wilderness as ecological concept, as on-going self-organizing ecosystem. "Since wilderness is ultimately a feeling about a place," he writes, "a state of mind,

that varies from person to person, why not accept the fact that there can be many kinds of intensities of wilderness experience. Like baseball, wilderness recreation may be enjoyed from the backyard level all the way to the major leagues. Players, fans, and umpires recognize these distinctions; wilderness managers could follow suit."



Several people have remarked on how technical the writing is in deep ecology--the jargon and terminology gets in the way of understanding for non-philosophers and for undergraduate college students. I was surprised at this assessment; when one compares the average eco-philosophy paper with articles in most of the traditional philosophy journals, the ecophilosophy papers are readable and understandable. But I suppose this complaint is still justified.

Most of us tend to write for our colleagues and we have little concern for the wider non-philosophically trained audience. Yet there is a tremendous need for papers and books for this wider audience and for teaching purposes. Thank God for Capra and other popularizers who pull it all together in a beautifully clear style.

Bertrand Russell once remarked that after he proved he could say what he wanted to say in symbolic logic, he then tried to write as simply and clearly as he possibly could (for which he received the Nobel Prize for Literature). I think we need to disabuse ourselves of the idea that there is one pat academic journal style to which we must all conform, and to have the courage to strike out in different directions. Let appreciation for diversity in species and cultures extend to diversity in writing styles. Some of these new styles might even reach that wider audience, including our own students!

I think the Arne Naess interview, "Simple in Means, Rich in Ends," in THE TEN DIRECTIONS (Fall, 1982, Zen Center of Los Angeles), together with Gary Snyder's "'Four' Changes" provide a wealth of ideas easily understood which cover much of the deep ecology position. But obviously a great deal more needs to be done.

There are a number of taped interviews available now for classroom use which provide a good basis for discussion.

Pacifica Tape Library in Los Angeles has an Alan Watt's tape on "Ecology and Religion" and the Watts-Lynn White debate.

New Dimensions Radio has interviewed writers and artists over ten years and has an immense commercial library built up including tapes of Schumacher, Bucky Fuller, Eugene O'Neill, Paolo Soleri, Roszak, Aitken Roshi, Needleman, and Capra. I did a one hour tape for them on deep ecology last fall. For their catalog, write New Dimensions Radio, 267 States St., San Francisco, Ca. 94114.

Joseph Meeker at the Strong Center for Environmental Values has been taping environmental thinkers over the last three or four years and has a substantial library available. Unfortunately his Arne Naess interview is barely audible. My favorites are the tapes with Gary Snyder, Ernest Callenbach. The Capra interview is outstanding--he talks about spiritual ecology. Dolores LaChapelle is only given a few minutes. A full tape should be devoted to her work with earth rituals and festivals.

For a list of these tapes, write Meeker at the Strong Center, 2355 Hearst Ave., Berkeley, Ca. 94709.

A beautifully written book which infuses Eastern and Native American mystical understanding into journeys through the American Southwest is Rob Schultheis, THE HIDDEN WEST (NY: Random House, 1982).

The newsletter of the Planet Drum Foundation, RAISE THE STAKES, does an outstanding job of reporting on the bioregion/reinhabitation movements around the world. For membership, send \$15 to Planet Drum Foundation, PO Box 31251, San Francisco, Ca. 94131.



## ANTHROPOCENTRISM QUESTIONED

John Seed

"But the time is not a strong prison either  
A little scraping the walls of dishonest  
contractor's concrete  
Through a shower of chips and sand makes freedom.  
Shake the dust from your hair. This mountain  
sea-coast is real  
For it reaches out far into the past and future;  
It is part of the great and timeless excellence  
of things." (1)

"Anthropocentrism" or "homocentrism" means human chauvinism. Similar to sexism, but substitute "human race" for "man" and "all other species" for "woman."

Human chauvinism, the idea that humans are the crown of creation, the source of all value, the measure of all things, is deeply embedded in our culture and consciousness.

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth on the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands they are delivered." (2)

When humans investigate and see through their layers of anthropocentric self-cherishing, a most profound change in consciousness begins to take place.

