

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature

Bron R. Taylor

Editor-in-Chief
The University of Florida

Jeffrey Kaplan

Consulting Editor
The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Executive Editors

Laura Hobgood-Oster
Southwestern University
Austin, Texas

Adrian Ivakhiv
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont

Michael York
Bath Spa University
Bath, United Kingdom

2005



THOEMMES CONTINUUM
A Continuum imprint
LONDON • NEW YORK

Faerie Faith in Scotland

Beneath formalized religious structures of many societies rests a bedrock or vestige of nature religion. In Scotland and other Celtic countries, faerielore fulfils this quasi-totemic function. The literary representation of the faeries as winged "little people" is largely a Victorian British development. Kipling's "Puck of Pook's Hill" maintains he was the last faerie (or fairy) in England, so a measure of reinvention may have been justified. Nineteenth-century artists like Joseph Noel Paton (National Gallery of Scotland) found inspiration in the "fairy faith" for rich erotic sublimation that might otherwise, with more worldly muses, have shocked Victorian sensibilities.

Traditionally faeries could vary in size from the miniscule to the superhuman. R.H. Cromek, in an ethnographic account, describes those of southwest Scotland as,

of small stature, but finely proportioned; of a fair complexion, with long yellow hair hanging over their shoulders and gathered above their heads with combs of gold. They wear a mantle of green cloth, inlaid with wild flowers; green pantaloons, buttoned with bobs of silk; and silver shoon . . . They ride on steeds whose hoofs "would not dash the dew from the cup of a harebell" (Cromek in McNeill: 111).

Irish legends, also influential in Gaelic Scotland, portrayed the faeries as aboriginals who were driven into hollow hills – knowes, raths or forts – when iron-age humankind conquered with tree-felling axes. As such, faerie faith conveys a submerged Arcadian or idyllic green consciousness. Various Scottish tales account for the faeries as those angels who were too good to follow Lucifer all the way to hell, but not good enough to remain in heaven. In *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (ca. 1690), the Rev. Robert Kirk documented Gaelic beliefs and provided a biblical underpinning. The faeries, Kirk believed, are a species of creation that, like humankind, also await salvation.

Care must be taken not to offend these *daoine sithe* – the "people of peace." They can cause mishaps and even replace healthy human children with sickly, troublesome, faerie "changelings," thereby perhaps conveniently allowing blame for genetic misfortune or parental neglect to be displaced. This has diminished the esteem in which the "gentle folk" might otherwise be held. But W.B. Yeats in *The Celtic Twilight*, first published in 1893, makes

impassioned "remonstrance with Scotsmen for having soured the disposition of their ghosts and faeries" (Yeats 1990: 92–5). Scots, he says here, have been "too theological, too gloomy." In contrast, he continues, the Irish "exchange civilities with the world beyond," and are accordingly more richly blessed.

In recent years some such "Twilightist" sentiments, boosted by New Age and green mystical seeking, have been attacked as inventive romanticism by such "Celtsceptic" scholars as Professor Donald E. Meek, who holds a chair of Celtic studies at Edinburgh University. Meek's concern is with cultural appropriation, invasion and distortion, and while anger about this would be shared by many Gaelic thinkers, views of what is genuinely traditional, or authentically evolving, vary, and some thinkers understandably feel divided within themselves on such shifting numinous ground within the cultural psyche. The Faerie Hill is, suggests Gaelic scholar John MacInnes, "a metaphor of the imagination" (personal communication, 1997); a liminal and imaginary realm, where musicians or poets would fall asleep, accepting they would awake either mad, or inspired. As such the faeries may represent the interface of natural and human creativity: nature personified, true nature's child born to be wild and perhaps being reborn in the nascent green consciousness of our times.

"Yes, about the fairies and all that . . . They say they are here for a century and away for another century. This is their century away." So said Nan MacKinnon, tradition-bearer of the Hebridean Isle of Vatersay, interviewed for the Scottish studies journal, *Tocher* (vol. 6–38, 1983: 9). She said it in 1981!

Alastair McIntosh

Further Reading

- Evans-Wentz, W.Y. *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*. Secaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing Group, 1994.
- MacInnes, John. "Looking at Legends of the Supernatural." *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* LIX (1994–1996), 1–20.
- McNeill, F. Marian. *The Silver Bough: Scottish Folk-Lore and Folk-Belief*. Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1989.
- Meek, Donald E. *The Quest for Celtic Christianity*. Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2000.
- Yeats, W.B. *The Celtic Twilight*. Bridport: Prism Press, 1990 (1893).

P The Rotting Tree Faerie

What is it that keeps faerie traditions alive? One answer, suggests Alastair McIntosh, is numinous experience. The stories keep reasserting themselves, as he suggests with this account adapted from his article, "Rainforests and High Finance," in *World Rainforest Report* 26 (October 1993), 18-20.

It was our last day deep in the Australian forest. And there, like out of a child's picture book, in an arched door-like entrance to this hollow rotting tree, was quite the most exquisitely beautiful mushroom any of us had ever seen.

It had a slightly bulbous, pristine white stem, and a perfectly circular, mottled grey cap with a ring of white spots as crisp and fresh as God in the morning light.

We gazed in wonder. And I said for a laugh - for the kind of laugh that you need when wrestling with the pain of nature undergoing destruction - "What kind of a faerie lives here?"

Everyone smiled. I mean, it's kind of ridiculous, to be enquiring after . . . faeries!

The other protestors from John Seed's Rainforest Information Centre gradually move on. But I stay, alone. And again, the question, burning now: "What kind of a faerie lives here?"

