

# Eucalyptus rubida

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## I am the Universe – The Universe is my Body

The title of this essay has many sources in many traditions, for example, from the “I am Brahman”/“Thou art that” of the Upanishads to “You are the universe in ecstatic motion” of Rumi.

When Teilhard de Chardin, in his *The Human Phenomenon* announced to his Western audience that every being and every thing had both an ‘inner’ and an ‘outer’ aspect he effectively set in motion a mode of thinking that began the task of repairing the separation of the human from the rest of the universe. The Western audience was startled and intrigued by this way of seeing things, because they had become accustomed to thinking of the human as that part of life only that could boast an ‘inner’ aspect.

Other traditions, especially from the East, and many indigenous traditions did not suffer from this same malady of separateness. Ancient scriptures and oral traditions, and even cave art, spoke of a oneness with nature that even now prompts our thinking, and makes us wonder how we got it so wrong.

Every thing has an ‘inner’ aspect to it. We have come to describe our innerness as soul, self, ego, or psyche, and also we have denied that earlier animal life (and of course plant life, and river and sea and mountain... ) could possess anything like this at all. But *The Universe Story* as we have come to know it, tells us that the human did not just ‘arrive’ with a full set of inner complements. Everything we are, with our ‘soul’, our ‘spirituality’ our ‘compassion’ has come to growth through a sequence of transformations over several million, even billions of years.

Our individualization of the universe has an ancestry, and even now retains a deep connectedness to all past and present expressions of the Originating Mystery. Those attuned to this connectedness see a kinship with Earth and its many and beautiful manifestations. They sing to it, venerate it, poetise about it, in such an unashamed way that I can only conclude that their deep connection equates to

and possibly exceeds their other natural human relationships.

Are they crazy? We might be tempted to think so, but possibly we are the crazy ones. Having become so completely enculturated in our own tradition, we might be the ones who have come to frame the intuitive wisdom of our ancestors into abstract doctrines that stifle the deep down reality of soulful wisdom that underlies existence.

It has almost become natural for us to deny anything savouring of a soulful life-principal associated with the natural world. So many people now find themselves in love with the natural world, and regard it as a life-giving,



nurturing and healing agency. They intuitively recognise it as the origin and mother of everything they are. Last issue of *Rubida* proposed that our spirituality is born of the stars and the life-process that produced us.

Jung spoke about the collective unconscious. Maybe this concept did not suddenly commence with the early human (when did this happen anyway?), but has been in existence from the very beginning and bear a deeper identity with the Originating Mystery, Source, God, or One Mind.

Next time you hug a tree, imagine the tree enjoying this demonstration of affection, and extending to you a mutual love and healing. For in a sense you are already the tree, the soil it rises from, the water it processes, and the sky that floods the Earth with brightness and enables all life to exist. In this way our imagination could

be an entrée to a deeper intimacy with the Mystery manifest in the natural world.

We are simply the human conscious aspect of a universe already alive with the primal mind, brimming over with the wisdom that has brought us to birth. It is the *anima mundi* (soul of the world) of Plato, the *Ever Present Origin* of Gebser, the *One Mind* of Eastern and Chinese thought.

There is so much going on that is beyond or below our immediate consciousness. We sometimes get glimpses of this in our dreams, and in those moments fleeting or enduring where we feel one with everything, as in absorption with a scene of great beauty or an interpersonal connection with a loved one. At these times it might be said that we have come into contact with our deeper, inner self, where the mythic essence of the universe awaits us. This would be the Brahman/Atman of the Vedanta, the One Mind of the East, or possibly the Holy Spirit of the Christian tradition.

At a time when Earth is unravelling there is really only one solution to its ‘redemption’. We will not heal ourselves and Earth, unless we have come to love the Earth. To the extent that God, as we ordinarily use the term, is present to Creation (once again, as we use the term) love of God must also be realised as love of the universe, and in particular the Home and Mother which is Earth. This must be the basis for an eco-spirituality. Neither an Earth-denying spirituality or a Spirit-denying ideology can reflect an attitude that can heal the rift between the secular and the sacred that besets our world. Each one needs to complement the other, and each will be enhanced by the other. Both come from the same source and both express a love for the sacred in different ways, and at their best they are complementary.

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Photo by Louise Levy

(Leucodendron Safari Sunset)