

Environmentalism and Catholicism in Australia: the Provenance of ‘Creation Spirituality’ and Some Implications Arising from the Idea.

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Properly speaking, of course, there is no such thing as a return to Nature, because there is no such thing as a departure from it. The phrase reminds one of the slightly intoxicated gentleman who gets up in his own dining room and declares firmly that he must be getting home.

G.K. Chesterton

Introduction

The term ‘creation spirituality’ will be familiar to anyone who has perused a parish Sunday bulletin or read a Catholic newspaper. In short, it is now a common and widely accepted response within Australian Catholicism to the challenges imposed by environmental degradation. What does it mean and how can such an approach help to solve the world’s environmental ills?

Very briefly, creation spirituality is a set of beliefs about the nature of the cosmos and of God. Many elements of it derive from traditional Christian theology but these have been married to a modern, scientific view of the natural world. It strongly emphasises the principle of pantheism – God in things – and tends to diminish more traditional concepts such as human sinfulness and original sin. Because God is ‘in things’, the universe is basically a blessing – something we experience as an unqualified good. This is in direct contrast to the older notion of ‘this vale of tears’ and of a certain disdain for the merely material (*contemptus mundi*). In short, the transcendence of the Absolute is de-emphasised, as is the notion of human cupidity and sinfulness. We experience the Divine in all things. Salvation is not understood as rescuing us from sin, but as ‘preserving the good’.

Pre-eminently though, creation spirituality might be regarded as a form of ‘experiential’ theology. It relies heavily upon the individual’s subjective experience of the sacred in nature and might therefore be regarded as anti-metaphysical. In short, we must look for God in nature and the unfolding drama of cosmic evolution.

Primarily, in this paper, I wish to trace the history of the idea and show how it is intimately linked to ‘popular’ scientific theories. I also wish to comment on what I believe to be some dangers associated with it and, following from this, to give some final assessment of the idea.

The Provenance of the Idea

The genesis of the term *creation spirituality*, in its modern form, can be traced to a number of important Catholic writers of the 1980s, especially Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry in America. They, in turn, influenced other and later writers such as our own Paul Collins. However, I believe that the true progenitor of many of the ideas implicit in creation spirituality is the French Jesuit, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). It is true that earlier forms of ‘creation spirituality’ can be found in the writings of the Greek Fathers and later figures such as Meister Eckhart and Thomas Aquinas. However, I would argue that invoking the writings of these figures as ‘models’ for the modern notion of creation spirituality is erroneous because they pre-date all knowledge of ‘ecological consciousness’ and biological evolution. As an aside, it is worth pointing out that the word ‘ecology’ was coined by Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), a German biologist who campaigned vigorously against revealed religion in general and Catholicism in particular.¹

A palaeontologist by training, Teilhard de Chardin was much influenced in his formative years by the philosophy of Bergson (especially his ideas as expressed in *L'Evolution créatrice* 1907). His philosophy/theology takes Darwinian evolutionary theory, *in toto*, as a necessary fact – a premise upon which all of his ideas are developed.² It is not possible here to give a full account of Teilhardism, but a brief summary of its main elements will be necessary if we are to account for his influence on other Catholic commentators in the general area of ecology. This summary is drawn principally from *The Future of Man*, a collection of Teilhard de Chardin's essays which, I believe, offer a key to his thought.³

In Teilhard's estimation, humankind is the pinnacle of cosmic evolution, because it is in us that the Creation has become self-aware. Human beings are not above the Creation, but are that part of the Creation that is self-conscious. The evolutionary ascent of human beings occurs, according to Chardin's theory, in two stages of what he calls 'planetization'.

