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Deep Ecology and Its Social Philosophy: A Critique

Bron Taylor

Deep ecology philosophy is both more and less plural than is usually recognized. To assess such philosophy fully, we must apprehend both its diversity and that which makes it possible to speak of deep ecology as an emerging philosophy and movement.

For nearly a decade I have been conducting ethnographic and archival research exploring this movement, especially in North America. In this essay I (1) describe the forms deep ecology assumes as it trickles down from philosophers and shapes much of the grassroots environmental movement in the United States; (2) argue that the Green ideology known as bioregionalism has almost universally been grafted onto deep ecology, becoming its de facto social philosophy; and (3) evaluate the central conceptual claims and bioregional social philosophy that are typically found in grassroots deep ecology.

Deep Ecology on the Ground

Deep ecology on the ground is simpler than in the philosophical literature. This is partly because few activists have read or taken time to read such material widely. One consequence of this is that environmental activists who embrace deep ecology tend to adopt simpler understandings of it than do writers of deep ecology philosophy.[1]

Deep ecology on the ground is, conversely, more complicated than most versions found in the philosophical literature. This is partly because its rank-and-file practitioners are less interested than are its philosophical advocates in resolving inconsistencies or in defending a particular version of deep ecology.

Consequently, grassroots deep ecology has become a bricolage of countercultural ideas fused to a kind of generic (common-denominator) understanding of deep ecology. This generic deep ecology can be expressed simply, in a way that

echoes the "eightfold platform" articulated by Arne Naess and George Sessions: *All life has value, apart from its usefulness to human beings, and thus, all life ought to be allowed to continue its evolutionary unfolding.*[2] This simple proposition, often reduced to the term "biocentrism" or "ecocentrism," captures well the central moral claim of deep ecology.[3]

If this is correct, then deep ecology's grassroots evolution has little to do with Naess's apron diagram, whether specific "ecosophies" ("T" or others) are compelling, or whether there is a better term than "deep ecology" to express its key presuppositions.[4] Many activists who identify with the deep ecology movement, of course, have read and resonate with the eightfold platform. They agree that all life matters, and that if people are to respect living systems, they must dramatically change their lifestyles and political arrangements in ways that reduce human population, consumption, and ecologically unsustainable technologies.

The Wider Complex of Deep Ecology Ideas and Ideals

Thus, deep ecology on the ground seems, at first glance, to be content with a simple formula and general call to action. But there are perspectives underlying and deduced from what I am calling the "generic" form of deep ecology which are so widely shared that they may be considered, for practical and analytical purposes, important if not essential parts of it.

Western Desacralization and Anthropocentrism as Root Cause; Earthen Spirituality and Bioregional Ideology as Antidote

Many Greens, perhaps especially those identifying with deep ecology, believe that monotheistic religions foster environmentally destructive behavior. Those religions shape consciousness such that humans believe that (1) they are the only species which deserves moral consideration and (2) the holy is above or beyond the world, and thus Earth's living systems are of penultimate moral concern. Additionally, such religion is criticized as intolerant of and repressive toward peoples whose ideas and cultures are more ecologically sustainable. Put simply, Western religions are anthropocentric and "desacralize" nature; consequently they precipitate a war on nature and nature-beneficent cultures, and are the central engines of environmental calamity.[5]

The flip side of this coin is that Western religious idea-complexes must be overturned in order for humans to harmonize their lives with nature. This helps to explain why deep ecology philosophers think it is important to reject monotheism (considered the antinature, "dominant paradigm" of Western religion and philosophy) while resurrecting and defending the lifeways and religions of the world's esoteric religious traditions and remnant foraging societies.

George Sessions, for example, suggested that Western people could grope their way back to a proper understanding of the "God/Nature/Man relationship" via the pantheism of the seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza.[6] He borrowed from Aldous Huxley (who borrowed in turn from Leibniz) a belief in "perennial philosophy,"[7] a variety of alternative, nature-beneficent ideals scattered globally and found especially in world's surviving indigenous peoples, religions originating in the Far East, and among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim contemplative mystics.[8]

The ubiquitous critique of Western spirituality also helps to explain why so many deep ecology activists have been involved in Earth-oriented ritualizing. Indeed, in 1982, Bill Devall criticized environmentalists for failing to "reconstruct [and] rediscover the earth bonding processes—which worked so well for primal peoples" while praising those engaged in countercultural spirituality for leading the way.[9] In the years since he wrote those words, radical environmentalists have designed many rites to evoke and deepen feelings of connection to a sacred Earth and its many manifestations.[10]

Gary Snyder and Paul Shepard (more than Sessions, Devall, or even Arne Naess) developed many of the ideas that would become central to the form deep ecology would take at the grass roots. In "Four Changes" (written before Naess coined the term "deep ecology" and published in a Pulitzer Prize-winning book titled *Turtle Island)* Snyder expressed virtually all the ideas that would later be sketched into the deep ecology platform.[11] He penned additional ideas that today are truisms, or nearly so, within the deep ecology movement. "Western Culture," he asserted, is the "root of the environmental crisis" because it severs culture from the "very ground of its own being . . . from wilderness."[12]

Far preferable, Snyder claimed, are the beliefs of "Gnostics, hip Marxists, Teilhard de Chardin Catholics, Druids, Taoists, Biologists, Witches, Yogins, Bhikkus, Quakers, Sufis, Tibetans, Zens, Shamans, Bushmen, American Indians, Polynesians, Anarchists, [and] Alchemists."[13] He also endorsed pantheistic beliefs in "nature herself . . . the great goddess, the Magna Mater" who, he added, "I regard . . . as a very real entity."[14] Snyder further argued that the animistic perceptions found in "all primitive cultures" demonstrate that people can learn to understand and speak for the nonhuman world.[15] Thus, Snyder's essay is noteworthy, and not only as an early expression of the desire to supplant Western monotheism with spiritualities considered more nature-beneficent.

Meanwhile, Paul Shepard was doing more than any other deep ecology architect to advance the central radical environmental cosmogony, its story about how today's world came to be. In several remarkable books, Shepard blamed the rise of pastoral and agricultural lifeways, both of which tamed animals (including humans), for destroying environmental and human emotional health.[16] Both pastoral and agricultural societies required political centralization and a warrior class for their expansion and perpetuation. They violently suppressed foraging peoples, supplanting their cultures with cultures in which people had little contact with nature and less "attentiveness" to it, turning the world into a "thing" instead of a "presence," widely destroying animistic spirituality and ethical sensitivity toward nature.[17] Pastoralism especially promoted these trends, producing hierarchical sky-God cosmologies and violent centralized human cultures that severed the gods and the sacred from Earth, unleashing a war against it. Such cosmologies were often, according to Shepard, fused to the agriculture with which they became enmeshed and mutually dependent.[18]

In *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, completed just before his death in 1996, Shepard summarized his lifework: "If there is a single complex of events responsible for the deterioration of human health and ecology, agricultural civilization is it."[19] Despite the relentless, ten thousand-year drive toward an impoverishing domestication, humans can rediscover appropriate lifeways, ones in which a life in wild nature is seen as "a basic optimum human environment".[20] "A new paradigm of primordial recovery" is possible, Shepard argued, one that "models optimum qualities of human life not only in terms of philosophy and culture but also in food, exercise, and society, as these existed among late Pleistocene humanity and still exist in relic hunter/gatherer peoples."[21] The potential resides in the human genome itself, Shepard believed, in our genetic inheritance from millennia as evolving *Homo sapiens*. In the human genome, wildness and wisdom remain—and they can teach us how to live.

Such "Back to the Pleistocene" sentiment was proclaimed early on by Gary Snyder in *Turtle Island*, but his thinking later moderated. No less a critic of modern agriculture, Snyder now urges that we learn from, if not return to, Neolithic or "upper-Paleolithic" lifeways that include small-scale, "traditional" (or "indigenous") agriculture and horticulture.[22]

In response, Shepard gently criticized Snyder, as well as influential farmer-writers (and bioregionalists) Wes Jackson and Wendell Berry, for failing to push "the thesis of an undiluted model of primal life to its conclusion." He acknowledged, however, the apparent impracticality of this ideal, stating that he would certainly prefer that their Neolithic consciousness would "prosper—and prevail" over current lifeways.[23]

These figures, whose ideas have influenced grassroots deep ecology, believe that the domestication of plant and animal life and agriculture itself inexorably reduce biological diversity. Indeed, despite disagreements about which food production technology we should use, Snyder, Shepard, and early environmentalists such as John Muir and Henry David Thoreau, who are considered to be elders by contemporary deep ecologists,[24] all trace the primordial fall from a foraging paradise to agriculture.[25] Such a cosmogony fuels the turn toward the local and a desire for a bioregional polity—an important if not universal aspect of grassroots deep ecology.