Alienation subsides. The human is no longer an outsider, apart. Your humanness is then recognised as being merely the most recent stage of your existence, and as you stop identifying exclusively with this chapter, you start to get in touch with yourself as mammal, as vertebrate, as a species only recently emerged from the rainforest. As the fog of amnesia disperses, there is a transformation in your relationship to other species, and in your commitment to them.

What is described here should not be seen as merely intellectual. The intellect is one entry point to the process outlined, and the easiest one to communicate. For some people, however, this change of perspective follows from actions on behalf of mother Earth.

"I am protecting the rainforest" develops to "I am part of the rainforest protecting my self. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking."

What a relief then! The thousands of years of (imagined) separation are over and we begin to recall our true nature. That is, the change is a spiritual one, thinking like a mountain (3), sometimes referred to as "deep ecology."

As your memory improves, as the implications of the sciences of evolution and ecology are internalised and replace the outmoded anthropocentric structures in your mind, there is identification with all life. Then follows the realisation that the distinction between "life" and "lifeless" is a human construct. Every atom in this body existed before organic life emerged 4,000 million years ago. Remember our childhood as minerals, as lava, as rocks? Rocks contain the potentiality to weave themselves into such stuff as this. We are the rocks dancing. Why do we look down on them with such a condescending air? It is they that are the immortal part of us.

If we embark upon such an inner voyage, we may find, upon returning to 1983 consensus reality, that our actions on behalf of the environment are purified and strengthened by the experience.

We find here a level of our being that moth, rust, nuclear holocaust or destruction of the rainforest gene pool do not corrupt. The commitment to "save the world" is not decreased by the new perspective, although the fear and anxiety which were part of our motivation start to dissipate and are replaced by a certain disinterestedness. We act because life is the only game in town, but actions from a disinterested, less attached consciousness, may be more effective.

Activists often don't have much time for meditation. The disinterested space we find here may be similar to meditation. Some teachers of meditation are embracing deep ecology. (4)

Of all the species that have ever existed, it is estimated that less than one in a hundred exist today. The rest are extinct. As environment changes any species that is unable to adapt, to change, to evolve, is extinguished. All evolution takes place in this fashion. In this way an oxygen-starved fish, ancestor of yours and mine, commenced to colonise the land. Threat of extinction is the potter's hand that molds all the forms of life.

The human species is one of the millions threatened by imminent extinction through nuclear war and other environmental changes. Though it is true that the "human nature" revealed by 12,000 years of written history



does not offer much hope that we can change our warlike, greedy, ignorant ways, yet the vastly longer fossil history assures us that we can change. We are that fish, and the myriad other death-defying feats of flexibility which a study of evolution reveals to us. A certain confidence (in spite of our recent "humanity") is warranted.

From this point of view, the threat of extinction appears as the invitation to change, to evolve. After a brief respite from the potter's hand, here we are back on the wheel again.

The change that is required of us is obviously a change in consciousness. Deep ecology is the search for a viable consciousness.

Surely consciousness emerged and evolved according to the same laws as everything else--molded by environmental pressures. In the recent past when faced by intolerable environmental pressures, our ancestors thought their way out. Now we too must think like a mountain.

If we are to be open to evolving a new consciousness, we must fully face up to our impending extinction (the ultimate environmental pressure). This means acknowledging that part of us which shies away from the truth, hides in intoxication or busyness from the despair of the human, whose 4,000 million year race is run, whose organic life is a mere hairsbreadth from finished. (5)

Our bio-centric perspective, the realisation that rocks will dance, and that roots go deeper than 4,000 million years may give us the courage to face despair and break through to an evolved consciousness, one that is in harmony with life again and sustainable.

