her children and herself. She had to send her children away and returned to live with her parents. One day, a bird, disguised as a man, sought Sedna in marriage. She accepted and went to live with him. But soon Sedna discovered that her new husband was not a man but only a fulmar. When Sedna's father visited her, he convinced Sedna to leave with him in his boat. Unfortunately the fulmar caught them, and with his wings created an enormous storm, which threatened to overturn the boat. Terrified, Sedna's father tried to throw the girl overboard to her husband, but she grasped the boat's side. In fear, the father cut off Sedna's fingers until she fell into the sea. It is said that Sedna resides at the bottom of the sea with the seals and other sea animals that were created from her fingers.

In contrast to the other sea goddesses, Sedna is not depicted as beautiful. Her hair and body gets dirty and ugly when humans break taboos or behave in bad ways. Then she holds the animals back and sends storms or diseases. Therefore a shaman will undertake an underwater journey to comb her hair and wash her after he has defeated her in a fight. This causes her to let the animals go. More recent research revealed that this shaman can also be a woman. In this case, the interpretation of symbolical sexual subjugation of women (by male shamans) (Zumwalt 1984) becomes obsolete, and the fertility as well as the moralistic aspect of Sedna comes more to the fore. In her image, the behavior of people and the cycles of nature, the weather and the fertility of the animals, are closely connected.

Indonesia: Ratu Kidul

Ratu Kidul is the Queen or Goddess of Java's Southern Ocean. She is the ruler of all spirits, and she appears in the old texts and in the oral traditions of both the Javanese courts and ordinary people. In contrast to the above-mentioned figures, she is not first and foremost a mother goddess in connection with fertility but her central characteristic is the legitimization of political power. From the early seventeenth century onward, she has always been regarded as the consort of the Sultan (from the eighteenth century onward, of the Sultans of both Surakarta and Yogyakarta), supporting him and defending his realm. Implicitly the marriage meant that the ruler was approved and sanctioned by the primordial powers of the Sea. The significance of this relationship has been waning along with the declining positions of these courts in present-day Java. On the other hand, at present, ordinary people can and do ask her for help with all kinds of troubles. Spiritual and material goals become inseparable. Ratu Kidul is an ambiguous figure too: she can be the source of luck, welfare and healing as well as of illness, death and destruction. There are manifold adaptations to both modern life and Islam in imaginations of her, and the quality of her persona depends on the context in which it is presented. Nevertheless Javanese popular belief in Ratu Kidul is still very vivid.

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See also: Candomblé of Brazil; Divine Waters of the Oru-Igbo (Southeastern Nigeria); Inuit; Rainbow Serpent (North Wellesley Islands, Australia); Serpents and Dragons; Umbanda; Water Spirits and Indigenous Ecological Management (South Africa).

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

– *See* Biocentric Religion – A Call For; Watson, Paul – and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

Seattle (Sealth), Chief (ca. 1790–1866)

Chief Sealth (or Seattle as he is commonly called today) was an influential chief of the Salish-speaking indigenous peoples whose lands included the Puget Sound region of what is now Washington State. Born sometime around 1790 from a Duwamish mother and a Suquamish father, and dying in 1866, this namesake of present-day Seattle was chief during the coming of the "Boston Men" (American-European settlers from the east coast of the United States), and maintained mostly cordial relations with them throughout his life. By nearly all early accounts, Sealth was an able chief and spokesman for the Salish, whose existence centered on the rich tidelands and estuaries that surrounded Puget Sound.

However, his fame today – especially in popular culture – is due mainly to the modern environmental movement, specifically to their appropriation and revision of a speech Sealth allegedly gave along the Seattle waterfront, probably in 1854. The earliest account of the speech, recorded by Henry Smith in the *Seattle Sunday Star* in 1887, comes from Smith's recollections and diary fragments – the latter never found. In Smith's account, Sealth contrasts the white culture with his own: the former apparently favored

by God, the latter rejected, with the white religion given by an "angry God" and hence incomprehensible to his and other tribes.