In the first stage, humanity expands, in both quantity (number of humans), and in quality (psychological and spiritual development). At the beginning of the 20th century, with most of the habitable surface of the Earth occupied, the races began to converge. Thus, we move from an expanding, or diversifying stage, and enter a contracting, or unifying stage. From this point forward, evolution will not be in the classic Darwinian mould (i.e., natural selection) but will proceed by our own capacity to converge and unify – a 'global society' perhaps. The most important initial evolutionary leap of the convergence stage is the formation of what Teilhard terms 'the Noosphere' a sort of envelope of 'thinking substance' outside and above the biosphere'.⁴ As part of the psychological development of a convergent mankind, Teilhard hypothesises a sort of hyper-evolutionary endpoint (God?) which he calls the *Omega Point*.

Whilst Teilhard de Chardin does not give any explicit account of his views on original sin, his writings certainly seem to imply that it does not exist. Because he has downplayed the problem of sin in the world of man, his focus is necessarily on creation, not redemption. It is this theme which his later supporters take up in the cause of an 'environmental' critique of the Western Tradition.

There are many other aspects of Teilhard de Chardin's theology which are problematical. The uniqueness of the individual seems to become lost in the totality of the 'Noosphere' and universal salvation seems to be assured for everyone irrespective of the problem of sin, since all humanity seems to be involved in the progress towards the 'Omega Point'. His total commitment to Darwinian evolutionary theory seems to suggest that a human-based scientific theory can give us the ultimate insight, not just into the nature of the universe, but into the nature of God Himself. This aspect of his thinking has been heavily criticised by the contemporary writer and scientist, Wolfgang Smith.⁵ Despite these problems and the reservation of the Vatican concerning Teilhard de Chardin's writings, many modern Catholic commentators have been profoundly influenced by his ideas. It is to some of these commentators that I now wish to turn.

For the remainder of this potted history, I will concentrate on two such Catholic commentators of our time whom I believe to have had a major influence on the whole area of religion and ecology – Thomas Berry, and Matthew Fox. Both are Americans but I point out in passing that the Australian religious affairs commentator, Paul Collins, who draws heavily on the ideas of both Berry and Fox, has also been very influential.⁶ There are other recent commentators who take a slightly less controversial approach to the three

abovementioned - Sean McDonagh, for example – but my choice must be limited.⁷ I point out also that I do not contest the need for a religious response to the environmental crisis or the undoubted sincerity of the writers mentioned. Sean McDonagh, for instance, has witnessed enormous environmental destruction in the Philippines and is right to campaign against it.

Thomas Berry is a Catholic priest of the Passionist Order. He is a prolific writer and popular public speaker and is held in high esteem by a great number of environmentalists both Christian and otherwise. In coming to his particular ideas concerning the human-nature interaction, Berry has been heavily influenced by two other thinkers, Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744), an Italian philosopher of history, and Teilhard de Chardin.

Vico's influence on Berry relates mainly to the former's ideas regarding the categorisation of history.⁸ Vico supposes that three ages can be discerned in human history – the age of the gods (theocratic government supported by mythology), the age of the heroes (aristocratic government with class conflict and slavery), and the age of men (democratic government with the triumph of reason). Using this method of broad categorisation, Berry himself proposes four major ages in civilization; the tribal shamanic, the traditional civilizational, the scientific technological, and the ecological (=‘ecozoic’). In the ‘tribal shamanic’ age, Berry sees a full integration of the human in nature. Thus, Berry says of the tribal shamanic humans: ‘... in our early tribal period we lived in a world dominated by psychic power symbols whereby life was guided toward communion with our total human and transhuman environment. We felt ourselves sustained by a cosmic presence that went beyond the surface reality of the surrounding natural world’.⁹

There followed, in Berry's analysis, a period during which the great civilizations, including the Christian West, developed. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Berry does not see the rise of civilizations as ecologically negative but, rather, as a further development of the sense of the sacred in the ‘tribal shamanic’ era. In traditional civilizations, though, he supposes that the earlier divinities were more fully integrated into human work and human customs. Thus the ‘psychic energies’ were contained or delivered in more formal customs or practices. Berry places the birth of the ‘scientific-technological age’ in the 16th and 17th centuries, with Bacon, Galileo and Newton. In this new atmosphere, he supposes that humans were ‘less concerned with psychic energies than with physical forces at work in the universe and the manner in which we could avail ourselves of these energies to serve our own well-being’.¹⁰ Thus was born what Berry calls the ‘objective world’ – a world clearly distinct from ourselves and available ‘not as a means of divine communion, but as a vast realm of natural resources for exploitation and consumption’. This, Berry supposes, is a severely pathological condition – a cultural pathology of alienation from one another and from our spiritual relatedness to the earth.