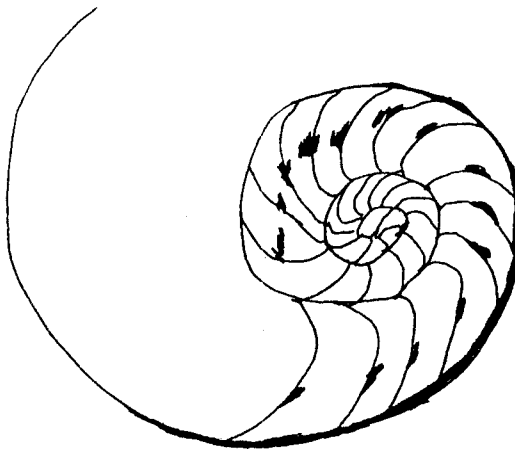
"Protecting something as wide as this planet is still an abstraction for many. Yet I see the day in our own lifetime that reverence for the natural systems--the oceans, the rainforests, the soil, the grasslands, and all other living things--will be so strong that no narrow ideology based upon politics or economics will overcome it." (6)

The term "deep ecology" was coined by the Norwegian professor and eco-activist Arne Naess and has been taken up by academics and environmentalists in Europe, the U.S.A. and Australia.

"The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions... We ask which society, which education, which form of religion is beneficial for all life on the planet as a whole." (7)

1. from the poem "A Little Scraping," THE SELECTED POETRY OF ROBINSON JEFFERS (NY: Random House, 1933).
2. Genesis 9:2
3. Aldo Leopold, A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC (NY: Oxford, 1949).
4. "For Dogen, the others who are "none other than myself" include mountains, rivers and the great earth. When one thinks like a mountain, one thinks also like the black bear, and this is a step...to deep ecology, which requires openness to the black bear, becoming truly intimate with the black bear, so that honey dribbles down your fur as you catch the bush to work."  
Robert Aitken, Roshi, "Gandhi, Dogen and Deep Ecology."
5. For the creative uses of despair, see Joanna Macy, "Despair Work," EVOLUTIONARY BLUES, 1,1 (1981)  
P.O. Box 448, Arcata, Ca. 95521.
6. Governor Jerry Brown at a rally at Diablo Canyon.  
Friends of the Earth Newsletter, 9,9 (August, 1979).
7. Interview with Arne Naess by THE TEN DIRECTIONS,  
Zen Center of Los Angeles Newsletter, Summer/Fall, 1982.

John Seed can be contacted through the Rainforest  
Information Centre, Box 368, Lismore, NSW, 2480, AUSTRALIA.



EDUCATION IN CONTEXT: WILDERNESS STUDIES AT THE SIERRA INSTITUTE

"Learn of the green world what can be thy place ... "

Canto LXXXI  
Ezra Pound

Developing a rigorous intellectual framework for deep ecology is a task many of us are engaged in. Few would doubt the necessity of this work. At the same time there is a need to provide educational experience that goes beyond the walls of the traditional classroom to touch the source from which we construct our scaffolding of rational thought. That source is the natural world and such learning occurs through the programs offered by Sierra Institute/Wilderness Studies, University of California Extension, Santa Cruz.

The Sierra Institute is an old worn backpack, a clear spring morning, a couple of frayed plant keys, a full food sack, a copy of Walden, some Gary Snyder poetry, a journal for field notes, a No. 2 pencil, and a million miles of mountains. The program provides interdisciplinary field studies in natural history, environmental philosophy, etc., in wilderness areas throughout the western U.S. Courses are often an entire study quarter in duration, offering three classes for fifteen units of academic credit. All instruction takes place in a particular wildland during a series of extended hikes.

Programs do not offer "backpacking for credit". Instead, the emphasis is on first-hand experience in field ecology that is many times combined with studies in environmental philosophy. The key is academic pursuit within the context of the wilderness experience. Experience may enrich the intellectual process without either mode diminishing the other.

The results are powerful. Students gain in-depth knowledge of the ecology of a particular place be it mountain, desert, or temperate forest. They also gain a fresh perspective on the world: wilderness/civilization; academic/experiential; Self/Other.

The Sierra Institute needs your support. The opportunity (and need) for growth is plain to see. If you would like a current list of programs, send me a note and I will place you on our mailing list. If you teach, pass the word out to your students. I would be happy to correspond with anyone interested in what we do: philosophy, programs, methods, etc.

We need both rational understanding and compelling contact to be whole.

Ed Grumbine  
Director  
Wilderness Studies

The Carriage House  
UCSC  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
(408) 429-2761



The following section is contributed by Bill Devall

A few social scientists remain interested in eco-philosophy and in phenomenology. David Seamon (Department of Geography, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019) has written a series of articles and books utilizing Heidegger's approach to dwelling.

