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cultural enclaves that have maintained better than anyone might have expected their culture, their aspirations, their land, and their autonomy after being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of foreign intruders." Cf. also Wilkinson's conclusion: "Federal Indian law is not what American Indians would choose. Their rights to land and political power are diluted, not pure. Nevertheless, for all of its many flaws, the policy of the United States toward its native people is one of the most progressive of any nation" (*American Indians, Time, and the Law*, p. 5).

Even Professor Hauptman, a sharp critic of recent Court decisions, points out that while the Court has been more than deferential to Congressional control over Indian affairs, it has also "frequently recognized Indian interests when they were not inconsistent or in direct conflict with federal interest" ("Congress, Plenary Power, and the American Indian," p. 321). He cites, e.g., decisions having to do with Indian fishing and water rights.

153. See Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

154. The only just solution to the problem of American misappropriation and misuse of Indian land, Vine Deloria Jr. concludes, "would be an international forum or tribunal to which the United States and the Indian nations would submit their dispute" ("The Application of the Constitution to American Indians," p. 301). See Robert A. Williams, *Indian Rights, Human Rights: Handbook for Indians on International Human Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Indian Law Resource Center, 1984) for details on appeal to international tribunals.

155. Doig, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, p. 30.

RESACRALIZING EARTH Pagan Environmentalism and the Restoration of Turtle Island

Bron Taylor

Environmental Paganism and Environmental Conflict

THE DARKNESS OF the high-desert night retreated immediately into the shadows as the FBI's flares launched skyward. The light signaled thirty heavily armed agents to descend on the three ecological saboteurs—and one FBI infiltrator—huddled below the giant electrical towers. Two of the saboteurs were quickly seized. The third disappeared into the shadows. Running with the wild abandon of all prey, when she paused to catch her breath, she began to feel herself mystically descend into Earth, sensing it merging with her, surrounding her, protecting her. She had become invisible—ghostlike. When the helicopters passed overhead, she hugged a tree or pressed herself into the ground, invisible. She had become like the ringtail cat, her totem animal. "The ringtail consciousness was in me that night," she recalls. "I ran through cactus gardens without getting stuck. I could feel the ringtail, like it was a part of me, encircling me. I felt its presence." Secure in this sacred mind-space they could never find her. Several hours later, still imperceptible, she slipped past her pursuers guarding a road on the edge of town. Back in the mundane world the next day, Peg Millett was seized and arrested at work—but she was not surprised, separated as she was from Earth's protective intention by the impermeable concrete of the building's foundation.¹

Mark Davis had been quickly apprehended that night. He was soon charged with several different acts of "ecotage" (a term meaning sabotage defending ecosystems, also known as "monkeywrenching" in movement

parlance) including an effort designed to thwart the expansion of a ski resort in Arizona's San Francisco Mountains—an area considered sacred by the Hopi and Navajo tribes (see Michaelsen's contribution in this volume). In a letter from a federal penitentiary, he explained this particular action:

Certainly there was some outrage involved at the blatant disregard of agreements with the Hopi and Navajo tribes, anger at the destruction of hundreds of acres of irreplaceable old-growth forest for the new ski runs, and indignation that the Forest Service was subsidizing a private company with public dollars. But the bottom line is that those mountains are sacred, and that what has occurred there, despite our feeble efforts, is a terrible spiritual mistake.²

When arrested in May 1989 in the Arizona desert, both Millett and Davis were involved with Earth First!, the self-described "radical environmental" movement.

In 1990, a year after these arrests, while she was enroute to an organizing rally, a bomb exploded under the car seat of Earth First! activist Judi Bari. She suffered permanent disabilities. Bari's pagan spiritual sentiments are similar to those beliefs held by Millett and Davis, especially the belief in the sacrality of natural landscapes.

Bari's paganism was not ignored by her adversaries.³ Indeed, a letter purportedly from her bomber quoted the Genesis "dominion" creation story and, accusing her of blasphemous paganism, declared that "this possessed demon Judy Bari . . . [told] the multitude that trees were not God's gift to man but that trees were themselves gods and it was a sin to cut them. [So] I felt the Power of the Lord stir within my heart and I knew I had been Chosen to strike down this demon."⁴ The rambling letter concludes warning other pagan tree worshipers that they will suffer Bari's fate.⁵

Perceiving the land as sacred, and being moved to defend that sacred land through acts of sabotage, may seem strange and anomalous to many Americans. But pagan religious sentiments leading to environmental activism are not a new phenomenon in America, nor is the hostile reaction of those whose beliefs are based in the more dominant cultural monotheisms.⁶ What is novel in recent events is the increasing boldness of the movement I call pagan environmentalism, the intensifying alarm about such militancy, and the escalating violence that is resulting as those with different perceptions about what constitutes American sacred space collide in political battles over who controls the land, and for what end.⁷

The following pages provide an archeology of pagan environmentalism: excavating spiritual perceptions of the sacrality of the natural world, un-

covering diverse acts of veneration and reconsecration in response to human pollution, illuminating hopes for the eventual reharmonization of people and nature, and describing the often hostile responses encountered by pagan environmentalists from those motivated by competing perceptions of sacred space. The study demonstrates that contemporary environmental conflicts are intertwined with disputes about the nature of sacred space and disagreements about the resulting human obligations.

Environmental paganism is an umbrella term for diverse spiritualities that, when combined with ecological understanding, lead to environmental activism. The spiritual tributaries contributing to environmental paganism include those traditionally labeled pantheism or animism (including shamanistic beliefs and experiences of interspecies communication)⁸ and the holistic religions of the Far East, which tend to view the world as metaphysically interconnected and sacred.⁹

Most of those involved with the "deep ecology" and "radical environmental" movements can be called pagan environmentalists; they generally use these self-referents interchangeably, whether they find their primary spiritual home in Native American spirituality, neopaganism, Taoism, Buddhism, or some other nature-based spirituality. All such traditions are believed to express deep ecological sentiments.¹⁰

The experiences of Millett, Davis, and Bari show that the spiritual perceptions and radical tactics of Earth First! activists provoke those who do not share their spiritual presuppositions. Pantheistic and animistic spiritual perceptions animate the moral passions of many environmental activists in North America. Later we will scrutinize one excellent example of how mainstream religions in America react to the actions of environmental pagans, when we examine the case of the battle over the Mount Graham International Observatory in southeastern Arizona. This case illustrates the complex character of disputes over sacred spaces, especially when disputes about the nature of American sacred space collide in battles over who controls the land.

But first, without belaboring a point well made elsewhere,¹¹ it is important to the present interpretive task to remember that American religious nationalism holds a dominant conception of American sacred space as expressing a vision of America as a utopian space, which provides both a model for and a means to achieve God's purposes on earth. Such a worldview is naturally hostile to any competing worldview that either denies the premise that America constitutes sacred space or locates America's sacrality in the landscape itself rather than in the U.S. nation-state.

On the environmentalist side, this overall worldview conflict is grounded in the antipathy of most pagan environmentalists toward monotheistic religion, especially Christianity, which they blame (along with Western philosophy and science) for dualistic assumptions that have separated humans from nature, setting them free to assault the natural world.

These conflicts are further complicated because, just as monotheistic (and especially Christian) religion has co-existed in a reciprocally reinforcing relationship with American religious nationalism, so environmental paganism reinforces and is reinforced by political philosophies that hope to break down the barriers between humans and between humans and nonhuman entities. These competing clusters of religious worldviews—Christianity in league with religious nationalism (assuming the U.S. nation-state promotes a sacred mission), vs. paganism tied to ecological resistance movements defending natural landscapes considered sacred and attempting to overturn nation-state political domination—help explain the intensity of the escalating conflict over environmental issues in the U.S.

Paganism and the American Conservation Movement

From *The Mountains of California* to the Sierra Club

When we try to pick out anything by itself we find that it is bound fast by a thousand invisible cords that cannot be broken to everything else in the universe. I fancy I can hear a heart beating in every crystal, in every grain of sand and see a wise plan in the making and shaping and placing of every one of them. All seems to be dancing to divine music. . . . The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."
—John Muir¹²

This epigraph, a favorite among contemporary environmentalists, demonstrates the nascent pantheism of John Muir (1838–1914), the father of the nonanthropocentric wilderness preservation movement.¹³ Although remnants of his theistic upbringing are still evident, and although he continued to use metaphors borrowed from Christianity, recent scholarship has well established Muir's pantheistic and animistic perceptions.¹⁴ Until recently, Muir's religious sentiments remained largely unknown. Fox explains, "Muir lived in a Christian society and wrote for a Christian readership. Not wishing to offend, he generally kept the precise nature of his religious ideas to himself, confining them to journals, letters, and private discussions."¹⁵

Muir was more than a popularizer of Transcendentalism.¹⁶ As his pantheism deepened through a variety of wilderness epiphanies, he articulated deep ecological sentiments long before the term was coined.¹⁷ Many of his perceptions, and much of his rhetoric, set the tone and pattern for the militant wilderness conservation movement in subsequent decades.

When speaking of wilderness, Muir often called his favorite wilderness places sacred, and referred to extractive enterprises as desecrations. He spoke of the Sierra Nevada as "mountains Holy as Sinai,"¹⁸ and often analogized wilderness to the ultimate sacred place—the Garden of Eden:

The very first forest reserve that I ever heard of . . . was located in the garden of Eden and included only one tree. The Lord himself laid out the boundaries of it, but even that reserve was attacked and broken in upon. The attacks then of sheepmen and lumbermen, unregenerate sons of Adam, on the Yosemite National Park are in the natural course of things.¹⁹

Muir often referred to specific wilderness places, mountains, groves, rivers as "cathedrals" or "temples," likening humans threatening them to agents of the devil. In response to a threatened dam on the Tuolumne River at Hetch Hetchy Valley, a righteous Muir railed against the "mischief makers and robbers of every degree from Satan to Senators."²⁰ "Dam Hetch Hetchy!" he wailed, "As well dam for water-tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man."²¹

For Muir, wilderness was a sacred environment where epiphanies could occur. Upon seeing a rare orchid, *Calypso borealis*, the young Muir wrote, "I never before saw a plant so full of life; so perfectly spiritual. It seemed pure enough for the throne of the Creator. I felt as if I were in the presence of superior beings who loved me and beckoned me to come. I sat down beside them and wept for joy."²² Using today's terminology, this experience reveals Muir's biocentrism. After this epiphany, Muir "no longer defined the world in human terms. All species, no matter how outwardly useless, had their own purposes."²³

Unitary consciousness (regarding the connectedness of all life) was the other central meaning Muir gained from his wilderness epiphanies. From Yosemite's Cathedral Peak Muir felt "earth and sky [draw] together as one [making one feel] part of wild nature, kin to everything . . . the Cathedral itself [is] a temple displaying Nature's best masonry and sermons in stone."²⁴ Sacred wilderness promotes proper spiritual perception, "in our

best times everything turns into religion, all the world seems a church and the mountains altars."²⁵

Michael Cohen writes that in another case, Muir so cherished Yosemite's Shadow Lake that, fearing its destruction by sheep, he kept it secret,

hoard[ing] its beauty as Indians before him had saved its sacred hunting grounds for times of hunger . . . Muir knew he could protect this sacred place [only] by keeping his silence. [But after an absence] he returned . . . to find his worst fears realized. [He wrote]: "all the gardens and meadow were destroyed by a horde of hooved locusts, as if swept by a fire. The money-changers were in the temple."²⁶

Muir viewed both humans and the creatures they tame as the primary agents desecrating paradise: "The beauty of the lilies falls on angels and men, bears and squirrels, wolves and sheep, bird and bees, but as far as I have seen, man alone, and the animals he tames, destroy these gardens."²⁷ But for Muir, domestic animals were not simply agents of despoliation, they were themselves desecrated. Humans had bred into oblivion their sacred, natural wildness. Muir glowed when describing noble, sacred, wild mountain sheep.²⁸ But tamed animals were not the only creatures defiled through domestication—humans were too—by their own civilization. "The gross heathenism of civilization has generally destroyed nature, and poetry, and all that is spiritual," including a proper humility.²⁹ The defiling influence of civilization, which improperly inflates human self-regard, needed to be purged from the body by "a good hard trip."³⁰ Indeed, "A little pure wildness is the one great present want, both of men and sheep."³¹ As Max Oelschlaeger portrays Muir's thesis in "Wild Wool," "both human beings and sheep would be improved by an infusion of wildness."³²

These ideas, that humans and their animals become degenerate when alienated from their wild natures, today permeate the sentiments of many ecological radicals. Following Muir, today's ecological radicals interpret Thoreau's phrase "in wildness is the preservation of the world" to mean that animals, including humans, are only authentic, only sacred, when undomesticated, living life wildly and spontaneously in harmony with, and when necessary in defense of, the natural world.³³

Animism was embedded in Muir's pantheism—sacred voices were discerned in entities most Westerners do not believe can communicate.³⁴ In 1871 Muir sent a note to the famous Transcendentalist Emerson, who was

visiting Yosemite valley, in Muir's opinion, too briefly to hear its sacred voices:

Do not drift away with the mob while the spirits of these rocks and waters hail you after long waiting as their kinsman and persuade you to closer communion. . . . I invite you to join me in a month's worship with Nature in the high temples of the great Sierra Crown beyond our holy Yosemite. It will cost you nothing save the time and very little of that for you will be mostly in eternity. . . . In the name of a hundred cascades that barbarous visitors never see . . . in the name of all the spirit creatures of these rocks and of this whole spiritual atmosphere. Do not leave us *now*.³⁵

On the occasion of an 1879 ascent in Alaska, Muir sensed all the entities surrounding him sharing his joy: "the plant people . . . rejoicing with me, the little ones as well as the trees, [as well as] every feature of the peak . . . seemed to know . . . the depth of my joy, as if they could read faces."³⁶

Given Muir's animistic and pantheistic wilderness epiphanies, his primary missionary strategy was to get people to listen to earth's sacred voices: "Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine-trees. Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish."³⁷

Here is the fundamental epistemological premise of the radical environmental movement, then and now. If people will only still themselves and listen to earth's sacred voices, they and the earth itself will be healed. This hope produced the tradition of Sierra Club outings, which attempted to bring people into proximity with such sacred voices, thereby enabling the development of proper earth ethics.³⁸

Similar strategies underlie virtually all of this century's preservationist missions.³⁹ From the 1930s on, for example, the dissemination of landscape photographs of undefiled places, free from human artifice but slated for despoliation, has been a central preservationist tactic.⁴⁰ Within Earth First!, the arts, including photography and other visual arts, poetry, prose, music, and theater (both guerilla street theater and a host of currently evolving ritual practices) are used to evoke and deepen the human sense of the sacredness of the earth and one's embeddedness in it. Such arts, however, are believed at best to *remind* us of primary perceptions that ultimately derive only from direct experience in wild nature.⁴¹