In each of these broad ‘periods’ of history, Berry supposes that there exists some form of ‘story’ or way of reconciling human presence in the universe. In the tribal-shamanic’, for instance, we have the great tribal mythologies. In the ‘traditional-civilizational’, at least in the Western Tradition, we have Judeo-Christianity. Presently, Berry believes, this ‘traditional story’ is dysfunctional – it will not carry us through the sorts of ecological problems we now face. In short, we are in need of a ‘New Story’ – a radical change in our mode of consciousness: ‘Our challenge is to create a new language, even a new sense of what it is to be human. It is to transcend not only national limitations, but even our species isolation, to enter into the larger community of living species’.¹¹ This ‘New

Story' is, in fact, the whole basis of the coming 'Eozoic Age'. To be fair to Berry, he does recognise that the traditional Christian cosmology (up until the late Middle Ages) did serve to put a proper value on nature. He supposes that this view, based mainly on the *Genesis* account of creation and interpreted through the framework of neo-Platonism or Aristotelianism, was deeply concerned with the natural world.

When and why did our present 'story' become 'dysfunctional'? The pivotal point for Berry is the Black Death in the fourteenth century, what he calls 'the central traumatic moment in western history'. He supposes that, in response to the plague, two 'dysfunctional' developments can be identified: '... one toward a religious redemption out of the tragic world, the other toward greater control of the physical world to escape its pain and to increase its utility to human society.'¹² Berry then goes on to make the extraordinary statement that the creed of Christianity places an excessive emphasis on redemption. This, he supposes, 'affects the integrity of the Christian story'. Faith dominated the religious experience and 'the Redemption mystique became the overwhelming form of Christian experience'.

We might first note that, for Berry, the great religious traditions of the past and those still surviving are simply 'stories' – each one fitted to a particular historical and ecological context. Whilst he is careful to avoid any suggestion of human subjectivity in these past 'stories' or interpretations, this is clearly what is implied in Berry's analysis. The 'old' stories clearly served well in their day but, with the coming of the scientific age and the discoveries of Darwin, a new story is required. Berry takes Darwinian evolution, the theory of ongoing cosmogenesis, very largely along the model of Teilhard de Chardin, and Lovelock's *Gaia* or earth-as-organism, as given and immutable facts which must become part of the new story.

Of very similar background and general outlook to Berry is another eco-theologian, Matthew Fox. Fox, formerly a Dominican priest was expelled from his Order in 1993 but remains as a hugely popular ecological commentator in America. He is now an Episcopalian Minister and his popularity gives credence to something once said by Elizabeth Arden - "To be Catholic or Jewish isn't chic. Chic is Episcopalian". Indeed, it might be said of Fox that his defrocking has resulted in a sort of martyrdom status, particularly for radical Catholics who seek fundamental change within the Church. Like Berry, Fox preaches for a marriage between science and religion, although he is critical of reductive science and its effects. More specifically, however, Fox is the champion for creation spirituality. Whereas redemption spirituality emphasizes the fallen nature of Man, the effects of Original Sin and the transitory nature of human existence on the earth, creation spirituality emphasizes God's inhering presence in all created things and spiritual enlightenment is obtained not by withdrawing from the things of this world, but by entering into them with an enormous passion – *eros* is a word much favoured by Fox. What this involves, on Fox's reading, is to move from a theistic position to a panentheistic one.¹³ Thus, God is in everything and everything is in God. This is not the same as pantheism – 'everything is God and God is everything'. Nor can it be equated with theism which, according to Fox 'is probably the ultimate dualism, divorcing as it does God and humanity'. For Fox, getting back to God means getting back to nature. Therein lays his popularity as a modern ecological commentator.