David Michael Levin uses Heidegger's discussion of being and dwelling to elaborate on the meaning of myth and opening ("Sanity and Myth in Affective Space: A Discussion of Merleau-Ponty," in THE PHILOSOPHICAL FORUM XIV, no. 2, Winter, 1982-83, 157-189).

William Catton, Jr., (Sociology Department, Washington State University) continues to call on fellow social scientists to shift paradigm to one which places humankind as one among many species, not Lord and Master of all. "It is imperative," he writes, "if sociology is to avoid becoming obsolete, that we sensitize ourselves to the ecological concept of carrying capacity-- a concept obviously considered indispensable by the writers of THE GLOBAL 2000 REPORT... It is of vital importance that from here on, one of sociology's chief concerns should be to ascertain the prerequisites of a sustainable society." ("The Need for a New Paradigm," SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES, 26, 1, Jan., 1983, 3-15).

Stephen Cotgrove, a professor at the University of Bath, has provided the most thoroughly competent discussion by a social scientist on the differences between the paradigms of "environmentalists," "Nature conservationists," "industrialists", and "trade union officials" in England. His data consist of answers to questionnaires completed by samples of each of the above. He presents data showing evidence of support for an "alternative environmental paradigm" among "environmentalists" while "industrialists" support the "dominant paradigm."

"All the evidence points to a generational shift in the culture of society. It is possible that the pendulum may swing back, and we could possibly witness a reassertion of material values and the work-ethic. But it is equally possible that despite temporary perturbations, the long-term drift is away from any strong moral commitment to the business culture. And the evidence of substantial levels of unrest among the young in the affluent capitals of Europe supports this view." (p 53) (CATASTROPHE OR CORNUCOPIA: THE ENVIRONMENT, POLITICS AND THE FUTURE, NY: John Wiley, 1982).

Table 2.1. Counter paradigms

	Dominant Paradigm	Alternative Environmental Paradigm
Core values	Material (economic growth) Natural environment valued as resource Domination over nature	Non-material (self-actualization) Natural environment intrinsically valued Harmony with nature
Economy	Market forces Risk and reward Rewards for achievement Differentials Individual self-help	Public interest Safety Incomes related to need *Egalitarian Collective/social provision
Polity	Authoritative structures: (experts influential) Hierarchical Law and order	Participative structures: (citizen/ worker involvement) *Non-hierarchical *Liberation
Society	Centralized Large-scale Associational Ordered	Decentralized Small-scale Communal *Flexible
Nature	Ample reserves Nature hostile/neutral Environment controllable	Earth's resources limited Nature benign Nature delicately balanced
Knowledge	Confidence in science and technology Rationality of means Separation of fact/value, thought/feeling	Limits to science  Rationality of ends Integration of fact/value, thought/feeling

\*Some environmentalists want a return to small-scale communities because they provide a traditional organic order — differentiated, hierarchical, and stable.

Richard Routley has criticized the use of paradigms in the discussion of environmental philosophy ("Roles and Limits of Paradigms in Environmental Thought and Action," Discussion Paper in Environmental Philosophy, The Australian National University, 1982).

He finds that various attempts to construct a "new environmental paradigm" are really fragments of paradigms. Different attempts include different lists of themes. There are several different definitions of the concept "paradigm." Social scientists have not yet demonstrated any "shift" in attitudes in major segments of populations in modern nations to an "alternative paradigm," he concludes, and anyway attitudes may not be put into effective action.

Routley argues that we cannot wait for alternative paradigms to be adopted. They can fulfill the role of ideal models, "for instance providing bases for argument, positions to fall back on and around which to consolidate and states to aim for. Their main function is ideological."

Even philosophy, he says, is not enough. "The action has to be directed against the sources of environmental despoilation, delaying and otherwise hindering their despoiling operations by both institutional procedures and direct action."

## ALGENY

Many commentators insist that the "modern age" is finished. The outlines of contemporary society are not clearly discerned but labels abound--'new age', 'post-modern', 'post-industrial.'

In previous newsletters we have explored "new age" ideology and asserted it is the abandonment of tradition and the triumph of nihilism. The objectification and attempted manipulation of all Nature as "commodities" makes the work of modern, urbanized intellectuals in science and technology both ironic and dread-filled.