In the back of the tree lay some termite-eaten wood. It was annoyingly distracting me, for I could vaguely make out in it the face of a grim old man staring, motionless, down at the soil, like a New Guinea spirit mask. This was not what I was looking for.

Again, my question. But this time, the old man spoke. Yes, he actually spoke! Clearly, subjectively objective in my mind's ear.

In a big, empowered, booming voice, he spoke. He said: "I am the faerie who lives here."

"No, no," I replied, bemused. "You're just a sour old face I'm imagining in rotting wood. I'm looking for flower faeries. You're not that!"

"Oh," he responded, quizzically. "But I thought you

were the one who's always going on to your students about radical feminist theology?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Just that you're always telling them about calling one-another into being; that a person becomes a person in community inasmuch as they're heard, listened to, and *allowed* to be visible."

Well! I tell you . . . he had me by my own ideals! To deny his reality would have been to deny one of the insights that I most value.

"Fair enough," I said to him. "But if I accept that, I'm going to start seeing faeries all over the place!"

He laughed and laughed. He said that faeries *are* all over the place! God has many masks and I was presently face to face with one of them.

"Tell me then," I enquired. "What kind of a faerie are you?"

He swelled with pride and delight at being asked. "I," he said, "am the Rotting Tree Faerie!"

"But," I protested, "I always thought faeries looked joyful. You look like an undertaker. So what kind of things give *you* joy in life?"

This was the question he'd been waiting for and his voice shook the forest. "Rotting trees give me joy in life! This mushroom," he said, "is at my door precisely because I AM the Rotting Tree Faerie."

And as he said it, he let me feel the great processes of death and decay going on in this old tree, indeed, in the whole forest. He let me feel the mushroom's mycelia reaching from the roots into every part of that dying tree, and beyond. I could even feel the molecular processes of rot taking place, composting what had reached the fullness of its time and had died to create new soil and therefore new life.

The mask and the mushroom were, indeed, his Janus face. One side expressed decay and death. The other, in its beauty, was his veritable flower faerie self.

Alastair McIntosh

See also: Re-Earthing; Seed, John.

See also: Animism (various); Celtic Christianity; Celtic Spirituality; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Ireland; Scotland; Seed, John.

The Fall

The Fall story of Genesis 1-11 is not only a theological text. It is also an aetiological narrative (a story about origins) concerning the rise of civilization in the late Neolithic period. Since the mid-nineteenth century the modernist-fundamentalist culture war in North Atlantic Christianity has generated two highly polarized

approaches to the biblical creation story: one that insists upon its putative historico-scientific content, and the other that views it as legend/folktale with no historical value. To move beyond this historicist straightjacket we might instead consider this story in terms of myth-as-memory. Might it be similar in character to origin-narratives of indigenous peoples, which postmodern anthropology is finally beginning to appreciate as legitimate "testimony" about prehistoric life?

Until recently there were few anthropological alternatives to post-Enlightenment evolutionary positivism's perspective on origins. There is no grander narrative in modern culture than the myth of "Progress," and this

humans have in the presence of nature. If the modern "ecological consciousness" has a religious or spiritual dimension to it, then we see evidence of this in the BSA publications.

The religious or spiritual dimensions of the study of nature in Scouting are subtle but unmistakable. The notion of "stewardship," an idea borrowed from religion by conservationists in the Progressive Era, pervades Scouting's ideas about nature. These are the "conservationist" ideas of people like Gifford Pinchot, Teddy Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, rather than the "preservationist" ideas of John Muir in the same period. William Temple Hornaday (1854–1937), who directed the New York Zoological Park from 1896 to 1926 and who was in the circle of Seton's friends, is remembered in the BSA with the William T. Hornaday badge and medals for boys who undertake projects representing "distinguished service in natural resource conservation," evidence of responsible stewardship over nature.

Although the social and cultural impetus for Scouting came from the pervasive sense of a "crisis" in white masculinity in turn-of-the-century Great Britain and the United States, some reformers thought that the ideas of the movement, including ideas about nature and religion, were also applicable to girls. Like Seton, the Gulicks created the Camp Fire program around American Indian lore and took care in designing campfire rituals meant to impart to girls the spiritual and service aspects of their lives as young women. Crafts and camping were part of the Camp Fire program from the beginning, sharing in the "Acadian myth" of the beneficial effects of having girls experience nature. Juliette Gordon Low's ideas for the Girl Scouts (1912) did not rely upon American Indian lore for their program, but Low and her colleagues were just as committed to the view that teaching girls self-reliance for the twentieth century should include woodcraft skills. Seton created still another opportunity for girls with his Woodcraft Girls, an organization paralleling his Woodcraft Boys, with its own handbook, *The Woodcraft Manual for Girls* (1916). All three of these organizations – the Camp Fire Girls, the Girl Scouts of America, and the Woodcraft Girls – were feminist organizations in their cultural context, as they aimed to take young women beyond the domestic sphere and give them knowledge and skills, including campcraft and woodcraft. In these movements' requirements, rituals, and excursions into the wilderness we see the same wedding of nature and spirituality so prominent in the boys' movements.

Jay Mechling

Further Reading

- Keller, Betty. *Black Wolf: The Life of Ernest Thompson Seton*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984.
Macleod, David I. *Building Character in the American Boy:*

- The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870–1920*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
Mechling, Jay. *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
Ross, Dorothy. *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
Schmitt, Peter J. *Back to Nature: The Acadian Myth in Urban America*. Baltimore, NJ: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990 (1962).
Seton, Ernest Thompson. *The Ten Commandments in the Animal World*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925.
Wadland, John Henry. *Ernest Thompson Seton: Man in Nature and the Progressive Era, 1880–1915*. New York: Arno Press, 1978.
See also: Indian Guides; Muir, John; Nature Religion in the United States; Pinchot, Gifford.