Fox's summary dismissal of theism requires some comment here because in this matter, as in many others, he appears reluctant fully to define his terms. The theist believes that

there is one God, a personal being with every perfection, who is creator of the world, manifested in the world, interacting with the world but nevertheless existing entirely separately from the world.¹⁴ On this basis, panentheism is merely a form of theism – one which emphasizes God’s manifestation in and interaction with the world. Fox’s own position on panentheism comes dangerously close to a type of cosmic pantheism. For instance, he says that creation as ‘the primary sacrament’ is the one thing that distinguishes pantheism from panentheism because ‘pantheism has no need of sacraments whereas panentheism does’. Fox further supposes that traditional Christianity has erred by driving a wedge between God and nature – by having God as some distant, male omnipotence who can only be reached by a rejection of the world – a world which on Fox’s reckoning was seen either as being at best inert or at worst, evil. This is not true of traditional Christianity. Even his most hated figure in Christian history, St. Augustine, makes this quite clear, as did many of the early Fathers of the Church and the Scholastics of the Middle Ages. For Augustine, it was possible to see God’s intimate involvement in the world of matter. He puts it in the following terms:

As the creative will of a sculptor hovers over a piece of wood, or as the spiritual soul spreads through all the limbs of the body; thus it is with the Holy Ghost; it hovers over all things with a creative and formative power.¹⁵

Linked to Fox’s dismissal of the traditional Christian doctrines on the Fall and the Redemption is an underlying reaction against the traditional understanding of *contemptus mundi*. The idea of looking beyond the world of time and space for real meaning is almost anathema for Fox. We see this clearly towards the end of his book *Original Blessings* where he lists the differences between ‘Fall/Redemption’ and ‘Creation-Centred’ spirituality.¹⁶ Part of this list is reproduced below.

Fall/Redemption	Creation-Centered
Faith is ‘thinking with assent’ (Augustine)	Faith is trust
Patriarchal	Feminist
Ascetic	Aesthetic
Mortification of body	Discipline toward birthing
Control of passions	Ecstasy, Eros, celebration of passion
Passion is a curse	Passion is a blessing
God as Father	God as Mother, God as Child, as well as Father
Suffering is wages for sin	Suffering is birth pangs of universe
Death is wages for sin	Death is a natural event, a prelude to recycling and rebirth
Holiness is quest for perfection	Holiness is cosmic hospitality
Return to past to a state of perfection	Imperfection is integral to all nature
Keep soul clean	Make soul wet so that it grows
Begins with sin	Begins with <i>Dabhar</i> , God’s creative energy
Emphasizes original sin	Emphasizes original blessing
Emphasizes introvert meditation	Emphasizes extrovert meditation, i.e., art as meditation

As Angela West has pointed out, Fox’s path to enlightenment is through earthly pleasure, a philosophy which she characterises as ‘Californian Ethnic Thought’.¹⁷ She goes on to point out that Fox makes use of ‘religion’ and the popular yearning for the numinous, against the distrust of traditional religious forms – a characteristic that is implicit in the Californian doctrine of pleasure. Nature and our natural selves are seen as the answer to

the corrupting power of civilisation. West exposes a particular ruse by Fox: ‘The trick is to co-opt the tradition and present it as being right behind one’s own position, while skilfully concealing the rich complexity of the tradition and its potential for quite another interpretation’.¹⁸ Missing from Fox’s account is the potential of passion to enslave. This was what so concerned Fox’s *bete noir*, St. Augustine. It was also a propensity which has been recognised by all the great Christian Saints and thinkers down through the ages. The whole business has been well summarised by Thomas Merton, a modern Trappist Monk and well known writer (whom Fox quotes liberally in support of his own ideas):