Most pointedly, the speech records Sealth as contrasting the Christianity of the whites (with its stark separation of Heaven from Earth) with his tradition's reverence for the land, hallowed by the very real presence of his people's ancestors. Regarding these sacred ties between the ancestors and the tribe's land, the chief warns: "the dead are not altogether powerless."

The modern legend of Chief Seattle and his "Speech," however, is not primarily due to Smith's account – with its authentic Salish ties between Earth and religion – but due to significant embellishments added by whites more than a century later, most notably from the pens of poets and screenwriters. In the past thirty years or so, in fact, many revisionist versions of Sealth's speech have appeared: quoted at Earth Day celebrations, highlighted at a World's Fair, used by political parties and "Green" political candidates, appearing in a Smithsonian exhibit, and penned even into children's books. Thanks to the massive information-exchange capabilities of the Internet, Sealth's speech – in seemingly infinite variations – is everywhere, from websites touting survivalist themes, to the home web pages of indigenous peoples.

In most of these accounts, Sealth is portrayed as fundamentally questioning not only an upcoming treaty with the U.S. government, but the very notion of private property itself: "How can we buy or sell the sky?" He also bemoans witnessing the "slaughter of the buffalo," despite the fact that bison are not indigenous to the Pacific Northwest, and the great slaughter of buffalo would not occur until a decade or more after Sealth's death. Thus, most scholars acknowledge that much of the text of "Chief Seattle's Speech" was in all probability not uttered by Sealth along the Puget Sound waterfront in 1854. Smith himself was known as something of a poet, and in the Victorian era it was common for writers to add rhetorical flourishes as they saw fit; but unless authentic documents are forthcoming, we are likely never to learn what exactly Chief Sealth uttered that so impressed Henry Smith.

Despite the difficulties in determining where Sealth's words stop and modern embellishments begin, Chief Sealth and his "speech" remain powerful and influential for two significant reasons. First, the authentic core of his speech points toward a land ethic and religious tradition which refuse to objectify nature, and which count ecological respect as a matter of course.

Second, the appropriation and adaptation of Sealth's powerful words, and the linkage of this text to the modern environmental movement, are reminders of the ever-present human impulse toward religious syncretism, the combination or synthesis of different elements from two or more seemingly disparate traditions. Many Native Americans are angry at how some groups of the majority culture have employed Sealth's speech, lifting it out of the specific Duwamish and Salish cultures from which it came. They view this appropriation as yet another example of theft. Others, however, look at the resultant text, not primarily in terms of historical accuracy, but of whether it expresses the truth of the results of persistent environmental degradation.

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See also: Indigenous Environmental Network; Indigenous Religions and Cultural Borrowing; Manifest Destiny; Mother Earth; Radical Environmentalism; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm.

Sedona

One of the most celebrated of New Age "power spots," this small town in scenic north-central Arizona has been a hub of New Age and metaphysical activities since at least the late 1970s, when California-based psychic and self-help guru Dick Sutphen began touting it as a power center and psychic Page Bryant identified seven specific "energy vortexes" in the area. Stories about extraordinary phenomena and about the area's healing energies circulated rapidly through the 1980s, and by the early 1990s the number of healing centers, New Age bookstores, crystal shops, and psychic channelers had multiplied far out of proportion to the town's population of ten thousand or so. Groups based in the area have included ECKankar, the Rainbow Ray Focus Group, the Aquarian Concepts Community, the Center for Advanced Energy Healing, and the Aquarian Educational Foundation.

Cradled in its other-worldly red rock surroundings, the town has become a spiritual melting pot of New Age millenarianism, neo-shamanic Earth spirituality, and post-traditional metaphysical and Theosophical occultism. Some of Sedona's channelers regularly contribute to the journal *Sedona: Journal of Emergence*, which has become the flagship of the American channeling community, with its millenarian beliefs in extraterrestrial contact, interdimensional portals, light-bodies and stargates. For some of Sedona's psychics and ecospiritualists, the colorful rock formations, steep-walled canyons, and piñon pine-juniper forests that surround the town are an energetically active and psychically catalytic wilderness rich with mysterious energy "portals" and spiritual presences. At the same time, the rate of real estate and tourist development has turned Sedona into one of the prime tourist sites of the U.S.