In Muir's writings, a central irony emerges; while spiritual growth requires exposure to wilderness, civilized humans are not worthy of it. Their inability to perceive its sacrality leads them to destroy it. Toward the end

of his life, Muir told an interviewer, "You say that what I write may bring this beauty to the hearts of those who do not go out to see it. They have no right to it."⁴² This sentiment, that only the community of wilderness purists are worthy of the wilderness, has been common throughout the past century. As Linda Graber notes in her study of Muir's legacy in the mountaineering subcultures of the West, wilderness "purists resent the outsider's presence in sacred space because his 'inferior' mode of perception" and "inability to cope with distance and elevation" leads them to "desecrate wilderness."⁴³ And this sentiment is often tied to a belief that purification is needed before approaching natural places, which may include strenuous effort or physical danger.⁴⁴

For Muir, as for modern-day preservationists, dangerous excursions had a spiritual goal.⁴⁵ Mountaineering, for example, facilitated mystical unitary experiences, providing a Zen-like loss of self and experience of actionless action—motion without an individual actor involved.⁴⁶ Several times while climbing, Muir felt that neither he nor the mountain was moving, "but something beyond them" both.⁴⁷

Fellow Travelers within the Preservation Movement

An essentially pagan spirituality motivated John Muir. The pantheistic experiences he described were in fact the central experience inspiring most preservationists prior to the 1960s (such as Bob Marshall, David Brower, Charles Lindberg, Alexander Skutch, Joseph Wood Krutch and Ansel Adams). Stephen Fox explains, however, that to express such ideas and "question the implications of Christianity, in an overtly Christian society, only complicated their efforts" so they, like Muir, tended to keep such sentiments to themselves.⁴⁸ Despite such reticence, one can find the above mentioned preservationists expressing interest in and affinity with Greek wood gods (Pan), Asian religions (especially Buddhism and Taoism), Native American spiritualities, and Spiritualism.⁴⁹ Even Aldo Leopold, who as a scientist was especially reluctant to sound mystical in his ecological writings, was deeply influenced by the Russian mystic Peter Ouspensky, who had thoroughly rejected Western dualism in his efforts to merge science and Eastern mysticism.⁵⁰

The social and spiritual ferment of the 1960s brought greater tolerance for non-Western spiritualities. Meanwhile preservationist critiques of the negative environmental consequences of Western religion and science began to be more pointedly made, often with pagan or Eastern spiritualities offered as nature-beneficent alternatives. By the early 1970s the religious

component of environmental controversies escalated in importance, with Christians counterattacking preservationist heresies.⁵¹

Although pagan spiritual sentiments animated John Muir and many preservationists prior to the 1960s, two writers signaled the emergence of a new and more militant form of pagan environmentalism, articulating a vision of communities engaged in direct-action resistance to the escalating destruction of wilderness places they considered sacred. They share many of Muir's spiritual sentiments and like him, their own contributions and rhetoric are often reflected within today's pagan environmental movement. Indeed, Edward Abbey and Gary Snyder are the two figures who most decisively set the stage for the emergence of Earth First!'s militant form of environmental paganism at the waning edge of the 1970s.

Desert Solitaire and The Monkeywrench Gang

Edward Abbey (1928–1989) was a Western writer who had periodically worked for the National Park and Forest Services, studied anarchist philosophy, taught writing for a Southwestern university, and whose nature writings, novels, and caustic essays reflected and captured the love many Westerners feel for their landscapes and their rage about its ongoing destruction. His writings are often credited with precipitating the radical environmental movement known as Earth First!. More accurately, Abbey wrote about a wave of illegal direct action against development schemes that began in the 1950s, and then fueled such ecological resistance by writing about and romanticizing it.

In this analysis, Edward Abbey represents those environmental pagans who are agnostic about metaphysical questions, but nevertheless believe that the natural world is ultimately valuable, and use metaphors of the sacred to convey spiritual experiences and perceptions. Writing in *Desert Solitaire* about his experiences during a mid-1950s stint as a ranger at Utah's Arches National Park, Abbey immediately struck a chord with many conservationists. Abbey considered desert landscapes, not mountains, to be the most holy, the most capable of fostering proper spiritual perception, but he shared Muir's contempt for tourists as agents of pollution, ridiculing their dependence on cars and other modern conveniences such as roads and "comfort stations." Like Muir, Abbey viewed citified humans as both perpetrators and victims of industrial culture—with a consequently flawed human character: "Mechanized tourists are at once the consumers, the raw material and the victims of Industrial Tourism."⁵²

Abbey pled for reverent behavior in America's National Parks: "We have

agreed not to drive our automobiles into cathedrals, concert halls, art museums . . . and the other sanctums of our culture; we should treat our national parks with the same deference, for they, too, are holy places."⁵³ Also like Muir, Abbey appropriated Eden as a metaphor to convey the sacredness of wilderness landscapes. "I saw only part of it," Abbey reminisced, reflecting on the canyon drowned behind Arizona's massive Glen Canyon dam, "but enough to realize that here was an Eden, a portion of the earth's original paradise. To grasp the nature of the crime that was committed, imagine the Taj Mahal or Chartres Cathedral buried in mud until only the spires remain visible."⁵⁴

For Abbey as for Muir, it was the ability of wilderness places to convey spiritual truth that revealed their sacrality. Their wilderness epiphanies led to strikingly similar perceptions; a relativized sense of self, a recognition of one's place as embedded in all reality, and the experience and affirmation of the intrinsic value of all Earth entities. Abbey, for example, told of a wilderness epiphany when, during an extended stay in the remote canyons of Arizona's Havasu Indian Reservation, the boundaries blurred between himself and all else:

I went native and dreamed away days on the shore of the pool under the waterfall, wandered naked as Adam under the cottonwoods, inspecting my cactus gardens. The days became wild, strange, ambiguous—a sinister element pervaded the flow of time. I lived narcotic hours in which like the Taoist Chang-tse I worried about butterflies and who was dreaming what. . . . I slipped by degrees into lunacy, me and the moon, and lost to a certain extent the power to distinguish between what was and was not myself: looking at my hand I would see a leaf trembling on a branch.⁵⁵

Abbey knew he was not unique, mentioning several books whose spiritualities are based on desert experiences, including Joseph Wood Krutch's pantheist classic, *The Voice of the Desert*.⁵⁶ All this led Abbey to wonder,

What is the peculiar quality or character of the desert that distinguishes it, in spiritual appeal, from other forms of landscape?

The restless sea, the towering mountains, the silent desert—what do they have in common? and what are the essential differences? Grandeur, color, spaciousness, the power of the ancient and elemental, that which lies beyond the ability of man to wholly grasp or utilize, these qualities all three share. In each there is the sense of something ultimate, with mountains exemplifying the brute force of natural processes [but] . . . what does the desert say?

The desert says nothing. Completely passive, acted upon but never acting, the desert lies there like the bare skeleton of Being, spare, sparse, aus-

tere, utterly worthless, inviting not love but contemplation. In its simplicity and order it [rejects the idea that] only the human is . . . significant or even . . . real.⁵⁷

Thus the desert is sacred because no place has greater power to evoke a proper spiritual understanding of one's place in the universe. Abbey concludes from his desert-fostered perception of human insignificance, that an authentic death is dying and being eaten by other living entities. A proper death is one final means of being absorbed into the entire universe.

This idea seems to have been inspired by poet Robinson Jeffers, who was once temporarily mistaken for carrion by a vulture:

I had walked since dawn and lay down to rest on a bare hillside
Above the ocean. I saw through half-shut eyelids a vulture
wheeling high up in heaven,
And presently it passed again, but lower and nearer, its orbit
narrowing, I understood then
That I was under inspection. I lay death-still and heard the
flight feathers
Whistle above me and make their circle and come nearer. . . .
how beautiful he looked, gliding down
On those great sails; how beautiful he looked, veering
away in the sea-light over the precipice. I tell you solemnly
That I was sorry to have disappointed him. To be eaten by that
beak and become part of him, to share those wings and
those eyes—
What a sublime end of one's body, what an enskyment; what a
life after death.⁵⁸

Abbey's reflections on death are reminiscent of Jeffers, whom he admired; an authentic death is one unaccompanied by life-prolonging technology, when the body is left unpolluted by poisons so that it can properly reunite with and nurture the earth.⁵⁹ Reflecting on a tourist who died alone in the desert, Abbey mused,

he had good luck—I envy him the manner of his going: to die alone, on a rock under the sun at the brink of the unknown, like a wolf, like a great bird, seems to me very good fortune indeed. To die in the open, under the sky, far from the insolent interference of leech and priest, before this desert vastness opening like a window onto eternity—that surely was an overwhelming stroke of good luck. . . . [Today], I think of the dead man under the juniper on the edge of the world, seeing him as the vulture would have seen him, far below and from a great distance. And I see myself through those cruel eyes . . . I feel myself sinking into the landscape, fixed in place like a stone, like a tree, a small motionless shape of vague outline,

desert-colored, and with the wings of imagination look down at myself through the eyes of the bird, watching a human figure that becomes smaller, smaller in the receding landscape as the bird rises into the evening.⁶⁰

Before his death in 1989, in his last act of desert consecration, Abbey arranged for his body, unpolluted by embalmer's artifice, to be spirited away and illegally buried in his beloved, sacred desert. In death he would nourish the desert as it had him.⁶¹

Although Abbey articulated some of the meaning of his desert experiences, he indicated there was still something ineffable about them. The desert's wisdom is a "treasure which has no name . . . [Nevertheless], there is *something* about the desert . . . , there is *something there* which the mountains, no matter how grand and beautiful, lack; which the sea, no matter how shining and vast and old, does not have."⁶²

As the desert vitiates our anthropocentrism, it also overturns our nationalist pretensions and fidelities. Abbey recounts an all-night discussion in which he confided his

desert thoughts to a visitor [and] . . . was accused of being against civilization, against science, against humanity. [After much discussion], with his help I discovered that I was not opposed to mankind but only to man-centeredness, anthropocentricity, the opinion that the world exists solely for the sake of man, not to science, which means simply knowledge, but to science misapplied, to the worship of technique and technology, and to the perversion of science properly called scientism, and not to civilization, but to [the United States and other] industrial culture[s].⁶³

Both superpowers, Abbey concluded, "are essentially *industrial* cultures . . . and the more they compete the more alike they become."⁶⁴

With such statements Abbey denied the special status of the U.S. nation-state, presaging his and his progeny's collision with religious nationalism and Christian fundamentalism, both of which usually assume that God has given the U.S. a special, earthly mission.⁶⁵

Although Abbey eschewed nationalistic beliefs in some special divine U.S. purpose, he nevertheless maintained an eschatological hope in the reversal of human desecrating crimes and a reharmonization of life on earth. The primary agent for the restoration of Eden would be earth herself. "Glen Canyon will be restored eventually, through natural processes, but it may take centuries. (Pray for an earthquake)."⁶⁶ But humans also may have a role—if they resist the forces of ecological destruction. Although

generally pessimistic about humans, Abbey thought that Americans were becoming "an increasingly pagan and hedonistic people (thank God!)" and asserted that "we are learning finally that the forests and mountains and desert canyons are holier than our churches. Therefore let us behave accordingly."⁶⁷ His hope was based in an ecological resistance movement that emerged in the 1950s, experimenting with tactics such as pulling up survey stakes and destroying advertising billboards. While on patrol in the Park he would sometimes find people with whom he could share "rumors from the underground where whatever hope we still have must be found."⁶⁸

Indeed, wilderness was both means and end in Abbey's eschatological hopes, prerequisite to liberty, because it provides excellent guerilla habitat,⁶⁹ and also the ultimate end after the anticipated collapse of industrial society. Industrial collapse, Abbey hoped, would lead to

the coming restoration of higher civilization [characterized by] scattered human populations modest in number that live by fishing, hunting, food-gathering, small-scale farming and ranching, that assemble once a year in the ruins of abandoned cities for great festivals of moral, spiritual, artistic and intellectual renewal—a people for whom wilderness is not a playground but their natural and native home.⁷⁰

Despite his frequent allusions to the desert as a sacred place, Abbey remained agnostic about ultimate metaphysical questions. In *Desert Solitaire*, when marveling at a favorite desert landscape, he wondered,

Is this at last *locus Dei*? There are enough cathedrals and temples and alters here for a Hindu pantheon of divinities. Each time I look up at one of the secretive little side canyons I half expect to see . . . the leafy god . . . a rainbow-colored corona of blazing light, pure spirit, pure being . . . *about to speak my name*.

If a man's imagination were not so weak, so easily tired, if his capacity for wonder not so limited, he would abandon forever such fantasies of the supernatural. He would learn to perceive in water, leaves, and silence more than sufficient of the absolute and marvelous, more than enough to console him for the loss of ancient dreams.⁷¹

And in his farewell preface to the same volume, written while he was aware he would soon die, he urged his readers to eschew metaphysical pre-occupations, addressing those who complain that *Desert Solitaire*

does not reveal the patterns of unifying relationships that many believe form the true and underlying reality of existence, I can only reply that I am content with surfaces, with appearances. I know nothing about *under-*

lying reality, having never encountered any. I've looked and I've looked, tried fasting, drugs, meditation, religious experience, even self-mortification, but never seem to get any closer to basic reality than the lizard on a rock, a hawk in the sky, a dead pig in the sunshine. . . . Appearance is reality, I say, and more than most of us deserve. You whine and whimper for immortality beyond space-time? Come home for God's sake, and enjoy this gracious Earth of yours while you can . . .

Throw metaphysics to the dogs. I never heard a mountain lion bawling over the fate of his soul.⁷²

Abbey believed that one can be unconcerned about metaphysics, but still perceive and act on the perception that wilderness places are sacred. For him, as for his Earth First! character/alter-ego Hayduke in *the Monkeywrench Gang* and *Hayduke Lives*, ecotage is the ultimate act of reconsecration.⁷³ The slogan "We stand for what we stand on" simply expresses Abbey's material brand of nature spirituality.⁷⁴ Abbey believes that one can know that the desert and other wild places are sacred—and that honor requires one to defend them—without speculating about why this is true.

Veneration and Gary Snyder's Labeling of *Turtle Island*

In Pueblo societies a kind of ultimate democracy is practiced. Plants and animals are also people, and through certain rituals and dances, are given a place in the political discussions of the humans. They are "represented." On Hopi and Navajo land, at Black Mesa . . . the cancer [of industrial civilization] is eating away at the breast of Mother Earth in the form of strip mining . . . to provide electricity for Los Angeles. The defense of Black Mesa is being sustained by traditional Indians, young Indian militants, and longhairs [hippies]. Black Mesa . . . is sacred territory. To hear her voice is to give up the European word "America" and accept the new-old name for the continent, "Turtle Island."

Calling this place "America" is to name it after a stranger. "Turtle Island" is the name given this continent by Native Americans based on creation mythology. The United States, Canada, Mexico, are passing political entities; they have their legitimacies . . . but they will lose their mandate if they continue to abuse the land.

For a people of an old culture, all their mutually owned territory holds numinous life and spirit. Certain places are perceived to be of high spiritual density because of plant or animal habitat intensities, or associations with legend, or connections with human totemic ancestry, or because of geomorphological anomaly, or some combination of qualities. These places are gates through which one can—it would be said—more easily be touched by a larger-than-human, larger-than-personal view . . .