Summarized simply, bioregionalists envision decentralized governance ("community self-rule" and "participatory democracy," in movement parlance) within political boundaries redrawn to reflect the natural contours of differing ecosystem types.[26] Such polity is needed because within a given ecological region people can—by virtue of "being there" and "learning the land," its climate patterns, native flora and fauna, water systems, soils, and so on—better care for and build ecologically sustainable lifeways than can people and institutions placed farther away. The region itself, moreover, can become a part of human identity. To take care of one's place, therefore, is to take care of oneself. It does not require altruism or sacrifice. As with deep ecology, such a shift in human identity, a sense of loyalty to place, requires a fundamental spiritual reorientation toward a holistic, ecocentric worldview.

It was in *Turtle Island* that Snyder articulated the ideas which would provide the bedrock of bioregionalism, more than five years before the term was coined.[27] By the 1990s bioregionalism was firmly grafted to the grassroots deep ecology movement in North America.[28] To a significant extent, bioregionalism would put flesh on the skeleton of a deep ecology platform that was strikingly bereft of political conviction. Indeed, bioregionalism provided the deep ecology *movement* with the *social philosophy* that any comprehensive philosophy must develop.

Summary: The Wider Complex

Snyder, Shepard, and others have promoted a complex of ideas that are now intimately associated with deep ecology: We suffered a primordial fall from a foraging paradise in which domestication and agriculture accompanied the destruction of nature-sympathetic (especially animistic and pantheistic) religious perceptions, rituals, and lifeways. We should defend, learn from, and help revitalize the world's remnant foraging societies or small-scale agricultures, and strive toward bioregional modes of identity and political governance. These are among the transformations needed if we are to construct lifeways that ensure biological and cultural diversity.

A recovery of ecological sustainability requires a rejection of modern, Western, anthropocentric, and monotheistic modes of consciousness, bioregional deep ecology proclaims. This simultaneously will involve a return to or invention of ritual forms that promote what could be called "primal" consciousness or spirituality.[29] It will produce emotionally healthy animals, including humans. A transformed consciousness and proper spiritual perception will yield a love for the land and all life, promote local acts of compassion, and ignite resistance to environmental destruction. Such consciousness change will eventuate in bioregional activism and political organization.[30]

Despite such broad agreement, Snyder and Shepard disagreed about the ability of the world's great, cosmopolitan religions to foster the needed perceptual changes. In his final book, Shepard first quoted Snyder, agreeing with him that "otherworldly philosophies end up doing more damage to the planet (and human psyches) than the existential conditions they seek to transcend." He protested, however, Snyder's use of Jainism and Buddhism as models: "Surely these are two of those great, placeless, portable, world religions whose ultimate concerns are not just universal but otherworldly." Although Shepard clearly preferred that religion remain located bioregionally, he could discern no contradiction in Snyder's personal life between his bioregional commitments and his approval of some type of cosmopolitan religion. Shepard concluded, "I suspect that Snyder, like [Wendell] Berry and [Wes] Jackson, is not so much following tradition as doing what Joseph Campbell called "creative mythology."[31]

This is a good point to conclude this brief overview of deep ecology as it grows on the ground, for whether in the work of theorists like Snyder and Shepard, or in the ritualizing found among deep ecology groups, mythmaking (and ritualizing) is important and ongoing. Cosmogonic myths diagnose our current predicament: Agricultures (and later, large, centralized nation-states) have supplanted foraging lifeways and produced ecological and spiritual dysfunction. From such myths is deduced a decentralist preference that shapes deep ecology's bioregional *social* philosophy. They shape its evangelical strategy: To heal the Earth and all its creatures, we must find ways to recover or invent a regionally placed, postanthropocentric consciousness and spirituality. To whatever extent possible, we must return to the primal lifeways of foraging people or of small-scale, premonotheistic agricultures, which have traditionally generated place-based identities and evoked kinship feelings for nonhuman nature.

Consciousness transformation, it is believed, is the first step toward the needed behavioral changes.

A Critique of Deep Ecology

The following critique of bioregional deep ecology depends on the general accuracy of the preceding portrait. I have identified, based on fieldwork and text-based research, central beliefs found among deep ecology proponents and movements. I do not claim, by focusing on the mainstreams and central tendencies of deep ecological thought, that everyone associated with the deep ecology movement uncritically endorses these tendencies. Quite the contrary: Within most social movements there is pluralism as well as some idea-glue that binds together the group, however tenuously. Because of space limitations, however, I must focus my critique on the main conceptual tendencies found in North America's deep ecology movements.

A General Critique of Deep Ecology's Social Philosophy

Bioregional deep ecology generally asserts the binary associations found in table 14.1. My central argument is that such ideology would be more compelling if its advocates would eschew simplistic binary oppositions and monocausal explanations in their efforts to explain the causes of and solutions to environmental degradation.

Sometimes, of course, such dichotomies insightfully illuminate how certain social variables, cultural differences, and historical developments shape human lifeways and impact nature. A problem arises, however, when such dichotomies are viewed, as they often are, as distinct and rigid oppositions, or as variables whose influence runs in a single direction. When examined in historical and cross-cultural perspective, it becomes clear that such oversimplifications are grounded in a misleading failure to appreciate the diversity and complexity of human cultures and political economies.

The failure of many deep ecology advocates to appreciate such complexity signals either social-scientific naïveté or interpretive hubris. The latter is highly ironic, for in other important ways, bioregional deep ecologists express an unusual and laudable humility. Even though it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape anthropocentrism,[32] the effort to do so, and the claim that all life has value apart from its usefulness to human beings, is a salutary act of moral imagination, perhaps even a spiritual insight. Such humility is morally praiseworthy: Willingness to consider equally the interests of others (sometimes even above one's own) is widely and properly recognized as virtuous. Individuals involved in deep ecology movements do, generally speaking, make significant sacrifices (at least as conventionally understood) in their efforts to promote sustainability

Table 14.1
Binary associations in bioregional deep ecology

Good	Bad
Foraging (or small-scale organic horticultural) societies	Pastoral and agricultural societies
Animistic, pantheistic, goddess-matriarchal, or Eastern religions	Monotheistic, sky-God, patriarchal, Western religions
Biocentrism/Ecocentrism (promotes conservation)	Anthropocentrism (promotes destruction)
Intuition	Reason (especially instrumental)
Holistic worldviews	Mechanistic and dualistic worldviews
Decentralism	Centralization
Primitive technology	Modern technology
Regional self-sufficiency	Globalization and international trade
Anarchism/participatory democracy	Statism, corruption, authoritarianism
Radicalism	Pragmatism

through lifestyle simplification and political action. They express a commendable humility when they insist that ecosystems are more complex than we can know, deducing from this a powerful rationale for precautionary principles that demand the protection of all ecosystem types as wilderness or biosphere reserves.

Yet such humility often evaporates when deep ecology advocates turn their attention to political and economic systems. This is ironic, partly because dualistic distinctions, such as summarized in table 14.1, seem incongruent with the holistic, antidualistic metaphysics endorsed by most deep ecologists. Given such holism, it is surprising how often deep ecology advocates articulate or otherwise express dualistic beliefs to the effect that some such systems are "unnatural."[33] Equally ironic is that many such holistic thinkers fail to apprehend that, because political and economic systems are embedded in ecosystems, they are also highly complex.

Complexity suggests more than a suspicion of monocausal explanations for social reality. It underscores the difficulty of identifying the relative importance of the multiple variables contributing to social realities and social transformations. An understanding of socioeconomic systems as aspects of even more complex living systems clarifies why it is often difficult for scholars or activists to discern which strategies might best effect the desired transformations. An understanding of political complexity would lead to greater humility when making tactical and strategic recommendations, and less antipathy toward

those with similar goals but differing political judgments about how best to pursue them. This is not an abstract point. Those well acquainted with internal politics among environmentalists know how common it is for strategic disagreements to devolve into counterproductive brawls.

This general critique, and the negative effects of simplistic historical and social scientific analysis, can be used to evaluate, through cross-cultural and historical examples, several specific claims that are endemic within the bioregional deep ecology movement.

To summarize: Deep ecology advocates argue that

1. Anthropocentric attitudes, emerging with agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, and subsequently grounded in Western philosophies and religions, are causing the current extinction episode.
2. Hope requires widespread resistance to environmental degradation and the evolution of bioregional governance and bioregionally sustainable lifeways.
3. This requires that we replace anthropocentric with ecocentric attitudes.
4. Such replacement in turn requires that we "resacralize" our perceptions of nature and, thus, a religious revival of indigenous and Eastern religions, or holistic metaphysics (such as Spinozan philosophy or "scientific" pantheism).

In short, deep ecology posits that a transformation of human consciousness must take place if humans are to reestablish harmony with nonhuman nature.