Martin Heidegger discussed this trend, particularly in "The Question Concerning Technology." Michael Zimmerman summarizes Heidegger's argument ( "Beyond 'Humanism': Heidegger's Understanding of Technology") "... for those who believe that it is no mere accident that only western man came to interpret nature as a mathematical field manipulable by devices designed by calculating intelligence--those people will find that Heidegger has something important to say. Briefly put, Heidegger claims that the 'essence' of technology is not technological devices, but is the disclosure to man of all beings whatsoever as objective, calculable, quantifiable, disposable raw material which is of value only insofar as it contributes to the enhancement of human power. Heidegger says that the revelation of all beings as raw material for man is the culmination of the history of Western culture and philosophy; at the same time, it is the triumph of nihilism."

One of the leading theorists of "new age" is Teilhard de Chardin. Scientist, Christian, writer and guru, Teilhard gloried at living at the edge of history. Now Thomas Berry (Religion, Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pa.) has written a definitive expose of Teilhard's humanism and his blindness to ecology ("Teilhard in the Twentieth Century", Teilhard Studies #7, Fall, 1982). Berry shows that Teilhard gloried in the increasing human control over the natural world which he called "progress." Progress was evident throughout the cosmic-historical process and included an upward spiritual transformation of Man. All this was identified with and supported by emergent evolutionary process. The "myth" of evolution was central to Teilhard's argument. But "so entranced with the glory of the human, Teilhard however had no awareness of the increasing desolation of the earth." "What was missing (in Teilhard) was the feeling for an interdependent biological community of the human with the natural world as the functional context for earthly existence." "While (Teilhard) rejected the mechanistic world view in favor of a mystical world view he fully accepted the industrial and technological exploitation of the planet as a desirable human activity."

Heidegger's essays on technology and Berry's essay on Teilhard can be read as prefaces to Jeremy Rifkin's new book, *ALGENY* (NY: Viking Press, 1983).

Rifkin, like Roszak, Capra, William Catton, Jr., and other commentators, asserts the great industrial age is passing from view. We, as humans, face two crises simultaneously: "The earth is running low on its stock of burnable energy and on the stock of living resources at the same time. We are at a turning point in the history of civilization, and it is at this critical juncture that a revolutionary new approach to organizing the planet is being advanced, an approach so overwhelming in scope that it will fundamentally alter humanity's entire relationship with the globe." That approach is to combine the computer with biotechnology.

We are entering the age of Algeny. "Algeny means to change the essence of a living thing by transforming it from one state to another; more specifically, the upgrading of existing organisms and the design of wholly new ones with the intent of 'perfecting' their performance. But algeny is much more. It is humanity's attempt to give metaphysical meaning to its emerging technological relationship with nature. Algeny is a way of thinking about nature, and it is this new way of thinking that sets the frame for the unfolding of the next great epoch in history".(17)

Rifkin asserts that cosmology is the projection of human social organization into nature and that "every age has its own unique view of nature, its own interpretation of what the world is all about. Knowing a civilization's concept of nature is tantamount to knowing how a civilization thinks and acts." (24)

Our concepts of nature "are utterly, unabashedly, almost embarrassingly anthropocentric." In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the "myth" of evolution provided such cosmology and legitimacy to the way western societies viewed nature.

Darwin's vision was accepted as the cosmology of the Industrial Age because it was derived from metaphors of the Industrial Age-- the marketplace and the "hidden hand" theory of competition regulating the market. Evolutionary theory became "enshrined as the centerpiece of our educational system" as "fact" rather than theory.

Rifkin asserts that Darwin's vision is waning as a new vision is emerging. Questions have begun to emerge in the "Darwinian sunset" centered around the fossil record

supporting evolutionary theory, breeding and species stasis, natural selection, embryology and vestigial organs, biogenesis, and mathematical improbability. After summarizing the questions raised by scientists, Rifkin boldly concludes that "Darwin's theory of evolution will be remembered in the centuries to come as a cosmological bridge between two world epochs. It represented the culmination of a mode of thought that went hand in hand with the age of pyrotechnology. At the same time it contained the seeds of the new mode of thinking that will animate the next great world epoch, the age of biotechnology." (160)

The new theory of evolution is based on the concept of "fields" and replaces "knowledge," painfully acquired and guarded over the centuries, with "information", ie., transferable bits of data. Process philosophy, as articulated by Alfred North Whitehead, cybernetics, articulated by Norbert Weiner as the theory of how machines self-regulate themselves in changing environments, and the articulation of quantitative ecology have laid the groundwork for new age cosmology.