The temples of our hemisphere [are] . . . the planet's remaining wil-

derness areas. When we enter them on foot we can sense the *kami* or (Maidu) *kukini* are still in force there.⁷⁵ —Gary Snyder

Gary Snyder emerged as an important counterculture figure during the 1950s "beat" literary movement, when a group of poets and writers, often inspired by various religions originating in the Far East, posed a fundamental challenge to the dominant values of the post-war generation. Raised in the Pacific Northwest, and influenced both by a love for the woods and by an early dose of anti-industrial "wobbly" lore, Snyder left San Francisco in 1955, spending twelve years studying Zen Buddhism and taking vows as a Zen monk. He introduced anti-anthropocentric ideas through his poetry into the "beat" counterculture, and eventually played a major role in promoting the counterculture's appreciation of and experimentation with communal forms of living beginning in the 1960s.⁷⁶ But it may be in his role in promoting the counterculture, which in turn became the breeding grounds for the radical environmental movement, that his most lasting impact will be felt.

America is a sacred place to Snyder—whose *Turtle Island* won the Pulitzer prize for poetry in 1975—especially its wilderness areas and places inhabited by Indians and others who practice "the old ways" ("nature based" practices including shamanism). Renaming America Turtle Island is an act of veneration acknowledging the sacrality of the land by linking it to sacred people—those still able to perceive its sacred voices and live respectfully upon it. Such renaming is simultaneously an act of subversion,⁷⁷ questioning or repudiating any view that links the sacredness of the continent to a presumed beneficent, divine "mission" carried forward by the U.S. nation-state.⁷⁸

The depth of Snyder's subversiveness is grounded in his animism and concomitant critique of monotheistic nationalism. Recalling that he was a "natural animist" as a child, Snyder asserts that other children are also because, they are "so open to other creatures." He also believes that, even today, animism and pantheism are more common than monotheism.⁷⁹ Moreover, he adds, monotheistic perceptions should be subverted because historically they promote and benefit from ecologically destructive nationalistic ideologies. Snyder believes that, viewed historically, monotheism and nationalism are unnatural aberrations:

What's not common is the mind-body dualism that begins to come in with monotheism. And the alliance of monotheism with the formation of centralized governance and the national state, that's . . . unnatural, and statistically in a minority on earth. The [majority of] human experience

has been an experience of animism. Only a small proportion of people on earth have been monotheists.⁸⁰

In place of monotheistic religious nationalism, Snyder and a few others began developing, during the 1960s, an alternative vision—one infused with eschatological hope, but not always optimism—a utopian eco-political philosophy they labeled bioregionalism. Seeking to replace nation-state governance with an “ecological anarchism” characterized by widespread liberty, mutual aid, and collective self-rule, bioregionalists contend that governance systems should be limited in size to specific ecosystem types.⁸¹ Most bioregionalists also believe that by “reinhabiting” and defending a specific region one can eventually discern its sacred voices and learn appropriate lifeways from them.

Such bioregional epistemology, assuming that one must long remain in a place in order to learn the birds, plants, weather, and eventually its sacrality, can be seen when Snyder quotes a Crow Elder, “I think if people stay somewhere long enough—even white people—the spirits will begin to speak to them. It’s the power of the spirits coming up from the land. The spirits and the old powers aren’t lost, they just need people to be around long enough and the spirits will begin to influence them.”⁸²

In bioregional thought, political philosophy, paganism, and ecological resistance converge. Often Snyder has alluded to wilderness epiphanies where animistic experiences of interspecies communication occur, or where one experiences a pantheistic sense that the entire earth is alive and sacred. Recalling in 1968 an earlier experience while working on a trail crew in Yosemite National Park, “I found myself being completely there, having the whole mountain inside of me, and finally [I had] a whole language inside of me that became one with the rocks and with the trees.”⁸³ Although reluctant to discuss such experiences specifically for fear of trivializing them, Snyder insists that “you can hear voices from trees” and recalls that “I have had a very moving, profound perception a few times that everything was alive (the basic perception of animism) and that on one level there is no hierarchy of qualities in life—that the life of a stone or a weed is as completely beautiful and authentic, wise and valuable as the life of, say, an Einstein.”⁸⁴

Snyder has been reluctant to discuss the specific experiences he has had of interspecies communication because words are inadequate to convey such experiences. But during a long discussion, he gave an idea of how these perceptions occur:

Do you know how things communicate with you? They don’t talk to you directly, but you hear a different song in your head. In fact, I knew an old Irish mystic lady in the bay area in the 50s, Ella was clear about this. Once while walking in Muir woods (near Mt. Tam), Ella said, ‘that yellow crown warbler gave that to me’ and I said, ‘you mean that one that just sang just now’ and she said ‘yes that was a special song, I heard it . . .’ It’s not that animals come up and say something in English in your ear. You know, it’s that things come into your mind. . . . Most people think that everything that comes into their mind is their own, their own mind, that it comes from within. It may come from someplace deep within or less deep, but everybody thinks it comes from within. That’s modern psychology. Well, some of those things that you think are from within are given to you from outside, and part of the trick is knowing which was which—being alert to the one that you know was a gift, and not think, ‘I thought that.’ Say [instead], ‘Ah, that was a gift!’ . . . I have a poem about Magpie giving me a song [Magpie’s song]. That’s just one [example].⁸⁵

Snyder thinks such experiences are available when actively pursued.⁸⁶

Muir, Abbey, and Snyder are united by the conviction that wilderness is sacred, at least partly because it is the locus of sacred experience. Snyder believes, for example, that wilderness pilgrimages and backpacking are especially good rituals of transformation. They “bring a profound sense of body-mind joy,” he writes, that “take us . . . out of our little selves into the whole mountains-and-rivers mandala universe.”⁸⁷ But private wilderness experiences are not enough; since the natural world is never totally ruined, resistance and restoration are morally obligatory, reconsecrating acts.⁸⁸

These convictions lead Snyder to view most extractive industry as desecration demanding resistance. He may have been the first to refer to industrial civilization as a “cancer” on earth. And in his valorizing of the Black Mesa and other ecological resistance movements, Snyder joins Abbey in providing some of the earliest published approval of extralegal ecological resistance. They diverged on the issue of monkeywrenching, however; Abbey enthusiastically endorsed it, while Snyder generally cautions against such practices, warning that its practitioners counterproductively cede the moral high ground and fail to recognize that all extra-legal activism is theater and must play well to the public audience.⁸⁹

Snyder also deviates from Abbey’s penchant to deride metaphysical speculation: “the world is nature, and in the long run inevitably wild, because the wild, as the process and essence of nature, is also an ordering of impermanence.”⁹⁰ Although he is inspired by crosscultural expressions of shamanism as well as animistic and pantheistic religious experiences,

Snyder's primary spiritual home remains Zen Buddhism, partly because he thinks ancient Zen teachings express deep ecological ethics with unsurpassed philosophical sophistication.⁹¹ He calls himself a "Buddhist-Ani-mist."⁹²

Despite disagreeing about the value of thinking about ultimate meta-physical questions (Abbey once told Snyder that he liked everything in *Turtle Island's* "Four Changes," "except the Buddhist bullshit"), Snyder and Abbey both believe that wilderness and wildness are essential to a spiritual epistemology capable of fostering a "larger-than-personal" insight. "Only the early Daoists," Snyder writes approvingly, recognized "that wisdom could come of wildness."⁹³ This epistemology of wildness is reminiscent of the sense among many environmental pagans that the earthly process of eating and being eaten is sacred.⁹⁴ Snyder's own spiritual perceptions parallel Abbey's here: "Countless men and women . . . have experienced a deep sense of communion and communication with nature and with specific nonhuman beings. Moreover, they often experienced this communication with a being they customarily ate."⁹⁵ "To acknowledge that each of us at the table will eventually be part of the meal is . . . allowing the sacred to enter and accepting the sacramental aspect of our shaky temporary personal being."⁹⁶ For Jeffers, Abbey, Snyder, and their soulmates, the vulture serves as metaphor for physical and ultimately spiritual union and reharmonization with all reality.

Snyder has been sympathetic to militant bioregionalists including Earth First! activists (themselves substantially inspired by Abbey). (Earth First!ers often discuss bioregional ideas, sometimes considering themselves the bioregional militia.)⁹⁷ Snyder has also promoted the bioregional strategy known as "watershed organizing," and is considered by many bioregionalists and radical environmentalists to be a movement "elder."

Snyder is also responsible for inspiring many within the pagan environmental movement to view and use the arts, especially poetry and song, as a tactic. Poetry and song are among "the few modes of speech that [provide] access to that other yogic or shamanistic view (in which all is one and all is many, and many are all precious)."⁹⁸ Indeed, using the arts as a weapon in ecological struggle has become a central strategy within contemporary pagan ecological resistance.⁹⁹

Back to the Pleistocene: The Primitive as Paradise

Snyder almost surely coined the slogan "back to the pleistocene!", subsequently appropriated by Dave Foreman, one of the founders of Earth

First!, as a rallying cry. Although Snyder later clarified his reflections in this area, speculating that people lived most harmoniously with nature during the Upper Paleolithic, and although he acknowledges that we cannot go back in time, this nostalgia for an earlier paradise parallels Muir's and Abbey's metaphorical references to Eden as a sacred place. In the last two decades, much debate has occurred within the pagan environmental movement regarding where humans went astray, and how we can live in a way that respects the earth and her creatures. Whatever the diagnosis about what humans did to leave Eden, Muir, Abbey and Snyder all helped set the stage for movements to follow, reconsecrating land and striving to resacralize human attitudes toward it.

Earth First!: Vanguard of the Pagan Environmental Movement¹⁰⁰

Since its founding in 1980, partly due to its high-profile tactics, Earth First! has surged to the forefront of what I am calling the pagan environmental movement. Although characterized by great pluralism, three central convictions are almost universally shared within the movement: (1) The natural world is morally valuable apart from its usefulness to human beings. The various labels for this idea, deep ecology, "biocentric," or "ecocentric" ethics, underscore the rejection of anthropocentric moral systems, whether theistic or humanistic. Related to this conviction are ubiquitous descriptions of the Earth and her natural processes as sacred, and exhortations that we resacralize our perceptions of her. Most Earth First!ers believe industrial agricultures went awry when they abandoned forager lifeways, losing the primordial perception that the earth is sacred. (2) We are in the midst of an unprecedented, anthropogenic, extinction crisis. (3) Corporate power prevents democratic processes from responding adequately to the crisis. Grounded upon these convictions, Earth First! activists have pioneered diverse means of ecological resistance, including illegal tactics such as civil disobedience and ecotage (or monkeywrenching).¹⁰¹

The actions of Peg Millet and Mark Davis, described earlier, may seem sensational. Yet similar experiences and sentiments to theirs underlie the moral passions of most ecological radicals practicing civil disobedience or ecotage. Such activists view wilderness defense as a sacred vocation, for in wild places yet undefiled by development, humans can still experience the sacred and discern how to live harmoniously on the planet.

Most Earth First! activists believe that today's environmental crises are

rooted in our current spiritual dysfunction—by paving over the earth's sacred voices we can no longer recognize or learn from the sacrality of Earth. (Indeed, my own interviews with activists confirm further, that animistic or pantheistic religious experiences undergird the ecocentrism of nearly all Earth First! activists.)¹⁰² The defense of wilderness is essential if humans are to "resacralize" Earth and avert an apocalyptic, global ecological collapse.

Given the heritage of Muir, Abbey, Snyder and others, it is obvious that Earth First!ers are not expressing new sentiments when they rage against human despoliation of nature—but they have extended that outrage to an increasing number of human activities. I cannot detail every form of earth defilement perceived by Earth First!ers nor enumerate each consecrating response, but an overview of typical Earth First! perceptions of and responses to the destruction of nature is possible. I will follow this with a more detailed discussion of the battle over efforts to build telescopes on Mount Graham, a site in Arizona considered sacred, in differing but related ways, by Earth First!ers and many Native Americans.

Perceiving the Sacrality and Desecration of Earth

Earth First!ers perceive many forms of human-caused defilement, including commercial developments (and the accompanying pavement); most forms of tourism (following Abbey, especially industrial tourism including developed campgrounds involving habitat destruction); human efforts to "manage" nature (by replacing natural, biodiverse forests with tree farms, for example); and suppressing fires (thwarting sacred natural processes). Also defiling is the pollution of land, water, and sky (including aviation vapor trails) and flush toilets (robbing earth of sacred, regenerating compost). Indeed for most Earth First!ers, few corners of modern society have not profaned Sacred Earth, from the laboratories of vivisectionists to zoos and aquatic parks.

The human enclosure and privatization of land escalating with the emergence of industrial societies is often thought of as the central, arrogant, desecrating crime. One reason enclosures are abominating acts is that they destroy the earth's sacred peoples—those indigenous "nature peoples" who know how to live in a way that recognizes and venerates Sacred Earth. (Several groups led by Earth First!ers include "Sacred Earth" in their organization titles or charters.)

Earth First!ers generally share the conviction of their predecessor preservationists, that the defilement of earth is exacerbated by the desecration

of wild animals by humans, who breed into oblivion the wildness and freedom originally inherent in all creatures.

Of course, sacred and profane animals are not new in the history of religion. What is novel is the suggestion that *domestication* profanes sacred animals. Earth First!ers, for example, share Muir's contempt for domesticated sheep, sometimes quoting his description of them as "hooved locusts." In an interesting contemporary innovation, Earth First!ers buttress their analysis of the process of desecration with ecological science. Domestic sheep defile land (by overgrazing and displacing authentic, wild creatures), water (by polluting it with their excrement), and sky (by belching and farting enormous amounts of ultimately anthropogenic greenhouse gases).

Consequently, many Earth First!ers wish to purify sacred places of unauthentic domestic animals. Some even suggest that domestic cows and sheep should be clandestinely shot or poisoned. Reports of such incidents have been increasing in the Western U.S.¹⁰³ Sacred places also need to be purified of human despoilers, whether developer, government lackey, off-road vehicle fanatic, religious fundamentalist pro-natalist breeders, or eager immigrants lusting after unsustainable consumer lifestyles.¹⁰⁴

From Perception to Reconsecration: Responding to the Desecration of Earth

Awareness of this part of the radical environmental worldview explains why veneration and consecration takes many forms, including *rituals of resistance* such as political protests, civil disobedience, ecotage, and electoral politics; *rituals of healing* designed to purify the earth from human defilement (e.g., through ecological restoration projects) and human consciousness from delusions of separation (e.g., through meditative workshops); and *rituals of worship* such as neopagan ritual circles at Earth First! gatherings.

Much creative energy goes into such ritualizing. A ritual process known as the "Council of All Beings" provides a context where devotees grieve for the loss of wild creatures and seek empowerment from them for ecological struggles.¹⁰⁵ Since at least 1986 the liturgical ritualizing unfolding at Earth First! wilderness gatherings has been designed to foster group cohesiveness (one night, for example, is devoted to the "tribal unity dance"), and to deepen these activists' spiritual connections with nature.