A Critique of Specific Claims and Assumptions

On Consciousness and Environmental Behavior We do not have convincing empirical (quantitative) research correlating environmental attitudes and behavior. Nevertheless, my fieldwork in North America suggests that in the affluent, industrialized West, people espousing ecocentric values do promote environmentally aware lifestyles and passionate political action more consistently and passionately than those who express anthropocentric attitudes and presuppositions.[34] There is ample evidence, however, that the dichotomies and correlations surmised by many deep ecology advocates (e.g., in table 14.1) are not as strong as they presume. Indeed, the increasing number and diversity of ecological resistance movements around the world suggest that some deep ecology premises are, if anything, *decreasingly* apt generalizations about social reality.

This was an important finding of my on-the-ground research that explored diverse and widely dispersed examples of movements promoting environmental protection which have been variously been characterized as "militant" or "radical."[35] This cross-cultural research challenged the prevalent deep ecological conviction that consciousness change toward an ecocentric, deep ecological spirituality is a precondition of "radical" environmental action. Although we

found examples where deep ecology-like values and spiritualities animated environmental actors and groups, we also found many cases where such motivations were missing or not widely shared. Indeed, contrary to deep ecological expectations, in the global context the most prevalent factor precipitating and justifying aggressive environmental resistance appears to be a recognition that intensifying environmental degradation directly threatens traditional livelihoods, human health, and the life prospects of children.[36]

Indeed, it is *social analysis* purporting to explain the causes of current environmental threats that most decisively fosters environmental activism. Social analysis helps inspire the creation of new environmental movements and ecologizes the agendas of many social movements that originally had no environmental objectives. In the global context, it is not an analysis of the environmentally destructive consequences accompanying the advent of pastoral or agricultural lifeways, or of the changes in religious perceptions that accompanied such developments, which most decisively fuels resistance, even in cases where such views are present.

The most common social analysis animating grassroots environmentalism outside of the industrial West can be summarized in this way: *The land has been stolen and abused by outsiders—either by multinational commercial interests, or more commonly, by national and local commercial elites—who are interested in quick profits rather than in ecologically sustainable land use.*[37] Grassroots activists often trace the beginning of this process to the arrival of colonial armies, the theft of their mineral resources, and fast-following commercial enterprises, including cash-crop monocultures.[38] It is not *agriculture* or *technology* per se that is blamed for immiseration, therefore, but international *agribusiness* which overturns putatively sustainable agricultures, centralizing production and exporting food, displacing and impoverishing the original inhabitants. Such analysis is often and increasingly tied to a clear understanding of how the enclosure of commons lands and the displacement of peoples living there play a key role in the destruction of human lives, cultures, and the environments upon which human lives depend.[39]

These types of analyses represent a novel fusion of left-wing criticism and a growing ecological and historical understanding of the processes by which traditional livelihoods have been lost and of the ways in which modern agriculture impoverishes people and ecosystems. In less-affluent countries we increasingly find, consequently, that notions such as "sustainable development" and "environmental justice" provide valuable conceptual resources both for environmental resistance and for endeavors to restore traditional and less-damaging agricultures and livelihoods.[40] Nevertheless, some prominent deep ecology advocates dismiss such notions as an impediment to *environmental* sustainability, considering them to be anthropocentric and thus, not sufficiently ecological or ecocentric.[41]

When informed by an ecological understanding of resource-based limits and widespread environmental damage resulting from industrial growth, even those with anthropocentric value systems will realize that such growth *cannot* benefit most people. Participants in popular movements, consequently, decreasingly view industrial growth as the "development" goal or the means to "social justice."[42] Arriving at such ecology-informed conclusions certainly involves a transformation of consciousness, particularly when we consider the success capitalist societies have had in making economic growth the axial social organizing principle of most countries on the planet. But such consciousness change can occur without a concomitant shift toward a deep ecological, or even an ecocentric, perspective.

Indeed, the obvious negative consequences of unrestrained "development" reinforce perceptions that the land has been expropriated by outsiders who are using it up for their exclusive benefit, and the conclusion that any further extension of international commerce betrays local needs and interests.[43] In the final analysis, it is often a realization of the connections between commercial development, ecological deterioration, and declining life prospects that produces what can be called the "ecologization" of many popular social movements.[44] Increasingly, social movements are becoming ecologized, recognizing that growth and industrialization are illusions of prosperity offered by elites to keep ordinary people from defending and promoting appropriate and sustainable alternatives.

On Spirituality and "Ecological Consciousness" What about the claim that we must resacralize our perceptions of nature? What of the ubiquitous assumption within deep ecology movements that resacralization requires a rejection of Western monotheistic (and patriarchal) religions? What of the belief that the worldviews and religious practices of Eastern religions and indigenous peoples, or pantheistic metaphysics, provides superior ground for environmentalism than Western religions or philosophies?[45]

My brief response involves four assertions. First, current scholarship shows that the ecological practices of indigenous peoples are diverse and efforts to portray such peoples as ecological saints or sinners are simplistic, failing to recognize religious and cultural pluralism among and within such groups.[46] Second, the debate over the impact of Eastern religious ideals on environmental behavior is anything but resolved, and the tendency to make broad generaliza-

tions has proven problematic, just as it did with indigenous societies.[47] Third, those who have asserted that Christianity is the decisive variable precipitating environmental degradation have advanced a conclusion which exceeds their evidence.[48] To summarize these three points: The putative ecological superiority of indigenous and Eastern religions over monotheistic worldviews is a difficult empirical question. The likelihood is that broad generalizations about the ecological superiority of one or another culture or religious tradition will continue to prove wanting. Understanding the ecological impacts of societies and religions will require careful attention not only to the tendencies that inhere in different groups, but also to their internal pluralism and changing forms.

My fourth assertion, then, in response to the typical assumptions about religion found in deep ecology subcultures, is that a greater appreciation of the malleability of religion is needed than is usually found within them.[49] A proper appreciation of religious change can be grounded in the history of religion. Fieldwork exploring the ways in which religious, philosophical, and ecological ideas cross-fertilize and transmogrify group thinking and practices can also foster an appreciation of religion's malleability.[50]

Whatever tendencies there have been or may be in various cultural and religious traditions with regard to environment-related behavior—when the ecological facts become clear, when people recognize that their well-being is threatened by environmental degradation, when they decide to do something about it—their followers usually turn first to their own traditions. There they seek the conceptual and material resources they will need to respond. When these resources prove inadequate, people often will transform their traditions, sometimes rapidly, into forms better suited to the challenge. Sometimes this occurs as a result of cross-fertilization and mutual influence among groups that are usually isolated from each other and thus have little opportunity to exercise mutual influence. When environmental circumstances become dire, however, people often become more receptive to participating in coalitions, encountering new people, and considering new ideas. When such social dynamics are unleashed, few remain unchanged in the process.

These findings square with those of scholars who have studied grassroots environmentalism in less-affluent countries.[51] They also cohere with recent scholarship examining the "greening" of monotheistic religions in the West.[52] A good example of such change can be found in the "Earth Charter," an endeavor led by an ecumenical coalition of religious leaders to construct, with participation from "civil society" around the world, principles for revering the Earth. The hope is to have the Charter ratified by the United Nations, and that this would inspire greater international cooperation toward solving environmental

problems. Interestingly, the second draft retains language of the sacred and intrinsic value to describe human responsibilities to the nonhuman nature:

> Planet Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. With reverence for the sources of our being, we give thanks for the gift of life. We affirm that Earth's life support systems and resources are the common heritage of all and a sacred trust. Ensuring a healthy and beautiful Earth with clean air, pure waters, fertile lands, expansive forests, and plentiful oceans is a basic common interest of humanity. . . .
>
> General Principles: Respect Earth and all life . . . [and] the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings.[53]

This document is based on long-term discussions among people of many different civil and religious groups, and illustrates how people with very different worldviews are developing new perspectives in response to the environmental crisis.

