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the natural kinds or natural forces which make it alive. The Huaorani, who still belong to the latter, cultivate interspecies communication and relate to the energies inherent in animals and plants by living in – with – the forest. Their eco-economy is in this sense solar, given that all living organisms originate from the same cosmic source, the sun, its rays, and powers of fecundity.

For the last fifty years, Huaorani people have been confronted with the other Amazon, that of oil development, although it is only recently (in 1994) that oil has been commercially extracted from their land to feed the global fossil economy which is exhausting raw resources, destroying lives and livelihoods, and undermining the future. Confronted with pernicious and contradictory economic and political interests, the Huaorani are not embracing the market place ruled by the imperatives of carbon energy and corporate law in the way expected by the oil companies operating on their territory. Witnesses of the transformation of their forest into a busy oil field, with thousand of kilometers of seismic lines cut, tens of wells drilled, and numerous temporary camps established, the Huaorani have subverted the cultural logic of corporate outsiders by treating them as sources of endlessly renewable wealth. Large quantities of foreign commodities imported by oil workers have reached Huaorani homes and have been distributed, shared and used according to the same egalitarian principles as other forest resources. The forest is bountiful. Past activities of long dead people are understood to be at the origin of forest abundance. The wealth of game and plant resources, accessed through the skilled activities of every hunter and gatherer sustains the longhouse sharing economy. By treating the oil companies as impersonal giving agencies not unlike that of long dead people, the Huaorani have turned the religion of the market on its head. What they continue to value are the unfolding, personal relationships between interdependent subjects of the sacred Earth/forest. At the beginning of creation, there was the giant *ceibo* tree, rooted in Earth and tied to the sky. Through the dynamic interplay of social agency, the tree of life was transformed into a great water system and landscape. The world with all its differentiation and biocultural diversity is, and will continue to be, the historical transformation of what was given, the tree of life.

Laura Rival

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See also: Animism (various); Amazonia; Shamanism – Ecuador.

Hudson River School Painters – See Art; Romanticism – American.

Hundredth Monkey

The claim that a spiritual transformation of consciousness is prerequisite to the reharmonization of life on Earth is a recurrent theme in environmental enclaves. One expression of this theme is that of the "Hundredth Monkey," first published by Lyall Watson in *Lifetide: A Biology of Consciousness* (1979).

In *Lifetide* Watson described how on the Island of Koshima in 1952 a Japanese monkey of the species *Macaca fusacata* was provided with a new food, sweet potatoes. They were covered with sand and dirt and this particularly intelligent monkey, dubbed Imo by the primatologists studying the troop, quickly apprehended the potatoes would taste better if first washed in the river. Imo subsequently taught the behavior to his neighbors, which between 1952 and 1958 spread throughout the island, adopted by most of the monkeys. "Then something extraordinary took place" (1979: 147), Watson wrote, indicating that what happened next is not certain and that he had

to gather the rest of the story from the personal anecdotes and bits of folklore among primate researchers, because most of them are still not quite sure what happened. And those who do suspect the truth (1979: 147) are reluctant to publish it for fear of ridicule. So I am forced to improvise the details, but as near as I can tell, this is what seems to have happened (Watson 1979: 147–8).

In the fall of 1958, a large group of monkeys was washing potatoes, "Let us say, for argument's sake, that the number was ninety-nine" (148), when "one further

Monkeys in the Field

During the 1980s there were regular “Hundredth Monkey” protests against nuclear weapons at the U.S. government’s Nevada Test Site. While engaged in fieldwork exploring radical environmental sub-cultures I learned that many Earth First! activists had participated in protests at the test site and had been inspired by the story. One of them told me during a 1992 interview (4 January, Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon) that the idea has to do with paradigm shifts:

I’m trying to remember if it was a myth that became a scientific experiment, or a scientific experiment that became a myth, but during the ’50s, there were studies on these monkeys on an island off the coast of Japan. The scientists gave the monkeys potatoes to see what they would do with them, and they would eat them whether they were sandy or not. Then one day a girl (sic) monkey took her potato . . . and washed it off and ate it, preferred it, showed her friends, then the parents, and they caught on, and pretty soon all the parents, and the whole island washed the potatoes, and then [as if by magic] monkeys on all the other islands begin doing it, even though there was no physical contact.

When I responded, “So this shows interconnectedness of all beings?” he replied, “Oh yes. The magic of these paradigm shift stories shows that a lot is going on we can’t easily feel, touch and taste.”

Shortly after this conversation I noticed an article in *Earth First!* endorsing a similar metaphysics. Commenting on the “one percent effect” claimed by practitioners of Transcendental Meditation, the author wrote that it “demonstrates that when 1% of the population in a given area practices meditation . . . crime rates decrease along with instances of mental illness and disease. We literally can [therefore] dream back the bison, sing back the swan” (Lewis 1989: 27–8).