One form of ritual worship that particularly illustrates the present concerns of Earth First! are "road shows." These events typically weave ecol-

ogy lectures with slide-show pictures of undefiled wilderness, contrasting these with landscapes devastated by clear-cuts or overgrazing. The itinerant road show "prophets" sometimes exhort the assembly to "learn to listen to the land"—reflecting an animistic presupposition—while urging repentance from ecological destruction and the restoration of wilderness places to their original purity.¹⁰⁶

Pictures of undefiled sacred places are believed able to touch natural, but societally suppressed, connections humans have to nature. Alice Di-Micelle, a long-term Earth First! musician from the northwestern U.S., was designated a special role during a 1992 European road show. She was to bring her audience *experientially* into the forest: through her slides and music, she was expected to awake in them a mystical experience of the wild. Illustrating her own feelings about the sacrality of wilderness, she exclaimed, "that was fine with me, [the wilderness] is my church."¹⁰⁷

Earth First! worshipers sometimes express devotion to the earth explicitly, referring to her as the Goddess or Gaia. Certainly Earth First! ritualizing is designed to focus attention on the sacredness of earth and foster in neophyte and mainstay the pagan religious experiences and sentiments that undergird the movement.

Although I have delineated three kinds of rituals—resistance, healing, and worship—these are often intertwined. Sacred songs learned during wilderness gatherings are regularly sung at demonstrations. Acts of ecological resistance, such as being buried in a logging road or doing a multi-day "tree sit," sometimes produce altered states of consciousness involving experiences of unity with earth or a tree, or communication with the spirit of some nonhuman entity or earth herself. Acts of worship or meditative processes such as "eco-breath" workshops, designed primarily to alter consciousness and deepen one's empathy toward and connection with the sacred natural world, are also thought by some to actually facilitate planetary healing.¹⁰⁸ (The metaphysical basis for this belief is the conviction that, since all entities are interrelated metaphysically, the transformed consciousness of one or more beings can have a salutary healing impact upon the whole.)

The above typifications show that the pagan environmental movement exhibits diverse strategies of venerating land. By looking at the specific events at Mount Graham, we can better see the impact pagan environmentalists are having, particularly when their spiritual sentiments collide with incompatible ways of understanding sacred places.

The Battle for Mount Graham: Earth and Outer Space as Sacred Space

At every Earth First! rendezvous, different groups lobby to host the next year's Earth First! gathering. The lobbying typically centers around arguments about which wilderness is the most pristine and threatened, and thus worthy of pilgrimage and defense. In 1992 several groups made impassioned pleas, arguing that their preferred place was the most biologically diverse, with the most fragile ecosystem; had many endangered species; and represented a crucial, precedent-setting battle. (The arguments became so repetitious that several advocates humorously recited this litany of claims as a prologue before advancing their specific cases.) The decisive factor in the group's decision turned out to be whether *people* they considered sacred—namely North American Indians with their nature-based religions—were also imperiled and whether the campaign could promote a desired alliance with them.

Earth First! chose to meet during the summer of 1993 in eastern Arizona where, since the mid-1980s, environmentalists and Earth First!ers had been fighting plans by astronomers at the University of Arizona and other cooperating research institutions, including the Vatican Observatory, to construct the Mount Graham International Observatory, a complex of advanced technology telescopes. (The Vatican astronomers moved to Arizona in the early 1980s in order to flee Rome's light pollution.) As the battle unfolded, it increasingly had been characterized by an environmentalist alliance with traditional Apache Indians who considered the peak sacred and viewed the observatory project as a threat to their freedom of religious practice. Predictably, there were religious tensions between this resistance and the Vatican's proponents of the telescope project.

The Mount Graham controversy provides what may prove to be an archetypal example of conflicts over American sacred space tangled with environmental disputes. The central characteristics of this controversy can be quickly summarized. Earth First!ers view Mount Graham as sacred because it is a special, ecologically fragile, "sacred island ecosystem" (according to Earth First! movement tabloids) that since the last Ice Age has been isolated biologically by the surrounding desert. Consequently, it provides habitat for several unique species of flora and fauna that evolved only there, including the Mount Graham red squirrel.

Earth First!ers generally wish to support indigenous nature peoples wherever they are found, believing they provide the remnant of human knowledge and spirituality needed for the reharmonization of humans and sacred natural processes. Consequently, Earth First!ers also view Mount Graham as sacred in deference to traditional Apache who also venerate the mountain and oppose the telescopes. Various Apache believe that the mountain is the chief (or one) among four (or two) sacred mountains, is an important pilgrimage site, a secret burial site for their medicine people, the home of important spiritual beings (sometimes called the Gaahn, Lightning People or Crown Dancers) to whom they pray for life giving water, and the locus of sacred plants essential to the practice of their healing arts.¹⁰⁹ Apache opponents fear the telescopes will block their prayers to the creator, which travel to the heavens via Mount Graham.¹¹⁰

Resistance to the Mount Graham telescopes began when both pagan and mainstream environmentalists declared that it would contribute to the extinction of the endangered red squirrel. About the time the prospects for this strategy declined, traditional Apache came forward with their claims about Mount Graham's sacredness. Environmentalists quickly championed these assertions, partly as a strategy to open a second front in the battle, but also out of sympathy for the nature spirituality and cultural integrity of the Apache. By the early 1990s the two strategies had merged into complementary expressions of the sacrality of the mountain, well encapsulated in the heading of a publicity flyer: "Mt. Graham—Sacred Mountain, Sacred Ecosystem."¹¹¹

The beginning of the resistance can be traced back to mid-1985 with the formation of the Coalition for the Preservation of Mount Graham. A year later \$20,000 of equipment was stolen from the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory on Mount Graham's High Peak. In 1987 a civil disobedience campaign began with the arrests of Earth First!ers blockading road construction for the project. On 30 August 1988, Dave Foreman vowed that, if built, the telescopes would be destroyed. In another act of defiance, on 5 May 1989, microwave dishes and telescope housing were sabotaged at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

In November 1988, however, when Congress passed the telescope-sympathetic Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act, the University of Arizona gained permission to construct three telescopes immediately through an exemption from federal environmental laws. A second phase would include four more, if the red squirrel population did not decline as a result of the first phase.¹¹² By September 1993 the first two telescopes, including

the Vatican observatory, had been completed, and it appeared that the act was the deathknell to the *environmental* strategy against the observatory complex.¹¹³

Much of the *environmentally* based opposition to the project has been based on the perception, often not articulated for strategic reasons, that Mount Graham is a sacred wilderness ecosystem. About the time of the enabling legislation and the waning of hopes that ecological rationales would thwart the telescopes, an opposition *explicitly* based on the sacredness of the mountain reignited the controversy.

This phase of the opposition was foretold by several letters sent in January 1987 to the United States Forest Service during the National Environmental Policy Act comment period. The authors claimed that Mount Graham was sacred to the Apache; one suggested that Mount Graham was currently utilized by the San Carlos Apache for religious purposes. But these claims went largely unacknowledged until 4 October 1989, when Ola Cassadore Davis, the great-granddaughter of Apache Chief Cassadore, went public in the *Tucson Citizen* protesting the scopes as a desecration.¹¹⁴ Environmentalists soon established a coalition with Davis and other Apache spiritual leaders who shared Davis's perceptions, forming the Apache Survival Coalition in May 1990.

Soon the Coalition had presented its claims to a congressional oversight committee dealing with Mount Graham and secured a 10 July 1990 resolution by the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council asserting that "for generations our elders have instructed us on the sacredness of Dzil nchaa si an (Big Seated Mountain, aka Mount Graham)," labeling the project "a display of profound disrespect" and proclaiming "firm and total opposition to the construction of a telescope."¹¹⁵ About a year later, in a 6 June 1991 letter signed by all nine members, the Tribal Council threatened the Forest Service with a lawsuit for violating several federal environmental and religious freedom laws. Shortly afterward (on 19 August 1991) the coalition filed a lawsuit versus the U.S. Government (and its Forest Service) for permitting the telescopes; the University of Arizona joined the lawsuit to gain standing to defend their interests. The Tribal Council reaffirmed its support for the Coalition's legal effort on 10 December 1991.¹¹⁶ Also, during 1990 and 1991 several letters were written to U.S. government agencies by prominent Apaches protesting the desecration of Mount Graham,¹¹⁷ and a variety of Native American tribal associations and solidarity groups in the U.S. and Europe went on record opposing the telescopes.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, direct action by Earth First! activists and other environmentalists against

the road building and site preparation, and civil disobedience at the University of Arizona, led to increasing numbers of arrests and substantial regional awareness regarding the controversy.

Although the resistance had gained momentum during the early 1990s, telescope opponents suffered a major setback in September 1993 when the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council, on a 4-4 vote that Council Chair Harrison Talgo refused to break, withdrew its opposition to the telescopes (Salerno 1993).¹¹⁹ Moreover, by this date, prospects for a legal victory by either environmentalists or the Apache Survival Coalition appeared remote.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the tenacity of the opposition had created a public relations nightmare for the University of Arizona and the Vatican, who are now seen by many to be insensitive or racist toward Native Americans and their religions. In May 1992 Apache and other U.S. opponents of the telescopes traveled to Europe, winning resolutions opposing the telescopes by many members of the German and Italian parliaments.¹²¹ An audience with the pope that had been scheduled to discuss their concerns was abruptly cancelled, further bolstering accusations of Vatican insensitivity and "bad faith." On 16 December 1991 Belgian activists pulled a bulldozer up to a Catholic cathedral, symbolically threatening its desecration, protesting by analogy the Vatican's bulldozing of Apache sacred ground.¹²² And on 18 August 1992, in a "sacred run" for Mount Graham, Apache ran from Mount Graham to Tucson to publicize the importance of Mount Graham to their religious traditions.¹²³

Negative publicity contributed to the withdrawal of all U.S. participants in the telescope project, including the Smithsonian Institution and several prestigious universities, leaving only the Vatican Observatory, Germany's Max Planck Institute, and Italy's Arceti Observatory as collaborators. Dr. Steve Emerine, spokesperson for the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory, claimed that it was impossible to have predicted how fierce and relentless the opposition would be. He might not have been so surprised had he recognized that people fight the hardest when defending values or places they consider most sacred.

Proponents of the telescope have done their best to deflect opponents' accusations. The Vatican and its observatory personnel in particular have been vulnerable to the charge of religious insensitivity.¹²⁴ This has been complicated by Pope John Paul II's pronouncements supporting Native American efforts to preserve their heritage.¹²⁵ Such pronouncements have been used by telescope opponents to accuse the Catholic church of hypocrisy. Opponents cite, for example, the name originally given to the third

telescope permitted by the enabling legislation, "the Columbus project," as evidence of Vatican and University of Arizona insensitivity.¹²⁶ To diffuse such perceptions, the project was given a simpler, more descriptive label, the "Large Binocular Telescope."¹²⁷

The Vatican Observatory's astronomers faced a conundrum. They would either have to withdraw from the project, abandoning professional prestige, years of effort, and probably their sole chance to control a high-quality (but not unusually powerful) telescope.¹²⁸ Or, they would have to reject claims by the coalition and others that they were desecrating the mountain and promoting cultural genocide. The observatory's response has been led by two Jesuits, George V. Coyne, the observatory's director, and Charles W. Polzer, curator of ethnohistory at the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, Arizona. Their strategy has been to insist that they respect Native American religion and to acknowledge that the mountain is considered sacred by some Apache, while denying that there is any "credible evidence" from "authentic Apache" that the telescope project violates Apache religious freedom.¹²⁹

In spite of their efforts to appear sympathetic to those who revere the mountain, a review of Coyne and Polzer's defense of the observatories reveals ambivalence and even hostility toward the pagan perceptions animating many of their opponents; these Jesuits reject the conception of sacred space articulated by their opponents.

Coyne and Polzer have argued that there is no historical or archeological evidence proving that the telescopes are incompatible with Apache religious practice: since no shrines were found at the telescope site on Emerald Peak, for example, the project cannot desecrate sacred sites. Moreover, they assert that since an anthropologist who studied the Apache in the 1930s did not mention Mount Graham as a pilgrimage destination, it must not have been an important ceremonial site.¹³⁰ They conclude that Apache religious practice is not dependent on physical access to the mountain and that thus the telescope does not threaten Apache religious freedom.¹³¹

Polzer and Coyne have made these assertions despite their acknowledgment that "the field notes of Grenville Goodwin, archived at the Arizona State Museum [demonstrate] that the Apaches did revere Mt. Graham." Coyne argued that "none of the references single out either the summit or the range itself as unique," insisting that "the Vatican Observatory offers no opposition to the continuance of Apache religious practices or the preservation of traditional Apache religious sites on Mt. Graham." He goes on to suggest that, not only is there is no evidence "Mt. Graham possesses a

sacred character which precludes responsible and legitimate use of the land," but that "responsible and legitimate use of the land enhances its sacred character."¹³²

Coyne's assertions have been sharply disputed by two contemporary anthropologists specializing in Apache culture, Keith Basso of the University of New Mexico and Elizabeth Brandt of Arizona State University at Tempe. They contend that Coyne and Polzer inappropriately exclude or misinterpret the ethnographic evidence, and that both the field notes of Goodwin (who studied the Apache in the 1930s) and contemporary ethnography demonstrate that Mount Graham is vitally important for Apache religion and practice.¹³³

Coyne has gone especially far in his effort to appear sympathetic to Apache religion, virtually adopting his opponents' rhetoric of sacrality, while still insisting that the telescopes will not defile the mountain: "We wish, frankly, to preserve the sacred character of Mount Graham by assuring that public access associated with the Observatory will not contribute to the degradation of the mountain. We are dedicated to assuring that the platform from which we observe the heavens will not become a staging area for the destruction of the earth." Coyne even invited "our Apache brothers and sisters to join [us] in finding the Spirit of the Mountains reflected in the brilliance of the night skies."¹³⁴ Such statements seem to concede the sacredness of the mountain, and even to contradict Coyne's monotheistic tradition. They also reveal that, underlying much of the controversy, there are irreconcilable conceptions regarding what actually constitutes sacred space.

Indeed, it is plausible to suggest that for Coyne, outer space is the ultimate sacred space. Space is sacred partly because it is the place where divine mysteries are still being revealed—today through the miracle of astronomical technology. Upon such an premise, astronomy itself assumes the character of a sacred calling. Evidence for this interpretation can be found in Coyne's assertion that the Mount Graham International Observatory will eventually "contribute to both . . . the conservation of the environment and the knowledge of its ultimate origins" as well as fulfill human "curiosity to know where [the environment] and human civilization came from."¹³⁵ The implied goal here is to find God, or at least deepen human understanding of God's creation and character. One might even surmise that the sites of such missionary activity—in this case telescope complexes—like any epiphany site, would also assume a sacred character. It is not surprising that Coyne, whose Catholicism has traditionally located

God outside the biosphere, would still conceive of space, of the heavens, as the ultimate sacred place, nor that the practice of his religion and the deepening of his understanding would supersede in importance the religious practices of a relatively small number of traditional Apache and environmental pagans.

Other statements illustrate the incompatibility between the worldviews of Coyne and his opponents. Accusing environmentalist "ideologs" of manipulating American Indians into opposing the telescopes, Coyne declared "No mountain is as sacred as a human being and there is no desecration more despicable than the use of a human person for self-serving purposes."¹³⁶ Here Coyne's anthropocentrism is clear, quietly grounded in those biblical passages assuming that humans alone are sacred because only they are created in God's image. Certainly such assumptions collide with the pantheistic or animistic perceptions of many pagan environmentalists; and also with the perceptions of those Native Americans who speak of other creatures as kin and reject Chain-of-Being hierarchies.