The world is metaphysically real. Creatures can lead us efficaciously to the knowledge and love of their Creator and ours. But since the created world is present to our senses, and God as He is in Himself is infinitely beyond the reach both of sense and of intelligence, and since the disorder of sin gives us a tendency to prefer sensible goods before all others, we have a way of seeking the good things of this life as if they were our last end. When Creation appears to us in the false light of concupiscence, it becomes an illusion. The supreme value that cupidity seeks in created things does not exist in them. ... When we live as if the multiplicity of the phenomenal universe were the criterion of all truth, and treat the world about us as if its shifting scale of values were the only measure of our ultimate good, the world becomes an illusion. It is real in itself, but it is no longer real to us because it is not what we think it is.¹⁹

Is ‘Creation Spirituality’ the Best Approach for a Practical Catholic Response to Environmental Problems?

In modern Australian Catholicism, the terms ‘ecological conversion’ and ‘creation spirituality’ are, like *The Man from Snowy River*, household words today. There can be no doubt that the concepts have been useful in raising our awareness, as Catholics, of the need for some real response to the environmental problems that face us in the 21st century. There can be no doubt, too, that since the time of the Industrial Revolution we have become accustomed to treating nature simply as a resource to be utilised. A change of emphasis is required. However, as a former biologist and as a Catholic, I would argue that ‘creation theology’, although emotionally appealing and in apparent sympathy with evolutionary and ecological theories, is theologically weak and ultimately harmful to both the cause of environmentalism and to the Church. ‘Ecological conversion’ is less problematic if not taken too literally – i.e. as a call away from traditional Christian concepts of nature. I note in passing that Pope John Paul II placed the words *ecological conversion* in inverted commas in his Jan 1990 *World Day of Peace* message.

The notion of creation spirituality is theologically weak because it links itself intimately with certain scientific ideas in evolutionary biology and general ecology which are themselves problematical and subject to radical and unforeseen changes as the march of science proceeds. Let me give just one example. The science popularisers are very fond of the term ‘biological diversity’. This, they suppose, gives us a measure of the health of an ecosystem. But the main Australian textbook on ecology for undergraduates stresses that the concept of biological diversity is ‘in many ways imponderable and difficult to quantify satisfactorily’²⁰. For instance, the often assumed relationship between high species diversity and high ecosystem stability is now hotly debated by the experts. Unifying rules in ecology constitute a sort of elusive Holy Grail. What we have here in the twin ideas of biological diversity and the biological ‘web of life’ as a huge ‘ecosystem’ is yet another version of that old and perplexing metaphysical problem of the One and the Many. To quote the philosopher Frederick Copleston:

The philosopher may try to bring the One more within the field of understanding, perhaps by identifying it with the phenomenal world and endeavouring to eliminate transcendence. But if the elimination is successful and the One is literally identified with the world of plurality, the 'One' becomes simply a collective name for the Many.²¹

That is the problem in a nutshell and we encounter it in almost every aspect of life. There is a state of perpetual warfare between two dearly held and entirely opposite human ideas or tendencies – the urge to find some unifying concept or grand explanation in a world where actual human experiences deliver the contrary notion of radical plurality.

At the core of this problem of placing faith in science as an aid to theological understanding is the very nature of radical conceptual innovation. As Sir Karl Popper and various others have shown, any discovery in science which consists in the elaboration of a radically new concept cannot be predicted, for a necessary part of the prediction is the present elaboration of the very concept whose discovery or invention was to take place only in the future. However, those theologians who lean towards science in order to elaborate their ideas often seem to assume that the future will merely see some further refinement of current scientific theories, not their overthrow by radically new concepts.