John Seed, the Australian deep ecology activist and itinerant Council of All Beings missionary also mentioned the “one percent effect” during an interview (5 November 1992 in Osceola, Wisconsin). He indicated that there was a journal article documenting it and that, although he was not sure about the validity of this research, the environmental crisis is so grave that only a miracle precipitated by massive spiritual-consciousness transformation could prevent massive extinctions.

Not all radical environmental activists, however, are enthusiastic about such beliefs. During a 1993 conversation between Dave Foreman, probably the most charismatic of the founders of Earth First!, and board members and staff of the Wildlands Project in the United States (24 February 1993, Tuscon, Arizona), the conversation turned to the collision of sub-cultures that had led to a schism in the radical environmental movement a few years earlier. In this context the idea of the Hundredth

Monkey came under discussion. Then executive director of the project, David Johns, noted how activists from Oregon had shown up at Earth First! campaigns wearing “no them” buttons. These buttons expressed an anti-dualistic perspective toward political adversaries, in other words, the point of view that one’s opponents are not enemies or evil but misguided, implying that a transformation of human consciousness (like those envisioned in New Age circles and in stories like the Hundredth Monkey) will eventually overturn such distinctions. Foreman indicated that he did not fit in with such people and that he tended to ridicule the Hundredth Monkey stuff.

Johns, however, stated that there may be some truth to the theory, adding that such an effect would be too subtle to yield the radical changes needed to protect the Earth’s forests. As the conversation continued it became clear that most of those gathered thought the idea might be plausible. One mentioned favorably Peter Thomkins’ *The Secret Life of Plants* (a book that reached #1 on the *NY Times* best-seller list), which purported to show scientifically that plants have feelings and could communicate. Another board member talked about the sense of communication that American explorers reported having with the land. And for all his relative skepticism, Foreman himself stated, “I talk to trees. I think they’re telling me that it’s all connected.” He added that trees have even warned him on a number of occasions not to camp in a particular place.

Such interviews and conversations suggest that the plausibility of the Hundredth Monkey story resides not in its accuracy or scientific credibility. Such stories are resilient within the environmental countercultures because they cohere with the personal spiritual experiences of connection and extra-ordinary communication that many of these activists have had with nature’s various energies and life forms.

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Further Reading

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See also: Breathwork; Council of All Beings; Deep Ecology; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; New Age; Radical Environmentalism; Re-Earthing; Seed, John.

convert was added to the fold in the usual way,” sitting down and imitating the others.

But the addition of the hundredth monkey apparently carried the number across some sort of threshold, pushing it through a kind of critical mass, because by that evening almost everyone in the colony was doing it. Not only that, but the habit seems to have jumped natural barriers and to have appeared spontaneously . . . in colonies on other islands and on the mainland . . .

The relevance of this anecdote is that it suggests there may be mechanisms in evolution other than those governed by ordinary natural selection. I feel that there is such a thing as the Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon and that it might account for the way in which many memes, ideas, and fashions spread through our culture. It may be that when enough of us hold something to be true, it becomes true for everyone. Lawrence Blair says, “When a myth is shared by large numbers of people, it becomes a reality.” I’ll happily add my one to the number sharing that notion, because it may be the only way we can ever hope to reach some sort of meaningful human consensus about the future, in the short time that now seems to be at our disposal (1979: 148).

Watson concluded *Lifetime* arguing that this and the other examined scientific and occult phenomena demonstrate,

What we regard as ordinary physical matter is simply an idea that occupies a world frame common to all minds. The universe is literally a collective thought, and we have a very powerful say in the reality manifest on our particular sector (1979: 310).

This story spread at least as rapidly as the potato-washing monkeys. Ken Keyes, a self-help pioneer (d. 1996) explained that he learned of the story from talks given by the New Age writer Marilyn Ferguson (best known as the author of the New Age classic the *Aquarian Conspiracy*, if it is not an oxymoron to call it that) and Carl Rogers (the founder of Humanistic Psychology and arguably of the so-called Human Potential Movement). Keyes borrowed Watson’s story to promote a transformation in consciousness that would reverse our tendency to “experience people as ‘them’ – not ‘us’,” which he believed necessary to eradicate nuclear weapons and to restore our “bond with Mother Earth” (quotes from internet version www.testament.org/testament/100thmonkey.html, which includes additional material from Keyes 1982: 106–7).

Published with no copyright in 1982, *The Hundredth Monkey* story spread rapidly, first within the cultic milieu of Western religious and political countercultures – anti-nuclear, New Age, and environmental. Its popularity was

boosted by a video by the same name in which Keyes and Rupert Sheldrake (who in his own books articulates a novel metaphysical explanation for animism) repeated and promoted the story in this medium. The story lives on at numerous internet sites and will likely do so for many years to come.

But its popularity cannot be accounted for without understanding its appeal. The *Hundredth Monkey* transmits a nature spirituality expressing metaphysics of interconnection, namely, belief that, at least at a sub-atomic level, everything is connected to everything else. At the deepest levels of Being, therefore, there is no “us versus them,” a point which Keyes made explicitly in *Hundredth Monkey*. The metaphysical interconnection of all universal energies makes possible diverse modes of communication not observable scientifically, including telepathic pathways. They even make possible dramatic and rapid human cultural evolution that could bring social justice, peace and environmental well-being.