Even more telling are statements in Coyne's "Personal Reflections upon the Nature of Sacred in the Context of Mount Graham International Observatory." He begins, "I have a profound respect . . . for the resolutions of the San Carlos Apache council" declaring that Mount Graham is sacred. But when people claim a public place is sacred and deserves protection, he continues, such protection would have "civic effects [and] . . . they must offer reasonable arguments. To my satisfaction they have not." Coyne next assails the worldviews of many of his opponents, criticizing those who "claim that the features of our land (nature, if you will), . . . the earth transcends our existence." The earth has only been around 4.5 billion years, he reasons, and given the life span of the sun, will last only another 5 billion years. "There will come a time when . . . Nature and the earth . . . will not be there. . . . They are beautiful . . . but passing, expressions of the sacred relationship I have with God."¹³⁷

Coyne clearly believes the earth itself is not really sacred because it is not eternal; at most it can "express" the sacred human-divine relationship. But the earth is not sacred or valuable intrinsically as it is for environmental pagans and traditional Native Americans. Again, Coyne resists the metaphysical holism of his opponents, arguing that "We must distinguish between earth, nature, cultures, and [eternal] human beings." He concludes with words reminiscent of the Inquisition, "As both an environmentalist and a religious person I find that it is precisely the failure to make the distinctions I mention above that has created a kind of environ-

mentalism and a religiosity to which I cannot subscribe and which must be suppressed with all the force that we can muster."¹³⁸

One further statement helps clarify why for Coyne, the evangelical mission of the Church takes precedence over fears of earthly desecrations. Coyne envisions asking extraterrestrials contacted through the sub-millimeter radio frequency technology (built in phase one) if they had "ever experienced something similar to Adam and Eve, in other words, 'original sin'," and "Do you people also know a Jesus who has redeemed you?" A reporter interviewing him concluded that, "The Roman Catholic Church is look[ing] for life in outer space [in order to] spread the Gospel to extraterrestrials."¹³⁹ Apparently the sacred calling of the Mount Graham International Observatory extends beyond the quest for epiphanies to a willingness to spread the Gospel's universal message.

Some Catholics have been appalled at the statements by Coyne and Polzer, forming a group they called Catholics for Ethics and Justice to fight the telescopes and persuade the Church to withdraw from the project.¹⁴⁰ Coyne views this group as a nefarious front for the Apache Survival Coalition, accusing them of "stealthy, cowardly, unethical, and unjust" tactics and falsehoods, threatening them with a lawsuit in a 19 May 1992 letter. Their attorney responded by threatening Coyne with a defamation lawsuit.¹⁴¹

Communication between adversaries in this conflict has become intensely vitriolic. In one of the ugliest moments in the conflict, Charles Polzer attacked a group that, ironically, shares his monotheistic presuppositions. Polzer accused two Phoenix medical doctors, leaders of the mainstream environmentalist opposition to the telescope project, of spearheading a "Jewish Conspiracy" designed to "undermine and to destroy the Catholic Church."¹⁴² One of the two doctors is Lutheran.¹⁴³

A Sacred but Fragile Alliance¹⁴⁴

If differing perceptions regarding the sacredness of Mount Graham have fueled the conflict between proponents and opponents of the Observatory complex, the perception that the mountain is sacred, shared by most opponents of the project, has not led to unity among the resistance. There remains enough diversity of opinion about Mount Graham's sacredness that internal bickering periodically threatens to undermine the opposition's fragile alliance.

This became apparent shortly after Mount Graham was chosen as the

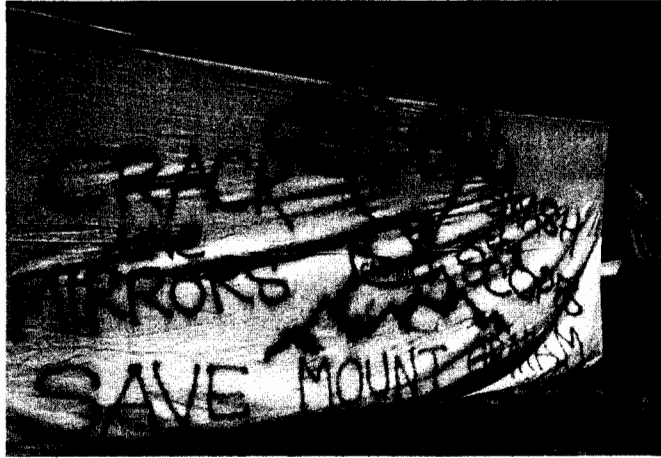


3.1 Editorial cartoon by Mike Ritter. Reprinted by permission of Tribune Newspapers of Arizona, all rights reserved.

pilgrimage site for the 1993 Earth First! rendezvous. Several close associates of Earth First! founder Dave Foreman expressed dismay that the rendezvous would be on, rather than near, Mount Graham.¹⁴⁵ Fearing that five hundred people would damage the fragile ecosystem, one said with disgust, "they think because they are nature-loving hippies that their shit doesn't stink. If they think the place is sacred, they should stay off the mountain." Jasper Carlton, founder of the Biodiversity Legal Foundation, an important legal arm of the radical environmental movement, complained "If it's sacred to the Apache and sacred from an ecological perspective, then it's hypocritical to tramp 500 people through there."¹⁴⁶

Fears that such a gathering would itself desecrate the site were raised at the 1992 site selection meeting. The assembly had been assured that ecologically sensitive places would be avoided, and that Apache elders would be consulted to insure their sacred places were respected.¹⁴⁷

Despite assurances that the mountain would be respected, several prominent Earth First!ers did not attend the 1993 meeting, and their criti-



3.2-3.5 Demonstration at the University of Arizona in July of 1993 protesting the Mt. Graham International Observatory. All photographs © Bron Taylor. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

cisms eventually were passed on to the rendezvous organizers. One organizer responded to these criticisms by arguing that the precautions taken to protect the mountain, and the direct action resistance, meant that "in many ways, we were resacralizing the place."¹⁴⁸ Thus the Earth First! pilgrimage was seen as *both* desecration *and* reconsecration among those very people who *agree* that Mount Graham is sacred and should be defended.

Extensive precautions were taken at the rendezvous, including plastic tape strung to bar access to red squirrel habitat, signs urging devotees to remove their shoes before entering the meadow where the daily meetings and workshops were held (for some, going barefoot has the additional epistemological benefit of enhancing one's contact with earth's sacred voices), and solar power was used to amplify music during the major rendezvous rally, maintaining the purity of the sacred, ritual space. Additionally, restoration efforts followed the rendezvous. That such rules and precautions were adopted without controversy is striking given the rebellious and anarchistic predispositions of most Earth First!ers.

One proposed rule, however, led to dissension. As early as the 1990 rendezvous in Vermont, activists worried that the rendezvous' alcohol-fueled party atmosphere could alienate Native American activists who link such drink to cultural genocide. On Mount Graham the issue came to a boil.

After an evening where revelers encroached upon an "alcohol-free campfire" complaints were raised at the next morning's "circle" (begun after the passing of smoldering, purifying sage) and the assembly was reminded that the Apache elders wanted no alcohol on the Mountain. The ensuing discussion lasted several hours, partly because Earth First! tries to operate by consensus, talking until agreement is reached or opponents "stand aside" and remove their "blocks" to the group will.

A majority were willing to quickly pass a resolution disapproving of alcohol consumption. The outnumbered opposition, however, was difficult to budge. Virtually all of the debate centered around whether alcohol consumption was compatible with respect for the sacred people (the Apache and other indigenous nature peoples) and the sacred mountain itself.

The morning's discussion began calmly, with a respected Sea Shepherd activist (known for successfully sinking whaling vessels), urging everyone to think carefully about the "sound bites" they might give the press. He suggested "we're here because this place is sacred." The discussion devolved. A woman responded, "but they'll think we're desecrating this

place, especially if they see drugs and alcohol." A man from the rendezvous committee responded defensively, missing her point, but implicitly responding instead to the criticisms that the rendezvous itself was a hypocritical defilement, "We're not desecrating [it], we're off the site itself."

A brief digression followed, during which a woman objected to allowing the press to attend evening fire circles. She didn't want them to see the "spiritual stuff" that happens in that sacred space-time, likening this to "invading a church." At this point a young American Indian Movement (AIM) activist appealed for abstention from alcohol, articulating two arguments often repeated thereafter: drinking is disrespectful to the mountain itself, and it is disrespectful to the indigenous peoples of this continent whose cultures are threatened with extinction by the dominant European culture. "In our hearts we don't want you to drink," he entreated, "look to your heart. Look to respect these natural places." If your family is into the bottle, "you'll respect that by not drinking . . . You're supposed to be our allies, not our enemies, and you can't be our allies if you don't help us here."

A woman spoke next, asserting that refraining for two days out of respect for the mountain was not asking too much. Angel responded, "We don't want two days set aside for Indian people, for this sacred mountain." We should have respect every day, he insisted.

At this point, the debate went back and forth. "As an anarchist" a woman wanting to block the resolution against drinking explained, "I don't want any restrictions. Even if we make restrictions, they will be ignored." Several agreed loudly, clapping and exclaiming "ho," ironically using a mode of agreement borrowed from Native American cultures. Passionately, and on the verge of tears, a man expressed his dismay at such sentiments, "There are lots of Native nations watching us. Many won't come here because of the alcohol, because of their fear [of us due to our reputation about alcohol]. We're talking about [risking an alliance with] six million indigenous people in North America!"¹⁴⁹

This plea did not convince those ideologically opposed to any official position: "We don't want to make laws about this stuff. It should come from the heart." Disagreeing, another voice expressed disbelief at what he was hearing, making a passionate appeal, "We're arguing about whether or not to respect a mountain. What's going on here? Are we going to respect the mountain or not? Or are we going to be butt-heads?" To this a woman shouted out, "If we disgraced the mountain, we did it by *driving* here."

Another confessed to feeling bad that she drank alcohol the previous night, "I've prayed and asked the Mountain for forgiveness" she exclaimed, "we can learn a lot from this mountain—and alcohol gets in the way."

To all this another woman replied incredulously, dismissing the notion that the mountain has an opinion, "The mountain doesn't care if we drink or not." Later, when given a chance to respond, another woman claimed that to deny the mountain has a perspective is "a white view," arguing that "we also have people in our tribe hurting themselves with alcohol" and concluding that "out of respect for the mountain we should not drink."

Despite occasional interjections opposing the preference of the majority to pass a resolution against alcohol consumption, the majority relentlessly mounted their case. A Wiccan woman involved in the development of various forms of ritual practice in the movement began by expressing her empathy for those who want to drink, "I come from a Catholic and a pagan perspective. In both, drinking is sacramental." And "normally, I'd be a rebel" against those who want to make rules. "But here, this is some one else's church. It's right for them, in their church, to ask us not to drink. Just as I would ask them not to use tobacco, their sacrament, in many of our pagan ceremonies." She also reminded the assembly that Ola Cassadore Davis, the Apache elder leading the opposition to the telescopes, had requested that each morning and night everyone take a moment alone to listen to the Spirit of this mountain. "If we do that," she suggested to much clapping and more "Ho!s" "that voice will make the decision for us."

A man who often leads neopagan sweat ceremonies at Earth First! retreats argued similarly, "It seems to me that, despite the fact that the entire Earth is sacred, this place is especially sacred. We must remember why we're here, what our duty is. Respect is not too much to ask." A woman agreed, noting that "We've drawn inspiration from their cultures—it's the least we can do—we're talking about helping them to survive." Another woman argued that there had been too much talking about what "I" want, not enough about what's good for the Earth or what's good for "the sacred alliance with the Native peoples here." These appeals were greeted with expressions of approval by at least ninety percent of the gathering.

After a dissenter again inveighed against more rules, a long-term AIM activist stepped forward, mentioning how his people have substances like peyote to alter consciousness, but "the bottle symbolizes the destruction of our people. If you want to help the family, you have to be in solidarity" with us in this struggle too, he insisted. He concluded by grounding his antidrinking argument in the sacrality of the Mountain, reasoning "If we

are to respect this mountain you have to respect our bodies that come from it."

Perhaps the turning point came when Dana Lyons, a musician who has been particularly active in promoting the alliance, and who has emerged as a spiritual leader whose role is to focus the tribe on the sacred and their corresponding duties, walked into the center of the circle. This was an unusual move, symbolically asserting his spiritual authority, "With all due respect, we are warriors," he began, pausing for emphasis, "Every society has warriors who are working for the community." This issue can be looked at two ways, he asserted, we can view it simply, like the Indians, "No fucking consensus—its sacred, [pausing again for emphasis], this should be enough." A secondary rationale for not drinking, he continued, is strategic. "We're talking about the most important alliance ever formed to fight for the Earth. At what other rendezvous have we had AIM people here?" he asked rhetorically. Then raising his voice to emphasize his conclusion, "The warrior sometimes must rise above his personal needs for the good of the community." His speech was greeted with the most "Ho!s" and cheers to occur during the debate.

Shortly thereafter, an AIM activist from Oregon exclaimed, "I don't want to have to go home and report that we spent so much time talking about chemical dependence [and] respect for Native Americans. I want to talk about strategies to make respect for the land happen." Expressing pantheistic and animistic reverence for the land, he made a variety of observations: the tree people, the bird people, are listening, "These peoples have to decide if they want you back . . ." "Think about, when you're leaning against a tree, you're leaning against a relative . . . I came here to promote community; to pray; to understand that its all alive. We love this land so much that we leave it alone. That's why we [Indians] don't hike so much [as white people]."

After a wide-ranging discourse he returned to the central debate: "To be warriors you have to do the [ceremonies] to purify your body. Keep in mind that you are teachers," he urged. "We need powerful minds and spirits to be real warriors. . . . The trees don't need [alcohol, you don't] either." Ominously, he warned them that alcohol jeopardizes the alliance, "I'll oppose you coming to sacred mountains if I know you bring alcohol here." He then offered them hope, describing a vision he has had of Indians and Earth First!ers united in a massive occupation defending a sacred site.

Toward the end of the debate, a well known Earth First! spiritual leader who regularly facilitates the Council of All Beings tried to diffuse the dis-

sension by stating "Respect is a matter of the heart. It can't really be defined. I don't want people battling over different views of respect." Of course, this is precisely what the entire controversy was about, not only between opponents and proponents of the telescopes, but within the opposition itself. It is difficult to find unity when disputes remain about the nature of the sacred and the concomitant duties toward it.

Eventually the facilitators realized that a consensus could not be achieved (several blocks remained to a resolution "opposing alcohol on the mountain out of respect to the mountain and the native peoples here").¹⁵⁰ A vote was then taken. (Voting is considered a last resort that has become necessary in large part because, it is believed, the movement is disrupted by authorities who purposefully sow discord.) The vote made clear that at least ninety percent of the assembly felt strongly that alcohol should be removed out of respect for the sacred mountains and the indigenous nature-peoples of the region. Through the rest of the rendezvous, although still present, alcohol-fueled revelry was significantly reduced from the levels at previous rendezvous.¹⁵¹

From Dissension to Resistance

Despite such tensions as the ones described above, most Earth First!ers and Indian activists expected their shared reverence for Mount Graham to unify them in resistance to the observatories. Lone Wolf Circles, an Earth First! spiritual leader, expressed the view that both Indians and Earth First!ers were tribes, with differing customs, and that both groups must learn to respect each other's traditions if the alliance were to flourish. Several ritual processes on the mountain served to foster such respect, building solidarity between the two groups.