Rifkin asserts the implications of this change in cosmology are staggering. Purposefulness is the motif of new age. Modern people must constantly accommodate more and more interactions with greater temporal speed. Information decays with amazing rapidity. The computer becomes a device to handle more and more information faster and faster. Thus the "new theory views evolution as the development of more efficient ways of utilizing scarce time." (192)

We continue to project our views into nature. Now living matter, in biotechnology, is reduced to "genes" which is defined as information accessible to manipulation by human minds. The engineering of the future places humans at the control panel of evolution with visions of perfectability of humans(eugenics) and creation of new forms of living matter.

Rifkin uses a rather simplified version of the theory of human psychology developed by Ernest Becker (DENIAL OF DEATH), and some other psychologists, to explain this restless search for control. Humans seek immortality because they are future aware animals. Human-kind wants to overcome death and disassociate with the rest of nature. "As technology becomes more advanced, these psychological drives become more poignant. As these psychological drives become more poignant, they stimulate the drive for greater technological advance.



These psychological and technological drives continue to intertwine, and periodically they metamorphose into new cosmological formulations that reflect both humanity's technological activity and its innermost needs and desires." (42)

Modern technology has undermined "the participatory, intimate union of people and nature." The world is "desacralized."

The ethics of the new age is based on performance in the marketplace. "Good" is defined as the engineering of life to improve performance. "Not to improve the performance of a living organism whenever technically possible is considered tantamount to committing a sin." (231)

The politics of the new age is based on temporal organization. "The new imperialism is temporal and cybernetic. The key to political power is the ability in the coming age to have effective control over the information systems for the many processes that connect living organisms with one another and with their environment."

Rifkin quotes Julian Huxley, spokesman of the new age, that our destiny as a species is to be "the sole agent of further evolutionary advance on the planet." Humanity has no choice, Huxley asserts, but to become "the business manager for the cosmic process of evolution." (241)

Mind, in the new age cosmology, is "creative extension" into the evolutionary process. In new age cosmology "bioengineering is not something artificially superimposed on nature but something spawned by nature's own ongoing evolutionary process. Any effort, therefore, to resist bioengineering would be in the end futile and self-defeating because it would fly in the face of what is 'natural'".

Only in the last chapter of his book does Rifkin suggest that the transition to the new age is not inevitable. We have choices, he asserts. The choice is between ecology and new age. To choose ecology is "to end our long, self-imposed exile; to rejoin the community of life. This is the task before us. It will require that we renounce our drive for sovereignty over everything that lives; that we restore the rest of creation to a place of dignity and respect. The resacralization of nature stands before us as the great mission of the coming age."

If we only value human security, then we give up ecology and assume the role of authorship of creation. If we value companionship with the birds and trees, we choose ecology.

"There could be no lonelier place than a biologically engineered world." But ecology requires sacrifice. "Companionship requires participation, sharing, and above all vulnerability. It is the price one pays to belong, to be a member in good standing in the community of life." (253)

Unless we say no to the age of biotechnology, Rifkin concludes, "the cosmos wails."

#### MAKE PRAYERS TO RAVEN

Postmodern people still have the chance to learn from extant native people. The spiritual awareness of some native peoples inspires and draws us into the myth of the future primitive rather than the myth of Algeny.

Richard Nelson has written several books on Indians and Eskimos in Alaska. His most recent book, he says, is a "native natural history." "It is intended as a 'guide-book' to the boreal forest derived from traditional knowledge of the Koyukon Indians." One of the purposes of the book is "to show how real and tangible the Koyukon belief in nature is" and "to serve Koyukon people themselves by educating others about the substance and values of their lifeways..."

Nelson says the book "sits on the fence between 'art' and science." It is a blend of empiricism and emotion as is all life.