SP Scything and Erotic Fulfillment

Ivan Illich has drawn attention to the "vernacular" as those practices and values that, like our vernacular (or native) tongue, are learned in family and community by oft-unconscious processes of social osmosis rather than through formal schooling. It is striking that vernacular activity in the satisfaction of fundamental human needs is typically rich in synergistic layers of meaning. Indeed, as development practitioners and "modernizers" have discovered to their cost, it is often the case in vernacular communities that "implicit meanings of local practices" will outweigh the superficially presented reason for doing things in a particular way. For example, stories abound in Africa of newly installed water pumps being broken by young men. Only then was it realized that having the young women walk to the distant well was an implicit but unspoken opportunity for courtship.

One of the most striking characteristics of much vernacular work is its relationship to rhythm – both as an outcome (for example, in work song), and as an organizing principle aiding the process. This emerges, for example, in walking, rowing, riding, cycling, milking, weaving, spinning, pounding corn, hauling on anchor chains, ropes and fishing lines, casting with a fishing rod, making music, repartee in discourse, varying forms of intercourse, rocking the baby, and in reaping with sickle or scythe.

The ability to "enter into the swing of things" in work, as in sport, is commonly the touchstone of right technique. Chant, song or dance, often in unison with co-workers, may be concomitant to such an extent that some cultures have built up considerable bodies of work-related folk songs. These are songs not necessarily about work, but rather, embodying the rhythm of work. Thus, for example,

the American-born Scottish ethnomusicologist, Margaret Fay Shaw, says of the weaving of Harris Tweed fabric in the 1930s: "Those were the days when a wearer could regard his homespun from the Hebrides with the thought of the songs and gaiety that went into the making of it" (Shaw 1986:7).

The wielding of a scythe – a sickle mounted on a frame to allow full-body engagement in harvesting grass and grain crops – is a paramount example of rhythmic vernacular work, and one that is currently generating fresh interest for its Zen-like meditative nature. In his seminal work, *The Scythe Book*, David Tresemer refers to the obviating effect of rhythm and resultant work song on the passing of time, maintaining that, "The main function of these chants and charms and songs was to coordinate the breath and scythe stroke and to 'deceive the tedious time. And steal unfelt the sultry hours away'" (Tresemer 2002: 60).

He sees this phenomenon as being spiritually transcendent, thus concluding his treatise with the paragraph:

It is my desire on this land, in the context of this small farm, to know the best use of my body, and to move with the scythe as an extension of my body – in relationship with the grass, and in a team of mowers – in the process of developing my own communion with the divinity that creates the task and all its parts (Tresemer 2002: 103).

In *The Scythe Must Dance*, a technical addendum to the second edition of Tresemer's work and widely cited on the internet, Peter Vido likens the correct swing of the scythe to "The practice of T'ai-Chi Chuan, with its emphasis on the executing of smooth motions and while in a reflective state of mind, it is a beautiful – even if idealistic – model" (Tresemer 2002: 169). He too, in his closing paragraph, transcendently elevates the art, quoting a school essay by eighteen-year-old Hannah Sawyer of Kingfield, Maine. She writes:

Scything is simple; it is relaxing too. It is no wonder the people of yesteryear had very little problem with stress. The quiet rhythm melts away tension; swish, cut, swish, cut, swish . . . If I close my eyes it is easy to imagine myself back in time – a bird singing to the sky, the wind whispering to the trees, the splash of a horse pawing the water, the lowing of a cow calling her calf. Would you like to time-travel? I'll teach you how (Tresemer 2002: 181).

I myself grew up on the Isle of Lewis off Scotland, knowing how to hone and handle a scythe for the making of hay and silage to feed our cow. I observe that, today, it has become a near-extinct and hard-to-get tool, driven out by the hegemony of the "strimmer" – the name given

in Britain to pernicious petroleum-powered pestilences with rotating nylon whiplashes that brash the grass. Walk a meadow or woodland path that has been strimmed, and you step among the scrappy carnage of flayed vegetation and scuffed ground. By contrast, tread a scythed path, and the vegetation is cleanly cut and laid to the side in pleasing swathes that avoid messing one's footwear. Rarely is the turf damaged because, as the Thai Buddhist Monk Ticht Nhat Hanh puts it in a quotation at the leading website dedicated to the art, "Whenever I see anyone cutting grass with a scythe, I know he is practicing awareness." Indeed, it was a personal meditation on strimmed versus scythed meadow paths in Scotland that inspired me with "The Scyther's Prayer": *May my death be the clean cut of an honest scythe, and never the thousand lashes of an accursed strimmer!*

Time and death wield a scythe because harvesting is both the fulfillment, and the transcendence, of them both. As Sir James Frazer suggested in *The Golden Bough* (1994), the practice of reaping connects humankind with the Corn God or the King of the Woods, and with the Earth Goddess. It is back into her sacred body, the Earth, that the sky god or King seasonally meets his nemesis, as at Diana's Grove of Nemi. To consciously reap the life-force (which can be symbolized by mistletoe or the "Golden Bough") with a hand sickle or scythe is therefore to participate in the perpetual archetypal cycle of life, death and rebirth.