Several of the Indian activists stayed with Earth First! allies while on the mountain, attending evening fire-circles, which involved diverse forms of merriment interwoven with reverent periods of nature-revering poetry and song. One song that speaks passionately about defending Mother Earth was rewritten to embrace the Apache in their struggle; to its previous chorus "this is our land, this is our home" (explaining their willingness to fight to defend it), was added "Apache land, Apache home." At another evening's fire, a carefully planned "neopagan" ritual was performed, beginning with a ritual leader leading the assembly in chanting the Apache name for Mount Graham, *Dzil nchaa si an*. (Like Gary Snyder, Earth First!ers often use the Native American names for places as a form of veneration.)

The climax of the rendezvous began when more than a dozen Apache and several Earth First! runners completed an 18 mile "sacred run" up the mountain to the Rendezvous site, carrying sacred eagle feathers that had been blessed by a medicine man. The run was both an astute antitelescope publicity event, and a transforming pilgrimage, as explained by a woman prior to the run, "each footstep is a prayer, an intense spiritual connection with the Earth."

Before the arrival of the runners, the sacredness of the event and the ending place was underscored when the assembly was told not to take pictures or audio recordings of the ceremony. After the run, Franklin Stanley, an Apache medicine man, explained that the mountain has "always been a sacred place," and that their medicine men are buried there. He performed a blessing, dusting the assembly with yellow powder (probably corn pollen, which is used in many Native American ceremonies), and gave a long prayer in his native language.

Interestingly, Stanley drew on Christian notions, referring to God and Christ, suggesting that "we're all equal in the eyes of the Supreme Being." Stressing again that "this is holy land," he proudly reminded everyone that his people were the last Indians fighting the U.S. army; then he urged unity for the coming struggle: "We're blossoming again. You [Earth First!] people are too. We're no different. Every people, each of the four colors, are given special powers. When we meet other people, look at their eyes to see if they have respect. We have to teach those who don't have respect. The prophecies say that someday we will all sit down together. That time is coming."

Stanley then planted a stick with three sacred Eagle feathers in the earth (the fourth carried on the run would return to the reservation). "You're purified to be here," he told the crowd. "There are visions here. Your fight is critical" and "this unity means a lot to us. . . . It's all of our fight to protect Mother Earth."

The demonstrations following the rendezvous also furthered unity between the groups. The Indians seemed moved by the nature-spirituality present at the demonstrations. Before the gate to the telescope construction they sang earth-revering songs borrowed from North American neopaganism. One such song, "The Earth is Our Mother" had been sung as early as 1989 during blockades on Mount Graham. The song was sung reverently, repeating many times the verses,

The earth is our mother, we must take care of her;
the earth is our mother, we must take care of her.

Her sacred ground we walk upon, with every step we take,
her sacred ground we walk upon, with every step we take.

The chorus is apparently inspired by a Native American song, "Hey yunga, ho yunga, hey hung yung" (repeated several times).

A similar song, "Ancient mother," reveres the earth as goddess and empathizes with her pain as she experiences her own defilement:

Ancient Mother, I hear you calling,
Ancient Mother, I hear your song.
Ancient Mother, I hear your laughter,
Ancient Mother, I taste your tears.

When sung before the gate of the construction site, the song spontaneously transformed the demonstration into a powerful ritual of mourning and commitment. Reminded by the song of the earth's suffering, most present gathered into a circle, many already weeping. A young woman who had grown up in the Church of All Worlds, a neopagan commune in Northern California, spoke about how the consciousness of the tribe comes from the Goddess. She then broke down crying as she thought about having no children. (Many Earth First!ers remain childless hoping to preserve the earth and her creatures from the ravages of overpopulation.) Someone thanked her for considering that level of commitment. She responded that it was not her, but the Goddess working in her.

The grief was palpable, and this led to a mourning ritual usually reserved for the Council of All Beings. A man who regularly facilitates the council at Earth First! gatherings placed a stone in the center of the circle, as is commonly done in the council's "mourning" phase.¹⁵² He then told those in the circle that he wanted to say goodbye to the possibility of grandchildren, recounting that with his blessing, both of his children recently decided against having children. At this point, all the protesters were huddled together, crying freely.¹⁵³

After a time, the grief was transformed to rage as an activist reminded the group that grief was not enough, and that those destroying the earth "have names and addresses." Another approached the locked gate shaking it in fury, tears still streaming down his face, setting the stage for the arrests to come. One of the AIM activists who earlier in the week had been offended by the stubbornness about alcohol confided to the group "I used to hate all white people, but today, you people showed me something."¹⁵⁴

Demonstrations continued the next day as activists picketed the mirror laboratory at the University of Arizona in Tucson. They chanted "Sacred

Mountain, Sacred site, telescopes are not alright," "Squirrels first, Pope last," and displayed signs such as "Mt. Graham = Church," "Crucify the Pope Scope," and "Pope, come back to earth."

After demonstrators occupied the office of the University of Arizona's president, many Earth First! songs were sung, including "the Earth is Our Mother," "Ancient Mother," and another with lyrics reminiscent of Muir's attitude that tourists needed but were not worthy of wilderness: "the Mountain is open to the righteous." Twenty-two people were eventually arrested and dragged out of the administration building by police using eye-socket-pain compliance techniques. Earth First!ers, along with perhaps a dozen Apache and AIM activists, locked arms and sat down in the roadways attempting to block the departing arrestees. In a symbolic egress, the blockade was circumvented as the police drove their vans off-road, crushing the plants adjacent to the blockade.

Despite the shaky start, the rendezvous and the action afterward had furthered the alliance between the devotees of these two nature religions. It should be noted, however, that the growing alliance depended on previous efforts by Earth First!ers and Indians in various regions. As individuals from these groups become better acquainted, they realize similarities in their spiritual perceptions.

To illustrate this with just one example, a woman calling herself "Sage" was first drawn to Native American spirituality through her interest in the holistic health movement. After connecting with Earth First!ers who shared similar interests, she learned to pick sage in the traditional way, so that "the spirit would come with the sage." She recalls how the sage spoke to her, calling her to give her own life back to the plants. In a discussion that reminded me of Gary Snyder's reflection on how one "hears" nature spirits, she said that when the sage speaks, "You don't hear a voice," but have a growing awareness. "For me, when the awareness came, the sage fields looked beautiful—they were alive to me. I was communicating to them in prayer and I was open to their spirits."¹⁵⁵ As with Snyder, openness is the prerequisite to discerning nature spirits.

She also explained that traditional Gabrielino elders recognize "what's happened between me and the sage. They say the sage called me." Moreover, these elders now vouch for her authenticity, so she has not been harassed by AIM members who sometimes ridicule New Age "wannabes." This is one example where Earth First!ers have gained credibility with spiritually traditional Native Americans by revealing their own connections to nonhuman entities. I have heard many times from Indian activists

and spiritual leaders that spiritual insight is a matter of openness, not ethnicity; they also uniformly add that many Indians have been severed from their spirituality. Many such leaders also welcome non-Indian interest in Native American spirituality as a hopeful sign of the prophesied reharmonization of lifeways on Turtle Island.¹⁵⁶

Conclusions

Since the days of John Muir, increasing religious pluralism and rising environmental anxiety have provided fertile ground for pagan environmentalism, a small but growing movement that is inspiring a militant environmental activism increasingly in alliance with Native American activists. The increasing militancy of pagan environmentalists, combined in many quarters with distaste for and fear of such pagan religiosity, is further escalating the intensity of social conflicts surrounding the development of America's remaining wilderness areas.

Pagan environmentalists generally believe that the entire earth is sacred. Practically speaking, however, it is difficult to act consistently as though this were true. Thus they are forced to prioritize the defense of those areas most important for the preservation of biological diversity (which are usually the most pristine areas) and the places considered sacred by the planet's remnant nature peoples. I have been struck, for example, by how Earth First!ers usually do not hold their gatherings in true wilderness, due to their conviction that they should not subject these holiest of places to the impacts of large numbers of humans. Their gatherings are usually held not in wilderness "holy of holies" but at nearby "tree farms" or clear-cuts created by monocultural forest management practices.¹⁵⁷ (Had the Mount Graham gathering been held in a more obviously desecrated place, discord over the site would have been avoided.)

These gradations of holiness support Chidester and Linenthal's contention in the introduction to this volume that Eliade's distinction between the sacred and the profane has been overdrown; field-level observations suggest that such distinctions are often muddy. Indeed, for Earth First! and other environmental pagans, the mundane-ordinary is not opposite to the sacred; the mundane *is* the sacred.¹⁵⁸ It may be that, *a significant part of all environmental conflicts boils down to disputes between those who feel that the sacred is beneath their feet and those who think it is above or beyond the world. As we have seen, the political battle over Mt. Graham was fueled by a more fundamental dispute over the location of the sacred.*

*Did the sacred reside in the earth or sky? Was the sacred ultimately situated in natural space or outer space?*¹⁵⁹ Perhaps conflict is not inevitable between those who locate the sacred on earth and those who perceive it to be beyond this world—but it seems likely. In this case, those like Coyne, who locate the sacred in outer space, had to look to the skies from the earth; this positioned the battle between warriors of earth and sky on contested ground.

Finally, parallels can certainly be found between the dynamics I have described and those found in contests over other sacred places. For example, Linenthal's description of disputes over American battlefields as involving processes of veneration, defilement, and redefinition (a term referring to the struggle to maintain control over or to redefine public perceptions about the nature of the sacred and concomitant human obligations)¹⁶⁰ reveals patterns found again in the present analysis. Certainly a good example of redefinition is the attempt by environmental pagans to define the sacred as a landscape "without borders"—namely—to delegitimize nation-states, redefining them as defiling monstrosities.¹⁶¹ In movement literature the U.S. is often called "Amerika." Likening the U.S. to a totalitarian regime certainly contradicts an understanding of the U.S. nation-state as an exceptional, American sacred space. Thus environmental paganism erodes religious nationalism. It decenters the national state from the sacred center, repositioning currently marginalized tribal societies to the center of the desired ecological utopia, the future-eden. Environmental paganism thereby wages a sacred battle against the most powerful form of religious sentiment and expression in U.S. culture.¹⁶²

Beyond the struggles related to veneration, defilement, and redefinition, a fourth and fifth dynamic can be discerned in the environmental conflicts under scrutiny, namely efforts at restoration and reharmonization.¹⁶³ Restoration is the act of healing damaged ecosystems, thereby resacralizing, reconsecrating despoiled landscapes; reharmonization involves reuniting humans with the rest of nature in complementary lifeways.

Restoration and reharmonization both move beyond the struggle to define or redefine the conception of the sacred; they also raise eschatological questions. How will the desired healing, the restoration, of natural processes come to pass?¹⁶⁴ And how should we envision, build, sustain, and ultimately reharmonize, human lifeways on the planet?

As the heirs of Muir and other pagan preservationists, most of today's pagan environmentalists believe that, whether through human agency or following human extinction, the original, edenic natural paradise will be

restored. The more optimistic among them still hope that tribes of human nature-peoples will populate that earthly, sacred place.

Notes

The author gratefully acknowledges the documentary assistance of Dr. Robin Silver and the astute comments on earlier drafts of this paper by the editors, Matthew Glass, Kathleen Dahl, Lauren Bryant, and Jean Crawford.

1. Interview with Peg Millett, San Gabriel Mountains (Southern California), 6 February 1994.

2. Letter to the author, received summer 1992.

3. When I first met her, at a spring 1991 community meeting in Philo, Cal., she musingly excused herself, in Rastafarian fashion, for "prayer"—namely, a few puffs of marijuana—consenting to talk afterward. Later, she told me that hallucinogens have had a decisive role in fostering in her, and in other Earth First! activists, the perception that the entire natural world is interconnected and sacred; many Earth First!ers make similar observations.

4. The letter's authenticity is in doubt. Initially I thought it looked like a difficult-to-fabricate synthesis of Christian fundamentalism and mental illness. American Indian Movement activist Ward Churchill and some Earth First!ers believe, however, that the letter is an FBI hoax—patterned after similar letters authorities received subsequent to abortion clinic bombings—designed to cast suspicion away from law enforcement agencies involved in the assassination attempt and/or its cover-up. Whether authentic or a ploy designed to divert attention from the actual perpetrator(s), this letter underscores how for some, sacred values are at stake in such environmental conflicts.

5. It is easy to multiply examples of hostility toward environmental pagans. Charles Cushman of the pro-development Multiple Use Land Alliance thinks that preservationists are promoting "a new pagan religion, worshipping trees and animals and sacrificing people" and in battles over the forests he envisions "a holy war between fundamentally different religions" (quoted by Michael Satchell, "Any Color But Green," *U.S. News and World Report* [21 October 1991]: 76). Such sentiments can also be found among utilitarian conservationists. Alston Chase, for example, criticizes the "mindless pantheism" and "clandestine heresies" of radical environmentalists in *Playing God in Yellowstone* (Boston: Monthly Review Press, 1986), 309, ch. 16 & 18, and rejects the now common charge, first articulated by Arnold Toynbee in "The Religious Background of Our Present Environmental Crisis," *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 3 (1972): 141-46; and popularized by Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, 155 (1967): 1203-07, that by repressing animism and pantheism, monotheistic religions are responsible for much of the West's devaluation and destruction of nature.

6. Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 358-73.

7. Violence against all types of environmentalists has been increasing. The Center for Investigative Reporting documented in 1991 104 violent attacks on environmental-

ists; see Carl Deal, *Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations* (Berkeley, Cal.: Oadian, 1993), 12. How much of this is animated by religious passion is unknown.

8. By most people discussed in this article, such notions are commonly called animism. As David Chidester recently explained to me, however, the term animism originated with E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* (London: J. Murray, 1871), who used it to refer to what he considered to be the inferior perception of "primitives," whom he believed incapable of distinguishing between dreams and reality. I use the term here in a nonpejorative way, to refer to the belief that the natural world is inspirited and that communication with nonhuman entities is possible.

9. By "sacred," a few movement participants seem to mean as little as "ultimately real" and "ultimately valuable"; more often they also have in mind an explicitly religious dimension of "holiness" when using the term, perceiving that the natural world is part of all divine reality, or part of a universal divine Being. The discussion of Edward Abbey's spirituality will illustrate the former conception.

10. In personal correspondence dated 29 December 1993, in response to an earlier draft of this manuscript I had sent to him, Gary Snyder suggested that I replace the phrase "pagan environmentalism" with "deep ecology environmentalism" because of the problematic nature of the term pagan and the bad image that paganism has in U.S. culture. He suggested that the term "deep ecology" was developed to avoid the negative connotations of this term, while still expressing essentially the same sentiments. I have demurred from his suggestion for the following reasons. First, the term pagan carries a strong religious connotation, which is not true of the term deep ecology. Secondly, the term can be defined nonpejoratively as I am doing in this article. Thirdly, many in the movement are trying to redeem the term by using it in a positive way and are attempting to counter the negative associations that now accompany it in Western culture.

