

# Eucalyptus rubida

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRE FOR ECOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY  
NEWSLETTER No.53 SPRING 2013



## REWILDING THE HUMAN - BEYOND DOMESTICATION

Rewilding is a term that has probably been coined in the past ten years. Its most common meaning is to do with the introduction of larger predator species into areas from which they had been eradicated. Hence the reintroduction of wolves and bears into parts of Europe and grizzly bears in the Yellowstone National Park. In our own country there are plans to reintroduce Tasmanian Devils to Wilson's Promontory. The term also relates to bird and plant restoration.

I suspected that this term might also be applied to the present situation of the human species, fighting the seeming inexorable march of domestication. Wikipedia offered a concise comment in the human context:

*Rewilding is about overcoming human domestication and returning to behavior inherent in human wildness. Though often associated with primitive skills and learning knowledge of wild plants and animals, it emphasizes the development of the senses and fostering deepening personal relationships with members of other species and the natural world. Rewilding intends to create permanently wild human cultures beyond domestication. Rewilding is considered a holistic approach to living, as opposed to skills, practices or a specific set of knowledge.*

No one can forget the words of Henry David Thoreau - *In wildness is the preservation of the world.* Written in 1854 its wisdom is perennial, and is one of the most famous ecological quotes we have.

This is in keeping with one of my favourite chapters in Thomas Berry's book, *The Great Work* where Thomas writes:

*The Community itself and each of its members has ultimately a wild component, a creative spontaneity that is its deepest reality, its most profound mystery.*

How are we to nurture this wild perception of nature that is encoded in our bones? Sometimes I think we can glimpse it in times of extreme passion associated with say, the excitement of barracking for our football team, when we become slightly incoherent, or in meeting a long absent friend, or in the absorption of love-making, or gulping a cold beer after a hot day or skinny dipping. I'm serious! Very deep feelings are associated with the primal drives of our being: survival, tribalism, relationships, power. Deep feelings

are also associated with our higher powers: love, creativity, mystical experience, insight, spirituality, though these can be culturally diminished by civilization or domestication.

Perhaps the best medicine is to nurture our relationships with the natural world, who in company with us will go into the future, for better or for worst. However we could not have better company for the journey. After all we are integral partners, even if we have forgotten our deep intimacy with it.



Next time you put yourself seriously into connection with the world, wild or domesticated, look for the deepest feeling that arise. Take notice of them and nurture them.

For nearly forty years I regularly walked for days in the Tasmanian wilderness and reflected on my experience:

*Going Out*

*Whenever you go out*

*you are really going in.*

*Not my words, but I love them.*

*So I often go out*

*in order that I might go in.*

*So when I go out to love and find the world*

*I find myself reflected in relationships;*

*my identity is the sum of my relationships.*

*Once again not my words but I like them.*

*There is no such thing as separateness;*

*everything relates,  
moreover everything co-creates.*

*Even our dreams*

*coming from the heart of nature*

*create us nightly –*

*bring us the world*

*from outside in,*

*and from inside out.*

*from The Archer Verses 3/8/12*

Is it possible to create permanently wild human cultures beyond domestication and do we need to do this? I think one thing is clear - our present or default Australian culture is not going to take us into a viable ecological future. How does one stand against the tide that tends to carry us with it?

To create a personal culture is probably easier than changing the world, and it is probably the first step as well. Becoming literate about the natural world is a help. Read well. Donate time or money to a good cause. Enter into deeper natural relationships by walking and listening to your body. Get up specifically to witness the sunrise or sunset. Occasionally stand gratefully in the rain. Honour people and pets around you. Grow some vegetables. BE in a way that is calling you home to your primal calling, which is connection. Pause a moment to reflect and realize that you are a manifestation of that timeless, spaceless divinity that underpins our experience of time and space.

We are connected at the quantum or atomic level just as we are connected at the ecological level, and those other levels that might exist in our huge universe. There is an ancient saying:

*I am the Universe;*

*The Universe is my body*

Trevor Parton

Interesting books:

*Walden* by Henry David Thoreau.

*Wild Law* by Cormack Cullinan

*Becoming Animal* by David Abram

*The Great Work* by Thomas Berry (see ch.3  
The Wild and the Sacred)

Photo: Eastern Rosella - Anne Foale