To Frazer, this insight connected the Christian story with a much wider body of world mythology. As he concludes his seminal if professionally controversial and much-disputed yet remarkable work:

Our long voyage of discovery is over [and] once more we take the road to Nemi. It is evening, and as we climb the long slope of the Appian Way up to the Alban Hills, we look back and see the sky aflame with sunset . . . over Rome and touching with a crest of fire the dome of St. Peter's . . . The place has changed but little since Diana received the homage of her worshippers at the sacred grove. The temple of the sylvan goddess, indeed, has vanished and the King of the Wood no longer stands sentinel over the Golden Bough. But Nemi's woods are still green, and as the sunset fades above them in the west, there comes to us, borne on the swell of the wind, the sound of the church bells of Aricia ringing the Angelus. *Ave Maria!* Sweet and solemn they chime out from the distant town and die lingeringly away across the wide Campagnan marshes. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi! Ave Maria!* (Frazer 1994: 714; translatable as, "The king is dead, long live the king! Praise be the Mother of God!").

Frazer's work may have fallen on stony ground when the relationship between Christianity and fertility became

a shunned field of study. Nonetheless, it cannot escape notice that in the Last Supper before his "Passion," Christ, the Mahavatan embodiment of God incarnate (and so carnal), offers bread – risen from reaped corn – in memory of eternal communion with his body. The spirituality implicit in the biblical Song of Solomon, Proverbs 8, Luke 7 and Matthew 11 thereby finds conjugal fulfillment in this "feast of love," this "communion of the saints," that realizes heaven as the fulfillment of the erotic.

Alastair McIntosh

Further Reading

- Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: A History of Myth and Religion*. London: Chancellor Press, 1994 (originally 1890).
- Illich, Ivan. *Shadow Work: Vernacular Values Examined*. UK: Open Forum, 1981.
- Max-Neef, Manfred. "Development and Human Needs". In Paul Ekins and Manfred Max-Neef, eds. *Real-Life Economics: Understanding Wealth Creation*. London: Routledge, 1992, 197–214.
- Shaw, Margaret Fay. *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986.
- Tresemmer, David. *The Scythe Book (With an Addendum on the Practical Use of the Scythe by Peter Vido)*. Chambersburg, PA: Alan C. Hood & Co. Inc, 2002 (2nd edn).
- See also: Aesthetics of Nature and the Sacred; Anthropologists; Nhat Hanh, Thich.

Sea Goddesses and Female Water Spirits

Water is not just regarded as a resource to be managed or exploited or as the source of natural metaphors, but as having an identity on its own. Such an identity has been, in many cultures, personified in the figures of female water deities.

Images of transcendental women surface worldwide – in the lakes, seas, rivers and springs of every continent. Nearly always of great beauty and ambivalence, they are seen as both seductive and threatening; as bringers of salvation and – at the same time – damnation; and – just like their element, water – as life-giving and life-taking, too.

Deities of the water, water spirits and mermaids cannot be seen only as a projection of attitudes toward women or just as a metaphor for male desire for and fear of the female. The following suggest the multiplicity of meanings inherent in a wide range of conceptualizations of sea goddesses in specific local and historical contexts and in connection with particular social practices.

Examples drawn from Europe, Africa, Brazil and Indonesia will focus on rites that are performed at present and which seem to be of growing significance. This reveals

local strategies for dealing with the extraordinary, unpredictable and challenging element, water.

Europe – Sirens, Sprites, Melusine and Undine

Each epoch in Europe constructed its own characteristic version of women in the waters. Aphrodite or Venus, the goddess of beauty, unbridled love and creative fecundity, can be linked to pre-patriarchal social structures. In contrast to her, sirens – half-bird, half-woman – seem like dark, strange and uncanny creatures who are full of sensual temptation for Odysseus, whom they try to deflect from his road home. In the post-Homeric era, the sirens lose their threatening characteristics, although in the Middle Ages they come to embody a direct threat to the male, Christian mode of being because they distract from the word of God and promise carnal desires and earthly pleasures. The sprite with her fish's tail moves to the front of the stage. While she is also a seductive creature she is a split being: Her form is human above and animal below. She is wild, but unreachable because of her sexual inadequacy, however in the course of time she is depicted in an increasingly harmless fashion. In early modern times, mermaids with one or two tails – the latter classified as Melusines – frequently appear in churches as well as in book illustrations and decorative folk art. This leads to the gradual supplanting of the wild, sexualized and demonized Melusine by the diminished child-woman Undine. The Undine is never a mixed form, but rather a different one in the sense of embodying a living, immediate naturalism.

The Romantic period sees a multitude of gushing literary variations on this figure. The Undine shares the Melusine's neediness. She needs a man, not only to make her human, but also, through marriage, to gain a Christian soul. After getting it, she is characterized by submission and humility and is similar to the figure of the little mermaid in Andersen's fairytale. Desexualization, devotion and silent sacrifice are central to the tale's bourgeois ideal of motherhood, because the little mermaid dies before she has a chance to seduce the prince.

The death of females by drowning, especially that of Ophelia, takes on a great fascination around the end of the nineteenth century. The lifeless, floating female body represents an increasing deindividualization, while, at the same time, the Undine becomes merely an "art nouveau" ornament. Today, we have Barbie dolls with fishtails and the Lorelei on T-shirts as examples of mass consumer products. Just as nature has been turned into a useful but lifeless object lacking the divine, so the mermaid has degenerated into a commercial sex object and a "harmless" piece of kitsch.

But, simultaneously, the sea even nowadays can provoke impressions of open space, power, eternity, movement, metamorphosis, change of shape and color, and orgasmic waves.