To summarize, participants in deep ecology groups generally believe that a shift toward primal, pagan, or Eastern religious spiritualities is a crucial prerequisite to reharmonizing human and nonhuman relations. Such beliefs need heavy qualification. The history of religion demonstrates the malleability of religion, and contemporary research shows dramatic changes unfolding in many religious groups and most religious traditions. Meanwhile, the emergence of increasingly plural grassroots environmental movements demonstrates that deep ecological consciousness change is no more likely to spur ecological resistance than ecological education combined with appeals to self-interest and concern for children, families, and communities. Indeed, many of the deep ecology dichotomies listed in table 14.1 are incomprehensible and have little explanatory power in non-Western contexts.[54]

On Bioregional Ideology, Decentralization, and the Question of Power We have already reviewed the extent to which deep ecology has fused with bioregionalism. Much bioregional theorizing has focused on the difficulties involved in demarcating bioregions. We can see that such difficulties are not insuperable, however, when we recognize that bioregional provinces are necessarily also cultural zones; they are social constructions, not just ecological realities. If they are to become governance units, they must be contested and negotiated.[55]

Another problem identified by political scientists is that "States in a world organized along bioregional lines would be more prone to conflicts rooted in differences in identity and traditions."[56] The explosion of violence that attended the bioregional breakup of the Soviet Union certainly intensified this critique. It is worth noting, moreover, that "The designers of the American Constitution were keenly aware of the [dangers of the bioregional] European

pattern and . . . were determined to avoid and counteract [regional conflicts by relying on] unnatural borders."[57]

It is not clear, however, that in the long run and on every continent and during every era, violence and conflict would be greater under bioregional forms of political organization than under political units drawn according to bioregional differences. Fear of balkanization raises important concerns, but a universal condemnation of bioregional polity does not logically follow. Gary Snyder, for example, would likely point to anthropologist A. L. Kroeber's work which shows that Native Americans have usually lived peacefully, largely in differing bioregional provinces.[58]

A more trenchant problem is how bioregionalists (and the anarchists who influenced their most influential theorists) often assume that people are naturally predisposed (unless corrupted by life in unnatural, hierarchical, centralized, industrial societies) to cooperative behavior.[59] This debatable assumption appears to depend more on radical environmental faith, a kind of Paul Shepard-style mythologizing, than on ecology or anthropology. Unfortunately for bioregional theory, evolutionary biology shows that not only cooperation promotes species survival; so also, at times, does aggressive competitiveness.[60] Based on its unduly rosy view of the potential for human altruism, it is doubtful that bioregionalism can offer sufficient structural constraints on the exercise of power by selfish and well-entrenched elites.

It should be obvious, for example, that nation-state governments will not voluntarily cede authority.[61] Any political reorganization along bioregional lines would likely require "widespread violence and dislocation."[62] Few bioregionalists seem to recognize this likelihood, or how devastating to nature such a transitional struggle would probably be. Moreover, making an important but often overlooked point about political power, political theorist Daniel Deudney warns:

> The sizes of the bioregionally based states would vary greatly because bioregions vary greatly. This would mean that some states would be much more powerful than others [and] it is not inevitable that balances of power would emerge to constrain the possible imperial pretensions of the larger and stronger states.[63]

Andrew Bard Schmookler, in his critique of utopian anarchism, has raised a kindred concern. In *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution,* he criticized anarchists (and their relatively moderate bioregional progeny) for ignoring a specific problem of power.[64] He asked: How can good people prevent being dominated by a ruthless few, and what will prevent hierarchies from emerging if decentralized political self-rule is ever achieved? One does not have to believe all people are bad to recognize that not all people will be good, he argued; and unless bad people all become good, there is no solution

to violence other than some kind of government to restrain the evil few. Schmookler elsewhere noted that those who exploit nature gather more power to themselves. How, then, can we restrain such power? There must be a government able to control the free exercise of power, Schmookler concluded.

Once when debating Green anarchists and bioregionalists in a radical environmental journal, Schmookler agreed that political decentralization is a good idea. But if we move in this direction, he warned, "There should be at the same time a world order sufficient [to thwart] would-be conquerors." Moreover, "Since the biosphere is a globally interdependent web, that world order should be able to constrain any of the actors from fouling the earth. This requires laws and means of enforcement." Schmookler concluded, "Government is a paradox, but there is no escaping it. This is because power is a paradox: our emergence out of the natural order makes power an inevitable problem for human affairs, and only power can control power."[65]

Bioregionalism generally fails to grapple adequately with the problem of power. Consequently, it has little "answer to specifically global environmental problems," such as atmospheric depletion and the disruption of ocean ecosystems by pollution and overfishing. Political scientist Paul Wapner argues that this is because bioregionalism assumes "that all global threats stem from local instances of environmental abuse and that by confronting them at the local level they will disappear."[66]

Nor does bioregionalism have much of a response to the "globalization" of corporate capitalism and consumerist market society, apart from advocating local resistance or long-odds campaigns to revoke the corporate charters of the worst environmental offenders. These efforts do little to hinder the inertia of this process.[67] And little is ever said about *how* to restrain the voracious appetite of a global-corporate-consumer culture for the resources in every corner of the planet. Even for the devout, promoting deep ecological spirituality and ecocentric values seems pitifully inadequate in the face of such forces. Perhaps it is because they have little if any theory of social change, and thus cannot really envision a path toward a sustainable society, that many bioregional deep ecologists revert to apocalyptic scenarios. Many of them see the collapse of ecosystems and industrial civilization as the only possible means toward the envisioned changes. Others decide that political activism is hopeless, and prioritize instead spiritual strategies for evoking deep ecological spirituality, hoping, self-consciously, for a miracle.

Certainly the resistance of civil society to globalization and its destructive inertia is honorable and important, even a part of a wider sustainability strategy. But there will be no victories over globalization and corporate capitalism, and

no significant progress toward sustainability, without new forms of international, enforceable, global environmental governance.[68] Indeed, without new restraints on power, both within nations and internationally, the most beautiful bioregional experiments and models will be overwhelmed and futile.

Even bioregional deep ecologists deeply committed to this new Green ideology sometimes realize that lasting victories must be gained through legislation or secured in the courts. The history of environmental politics in the United States certainly demonstrates that, contrary to bioregional ideology, it is often people far away who care more for specific places than those near them. This dynamic is apparent in federal legislation and judicial rulings; they have repeatedly provided wildlands greater protection from local extractive interests than would have been the case were such places left exclusively under local jurisdiction.[69] It is curious to me that so few bioregional deep ecologists notice the irony when their adversaries in the "wise use" movement parrot their primary *political* objective, decentralization and local control.[70] Such realities provide ample reason for skepticism that decentralization along bioregional lines will bring the desired transformations, at least in the foreseeable future.

My quarrel here is with the idea that "bioregionalization" is a panacea for environmental protection and positive social change, with related binary oppositions such as "big political systems bad/small political systems good." This criticism notwithstanding, there is a core of common sense to the idea that people living in a region are better placed than people far away to learn about their region and how to live there sustainably. There are also many encouraging examples of environmental activism and practice that have been inspired by bioregional ideas.

The recent "bioregionalization" of California provides an important example. In 1991, eighteen federal and state resource agencies signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" titled "California's Coordinated Regional Strategy to Conserve Biological Diversity." The agreement subdivided California into ten large ecoregions and charged officials within them to cooperate on all issues related to environmental protection and resource management.[71] These new management units ignored the preexisting county structures and were based largely on judgments about the boundaries of different ecosystem types.

This dramatic initiative would not have happened in the absence of decades of grassroots activism and severe environment-related conflicts. The "bioregional" or "biodiversity" project, as this governmental initiative is sometimes called, is not only a new way governments are hoping to manage ecosystems. It is also a way government officials hope to reduce and manage political conflicts about how to manage them.

The most thoughtful pioneers of bioregional deep ecology, it must be stressed, are not ideologues. In an essay reflecting on the bioregionalization of California, for example, Gary Snyder wrote, "I am not arguing that we should instantly re-draw the boundaries of the social construction called California, although that could happen some far day." Instead, Snyder advanced a longer-term view, concluding that bioregional thinking "leads toward the next step in the evolution of human citizenship."[72] And Raymond Dasmann, who coauthored perhaps the most important early bioregional manifesto,[73] while asserting two decades later that there are "obvious advantages to bringing a unified political control over the management of a single ecosystem," also recognized the formidable "political difficulties involved in redefining longstanding county or state boundaries." Dasmann concluded pragmatically, "It appears more feasible to seek close cooperation among the agencies involved in the management of a bioregion than to attempt the redrawing of political maps."[74] As we have seen, this process is under way in California, and despite many problems, such developments show that bioregional ideas can foster many positive changes, even without redrawing all political boundaries and immediately realizing a bioregional utopia.

It is this kind of pragmatic bioregional deep ecology that is most promising. It promotes concrete engagements within bioregions and pushes governments toward more rational, environment-related policies that consider the well-being of ecosystems and watersheds that cross existing political boundaries.

Toward a Bioregional and Terrapolitan, Deep and Social Environmentalism

I have elucidated the core ideas of deep ecology and the bioregional social philosophy that has been grafted upon it within the grassroots deep ecology movement. I then criticized the penchant in these movements to oversimplify the causes of and potential solutions to the environmental crisis. My hope is that critique can foster changes which can make bioregional deep ecology more politically effective and intellectually compelling. By returning to a previous criticism, I suggest an example of how this might work.