Interestingly, Snyder's suggestion helps make one of my central points, that conservationists are often animated by essentially pagan perceptions, but often fear expressing their sentiments in a culture they consider hostile.

11. E.g., in this volume. See also several other important studies: John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1989); Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields* (University of Illinois Press, 1991); and Wilbur Zelinsky, *Nation into State* (University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

12. Quoted in Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 291 and Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness* (Yale University Press, 1991), 177.

13. Muir is best known as the founder of the Sierra Club, but his foremost legacy is the National Park System, where his preservationist ideals found institutional expression. He was raised on a Wisconsin homestead by a strict Scotch Calvinist father, against whom he rebelled, and a mother who would sing him old Celtic songs, which may have helped shape his love of nature.

14. Michael P. Cohen, *The Pathless Way: John Muir and American Wilderness* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 80; Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 172-204.

15. Fox, *ibid.*

16. Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 172.

17. By Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, the Long-Range Ecology Movement" *Inquiry*, 16 (1973).

18. Cohen, *Pathless Way*, 65.
19. *Ibid.*, 289-90.
20. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 141.
21. Cohen, *Pathless Way*, 330.
22. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 43.
23. *Ibid.*, 45, 52-53. Oelschlaeger plausibly argues that, although "at this time it cannot be fairly said that Muir was a pantheist . . . , he was now passing from an orthodox theism through a panentheistic zone of transition toward pantheism." *Idea of Wilderness*, 177. Borrowing from Barnhart, Oelschlaeger well defines these terms; *ibid.*, 414, n. 35.
24. Cohen comments that he has been on this summit perhaps twenty times, and "Each day on Cathedral Peak that I remember seems sacred. The world seems to flow about that granite altar in all its wholeness," *Pathless Way*, 359. Given such sentiments, it is not surprising that Cohen was drawn to Earth First! in the 1980s, and currently retains a qualified sympathy for radical environmentalism.
25. *Ibid.*, 359-360.
26. *Ibid.*, 192.
27. Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 197.
28. Cohen, *Pathless Way*, 173-75; compare page 23 and also his discussion of Muir's blurring of the line between domestic and wild animals in his children's stories, pp. 342-50.
29. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 13-14.
30. *Ibid.*, 14.
31. Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 200.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Cohen concludes that Muir did not fully develop his view, or the logic, of sacred animals as wild creatures—especially with regard to predation (*American Conservation Movement*, 179-81).
34. Oelschlaeger correctly notes that "virtually all of Muir's later works (beginning in 1868, during his first summer in the Sierras) manifest [an] animistic vision" (*Idea of Wilderness*, 185).
35. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 5.
36. Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 185.
37. Cohen, *Pathless Way*, 303.
38. Although largely satisfied with the results of these outings, Muir felt they could also desecrate the wild, even complaining that campfire jokes "profane the Sierra night" (quoted in Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 120).
39. Many environmentalists would not call themselves preservationists because ecological change is inevitable. Nevertheless, the term can refer to preserving habitats and ecological processes, and this is what I mean by the term.
40. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 318; Linda Graber, *Wilderness as Sacred Space* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1976), 58-67. Cohen cogently critiques the use of photography in the preservation movement, *Pathless Way*, 236-52.
41. Bron Taylor, "Evoking the ecological self: art as resistance to the war against nature" *Peace Review*, 5 (2 June 1993): 225-30.
42. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 366.
43. Graber, *Wilderness As Sacred Space*, 28, 81.

44. Johnathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 56.
45. Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 350.
46. Cohen, *Pathless Way*, 66, 68.
47. *Ibid.*, 70. While on another dangerous climb, Muir had another one of his most profound spiritual experiences, this time, of interspecies communication with a small dog accompanying him, deepening his understanding of the intrinsic value of all creatures: see Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 69-70. Pantheistic experiences have also been reported by other twentieth-century mountaineer-preservationists, including Bob Marshall (see *ibid.*, 208).
48. *Ibid.*, 362.
49. *Ibid.*, 359-71. Another factor obscuring public knowledge of these sentiments has been press self-censorship. When "Thoreau declared his faith in the immortality of a pine tree and its prospects for ascending to heaven . . . the *Atlantic* ran the piece without the offending sentence, thereby eliciting a furious letter from the author," *ibid.*, 363.
50. *Ibid.*, 367.
51. *Ibid.*, 371-73.
52. Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire* (University of Arizona Press, 1968), 47.
53. *Ibid.*, 50.
54. *Ibid.*, 135.
55. *Ibid.*, 176.
56. *Ibid.*, 209. Abbey was also taken by the example of "the lad Everett Reuss, author of *On Desert Trails*, who disappeared at the age of twenty-one into the canyon country of southern Utah, never to return . . . For all we know he is still down in there somewhere, living on prickly pear and wild onions, communing with the gods of river, canyon and cliff" (*ibid.*).
57. *Ibid.*, 209-10.
58. Robinson Jeffers, *Rock and Hawk*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987).
59. Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, 74-75.
60. *Ibid.*, 186, 190.
61. Earth First! musician Darryl Cherney's song "free the dead" epitomizes pagan environmental sentiments about an authentic death; its lyrics deal with poison-free decomposition.
62. Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, 212.
63. *Ibid.*, 213.
64. *Ibid.*, 214.
65. E.g., Abbey contrasted civilization, which he viewed as compatible with sacred places, with culture, which was not, due to its multifaceted defiling engines. "Civilization is mutual aid and self-defense, culture is the judge, the lawbook and the forces of Law and Ordure [sic]; Civilization is uprising, insurrection, revolution; culture is the war of the state against the state, or machines against people. . . . Civilization is tolerance, detachment and humor, or passion, anger, revenge; culture is the entrance examination, the gas chamber, the doctoral dissertation and the electric chair," *ibid.*, 215.
66. *Ibid.*, 135.
67. *Ibid.*, 50.
68. *Ibid.*, 205.
69. *Ibid.*, 117, 137-38.

70. Edward Abbey, "A Response to Smookler on Anarchy," *Earth First!*, 7 (1 August 1986).
71. Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, 155.
72. *Ibid.*, xii.
73. Edward Abbey, *The Monkeywrench Gang* (New York: Avon, 1975); and *Hayduke Lives* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990).
74. This phrase Abbey speaks through his character Bonnie Abzug. See the epigraph at the outset of *Hayduke Lives*.
75. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974), 104 and *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 40, 93.
76. For an excellent description of the influence of Snyder and the "beats" in American culture, see Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
77. Snyder concludes: "the State itself . . . is inherently greedy . . . entropic, disorderly, and illegitimate," and quoting Cafard, "The region is against the regime—anarchy. Regions are anarchic," *Practice*, 41.
78. Other examples of such naming- veneration and naming- subversion include Snyder's claim that "You have to get rid of the name Cincinnati. . . . After all its the Ohio River Valley . . . [And] Ohio means beautiful in Shawnee," *Turtle Island*, 5. Furthermore, "We're consciously reinventing a language for North America." Using "Turtle Island . . . is part of reinventing a language for our time here. Its a political act." From interview with Gary Snyder, Davis (Putah-toi), Cal., 1 June 1993.
79. Snyder, interview.
80. Snyder claims that Jews and Muslims are the only pure monotheists, because Christians hold to it in "a very qualified and tricky way." "Everybody else in the world is a multi-faceted polytheist, animist or Buddhist, who sees things in the world" not as dead matter, valuable for its utility only, but as having continuity with all life. Snyder, interview.
81. Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: the Bioregional Vision* (Santa Cruz, Cal.: New Society, 1985); and Van Andruss, C. Plant, J. Plant, and E. Wright, *Home!: A Bioregional Reader* (Santa Cruz: New Society, 1990).
82. Snyder, *Practice*, 39.
83. Gary Snyder, *The Real Work: Interviews and Talks 1964-1979* (New York: New Directions, 1980), 8.
84. Snyder, *Real Work*, 17. Such allusions to the land as alive are common in Snyder's writings, e.g.: "Inhabitory peoples sometimes say 'this piece of land is sacred' or 'all the land is sacred.' This is an attitude that draws on an awareness of the mystery of life and death; of taking life to live; of giving life back—not only to your own children, but to the life of the whole land" in *The Old Ways* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1977), 59-60.
85. Snyder, interview.
86. Snyder, *Real Work*, 67.
87. This experience is not just available to backpackers: "the same happens to those who sail in the ocean, kayak fjords or rivers, tend a garden, peel garlic, even sit on a meditation cushion. The point is to make intimate contact with the real world, real self," in *Practice*, 94.
88. Snyder, *Practice*, 94.
89. Snyder, interview.
90. Snyder, *Practice*, 5.
91. Snyder, interview.

92. Gary Snyder, letter to author, 29 December 1993.
93. Snyder, *Practice*, 6.
94. Snyder calls this process "the real work" and gives a book of interviews this title, *Real Work*, 82.
95. Snyder, *Old Ways*, 13-14. Snyder also is fond of Jeffers's "vulture" poem (interview).
96. Snyder, *Practice*, 19.
97. Dave Foreman, "Reinhabitation, biocentrism and self defense" *Earth First!*, 7 (1 August 1987). He is also critical of many tendencies within *Earth First!* which are not relevant to the present analysis.
98. Snyder, *Old Ways*, 13-14.
99. Taylor, "Evoking the Ecological Self."
100. Unless references are cited, the material on *Earth First!* has been gathered by means of interviews and personal observation since 1990.
101. Ecological sabotage, now abbreviated "ecotage" or "monkeywrenching" in movement parlance, had begun at least as early as the mid-1950s in the southwestern United States, according to Edward Abbey in *Desert Solitaire*. Abbey's novel *The Monkeywrench Gang* celebrated the heroism of ecological saboteurs and helped inspire the development of *Earth First!* ecotage tactics such as "tree spiking" (hammering objects into trees to hinder logging), and bulldozer "decommissioning."
102. I will detail descriptions of these experiences in *Once and Future Primitive: The Spiritual Politics of Deep Ecology*, forthcoming from Beacon Press.
103. Bruce Hills, "'Ecoterrorists' may take aim at livestock," *Deseret News* (8 October 1990).
104. The logic here, combined with antianthropocentric ethics, might lead one to think that at least in some cases, human desecrators should be shot like other domesticated spoiling agents. Some *Earth First!*ers are bold enough to express such sentiments, but to the best of my knowledge, thus far such sentiments remain theoretical.
105. Bron Taylor, "Earth First's Religious Radicalism" in *Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Religious, and Aesthetic Perspectives*, ed. C. Chapple (State University of New York Press, 1994); John Seed et al., *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings* (Santa Cruz, Cal.: New Society, 1988).
106. Taylor, "Evoking the Ecological Self."
107. Interview with Alice DiMicelle, Oshkosh Wisc., 9 October 1992.
108. I will detail such experiences in future work.
109. Keith Basso, Declaration, Apache Survival Coalition et al. vs U.S. et al., University of Arizona, Intervenor, CIV. No. 91-1350-PHX-WPC. Declaration on Mt. Graham (Dzil nchaá si an), prepared for Patricia J. Cummings, Attorney at Law, and Apache Survival Coalition (31 March 1992); John P. Wilson, Apache Use of the Pinaleno Mountain Range, II, Report No. 57, prepared as defendant's exhibit for the Safford Ranger District, Coronado National Forest, Las Cruces, N. Mex. (January 1992); Tim McCarthy, "Apache Tribe Lives New Vision in Fight to Save Mountain," *National Catholic Reporter*, 27 (36, 2 August 1991).
110. Franklin Stanley, grandson of Apache Chief Bylas, and a full-blooded Apache medicine man, testified against the telescopes:
"I know the songs that are sung at our holy ground, and there are songs about Mt. Graham that are an important part of our religious practice. There are herbs and sources of water on Mt. Graham that are sacred to us. Some of the plants on Mt. Graham that we use are found nowhere else. These plants are important to our spiritual practices and

healing. . . The Apache relationship with the mountain includes showing respect to the natural things found on the mountain, the things we have discovered in revelations, or that the mountain has given us."

"The mountain is part of spiritual knowledge that is revealed to us. The mountain gives us life giving plants and healing . . . Our prayers go through the mountain, to and through the top of the mountain . . . There is also very sacred plants on top of the mountain and very, very important trees . . . The mountain is like a gateway or river and putting the telescopes on top of the mountain is like putting a dam on the river . . . The construction would be very detrimental because our prayers would not travel their road to God . . . God is the Almighty, the 'Ruler of Life.' There are very serious consequences, to us, if we act with disrespect. [Moreover] The 'Gaahn' [spirit beings] live on Mt. Graham. Mt. Graham is one of the most sacred mountains. The mountain is holy. It was holy before any people came, and in the mountain lives a greater spirit . . . If you take Mt. Graham from us, you will take our culture . . . If you desecrate Mt. Graham it is like cutting off an arm or a leg of the Apache people." Declaration of Franklin Stanley Sr. in support of preliminary injunction, Apache Survival Coalition et al. vs. U.S. et al., University of Arizona, Intervenor, CIV. No. 91-1350-PHX-WPC (31 March 1992).

111. The undated flyer is from "Friends of Mount Graham" (P.O. Box 41822, Tucson, AZ 85717-1822). For strategic purposes, cognizant of their negative image in many sectors, Earth First! activists often form "front" groups with names obscuring their Earth First! roots. Some such groups do not obscure their pagan spiritual sentiments, such as Minnesota's "Sacred Earth Network."

112. Charles Bowden, "How the University Knocked Off Mount Graham. *City Magazine (Tucson, Arizona)*, 4 (1 January 1989): 28-36; John Dougherty, "Star Whores: The Ruthless Pursuit of Astronomical Sums of Cash and Scientific Excellence," *Phoenix New Times*, 24 (25, 16 June 1993): 2-11.

113. The June 1989 Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund lawsuit against the United States lost when the courts ruled that Congress intended to exempt the project from these laws, and has the discretion to do so. However, the University of Arizona, with the approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service, decided in 1993 to move the location of the third and most powerful telescope (the Large Binocular Telescope) outside the area permitted by the Act. They then enraged environmentalists by cutting 250 trees from the new site on 7 December 1993, only hours after gaining these approvals. This led to another lawsuit, this time by a coalition of eighteen environmental groups. This lawsuit produced the first legal victory against the International Observatory, when on 28 July 1994 a Federal judge ruled that moving the telescope violated the Endangered Species and National Environmental Policy Acts. This ruling was upheld in September 1994 by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, delaying indefinitely the completion of the third (and most important) telescope.

114. While on a 1989 vision quest, Davis consulted a medicine woman on the reservation. "Praying in a wickiup, the traditional Apache shelter, Davis saw herself dangling off the east side of Mount Graham. A dangling man faced her from the west, their hands joined at the summit as if to harbor the entire range in their gigantic embrace. She thought the man was white. The medicine woman told her to push on with her opposition to the observatory," quoted by McCarthy. This vision helped inspire the Indian-environmentalist alliance against Mt. Graham.