Scotland

As the glaciers of the last ice age finally left Scotland as a bare and empty landscape about 10,000 years ago, pioneer species such as hazel and birch started to recolonize the land, the now-extinct wolf, bear and lynx returned, and people resettled (Edwards and Ralston 2003). These people left their mark in megalithic structures typically erected some 5000 years ago, such as the lunar-aligned Calanais Standing Stones on the Isle of Lewis. Such monuments are often found in beautiful places. Some probably had astronomical and ritual functions. Little can be said about this with certainty, but one claim that can be made without question is that they represent art. As such, the ancient sites have been described as "the longest show running"; a doorway to the imaginal realm where nature and the imagination intersect. The standing stones accordingly testify to a tripartite link between community, spirit and place and, as such, in all probability, to the early presence of nature religion – namely, the understanding that the spiritual realm interpenetrates and animates the natural world.

Scotland's original Pictish inhabitants may have had a matrilineal structure, but little is confidently known about them. The Romans were largely kept out of Scotland; they built two defensive walls to keep the Picts back. According to Tacitus' *Agricola* (ca. 98), the Pictish chieftain Calgacus said of the Romans:

Harriers of the world . . . they make a desolation and they call it peace . . . We, the noblest souls in all Britain, the dwellers in its inner shrine, had never seen the shores of slavery and had preserved our very eyes from the desecration and the contamination of tyranny: here at the world's end, on its last inch of liberty . . . Then let us fight as men untamed, men who have never fallen from freedom.

During the second half of the first millennium the Scots of Dalriada, originating from Ireland and speaking Gaelic, subsumed whatever had gone before with patriarchal chieftain structures based around the extended family or "clan." Irish-Scots' Celtic monasticism, resting on a Druidic "Celtic Old Testament" base, embodied a rich nature spirituality.

These Irish roots were later used to assert, before the Pope, Scotland's claim of right to be a nation free of Anglo-Norman suzerainty. English invaders based their claim to control Scotland on Geoffrey of Monmouth's "translation" of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of 1135 – parts of which were probably Geoffrey's own creation, as he later claimed to have lost the original manuscript. The *Historia* maintained that Britain was named after Brutus of Troy who had arrived in the twelfth century B.C.E. after pillaging France and Africa, inspired by an oracular man-

date to dominate "the round circle of the whole Earth." Geoffrey claimed Brutus had cleared Scotland or "Albany" of Picts and giants, giving it to his youngest son, Albanactus.

During the Wars of Independence (1296–1424) with England, Edward I used this myth to legitimize his colonizing conquest of Scotland. As embellished in the Hollywood movie, *Braveheart*, William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce drove the English out. However, to consolidate Scotland's free status they required papal recognition. This was achieved through the Declaration of Arbroath, 1320, a remarkable document that drew on Irish charter texts to trounce Geoffrey's Brutus myth (Ferguson 1998).

The Declaration links Scottish origins to ancient Scythia by the Black Sea, as described, for example, in the *Irish Book of Invasions* (ca. 1168 in final form). This portrays the Scots coming from Scythia to assist Nimrod with building the Tower of Babel, their leader learning all 72 languages of the world after its fall, his being summoned as Pharaoh's linguist while the Israelites were still in slavery, his marrying Pharaoh's daughter ("Scota," hence "Scotland," implying that the Mother of the Nation was black), his reconstructing Gaelic from the 72 languages (hence Gaelic's sometime designation, "the language of Eden"), his people providing the Israelites with bread and wine on the eve of their Red Sea departure, and then later, having received Moses' blessing, completing a 440-year-long migration via Spain to Ireland, and from there, according to the *Scotichronicon's* account (ca. 1449), on to Scotland, bringing as proof of their peregrinations the Stone of Destiny – Jacob's pillow from the original Genesis 28 version of Stairway to Heaven. Scottish nationhood is thereby symbolized by a holy stone, returned in 1996 from Westminster Abbey to Edinburgh Castle. This *axis mundi* stone, we might note, originally symbolized the connection between heaven and the land that Jacob was given; and that in a context where God pronounced blessing on all the world's peoples.

Revealingly, the Declaration of Arbroath locates sovereignty of the Scottish people not in the sovereign, but in the "Community of the Realm" which is "the community of Scotland." As such, and consistent with the principle that only God can own the land (Leviticus 25), Scotland had a King or "Queen of Scots" as distinct from a "Queen of Scotland." Resonant with the spirit of Calgacus, the Declaration asserts, "It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honors that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself" (Scottish Records Office, 1320). And while Scotland might have had its "Auld Enemy" in the English, the importance of loving the enemy was constitutionally embedded in the Declaration's modification of Galatians 3:28 ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"), asserting that under "the

Church of God," there is "neither weighting nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman." Thus Scottish identity is generally considered to be civic rather than ethnic: at its best, a person belongs inasmuch as they are willing to cherish, and be cherished, by a place and its peoples.

While the nobles of Scotland as the medieval signatories to the Declaration looked to Rome (and successfully so) for recognition of national sovereignty, the Scots Reformation parliament of 1560 repudiated Rome. Protestants saw late medieval Catholicism as having been lax to the point of almost being "pagan." It is perhaps to the imperative of asserting narrow puritanical rectitude in order to give boundary and faith-based justification to spiritual revolution that we can trace the origins of the neglect, and even fear, of both nature religion and mysticism that has characterized much mainstream Reformed Church religious discourse in Scotland through until the late twentieth century.

That said, John Calvin, the benchmark of Scots Presbyterian Protestantism, was not averse to the love of nature. His *Institutes* (III:XIV:20) speak of the Creation as that "beautiful theatre" in which we might do well "to take pious delight." Similarly, the formative 1647 *Westminster Shorter Catechism* affirms that "God executeth His decrees in the works of Creation and Providence."