It is especially noteworthy to understand the appeal of the vision when considering that those most commonly embracing it are barraged continually with the depressing environmental apocalypticism that is pervasive within the environmentalist sectors of the cultic milieu. The Hundredth Monkey suggests a metaphysical basis whereby humankind and other earthlings might evolve in such a way as to live harmoniously. This is an idea expressed in various ways within New Age enclaves and the subcultures they influence. We can see such ideas, for example, in José Argüelles’s understanding of the “Harmonic Convergence, James Redfield’s “Celestine Prophecy,” and in the idea of the “one percent effect” in Transcendental Meditation. They are also reflected in countless artifacts of material culture; for example, in bumper stickers and posters proclaiming we can “Dream back the Bison / Sing Back the Swan” and “Visualize World Peace.”

An appealing story is not necessarily accurate, of course. It is apparent to most of those who read the original scientific reports that Watson did not truly base his story on them. That he also implied that he had interviewed sources and patched together accounts from those present, an implication for which there is no evidence, also raises serious questions of his integrity and veracity. Keyes presented the story without mentioning Watson’s qualification about the uncertainty surrounding the incredible parts of the story, and did not mention that Watson himself acknowledged that he had “improvised” parts of the story. Skeptics concluded that Watson fabricated in an unscrupulous way his entire account. Some such criticisms were published in *The Skeptical Inquirer* and republished later in a book debunking this and other paranormal “phenomenon” (Admunson 1985, 1987; Frazier 1991). A later article reported that the senior scientist involved in the original studies denied observing any

spontaneous, trans-oceanic transformation in monkey-consciousness, having heard any folklore in this regard, or even having talked to Watson (Pössel and Amundson 1996). Watson's only published response appeared in the *Whole Earth Review*, in which he essentially admitted that he made up the most salient points of the story.

A story need not be accurate, of course, to convey important truths. Watson and others moved by the story have offered the rejoinder that the story was never intended to be taken literally as a scientific theorem. It was, rather, an encouraging and empowering metaphor for the struggle to transform human consciousness in such a way that the Mother Earth and all denizens would be understood as sacred and coevolving toward a peaceful and harmonious future. Others within environmentalist sub-cultures who share the perception that the Earth is sacred dismiss the story as wishful New Age fantasy that distracts people from taking action in her defense. The reception of the story depends in part on what strategies for the hoped-for transformations activists find most plausible.

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- See also: Celestine Prophecy; Harmonic Convergence; Harmonic Convergence and the Spiritualization of the Biosphere; Natural Law Party; Sheldrake, Rupert; Transcendental Meditation.

Hunting and the Origins of Religion

Introduction

Recently the relationship between religion and biology has drawn increasing scholarly attention. Ranging from theories of religion being "hardwired" in the human brain as a result of the species' genetic structure to the application of cognitive science in attempting to understand so-called religious proclivities and their history, more and more scholars such as Atran, Wilson, Ramachandran and Boyer are pursuing the links between humans, their religions, and the "natural" environment within which they function. Nature as the totality of the context within which a subject or an object exists, including all living and non-living materials, is a broad, even endless opportunity for relationships to be identified and traced. The origins and sources of particular comportments and relationships, in turn, throw light upon how those actions can be best understood. In this setting, religion can be approached as a web of relationships with an environmental framework; any attempt to grasp the origins of these relationships must, therefore, highlight that environment or the "natural" world in which those linkages take place. Among the most prominent of the pieces in this puzzle are human consciousness, human ethical behavior, and the predatory character of human interaction with the world, especially as represented in the hunt. All three concepts and activities rank at the top of any list proposing the most controversial notions of our time.

In contemporary thought, for example, ethics threatens to disappear into a general relativism. How is it possible any longer to establish values that function normatively? How, in other words, are values capable of "binding" and thus controlling the actions of members of a society? If one attempts to do that from within a given culture, one runs the danger of being charged with discrimination on the grounds of class or sexual orientation. If, on the other hand, one attempts to establish such value scales for another culture than one's own, then, especially in the United States, one might well be tagged as chauvinistic, even a racist. What can ethical norms mean in a world where Japanese mountain climbers could struggle past dying Indian climbers near the peak of Mt. Everest in 1996 without saying a word or doing a thing to help them? Their only commentary: "Above 8,000 meters (25,000 feet) is not a place where people can afford morality" (in Krakauer 1998: 313).

Hunting, meanwhile, is being attacked from all sides. In Germany and France, for example, hunting stands have their supports sawed off and their ladders weakened; in the United States, hunting dogs are poisoned and vehicles are vandalized. In a particularly notable case in 1997, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution was applied to such an incident. Normally called upon in court actions to protect the exercise of free speech, in this case