Despite his previous, power-related criticisms, Dan Deudney applauds bioregionalism and deep ecology for promoting "earth-centered identity and community claims." These can, he believes, erode the nationalistic identities that so often precipitate environmentally destructive conflict. Nevertheless, he criticizes "localist bioregional ideologies and political practices" for failing to apprehend "the unmistakable message of ecological science . . . that the earth is the only integral bioregion, and that the 'homeland' of all humans is the whole

planet rather than some piece of it."[75] This critique illustrates the peril of basing environmental politics primarily on decentralist principles. Arguing for a better approach, Deudney coined the term "terrapolitanism" to capture the need for new forms of political association based on loyalty to Earth itself.[76]

If such philosophy were to spread widely, it would provide a social-philosophical ground for what Deudney thinks we shall need if we are to arrest the destruction of the biosphere: legitimate international governance grounded in a federal-republican Earth constitution.[77] Deudney and those pursuing international environmental governance offer an important corrective to decentralist absolutism, for surely we must develop cooperative global responses to protect the planetary commons.

Interestingly, in a way reminiscent of bioregional spirituality, Deudney thinks that the development of a "planetary civic earth religion" could contribute to the conceptual and affective basis for new forms of international governance.[78] Indeed, he strikes a deep ecological note, asserting that environmentalist and deep ecological worldviews express a more credible cosmology than traditional religions. "Environmentalism is the first worldview of the modern era that can present a credible cosmology," he claims, adding, "A striking feature of 'deep ecology' as a spiritual and moral system is that it can make at least a prima facie claim to being compatible with an important science—ecology."[79]

I am sympathetic with such assertions. A planetary civil Earth religion could emerge, playing a positive role in replacing nationalistic identities with more life-affirming bioregional and terrapolitan identities. Deudney himself thinks that the idea of the Earth as alive, as Gaia, could provide the common denominator for a planetary civil religion. He argues that Gaia is the "most salient metaphorical structure spanning the divide between ecological science and Earth identity narratives,"[80] and concludes that "Gaian Earth religiosity seems well suited to serve as the 'civic religion' for a federal-republican Earth constitution."[81] There are alternatives. The Earth Charter, for example, could be considered another, more inclusive manifesto for a planetary civil religion.

I am concerned that Deudney may, like other deep ecology sympathizers, underestimate the ability of the traditional religions to reconfigure themselves, and overestimate the likelihood that large numbers of people will jettison their birth religions for Gaian Earth religiosity. Of course, many traditional religions already view the Earth's living systems as sacred or otherwise as deserving reverence and due care, and some are now evolving such theologies. Some are incorporating, and others will incorporate, Gaian Earth spirituality into their worldviews. For others, however, this would be impossible without a more comprehensive conversion. In any case, traditional religions must be full partners in the sustainability discussions, even if they do not fully adopt cosmologies and mythic metaphors that scientists and intellectuals find compelling. The Earth Charter, emerging from a long process of consultation involving the participation of diverse sectors of civil society, seems less prone to exclusionary assumptions.

I conclude recapitulating my general argument. Bioregional deep ecology will be more compelling if its advocates eschew reductionistic explanations for, and simplistic solutions to, our environmental predicaments. To their credit, many deep ecologists recognize that in addition to a proper spiritual perception and biocentric morality, a social critique and a social philosophy are needed. They have set off in a promising direction, appropriating bioregional thought and mapping out positive campaigns resisting environmental degradation and restoring ecosystems. But they should take more seriously the biospheric dimensions of the environmental crisis and consider new strategies to address them. Deep ecology movements must open themselves to greater cross-fertilization with other perspectives, including international relations theory and social ecology. If we are to grapple our way toward a greener tomorrow, openness to and experimentation with new ideas is essential. There are too many variables for us to identify with certainty the most decisive cause of environmental decline or the best solution to it. There are, however, many contributing causes that can be identified and attacked, and many worthy experiments in sustainability are under way or envisioned, and worth supporting.[82]

At their best, bioregional deep ecology movements represent a morally laudatory humility and compassion. Their activists are among the most passionate defenders of life on Earth. Stripped of overbroad critiques and simplistic prescriptions, their insights can be bedrock for the construction of Green social philosophy. They should be welcomed into the sustainability debate, along with the raucous chorus of new and old environmental philosophies, traditional religions, diverse political theories, and nature religions. Perhaps in this stew of rapidly mutating and cross-fertilizing political life and thought, we can find hope and take heart.

Notes

1. What seems essential in the deep ecology literature (see the essay by Eric Katz, chapter 2 in this volume) is not in the deep ecology movement.

2. See the introduction to this volume.

3. This formulation has been synthesized from dozens of similar articulations found within deep ecology groups and the corresponding literature. Some deep ecologists prefer

the term "ecocentrism" to "biocentrism," asserting they are concerned with ecosystems as wholes, not only with life-forms. The terms are often used interchangeably.

4. As Warwick Fox argues in *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990).

5. Only two years after Naess began speaking of "deep ecology," George Sessions blamed Judeo-Christianity for sponsoring anti-Nature behaviors and ignoring the anti-anthropocentric insights of postsixteenth-century natural science; see George Sessions, "Anthropocentrism and the Environmental Crisis," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 2 (1974): 1–12. He wrote, "Western ethical systems which portray humans as being of ultimate value in the universe are only a manifestation of the anthropocentric cosmologies within which they have developed. The entire humanistic approach to Nature displays a profound ignorance and insensitivity to contemporary cosmological and ecological conceptions of man's place in nature" (p. 10).

In "Earth bonding," *Earth First!* 3 (1982): 13, 21, Bill Devall argued similarly, criticizing Christianity for its war against paganism and environmentalists for undue preoccupation with Western rationality.

6. Sessions first asserted that Spinoza's pantheism better fits contemporary scientific understandings and properly overturns Western anthropocentrism in "Anthropocentrism and the Environmental Crisis" (p. 9). Soon afterward he expanded this argument in "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man in Nature," *Inquiry* 20 (1977): 481–528, specifically criticizing the "Judeo-Christian tradition" for "the demise of pantheism and the desacralization of Nature" (p. 482) while discussing similar tendencies in Western philosophy.

7. Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944). "Philosophia Perennis—the phrase was coined by Leibniz; but the thing—the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being—the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the Perennial Philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions" (p. vii).

8. The initial passage of Sessions's "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man in Nature" provides an excellent early example of the type of argument widely held by deep ecologists: "Modern Western society has experienced a profound failure of religious, philosophical, and moral leadership. A more-or-less continuous minority tradition in the West, more in keeping with the great religions of the East . . . might have provided leadership . . . *but it has not done so. This is a tradition,* both its Eastern and Western versions, which Aldous Huxley [and] Leibniz before him called the 'perennial philosophy'. Most of the hunting and gathering societies . . . have been guided by religions which were part of this tradition. And in the civilized West, a tenuous thread [of Perennial philosophy] can be drawn" (p. 481).

Sessions then mentions several pre-Enlightenment philosophers and theologians, including St. Francis, and more recent thinkers, such as "Spinoza, Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Lauren Eisley, Gary Snyder, Paul Shepard, [and] Arne Naess." Despite differences, Sessions continues, "This minority tradition could have provided the West with a healthy basis for realistic portrayal of the balance and interconnectedness of three artificially separate components (God/Nature/Man) of an ultimately seamless and inseparable Whole. It is this basis that we need now. It means rejecting the dominant Western paradigm of the God/Nature/Man relationship and the individual, and societal divisions, programs, values, and actions which are a result of this paradigm; all of which are leading human societies and the biosphere, as we know it, to destruction" (pp. 481–482).

9. Devall, "Earth bonding." Specifically, he praised Native American, New Age, and ecopsychology subcultures for fostering Earth-beneficent consciousness change, mentioning Gary Snyder, Dolores LaChapelle, Paul Shepard, Sun Bear, and ecopsychology pioneer Robert Greenway. Oddly, Devall later asserted, in a review of my *Ecological Resistance Movements,* that deep ecology should not be considered a form of nature mysticism. See Devall's "How Radical and Deep the Resistance?," *The Trumpeter* 12 (Fall 1995): 201–203; and my rejoinder, "Ecological Resistance Movements; Not Always Deep but if Deep, Religious," *The Trumpeter 13 (Spring 1996):* 98–103.

10. See Bron Taylor, "Evoking the Ecological Self: Art as Resistance to the War on Nature," *Peace Review: The International Quarterly of World Peace* 5 (1993): 225–230.

11. Gary Snyder, "Four Changes," in his *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1969), pp. 91–114. Here Snyder asserted the intrinsic value of all species and stressed the importance of evolution and "biological diversity," in the earliest use of this phrase that I have found anywhere (p. 108). He also urged a dramatic reduction in human numbers and consumption, likening the growth of industrial society to a "cancer" on the planet. This may be the first such use of this now common metaphor.

12. Ibid., p. 106.

13. Ibid.

14. *Ibid.,* p. 107.