However, the seventeenth century, under James VI, who became James I of a "United Kingdom" with England in 1603, saw organized religion applied as an instrument of inner (psychological) and internal (within the British Isles) colonization. As with James' policy in Ulster, muscular Protestantism was indoctrinated through, for example, his 1609 Statutes of Iona and in the 1616 education act. These helped to propagate a Protestant ethic of transcendental deferred gratification such as Max Weber would have recognized as the hallmark of the early-modern mindset.

In Ulster, James' policies wronged the indigenous Catholics and wrong-footed the poor Scots Protestants who he "planted" there. In Scotland, the underlying imperial and mercantile ethic of his policies attacked indigenous bardic politics and laid the ground for the 1707 Union of Parliaments, by which Great Britain emerged as the world's foremost exemplar of neo-Roman presumptions of Empire. Following the Jacobite uprising of 1745, British forces in the Battle of Culloden near Inverness (1746) crushed clan power, and key markers of indigenous culture such as the wearing of the tartan kilt were proscribed. Robert Burns, the national bard, was to say of this era in his poem, *Strathallan's Lament* written in 1787: "The wide world is all before us / but a world without a friend."

With the indigenous leadership now either compulsorily Anglicised or crushed in the remote Highland centers of resistance, land became valued as a commodity rather than for the number of people it could support. Improved

breeds of sheep, and demand for wool from the Napoleonic wars, triggered the "Highland Clearances" in which perhaps some half-a-million people were directly, or indirectly from economic pressure, forced off their native territories until the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886. Ironically, displaced indigenous Scots often colonized other native people's territories, the oppressed in some cases becoming oppressor. Much of rural Scotland became, in effect, one of the world's first casualties of what would now be called "globalization."

As with the famine in Ireland, many ordinary pious peasants internalized their oppression as punishment from God. At Croick, a congregation huddled in the churchyard awaiting the arrival of their emigrant ship scratched on a windowpane, "The people of Glen Calvie, the sinful generation." The 1712 Patronage Act had permitted landlords to appoint clergy within the established Church of Scotland. Some of these preached a gospel focused only on a transcendent pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die salvation. As if in antithesis to nature religion, the Earth was portrayed as a realm that had been corrupted with the sin of Adam. It was portrayed as fallen in its own right, rather than merely enduring the consequences of Adam's Fall. The Earth as Christ's "footstool" (Matthew 5:35), the very seat of the immanent presence of God, was overlooked. It was too often presumed that when Jesus condemned "the world" he included nature, rather than, merely, the corrupted human sociological order known as "worldliness."

Accordingly, the oppressed were, to the landlord's convenience, encouraged to write the world off rather than to discern and seek to redeem it. In any case, Calvin's double-predestination suggested that, ultimately, destiny fell outside of human control. It was mainly to break with patronage under the influence of an emerging liberation theology that the Church of Scotland split in the 1843 "Disruption." In an effort, not always successful, to embody spiritual freedom, the Free Church of Scotland emerged as a more truly Presbyterian or grassroots alternative that recognized the authority of "Christ as Lord" unmediated by any landlord. One of the Disruption's practical consequences was to give spiritual legitimization to the land reforms that took place at the cusp of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries, and which preserved agrarian "crofting" communities.

Amongst the peasantry a strong nature religion – expressed as awareness of the immanence of God and through supernatural belief and totemistic animism – is continuously evident. However, much of this has been caricatured as residually "Papist," (as with most of Carmichael's great nineteenth-century collection, the *Carmina Gadelica*), or of the faerie faith, and therefore merely superstitious (as with the Rev. Robert Kirk's seventeenth-century *Secret Commonwealth*). Recent work, such as that of the American Gaelic scholar, Michael Newton, and the Scots historian, James Hunter, reflects a continuous close

engagement between people and nature expressed in the bardic tradition often outside of or on the margins of the mainstream church. As a generalization, this represents human society as resting on the bedrock of ecological community under the Providence of God. Nature transfigures humankind in a grounded transcendence, thus the motto of Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides is "God's Providence is our inheritance," and the great twentieth-century Gaelic poet, Sorley MacLean, writes in *An Cuilithionn* (The Cuillin): "Beyond the lochs of the blood of the children of men / beyond the frailty of plain and the labor of the mountain . . . / beyond guilt and defilement; watchful / heroic, the Cuillin is seen / rising on the other side of sorrow" (in Hunter 1995: 175).

In the late twentieth century, a few activists, including the present author, used the above analysis of history in an effort to reintegrate nature, spirituality and a bardic politics in the public life of a Scotland developing a "devolved" or semi-detached relationship with the rest of the "United Kingdom." The Isle of Eigg Trust, established in 1991, successfully enabled the residents of a Hebridean island to revolt and rid itself of its landlord and establish a democratic community land trust. This in turn helped stimulate flagship land-reform legislation in the Scottish Parliament, which was reestablished in 1999.

Similarly, when the Isle of Harris was threatened by multinationals wanting to make it a center for European production of roadstone with perhaps two massive "super-quarries," theological testimony against violating the integrity of the creation was made by a panel that included Scotland's leading Calvinist, the Rev. Professor Donald Macleod, and the then-warrior chief of the Mi'Kmaq First Nation in Nova Scotia, a Sacred Pipe Carrier.