115. San Carlos Apache Tribal Council resolution opposing Mt. Graham telescopes. San Carlos Reservation, Arizona (10 July 1990).

116. The first vote was 6-0, the second 9-0.

117. For example, on 31 Aug 1990, San Carlos Tribal Council chairperson B. Kitcheyan wrote to the USFS criticizing them for violating Apache sacred beliefs, protesting their failure to contact the tribe about the telescope project. (The USFS disputed his contentions, claiming that in August 1985 they sent letters to the tribal council about two rock cairns and a shrine found on the mountain, asking the Apache for comments or concerns about the cultural or religious significance of these finds.)

After his dismissal as tribal chair in the middle of 1991 for misusing tribal funds, Kitcheyan reversed himself, claiming Mount Graham was not sacred to the Apache, eventually testifying in this way before the University of Arizona's Board of Regents. Kitcheyan was convicted of embezzlement on 7 July 1994. See Ann-Eve Pederson, "Former San Carlos Apache Chairman Pleads Guilty to Embezzling \$63,312," *The Arizona Daily Star, Tucson* (8 July 1994).

118. E.g., on 18 July 1991 a unanimous resolution against the telescopes was passed at a European meeting of groups in solidarity with North American Indians.

119. Telescope opponents interpreted this as evidence that university promises of economic and educational assistance eroded opposition within the council. But disputes about the religious significance of Mount Graham among the Apache were nothing new. This was partly due to divisions between religiously traditional Apache and those who are not, and also because of significant differences between clans. It was federal action against the Apache that placed different clans in close proximity on reservations; uniformity of worldview has not been a characteristic of all the different bands. For details, see Basso, Declaration on Mt. Graham.

120. The reasons cited by the district court for rejecting the ASC's lawsuit has been the failure of Apache opponents to register their claims at an earlier date, and the ruling that Congress does have the discretion to override their own environmental laws. The ASC appeal was rejected by the 9th U.S. District Court, No. 92-16288, D.C. No. CV-91-1350 PHX WPC (8 April 1994). The first two telescopes, including the Vatican's, were completed in September 1993.

121. Sal Salerno, "Apache Delegation Returns from European Tour of Protest," *The Circle (News from a Native Perspective)*, 13 (6, June 1992): 28.

122. Sal Salerno, "Vatican Denies Sacred Ancestry of Mt. Graham," *The Circle*, 13 (4 April 1992).

123. Sacred runs from the San Carlos Apache reservation to Mount Graham again protested the desecration of Mount Graham in 1993 and 1994. They included non-Indian solidarity activists, see "San Carlos Elders Thank Runners" in *The Navajo-Hopi Observer* (6 July 1994).

124. This is due in part to increasing public discourse, accompanying the recent 500-year anniversary of Columbus's journeys, about the Catholic Church's role in suppressing indigenous Americans.

125. Theresa Schuelke, "Indians Told to Keep Culture," *The Catholic Sun* (24 September 1987): 24-27.

126. Vatican Observatory proponent Charles W. Polzer, in stark contrast to Gary Snyder, who emphasizes the spiritual value of renaming this continent Turtle Island, refers to the region of southern Arizona, including Mount Graham, as "Northern New Spain." See affidavit of Charles W. Polzer, responding to Apache Survival Coalition lawsuit (6 April 1992).

127. Telephone interview with University of Arizona spokesperson Steve Emerine, 3 December 1993.

128. The Vatican's telescope received a relatively small mirror (six meters long) that

was fabricated as the test for the larger mirrors to go into subsequent scopes. For example, the Large Binocular Telescope has two 8 m x 4 m mirrors, and will be able to explore areas of the Universe previously unseen. The second project also was designed with unique capabilities; the "sub-millimeter" technology allows astronomers to measure radio frequencies at levels never before heard.

129. These arguments were made in affidavits by both Coyne and Polzer in response to the Apache Survival Coalition lawsuit and in other forums. See, e.g., George V. Coyne, "Statement of the Vatican Observatory on the Mount Graham International Observatory and American Indian Peoples" (5 March 1992), also submitted as University of Arizona, Exhibit "B," Apache Survival Coalition et al. v U.S. et al., University of Arizona, intervenor, CIV. No. 91-1350-PHX-WPC (6 April 1992).

130. For example, "Mt. Graham itself was subject to only the most casual and ephemeral use by the tribe, as documentary and archeological evidence clearly shows." Affidavit of Charles W. Polzer, responding to Apache Survival Coalition lawsuit (6 April 1992).

131. See Coyne, "Statement on American Indian Peoples" and Polzer, affidavit.

132. See Coyne, "Statement on American Indian Peoples."

133. See Basso, Declaration, and Elizabeth A. Brandt, "Executive Summary of the Preliminary Investigation of Apache Use and Occupancy and Review of Cultural Resource Surveys of the Proposed Mt. Graham Astrophysical Area, Pinaleno Mountains, Arizona," prepared for the Apache Survival Coalition (28 May 1991). Taking an intermediate view is John P. Wilson, a USFS employee, in "Apache Use of the Pinaleno Mountain Range," II, Report No. 57, defendant's exhibit for the Safford Ranger District, Coronado National Forest, Las Cruces, New Mexico (January 1992). Focusing only on the Goodwin papers, he concluded that "the mountains are a minor element in the exercise of Apache religion" and "while this range has some symbolic importance, traditional Apache religious practices do not require visits to [it]." This study begs the question about whether the Apache would view the telescopes as a desecration; its focus was very narrow, assuming that only historically demonstrable "traditional" practice is authentic religion. Thus it ignores other relevant evidence. Moreover, much of the material Wilson quotes from the Goodwin papers could easily be used to argue against his conclusions: that Mount Graham was of central religious significance to the Apache during the period of Goodwin's research.

134. See Coyne, "Statement on American Indian Peoples".

135. See George V. Coyne, "Statement of the Vatican Observatory on the Mt. Graham International Observatory, the ecology of the Pinaleno mountains, and related political issues" (22 April 1992).

136. See Coyne, "Statement on American Indian Peoples." Interestingly, in a hearing on Mount Graham before the University of Arizona's Board of Regents, a member of a pro-telescope group calling itself the San Carlos Apache Tribe People's Rights Coalition testified using language nearly identical to Coyne's: "No mountain is as scared as a human being. Therefore I believe that we as a people will survive [the telescope construction]. I believe that *responsible and legitimate use of the land enhances its true purpose*" (testimony of Karon Long before the Arizona Board of Regents Mount Graham Open Forum, 27 March 1992, my emphasis). This parallel rhetoric suggests that Coyne may be employing the very strategy he accuses his opponents of using, in his case, exploiting an Apache as a means to defend his telescope.

137. George V. Coyne, "Personal Reflections upon the Nature of the Sacred in the

Context of the Mount Graham International Observatory," Castel Gandolfo, Italy (25 May 1992).

138. Coyne, "Personal Reflections." In a newspaper article appearing after these "personal reflections" were made public by Coyne's opponents, he claimed that his statements were not a call to suppress Apache religion but "a condemnation of 'an extreme environmentalist tendency toward the worship of nature.'" See Jim Erickson, "Astronomer-Priest Contends that Science, Religion Don't Clash," *Arizona Daily Star* (11 November 1992). Coyne reiterated this explanation in a 14 January 1992 letter sent to signatories of a statement protesting his comments about suppressing nature religion. In this letter he says that the controversial quote was taken out of context, and that his statement "refers [only] to false worshippers of the Earth as described in the immediately preceding paragraph." He then states that, since "my statement about suppression of religiosity has led to ambiguities and to maliciously false interpretation, I have removed it in the revised version."

According to Coyne's own logic, however, to the extent that Native American spirituality involves reverence for nature itself, it must be "false," and he would wish it suppressed, certainly some Apache spirituality would qualify (see, for example, Franklin Stanley's testimony in endnote #110). Logically, Coyne cannot desire to suppress environmental but not Native American paganism. (I wish to thank Dr. Coyne for sending his above-mentioned letter and other related documents.)

139. Bruce Johnston, "Vatican Sets Evangelical Sights on Outer Space," *London Daily Telegraph* (28 October 1992); see also Dougherty.

140. Another group of Catholics appealed to the President of Italy to resist Italian participation in the project, see Marla Donato, "Come One, Come All to the Telescope Feud," *Chicago Tribune* (11 January 1992).

141. May 1992. No lawsuit followed.

142. Steve Yozwiak, "Priest Calls Telescope Foes Part of 'Jewish Conspiracy,'" *The Arizona Republic* (14 August 1992).

143. Polzer admitted making the statements, which were also acknowledged by his religious superiors, see Yozwiak, "Jewish Conspiracy." Polzer apologized for the pain his comments had caused, while claiming he had been ambushed by an Apache interviewer who had intended to set him up.

144. The following analysis is based primarily on field observations and interviews during the 1993 Earth First! rendezvous on Mount Graham and subsequent demonstrations, 28 June through 7 July 1993.

145. Foreman, who disassociated himself from Earth First! in 1990, retains great influence within the pagan environmental movement. From as early as the mid-1980s, he proclaimed that humans should "resacralize" their perceptions of the natural world.

146. Interview with Jasper Carlton, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 22 May 1993. Carlton is often frustrated with what he sees as the ecological ignorance of many Earth First! activists, which he thinks leads them to desecrate places they should be protecting. During a 2 July 1992 interview at the Earth First! rendezvous in the San Juan Mountains of south-eastern Colorado, he complained about activists walking disrespectfully in the meadow, stepping on blue lupine, a threatened meadow flower. "I cannot respect those who unthinkingly are trashing these plants," he said. "We are in a sacred area here. All this stuff is sacred." Adding that we must be sensitive to smaller life forms, he emphasized that humans should ask "biologically, legally, morally, how ought we to manage our sacred wilderness ecosystems."

147. Within the Native American and pagan environmental communities, "respect" and "disrespect" are ubiquitous terms that serve as verbal proxies: respect denoting "veneration," disrespect indicating "defilement" or "desecration."

148. Interview with Jean Crawford, Mount Graham, Arizona, 5 July 1993.

149. This figure is exaggerated. Census figures indicate that about 1.5 million self-identify as Indians in the U.S.; tribal enrollment is smaller still.

150. The remaining "blockers" were anarchists apparently from a "punk" subculture; one of the most vocal expressed a hyperindividualistic anarchism that illustrates one extreme boundary of the social philosophies undergirding some of those drawn to Earth First!. He asserted, "from my worldview this is not a sacred mountain. And there is no connection between booze and respect. Alcohol is fun. Its a good thing." Revealing a naivete that seems absurd for one presumably involved in an extremist form of political activism—that no idea is morally preferable to another—he concluded, "I'm against this proposal, it says [that] one view is better than another." Three individuals applauded this sentiment, prompting the facilitators to move toward a vote. (Later that evening two Earth First!ers justified their alcohol consumption by discussing how the Apache traditionally made their own alcohol.)

151. Still, drunken revelers did impinge on the sacred ritual space of the fire-circle at least one evening after this discussion, causing one ritual leader to tell them to "fuck off" as he drove them back into the shadows. (The ritual space is defined roughly by the penumbra of the fire and those encircling it; mere observers, as well as revelers and inebriates, are expected to stay outside of this space. This expectation often remains unfulfilled, sometimes intentionally by those who think the ritualizers are taking themselves too seriously.)

One common response to complaints about the drinking and partying is that rendezvous provide the major time each year for this extremely hard-working tribe to cut loose with their tribal family, and have some fun. Sometimes the pressure of being an outlaw group resisting great powers is cited. Few Earth First!ers appear to be alcoholics, however, perhaps because alcoholism tends to militate against political activism and environmental concerns.

152. Taylor, "Earth First!'s Religious Radicalism."

153. I wish to thank Charles Rothschild for describing this scene to me, since at this moment I was being denied access to the site by the police.

154. I wish to thank Jean Crawford for this anecdote and for the description of how mourning was transformed to rage at the demonstration.

155. Interview with Leona "Sage" Klippstein, Pasadena, Cal., 17 August 1993.

156. For more about the borrowing of Native American spirituality by Earth First!ers and the diverse reactions such borrowing engenders, see Bron Taylor, "Empirical and normative reflections on Deep Ecology's appropriation of Native American spiritualities," a paper presented to the North American Religion Section, American Academy of Religion, Washington, D.C., November 1993, author's files.

157. This was stated explicitly in "Midwest Rendezvous Upcoming," *Midwest Headwaters Earth First!* newsletter (2 August 1992). After directions are given, the gathering site is described: "The forest there has been logged but is recovering, there's plenty of firewood, space for tents, etc. It is not actually in the Wilderness but is very close. We might not feel so bad about leaving a bit of a trace (unavoidable) in an area already logged than in the designated wilderness."

158. Of course, as we have seen, it is possible for the sacrality of a place to be eroded

and even lost. In the cases where Earth First! gatherings are held in places of lesser sacrality, at least the potential for restoring the sacrality of the place is embodied, either symbolically by the pilgrimage itself, or practically, through acts of restoration ecology or political resistance. In the worldview of most Earth First!ers, if left alone for a long enough time, desecrated places can heal themselves.

159. Acknowledging that such conceptual disputes are important variables in environmental conflicts should not be mistaken for idealism. This analysis purposefully begs the question about whether material conditions or human conceptualizations have been most decisive in creating today's environmental and cultural realities. For an introduction to such disputes see John Bodley, *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems*, 2nd ed. (Mountain View, California: Mayfield, 1983); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Yale University Press, 1967); and Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*.

160. See Linenthal, this volume.

161. At the 1989 Earth First! rendezvous the U.S. flag was burned—the ultimate symbol of U.S. religious nationalism and of the U.S. *nation* as a sacred place. Only a few were offended since most disdain modern nation-states.

If it is true that the shopping mall can also be considered a sacred center of the U.S. culture of consumption, as Ira G. Zepp argues in *The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as Ceremonial Center* (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986), then another effort at decentering was an Earth First! "puke in" against shopping in the late 1980s, and plans to disrupt shopping at the Mall of America.

162. A good example of the collision between the antinationalist sentiment of most environmental pagans and the patriotism of religious nationalists can be found in the Greenpeace/Earth First! act of "symbolic guerilla warfare" which desecrated Mount Rushmore, described in this volume by Matthew Glass. (Mount Rushmore is an especially good site for anti-nationalist veneration of the land, since its construction depended on the violent appropriation of the Black Hills from the Lakota.) For the term see Edward T. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 163.

163. David Chidester reminds us that efforts at reharmonization provide one of the few universals in religious ethics, *Patterns of Action: Religion and Ethics in a Comparative Perspective* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1987). Of course the conceptions of the cause and nature of the dis-harmony vary widely, as do the prescriptions for reharmonization.

164. Catherine Albanese suggests that "New Age [spirituality is] a new healing religion [and] a planetary dimension is intrinsic to that healing," in "The Magical Staff: Quantum Healing in the New Age," in *Perspectives on the New Age*, ed. J. R. Lewis and G. J. Melton (State University of New York Press, 1992), 75. This emphasis on planetary healing in the New Age movement parallels the sentiments of many environmental pagans. New Agers *tend* to conceive of this healing in more mystical terms, and environmental pagans, in more political terms, although one can find both emphases among devotees of either spiritual subculture.