15. Ibid., p. 110.

16. Shepard's most important early books are *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game* (New York: Scribner's, 1973) and *Nature and Madness* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1982). See especially *Nature and Madness,* where he asserts that the process of domestication makes animals and humans alike "infantile" while fostering social hierarchy and eroding the human perception of a sacred world (pp. 35–39, 113–114, 171 n. 2). In *Coming Home to the Pleistocene* (San Francisco: Island Press, 1998), p. 132, he seems to soften his position, asserting that genetically we remain wild, even when we become conditioned to comfortable and domesticated landscapes.

When I first interviewed him, Earth First! cofounder and deep ecology advocate Dave Foreman singled out Shepard's work as very influential. (Many Earth First!ers share John Muir's contempt for sheep, sometimes quoting his description of them as "hooved locusts.")

In *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 110–11, 267, 439 nn. 84, 86, Max Oelschlaeger asserts that this type of view was articulated initially by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), who in turn directly influenced Gary Snyder. See Gary Snyder, *Earth House*

Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries (New York: New Directions, 1977), pp. 118–122.

Shepard was influenced especially by Nigel Calder, *Eden Was No Garden: An Inquiry into the Environment of Man* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967); Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968); Peter Ucko and G. W. Dimbleby, eds., *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969); and Morris Berman, *The Reenachantment of the World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).

Gary Snyder made comments akin to Shepard's pioneering "ecopsychology" and suggested that human emotional health depends on finding an ecological identity through "psychological techniques for creating an awareness of 'self' which includes the social and natural environment" (*Turtle Island*, p. 101).

17. Shepard, *Nature and Madness*, pp. 37, 22–23; *Coming Home*, pp. 81–103.

18. See Shepard, *Coming Home*, pp. 109–129, for example. "Pastoralism was one of the two great paths leading into the civilized world, and without its myths, traditions, and economy the modern world would be incomprehensible. The slow fusion of the earliest sedentary agriculture and the emergent ideology of the pastoralists between about six thousand and two thousand years ago gave us the first modern states. The long shadow thrown over the earth's ecology is that of a man on a horse, the domestic animal which, more than any other consolidated centralized power, energized the worldwide debacle of the skinning of the earth, the creation of modern war, and the ideological disassociation from the earthbound realm" (p. 109).

19. See Shepard, *Coming Home*, p. 103. The subjunctive tense here contradicts the unambiguous conviction of the rest of his work that promotes this monocasual explanation.

20. Here, quoting Hugh Iltis, in *Coming Home*, p. 136.

21. Ibid.

22. My interview with Gary Snyder at Davis, CA, June 7, 1993.

23. See Shepard, *Coming Home*, p. 107.

24. For how earlier environmentalists, including John Muir and Henry David Thoreau, expressed similar ideas, see Bron Taylor, "Resacralizing Earth: Pagan Environmentalism and the Restoration of Turtle Island," in *American Sacred Space*, edited by David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 97–151.

25. For a representative recent example of such a perspective, see "Agriculture and Biodiversity Rewilding," a special issue of *Wild Earth* 8 (1988): 29–77, especially Catherine Badgley, "Can Agriculture and Biodiversity Coexist?" (pp. 39–47). She draws on the latest scientific evidence to advance the radical Green critique of agriculture.

26. Scholarly introductions to bioregionalism can be found in Bron Taylor, "Bioregionalism: An Ethics of Loyalty to Place," *Landscape Journal* forthcoming, 2000, and Michael V. McGinnis, *Bioregionalism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).

27. See Allan Van Newkirk's term-coining article, "Bioregions: Towards Bioregional Strategy for Human Cultures," *Environmental Conservation* 2 (1975): 108–119. Van Newkirk subsequently had little to do with the movement he named.

28. In addition to Gary Snyder, among the most influential early bioregionalists were Raymond Dasmann, Freeman House, and Peter Berg. See Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann, "Reinhabiting California," *The Ecologist* 7 (1977): 399–401; Van Andruss et al., eds. *Home!: A Bioregional Reader* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1990); Christopher Plant and Judith Plant, eds., *Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1990); and Peter Berg, ed., *Reinhabiting a Separate Country* (San Francisco: Planet Drum, 1978). Other primary sources include Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1991); and Freeman House, *Totem Salmon* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

29. See Bron Taylor, "Earth First!: From Primal Spirituality to Ecological Resistance," in *This Sacred Earth*, edited by Roger Gottlieb (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 545–557. See also Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, for an excellent example of the kind of argument inspired and influenced by theorists critical of agriculture and monotheism, such as Shepard and Snyder. Oelschlaeger urges a return to a Paleolithic consciousness that sees humans as one with nature, fusing this perception onto contemporary cosmological understandings.

30. Many deep ecologists are influenced by the school of thought known as "eco- or trans-personal psychology," which Shepard's *Nature and Madness* helped inspire. For the best introduction to this literature, see Theodore Roszak, Mary Gomes, and Allen Kranner, eds., *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1995).

31. See Shepard, *Coming Home*, pp. 107–108.

32. As Eric Katz well argues in chapter 2 of this volume.

33. For an excellent introduction to the problem of identifying the natural, see William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: Norton, 1995).

34. For an excellent recent study on environmental attitudes in America, see Willet Kempton, James Boster, and Jennifer Hartley, *Environmental Values in American Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995); and on the role of passion and religion, see Bron Taylor, "Beliefs in Practice" in *The Ecologist*, 27:1 (1997): 38–39.

35. Bron Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995). Many observers note, moreover, that because women usually have greater roles in subsistence production and religious nurturing than men do (often in part because men are forced to leave their birthplaces to seek wage income elsewhere), they tend to be more aware of the direct threats posed by ecological deterioration. Consequently, more women than men tend to participate in environmental action and work to defend and restore ecologically sustainable, agrarian livelihoods. See the contributions in *Ecological Resistance Movements* by Lois Lorentzen, Vikram Akula, Ben Wisner, and Bob Edwards, for example, as well as Tariq Banuri and Frédérique Apffel Marglin, *Who Will Save the Forests?: Knowledge, Power, and Environmental Destruction* (London: Zed, 1993); Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed, 1988); Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Yash Tandon, "Village Contradictions in Africa," in *Global Ecology: A New Arena of*

Political Conflict, edited by Wolfgang Sachs (London: Zed; Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 1993), pp. 208–223.

36. In addition to the researchers cited in the previous note, others have come to similar conclusions, such as John Friedman and Haripriya Rangan, eds., *In Defense of Livelihood: Comparative Studies in Environmental Action* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1993); Robin Broad and John Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Hilary Tovey, "Environmentalism in Ireland," *International Sociology* 8 (1993): 413–430; Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993); and, more recently, Barbara Rose Johnston, ed., *Life and Death Matters: Human Rights and the Environment at the End of the Millennium* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1997).

37. See the articles by Bob Edwards, Larry Lohmann, Vikram Akula, Heidi Hadsell, and Al Gedicks in Bron Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements.*

38. See the articles by Ben Wisner and Yash Tandon in ibid.

39. A "commons" is land to which a community has access; it may be community-owned or controlled. The best introduction I have found dealing with commons issues was written by the editors of *The Ecologist* and republished as *Whose Common Future? Reclaiming the Commons* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1994).

40. This is especially true since ecological understandings of how resource scarcity exacerbates all the destructive dynamics that accompany the global extension of market capitalism penetrate such movements. David Carruthers, <davidc@mail.sdsu.edu>, a political scientist at California State University, San Diego, argues that although the "environmental justice" rubric originated in the North, like the term "sustainability," it is increasingly and effectively appropriated by Southern environmental movements. See David Carruthers, "The Globalization of Environmental Justice: Changing the Face of Third World Environmental Resistance," presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Los Angeles, March 19–21, 1998; and "Environmental Justice on the Borderline: Defending Workers and Community in Mexico's *Maquiladoras,*" presented at the Conference on Environmental Justice: Global Ethics for the 21st Century, University of Melbourne, Australia, October 1–3, 1997.

For an excellent article explaining how "sustainability" serves increasingly as an "ideological resource" for popular environmental movements, see Heidi Hadsell, "Profits, Parrots, Peons: Ethical Perplexities in the Amazon," in B. Taylor, *Ecological Resistance Movements,* pp. 70–86.

41. George Sessions, for example, fervently believes that environmentalism must be grounded in ecocentric values because with anthropocentrism (including when it is found in "Green" social justice movements), human concerns ultimately trump concern for *environmental* sustainability. See Sessions's "Radical Environmentalism in the 90s," *Wild Earth* 2:3 (1992): 64–70; and "The Sierra Club, Immigration & the Future of California," *Wild Duck Review* 4:1 (1998): 24–25. Although Sessions can provide examples as evidence, he overreaches in making into a kind of social law what might be a demonstrable tendency. Yet it seems to many, and to me, that a fully informed anthropocentric environmentalist would adopt, for prudential and human-concerned reasons, a comprehensive precautionary principle in defense of biodiversity. And Sessions's argument seems unable to account for dramatic environmental protection movements outside of North America that, although not ecocentric as he understands the term, are every bit as engaged in environmental protection as are Northern deep ecologists.