Attention was drawn in the public inquiry through the Mi'Kmaq testimony to the need for "defense of Mother Earth." Scripture passages such as Genesis 2:15, Proverbs 8, Job 38 and Romans 8 were invoked to argue that it is not creation that is fallen (and therefore treated as fit to have its national scenic areas ravished), but humankind. Professor Macleod noted that the function of the creation is to reflect the majesty of God and that "to spoil the creation is to disable it from performing this function [giving rise to] the consideration that rape of the environment is rape of the community itself" (Macleod in McIntosh 2001: 234). Accordingly, the present writer concluded, an appropriate relationship with nature is one of *reverence*. This is not *pantheism* – God as nature – but it should be understood as, *panentheism* – God being present in the creation as, for example, in Job or Hebrews 1:3.

The Scottish Government that, in the previous year, had abolished feudalism, rejected the superquarry in 2000. The "harriers of the world" may hover yet in the guise of globalization, but the spirit of Calgacus, increasingly expressed through nonviolent direct action, remains strong in fight-

ing, as Tacitus described it, "desecration and the contamination of tyranny: here at the world's end."

Alastair McIntosh

Further Reading

- Carmichael, Alexander. *Carmina Gadelica*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1994 (1900).
- Edwards, Kevin J. and Ian B.M. Ralston, eds. *Scotland After the Ice Age: Environment, Archaeology and History, 8000 BC–AD 1000*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003.
- Ferguson, William. *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- Hunter, James. *On the Other Side of Sorrow: Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands*. Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1995.
- Hutton, Ronald. *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Jackson, Kenneth H. *A Celtic Miscellany*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1971.
- McIntosh, Alastair. *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*. London: Aurum Press, 2001.
- Newton, Michael. *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.
- Tacitus. *The Agricola and The Germania*. London: Penguin Classics, 1970.
- See also: Celtic Christianity; Celtic Spirituality; Christianity (6c) – Reformation Traditions (Lutheranism and Calvinism); Christianity (6c2) – Calvin, John and the Reformed Tradition; Christianity (7c) – Liberation Theology; Christianity in Europe; Faerie Faith in Scotland; Ireland; The Protestant Ethic.

Scouting

Founded during the Progressive Era, the early Scouting movement in the United States embraced the era's widespread beliefs in Darwinism, in the restorative power of nature, and (for the boys) in the spiritual dimensions of physical activity ("muscular Christianity"). Lord Robert Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts in England in 1908, and in 1910 a group of men already active in youth work in the United States gathered in New York City to found the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Juliette Gordon Low created the first troop of Girl Scouts in 1912, and by 1915 the Girl Scouts of America (GSA) was incorporated. Although technically not part of the "Scouting" movement, the Camp Fire Girls, founded by Luther and Charlotte Gulick in 1910 and incorporated in 1912, shared Scouting's ideas and approaches to building nature-based recreational programs for children and adolescents.

Ernest Thompson Seton (1860–1946) played a central role in bringing into the BSA ideas about the relationship between nature and religion. Seton had been experiment-

Low, Mary. *Celtic Christianity and Nature: Early Irish and Hebridean Traditions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Maier, B. *Dictionary of Celtic Religion and Culture*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1997.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1991.

Meek, Donald E. *The Quest for Celtic Christianity*. Edinburgh: The Handsel Press Ltd., 2000.

Toulson, Shirley. *The Celtic Year*. Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1996.

See also: Animism (various); Celtic Christianity; Christianity (5) – Medieval Period; Donga Tribe; Druids and Druidry; Faerie Faith in Scotland; Heathenry – Ásatrú; Ireland; Neo-Wessex Archeology; Pantheism; Roman Britain; Scotland; Stonehenge; Trees (Northern and Middle Europe); Trees – Sacred.

Centre for Human Ecology (Edinburgh, Scotland)

The Centre for Human Ecology originated with the Centre for the Study of the Future founded in 1972 by the biologist Professor C.H. Waddington in the University of Edinburgh. In the early stages of the Centre's history, pioneering attempts were made to secure a cohesive view of the implications of environmental policy and research for the global ecosystem in the face of the exponential growth and fragmentation of biological and environmental sciences. These concerns consolidated around human ecology-defined systemics of resources, environment and development (PRED), and later, as the relationship between the social environment and the natural environment, and as the study of human community.

The Centre for Human Ecology gained greater political prominence during the last decade of the twentieth century under the joint leadership of its Director, Ulrich Loening, and its Teaching Director, the radical Scottish community activist, Alastair McIntosh. While the interdisciplinary methodology was developed and applied in the teaching and research of both tutors and students in the core programme offered by the CHE, the Master of Science degree in Human Ecology of the University of Edinburgh, the personal, political and, above all, the psychospiritual implications of this holistic approach shifted increasingly from theory into practice with controversial consequences. A series of high-profile campaigns, in particular the action which eventually led to the inhabitants' buy-out of the Isle of Eigg and the Harris super-quarry public inquiry, in which the Teaching Director played a leading role, increased tensions both within the CHE, and between the latter and its host institution. McIntosh employed Celtic shamanic and bardic techniques in the empowerment of his Quaker commitment. Members of the

CHE continue to represent many shades of religious opinion and practice, ranging from Christian Episcopalian, Findhorn Foundation-affiliated "New Age," Western Buddhism, and radical ecofeminism, to Scottish and Irish "Nature Religion" centered on reverence for the God/Goddess.

Throughout the late 1980s and 90s successive British governments sought through the 1988 Education Reform Act and the subsequent *Dearing Report on Higher Education* to bring all aspects of education under ever tighter centralized control. Educational aims and objectives were required to accord a central role to generic marketable skills and "total quality" management systems applied to the production of graduates with uniform, programme-specified skills and competences. This rationalization of education does not easily tolerate innovative and open-ended shamanic teaching methods directed toward the informed and critical interrogation of the commercial forces accelerating global degradation; such teaching became deviant and institutionally suspect. In addition, British universities were obliged to seek out commercial and industrial sources of funding for their core teaching (and not solely their research activity). The consequence was a tendency in universities to ensure that nothing was sanctioned which might damage income flow.

