

Centre for Ecology & Spirituality, Glenburn

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A Spirituality of Re-enchantment

The 13.7 billion year history of our universe has been marked by the ongoing rise of consciousness, culminating at this point in time in the reflective consciousness of the human. Each step along the way might be labelled as a 'transformation of consciousness.'

The first lesson comes from nature. All animals, all life forms (taken right down to raw matter) have a degree of consciousness in that they are all subject and reactive to that which draws them on. Call it emergence, call it evolution, call it Creation (God's), or possibly use Marianne Williamson's metaphor who was quoted in the last newsletter: "Nothing about your material circumstances has the power to stop the engine of cosmic intention that you be blessed." We are in the hands of a power greater than ourselves.

Now take the humble caterpillar. She possesses a caterpillar consciousness that allows her to perform the complex functions of her life and ultimately the power to become a pupa, encased in silk. During this time all the cell material of the caterpillar has broken down, and an astounding process of metamorphosis into the flying insect takes place. The insect 'emerges' with its insect consciousness that enables it to behave like an insect. Is this the same consciousness as that of the caterpillar? I cannot say- no one can, I guess, but this is immense food for thought.

The caterpillar has undergone a transformation of consciousness to become an insect. In a way the caterpillar has died and then been born to a new life. Is this reincarnation, re-birth or resurrection? What does it intimate about our own death?

It has now almost become commonplace to read of there being just one consciousness in which we all participate. Theology readily accepts this as God. The cosmic/ecological reading of this is very interesting.

Ancient wisdoms like Daoism and the wisdom of the Vedanta, not to forget the 'divinization of the

cosmos' of Teilhard de Chardin, speak of a sacred source of Earth-consciousness. This last term is from Sri Aurobindo's English writings.

All consciousness on Earth has arisen from this Earth-consciousness. We are related to all the life forms around us by this special sharing of awareness. Indigenous tribes, not exposed to the worst evils of modernity have never lost this deep identity with the oneness that surrounds them.

This Earth-consciousness is sacred and pervasive. It is within all of us, though we might have lost our recognition of it and a lack of confidence to manifest it. We are



Re-enchantment with Earth

greater in this respect than we could ever imagine. We ought not to leave it to our heroes and heroines of Earth to live it fully. Comes to mind the names, Rachel Carson, Arne Naess, Joanna Macy, John Seed, Sylvia Earle, Jane Goodall, Wangari Maathai. If you don't immediately recognise these names then look them up and see the transformative work they have done.

When we speak of a need to change our minds and hearts we are also speaking about a transformation of consciousness. Consciousness is our day to day immediate awareness of who, what and where we are in

the scheme of things, or as Gregory Bateson might say, where we are in the 'pattern that connects.' In the modern culture generally there has been a disconnect with the natural world which has produced us, and which nourishes us in so many ways. If you need a jolting about disenchantment have a look at this video of the devastation of the [Rubicon Forest](#) near Taggerty.

As far as modern humanity is concerned, modernity has fostered a disenchantment with Earth, resulting in our present crisis, where the effective meaning given to the human is to dig up all the carbon that planet Earth has carefully sequestered over four billion years, just to make ourselves comfortable. I really don't think it was put there just for our convenience!

How are we to re-enchant ourselves and our culture with Earth which is mother to life and consciousness? I would suggest that reflective immersion in the beauty and divinity that surrounds and contains us, would be a good start. Feel sand under your feet at the beach. Get dirt under your fingernails in the vegetable or flower garden. Introduce children to the delights of landscape, mountain and river. Rest in the peace of our great forests. Perhaps allow a righteous anger to animate us when we see Earth and its inhabitants suffer needlessly. If you are not able to climb trees to protect them, you might consider writing to local State and Federal ministers to 'stand on deck', to use a phrase from Clarissa Pinkola Estes.

This link is for [Federal members](#), and this link for [State members](#).

We could finish with a quote from Thomas Berry: "a new revelatory experience is needed, an experience wherein human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of the Earth process. This awakening is our human participation in the dream of the Earth."

Trevor Parton