"a world that watches-"

The Koyukon live in a world that watches. "The surroundings are aware, sensate, personified. They feel. They can be offended. And they must, at every moment, be treated with respect."

The central assumption of the Koyukon worldview is that the natural and supernatural world is inseparable; each is intrinsically a part of the other. Humans and natural entities are in constant spiritual interchange.

MAKE PRAYERS TO THE RAVEN: A KOYUKON VIEW OF THE NORTHERN FOREST, by Richard Nelson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

The Native American naturalist may practice a "wild" agriculture as well as hunting/gathering. Gary Paul Nabhan in *THE DESERT SMELLS LIKE RAIN* (A Naturalist in Papago Indian Country) (Albany, Ca.: North Point Press, 1982) tells how the Papago Indians lived with the desert, farming when it rained, collecting wild plants, spinning myths of animals, and breeding a diversity of dry-climate plants that let them live more healthfully than many of their descendants do today.

A contemporary version of "wild" agriculture is explored by Masanobu Fukuoka, *THE ONE-STRAW REVOLUTION* (An Introduction to Natural Farming) (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1978).

Gandhi was very interested in small scale, village economies and self-sufficiency in local communities. He recognized that the practical needs of the people, for simple food and shelter, must be met as well as attention given to their spiritual needs. Gandhi's work in the Ashram is shown in the Oscar winning film, *GANDHI*. The Ashram is the base from which Gandhi works for spiritual awakening in a mass political movement.

Gandhi's theories of social movement, including respect for one's "opponents", were brilliantly explicated by Arne Naess in a book published in 1974 but relatively unknown in North America, *GANDHI AND GROUP CONFLICT: AN EXPLORATION OF Satyagraha* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget).

Gandhi's practical efforts included reviving the spinning wheel. He used this device as a metaphor and a practical demonstration that the masses did not have to depend on the British Empire and huge mechanized industries to provide basic needs such as clothing.

The development of a socially appropriate technology is a major focus of attention for those seeking alternatives to the current large-scale industries and economies. A special issue of the *HUMBOLDT JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RELATIONS* is devoted to "Socially Appropriate Technology" (Spring, 1982). Edited by Michael Hibbard and Carl J. Hosticka, it includes articles by Alan Drengson, "Toward a Philosophy of Appropriate Technology" and by Bill Devall, "Ecological Consciousness and Ecological Resisting: Guidelines for Comprehension and Research." Copies are available for \$5 each from the Department of Sociology, Humboldt State University, Arcata, Ca. 95521.



Recent books on technology, utopian experiments and the limits of quantitative analysis of natural resources issues.

WATER SHORTAGE: LESSONS IN CONSERVATION FROM THE GREAT CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, 1976-77, by Richard A. Berk, C.J. LaCivita, Datherine Sredi and Thomas F. Cooley, (Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1981).

Those who look to the youth of industrial nations to be the vanguard of social change toward a sustainable society or an ecological utopia might read THE SOCIOLOGY OF YOUTH CULTURE AND YOUTH SUBCULTURE: SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL? by Mike Brake, (Boston: Routledge, 1980).

Youth culture may be coopted by the "informational society" (witness the 100,000 plus youths who attended the concerts and computer fairs in California sponsored by Apple computers) or, as Marcuse predicted in the 1960's become "one-dimensional." The work of Dolores LaChapelle and others on "experiential learning" in the wilderness should be more widely available to teachers. see also Michael J. Cohen, PREJUDICE AGAINST NATURE: A GUIDEBOOK FOR THE LIBERATION OF SELF AND PLANET (National Audubon Society Expedition Institute, 950 Third Ave. NY, NY 10022. \$7.80) This is a practical message for environmental education.

Forthcoming books on feminist perspectives on ecology

Elizabeth Dodson Gray, PATRIARCHY AS A CONCEPTUAL TRAP (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, Four Linden Square).

Augusta Fink, I-MARY: A BIOGRAPHY OF MARY AUSTIN (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1983).

On Native Americans

J. Donald Hughes, AMERICAN INDIAN ECOLOGY (El Paso: Texas Western University Press, 1983).

poetry

Gary Snyder, AXEHANDLES (Albany, CA: North Point Press, 1983).

"The ideally nonviolent state will be an ordered anarchy."

Gandhi