In the period from 1990 to 1996 the struggle between the CHE and the University of Edinburgh attracted international attention, and a *New Scientist* leader of 4 May 1996 described the University as "a narrow kirk" and the CHE as "a tradition of fearless inquiry." Within the CHE itself a parallel and passionate discussion took place between advocates of radical resistance and of compromise. Whilst Principal Sir David Smith sought to defend the freedom and continued existence of the CHE, his successor in 1995, Sir (later Lord) Stewart Sutherland presided over its closure in 1996 in a blaze of publicity. In effect, radical epistemology won out, but at the ultimate price. Such, however, was the loyalty and commitment of a number of the graduates that the organization was relaunched as an independent organization with charitable status and its MSc degree validated by the Open University (Britain's largest higher education provider). The core elements in the CHE MSc Programme in Human Ecology comprise scientific ecology, the social and psychological aspects of ecological thinking, and the motivation of human ecological activism, with particular emphasis upon the role of communities in relation to place and environment, including the spiritual underpinning of human community. The CHE now experiences an unavoidable creative tension between nationally enforced criteria of "Quality" built around the practices of efficiency, uniformity, predictability and control (demanded as the price of official validation), and a teaching programme that incorporates aspects of deep ecology and ecofeminism, and which also draws upon Scottish and Celtic spiritual traditions.

The struggle of the CHE to survive is recorded with poignant intensity in Alastair McIntosh's book, *Soul and Soil*. The role of the CHE as a pioneering organization is indisputable; many of its original analytical insights and practices have become part of the widely distributed armory of the informed environmental movement. Indeed this very success now poses intensified questions as to the future of human ecology with which the CHE is now fully engaged.

Richard H. Roberts

Further Reading

McIntosh, Alastair. *Soul and Soil: People versus Corporate Power*. London: Aurum Press, 2001.

Pearson, Joanne, Richard H. Roberts and Geoffrey Samuel. *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Roberts, Richard H. *Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press University Press, 2001.

See also: Celtic Christianity; Celtic Spirituality; Eco-feminism (various); Fairie Faith in Scotland; Ireland; Paganism; Scotland; Shamanism - Neo; Shamanism - Urban.

P Cetacean Spirituality

In the last part of the twentieth century, human perceptions of cetaceans (large whales, dolphins and porpoises) went through a sea-change. These mammals have always been special. They are a part of creation myths of indigenous people on ocean coasts; singled out for special notice in the Old Testament; celebrated in song, story, ritual, and art from Ancient Greece to Hollywood; and greedily hunted over centuries for human food, oil, whalebone and other products. Twentieth-century whaling technology had led to large reductions of numbers of whales, and even the endangerment of many species.

Then the tide began to turn.

In the 1960s, John Lilly's investigations revealed the extraordinary structure of the brain of the Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), leading him to speculate that the species was highly intelligent in ways that humans could measure. While still controversial, his ideas encouraged communication studies with dolphins, which are still ongoing.

In the decades between 1960 and 1980, a series of events occurred which caused a reversal from the hunting of whales and dolphins to the celebration and protection of them. These events - communication studies, the discovery of whale songs, a worldwide whale conservation effort, and whale watching - led, by century's end, to a

belief held by many people that some cetacean species are spiritual beings with a message for humanity. A belief system is in the making.

During this time, Bottlenose dolphins began to be displayed in aquaria, principally in the United States, where they were trained to accomplish a repertoire of tricks for delighted audiences. The same species then was used as the star of a long-running, popular television series, "Flipper," which further influenced the general public to accept Lilly's claim of their special intelligence.

In 1972, at the United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, a resolution was passed calling for an end to commercial whaling. It took another 14 years for that event to occur. Though incomplete, and challenged by a few nations where whale and dolphin hunting still occurs, from 1986, a worldwide moratorium on commercial whaling was agreed upon by countries signatory to the international whaling treaty. The impetus for an end to commercial whaling came from members of environmental groups in their millions who supported a "Save the Whales" campaign.

Also in the early 1970s, scientists Roger Payne and Scott McVay published their findings on the mysterious songs of the humpback whale (*Magaptera novaeangliae*). The eerie but beautiful music of this species caught the public imagination and led to its incorporation into popular and classical music, and to further speculation about intelligence in large whales.

Another watershed event happened in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the United States, in California and Massachusetts, fishermen began to take tourists out to sea to watch the whales that moved through or fed and bred along their coasts. Whale watching grew exponentially, and, by the end of the century, had spread widely around the world. In 1991, approximately four million people watched whales every year. By 2002, an estimated ten million whale-watchers would spend an estimated US\$1 billion on tours, travel, food and hotels in 87 countries and overseas territories.

Whale watching is now a thriving business from the Arabian Sea to the bays of Ireland, from the Mediterranean off Gibraltar to the Bahamas, from the frigid waters of Iceland to South Africa, from Japan and the Philippines to Ecuador, Argentina, Belize and the Caribbean islands.

Interacting with great whales at sea touched many people profoundly. Jonathan White interviewed Roger Payne who mused:

... when you encounter a large species like a redwood or a whale, it introduces awe into your life. And awe is a very rare but very important experience. It's what started the major religions. Experiencing awe in the hands of the wild can cause you to feel the same essential ecstasy (in White 1995: 296).