It is also good to remember that environmental resistance in Western industrial countries has also been strongly influenced by progressive social criticism. Its participants are often ecologized members of the left's peace and social justice movements. See the articles by Wolfgang Rüdig and Bob Edwards in my *Ecological Resistance Movements;* Robert Gottlieb's *Forcing the Spring;* and Mark Dowie's *Losing Ground* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).

Sessions complains that Gottlieb and Dowie inappropriately pressure Green environmentalists to adopt an urban, "environmental justice" agenda that banishes ecology to the margins. It is true that environmental movements need not always march under an environmental justice banner and that it is sometimes counterproductive to do so. But environmental justice, and even the more problematic term "sustainable development," which *can* be an oxymoron, may instead refer to a vision of people living and making a living in a place without degrading its ecological diversity and vitality. This would in most cases, of course, require a reconstruction of livelihoods along greener lines and a reduction of acquisitive goals and human numbers. But understood in this way, we can conclude that there will be no environmental sustainability without environmental justice. This should be painfully obvious when ranchers kill wolves reintroduced into the American Southwest, fearing their livelihoods are threatened. Put differently, there seems to be a dualistic distinction between livelihoods and ecosystem viability underlying Sessions's critique of the environmental justice and sustainability rubrics.

42. Like Gandhi, social activists increasingly recognize that only grief will follow if all marginalized people seek to follow the West's path of natural resource imperialism to development. For representative quotes expressing Gandhi's views that industrial societies are unsustainable and depend on imperialism, see Ramachandra Guha, "The Malign Encounter: The Chipko Movement and Competing Visions of Nature," in Banuri and Marglin, *Who Will Save the Forests?,* p. 98. It is obvious to most within popular movements that large-scale hydroelectric dams benefit elites while exacerbating inequalities; that they destroy communities and livelihoods; and that commercial forestry is likewise a disaster, uprooting people, eroding soil, polluting water, and destroying fisheries. See ibid., pp. 82, 98; and Broad and Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise,* pp. 56–63.

Dieter Rücht, meanwhile, has found that anti-industrial attitudes are increasingly widespread among environmentalists from many cultures, dividing them into radical and reformist camps; see his "Environmental Movement Organizations in West Germany and France: Structure and Interorganizational Relations," *International Social Movement Research* 2 (1989): 61–94.

43. For a good example of such analysis, see Haripriya Rangan's analysis of how such a view animated some of the earliest Chipko actions, "Romancing the Environment: Popular Environmental Action in the Garhwal Himalayas" in Friedmann and Rangan, *In Defense of Livelihood,* pp. 155–181.

44. And except for the few (usually indigenous) groups still engaged in foraging lifeways, the survival strategy considered to cohere with growing environmental awareness

often involves efforts to return to preindustrial agricultural and pastoral lifeways, not a rejection of them.

45. As discussed previously in notes 6–8 and the corresponding text, the best-known architects and popularizers of deep ecology speak of a "perennial philosophy," a nature mysticism promoting reverence for life. They assert that such philosophy is a universal perception not only in Eastern and indigenous religions, but also among many of the dissident mystical branches of the Western religious and philosophical tradition. From this they can argue that there are many paths to deep ecological consciousness.

As documented earlier, however, deep ecology writers generally express strong antipathy toward Christianity and Western philosophy. Such antipathy is equally strong throughout most of the grassroots deep ecology movement. And the leading American deep ecology advocates have done little, to my knowledge, to moderate such attitudes within the deep ecology movement or to encourage participation in it by monotheists. Indeed, arguments like those documented in the previous notes, and Lynn White's now famous argument blaming Christianity (and other monotheistic religions) for fostering nature-destructive attitudes, although viewed as seriously flawed and overly simplistic by cultural historians, are widely believed within the deep ecology movement. Moreover, White's call for a revival of Franciscan-style Christianity is rarely mentioned by deep ecologists. See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historic Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–1207.

A notable exception to this general pattern may be found in the work of Max Oelschlaeger. After writing *The Idea of Wilderness* and promoting a deep ecological appreciation for the sacredness of wild nature in it, he reached out to Christians in *Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

46. For example, the extent of the long-term indigenous management of the Americas "has been routinely underestimated," according to Gary Paul Nabhan, in an excellent and well-nuanced introduction to the discussion of Native American impacts on the environment. See his "Cultural Parallax in Viewing North American Habitats," in *Reinventing Nature?: Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction,* edited by Michael Soulé and Gary Lease (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1995) pp. 87–101.

For additional articles exploring the impacts on nature of indigenous peoples and their cultures, see K. Butzer, "The Americas Before and After 1492: Current Geographical Research," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82 (1992): 345–368; William Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82 (1992): 369–385; Calvin Martin, "The American Indian as Miscast Ecologist," in *Ecological Consciousness: Essays from the Earthday X Colloquium,* edited by Robert C. Schultz and Donald Worster (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981); Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian–Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Paul Martin and R. G. Klein, eds., *Quaternary Extinctions: A Prehistoric Revolution* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1984); Thomas Overholt, "American Indians as 'Natural Ecologists,'" *American Indian Journal* 5 (1979): 9–16; Kent Redford, "The Ecologically Noble Savage," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 15:1 (1991): 46–48; David Suzuki and Peter Knudtson, *Wisdom of the Elders: Honoring Sacred Native Visions of Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1992).

47. Based on empirical studies, Steven Kellert argued, for example, that conceptions of nature originating in the Far East are "highly abstract and idealized" and "rarely provide . . . support for nature conservation." "Moreover traditional Eastern attitudes toward nature often encourage passivity, even fatalism, toward the natural world depicted as all-powerful and beyond human capacity to control or grasp, let alone conserve or regulate" (pp. 116–117). Kellert concluded that "Neither Eastern nor Western societies are intrinsically inferior or superior in their perspectives of nature" (p. 118), and that idea differences between East and West do not play the decisive role often attributed to them. See Stephen Kellert, "Concepts of Nature East and West," in Soulé and Lease, *Reinventing Nature?*, pp. 103–121.

Yi Fu Tuan similarly resists those who view Far Eastern cultures as inherently Green; see "Discrepancies Between Environmental Attitude and Behaviour: Examples from Europe and China," *The Canadian Geographer* 12 (1968): 176–191. J. Baird Callicott and Roger Ames criticize Tuan's argument, insisting that Asian thought expresses a more nature-beneficent worldview than do Western religion and philosophy. See their "Epilogue: On the Relation of Idea and Action," in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought,* edited by Callicott and Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 279–289.

48. About five years after Lynn White's article was published, Arnold Toynbee agreed with him that monotheism is responsible for the environmental crisis. Unlike White, however, Toynbee promoted pantheism and the religions of the Far East as the remedy. See his "The Religious Background of the Present Environmental Crisis," *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 3 (1972): 141–146.

49. Of course, if religion is malleable, it may evolve in directions we deplore, including environmentally destructive ones. A number of writers, for example, point to links between nature-oriented religion and Nazi ideology, expressing fear of the reactionary potential of Green religion. See Michael Zimmerman, "Possible Political Problems of Earth-Based Religiosity," chapter 9 in this volume and his *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and "Ecofascism: A Threat to American Environmentalism?," in *The Ecological Community,* edited by Roger Gottlieb (New York and London: Routledge 1996), pp. 229–254.

See also Luc Ferry, *The New Ecological Order,* translated by Carol Volk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and John Clark's "The French Take on Environmentalism," *Terra Nova* 1:1 (1996): 112–119, in which he argues that Ferry provides "absolutely no support to his thesis that authoritarianism is implicit in the ecology movement." Clark argues that Ferry failed to note that the Nazi view of nature was thoroughly anthropocentric and instrumental. Jeffery Kaplan provides a significant counterpoint, demonstrating in "Savitri Devi and the National Socialist Religion of Nature," *The Pomengranate* 7 (1999): 4–12, that some Nazis promoted species egalitarianism. Kaplan concludes that in Savitri Devi's Green religion, "Nature serves not only as plea for humanity to move beyond the conception of dominion over nature, but as a bridge between the worlds of deep ecology and animal liberation and the adherents of racialist neo-Nazi beliefs." These sources demonstrate that Green religions, including deep ecology, are capable of evolving in reactionary ways.

My fieldwork-based view is that deep ecology subcultures are unlikely to provide fertile ground for reactionary politics; see my "Diggers, Wolves, Ents, Elves and Expanding Universes: Global Bricolage and the Question of Violence Within the Subcultures of Radical Environmentalism," in *Cult, Anti-Cult and the Cultic Milieu: A Re-Examination*, 2 vol., edited by Jeffery Kaplan and Hélène Lööw (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2000), and "Religion, Violence, and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front," *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence* 10:4 (1998): 1–42.

50. One example of such malleability can be found at Genesis Farm in New Jersey, an increasingly influential Catholic community and ecological learning center, led by Dominican Sister Miriam Therese MacGillis. The worldview and ritualizing that are evolving at the Farm fuse in a novel way monotheistic religion (Roman Catholicism), ritualizing celebrating the sacredness of the Earth and designed to deepen people's felt connections to it, and newly consecrated scientific cosmogonies about how the world came to be the way it is today. Some of this religious worldview resembles that of deep ecology and the bioregional movement, borrowed indirectly through Thomas Berry, the priest most responsible for the Creation Spirituality movement. Interestingly, especially for the current argument, some in this new religious movement express a pan*en*theistic theology: the idea that God (or the Holy Spirit) is present in all creation (not that nature *is* God or divine, as in pantheism, which Catholicism considers a heresy). For a fascinating study, see Sarah McFarland Taylor, "The Greening of Catholicism: Negotiating Religion and Culture at Genesis Farm" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1999).

51. A range of research illustrates such assertions, including Bron Taylor, *Ecological Resistance Movements;* Friedman and Rangan, *In Defense of Livelihood;* and Broad and Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise.*

52. See the articles and many references in these introductory books: Roger Gottlieb, ed., *This Sacred Earth* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996); David Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995); Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds., *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994); and Sean McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990).

53. This quote is from the second working draft, January 1999. For the earlier "Benchmark Draft," see "The Earth Charter," *Earth Ethics* 8:2–3 (1997): 1,3. It contained some language that seemed to endorse Gaian pantheism: "Earth is our home and home to all living beings. Earth itself is alive. We are part of an evolving universe. Human beings are members of an interdependent community of life with a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures. We are humbled before the beauty of the Earth and share a reverence for life and the sources of our being. We give thanks for the heritage that we have received from past generations and embrace our responsibilities to present and future generations. . . . We the peoples of the world commit ourselves to action guided by the following interrelated principles: 1. Respect Earth and all life. Earth, each life form, and all living beings possess intrinsic value and warrant respect independently of their utilitarian value to humanity" (p. 1). In the next draft the intrinsic value claim was retained but the controversial pantheistic language was expunged.

54. See especially the articles by Larry Lohmann and Ben Wisner in Bron Taylor, *Ecological Resistance Movements.* It is not surprising that bioregional deep ecologists from the industrialized West would tend to extend dichotomies they find in their own cultures more widely. Sometimes such dichotomies can have interpretive value. They can, however, fail to grasp the complexity of the variety of cultural variables that shape human ideals and behavior. Dichotomies that may be quite illuminating in Western, affluent countries might be misleading in other regions and offensive to those in the regions to which they are applied.

Lohmann shows that in rural Thailand, for example, villagers take a decidedly pragmatic approach to the land and forests, in ways that would make many deep ecologists cringe. They would probably be viewed as "regrettably 'anthropocentric,'" Lohmann thinks, "and their preoccupation with agriculture and ambivalence toward 'wild nature' [would] suggest a lack of appreciation of the intrinsic value of plants and animals. . . . [and a lack of] sufficient reverence for untouched nature" (p. 124). But this pragmatism does not mean, Lohmann concludes, that the villagers "treat their forests, streams, animals, or rice as instruments [or] place humans at the center of the universe. . . . Rather, forests, streams, animals, and rice are valued for themselves, treated as things which have intrinsic value and in some sense even as persons who can benefit humans but who if abused will also punish them" (p. 125). Lohmann urges us to leave behind "the Western obsession with dividing attitudes into anthropocentric and ecocentric," and concludes that this is essential if we are to build cross-cultural coalitions and solidarity among people hoping to preserve commons regimes and promote ecologically appropriate and just lifeways.

55. For detailed argument along these lines and further citations, see Bron Taylor, "Bioregionalism."

56. Dan Deudney, "In Search of Gaian Politics" in Bron Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements,* p. 294

57. Ibid., p. 293.

58. A. L. Kroeber, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947). My impression here is based on a June 7, 1993, interview with Snyder in Davis, CA, when he mentioned how profoundly Krober's work had influenced him.

59. Bioregionalists often draw on the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin for this assumption; for a criticism of such thinking, see Paul Wapner, *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 38.

60. Biologist Michael Soulé puts it harshly: "Most interactions between individuals and species are *selfish* not symbiotic." See his "The Social Siege of Nature," in Soulé and Lease, eds., *Reinventing Nature?*, p. 143.

61. Wapner, *Environmental Activism,* p. 38.

62. Deudney, "In Search of Gaian Politics," p. 293.

63. Ibid., pp. 293–294.

64. Andrew B. Schmookler, *The Parable of the Tribes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; repr. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

65. This argument is from Andrew B. Schmookler, "Schmookler on Anarchy," *Earth First!* 6:5 (1986): 22. It led to a long debate in this radical environmental journal. Few of the anarchistic bioregionalists would cede ground on the necessity of government. Interestingly, in his editor's note in response to this article, Earth First! cofounder Dave Foreman agreed: "True: our fall was our 'emergence out of the natural order.' It is fortunate for us that the framers of the US Constitution understood this paradoxical problem: that is why we in this society, for all its glaring imperfections, can freely discuss the evils that the play of power produces around us, and freely search for solutions." Before long, Foreman was arrested and convicted in an ecotage (ecosabotage) case. He later left the movement he cofounded, partly due to his disgust with the rigid anarchists increasingly drawn to it.

66. This incorrectly assumes, he continues, that "the problems . . . are not acute, . . . that humanity has decades or [even] centuries to split itself up into small communities and to begin to tackle the causes of environmental decay." See Wapner, *Environmental Activism*, p. 37.

67. On a positive note, the San Francisco-based Foundation for Deep Ecology has created a Forum on Globalization that is providing a venue for activists and intellectuals to strategize how to educate and resist such destructive trends.

68. For discussions of trends and possibilities along these lines, see Karen Litfin, ed., *The Greening of Sovereignty in World Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); Ronnie Lipschutz, ed., *Global Civil Society and Global Environmental Governance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Ronnie Lipschutz and Ken Conca, eds., *The State and Social Power in Global Environmental Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Sheldon Kamieniecki, ed., *Environmental Politics in the International Arena* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

69. This is nowhere more clear than in the case of federally owned land in the West that would have suffered worse environmental degradation had not the American people, through their federal government, established and retained title to many lands. For example from Australia, where federal power saved huge tracts of Tasmanian forest *despite* the prevailing sentiment among Tasmanians, see P. R. Hay, "Vandals at the Gate: The Tasmanian Greens and the Perils of Sharing Power," in *Green Politics Two*, edited by Wolfgang Rüdig (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 86–110.

70. There are relevant differences, of course. Bioregional localism and ecosystem integrity, not country- or state-oriented localism, guides bioregional decentralist advocacy.

71. As Ronnie Lipschutz correctly observes, "State sponsorship [is] an attempt to catch up with global civil society in California, whose members have undertaken hundreds of small-scale environmental protection and restoration projects." See Ronnie Lipschutz, "Guardians of the Forest: Renegotiating Resource Regimes in Northern California," in *Global Civil Society and Global Environmental Governance*, edited by Ronnie Lipschutz, pp. 81–125, quote on p. 83. See also Gary Snyder, "Coming in to the Watershed," *Wild Earth* (spec. iss. on the Wildlands Project, 1992): 65–70; and Bron Taylor, "Bioregionalism."

72. Snyder, "Coming in to the Watershed," p. 67.

73. Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann, "Reinhabiting California."

74. Raymond Dasmann, "Bioregion," in *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Paelhke (New York and London: Garland, 1995) pp. 83–85.

75. Deudney, "In Search of Gaian Politics," pp. 289–290.

76. Dan Deudney, "Global Village Sovereignty: Intergenerational Sovereign Publics, Federal-Republican Earth Constitutions, and Planetary Identities," in *The Greening of Sovereignty*, edited by Karen Litfin, pp. 299–323.

77. Ibid.

78. Deudney, "In Search of Gaian Politics."

79. Dan Deudney, "Global Environmental Rescue and the Emergence of World Domestic Politics," in Lipschutz and Conca, *The State and Social Power*, pp. 288–305, quote at 294.

80. Deudney approvingly cites James Lovelock's rejection of a sacred/secular dualism, and says Lovelock "articulates the central claim of the Earth science-religion fusion: 'Thinking of the Earth as alive makes it seem, on happy days, in the right places, as if the whole planet were celebrating a sacred ceremony.'" See Deudney, "Global Village Sovereignty," p. 317.

81. Ibid., p. 318.

82. For an important argument along these lines, see Anthony Weston, "Before Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 14:4 (Winter 1992): 321–328.