While pantheism itself is quite a proper Catholic theological position (as opposed to pantheism), over-emphasising it and linking it to popular scientific theories is not. Traditionally the notion of "God-in-things" has been understood as Providence and the maintenance of being by Being. Augustine, for instance, can speak of it in this fashion:

As the creative will of a sculptor hovers over a piece of wood, or as the spiritual soul spreads through all the limbs of the body; thus it is with the Holy Ghost; it hovers over all things with a creative and formative power.²²

Over-emphasis on pantheism brings it dangerously close to 'God-as-things'. This is especially the case with 'wild' nature. Here, it seems, God is particularly close to us. Take a good look at the images commonly associated with creation spirituality. You will find photos of misty forests, placid lakes, mountain streams, and 'huge cloudy symbols of a high romance'. Very few include human beings, even fewer human beings at work in nature. Whilst ostensibly emphasising our 'oneness' with nature, creation spirituality actually tends to draw a radical division between humanity and the remainder of creation. "Nature" tends to be identified with 'wilderness' – nature unmodified by human activity.

I believe that the environmental problems of our age are essentially moral ones, not strictly theological or scientific. They have arisen because of human cupidity and what Reinhold Niebuhr called 'the easy conscience of modernity'. The problem is not so much the human view of nature but, rather, 'man's inhumanity to man'. If we are to teach our children to respect the natural world around us, it will require a great deal more than a 'feel good', experiential theology based on popular scientific theories. Such an approach may be briefly invigorating, but is unlikely to have a lasting influence unless it can be backed up with a sound theology and placed within our traditional concepts of Catholicism. A colleague of mine once referred to 'New Age' ideology as 'a vast sea of theological insights – about one inch deep'. This, I think is true also of creation spirituality.

If the problem is to be seen as essentially a moral one for Catholics, then the primacy of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ must lay at the very core of our response. Surely that is what the term 'Christian' means. Redemption theology, in other words, should be the main basis of our response to the environmental problems besetting us. In is in the Cross, pre-eminently, that we see the point of intersection between the Divine and the world of space and time.

I wholly agree with Church authorities that there is a need for the Catholic Church to involve itself in environmental matters, but I believe that this can be done without the need for any drastic changes in Church doctrine. The joint resources of Scripture and Tradition offer ample scope for a powerful Catholic environmental ethic. In particular, a metaphysical approach based on the philosophy of being as elaborated by the Church Fathers and especially by St. Thomas Aquinas, provides a very good starting point. We might note that the neo-scholastic approach emphasises the 'analogy' of being' – the being each thing has is proportionate to its kind of existence. Such an approach preserves a respect for the material universe without positing God as some sort of inhering 'life force' *a la* Bergson. It is better to represent the Divine as **informing** nature rather than **inhering** in it. This, combined with traditional Catholic moral teaching which employs an objective, ethical philosophy, offers ample scope for the development of a distinctively Catholic approach to the environmental problems which beset our age. To be sure, work is required to 'flesh out' such an approach. Such a task is beyond both my competence and the subject matter of this paper, but I hope that some person or group will carry out the required work.

What are the credentials of the Tradition which would give us the necessary confidence to suppose that it can supply answers to environmental problems in the twenty-first century? They can be stated fairly simply. They combine the idea of a revealed Truth, impervious to the march of history and human 'progress', with the notion that the human intellect is equipped by its Maker to derive from the Revelation, answers to questions and problems that arise in history. I exclude here questions that are a matter of belief in what the Tradition terms 'Divine Mystery'. Those answers then become part of the Tradition itself so that for a period of more than one thousand years, the Christian West could rightly claim to base its religious beliefs on the combination of Revelation and Tradition. In all of this the application of human reason was neither abandoned nor deified. It was, to use that famous phrase, 'faith seeking understanding'. This approach reached its apogee in Aquinas whose synthesis of Greek philosophy with Old and New Testament Revelation provided a theology which persisted, within the Catholic Church at any rate, until our own era. It is only within the last fifty years that this view has been overshadowed by other approaches.

Have these 'other approaches' in the Christian West brought us any closer to a truly Christian 'environmental awareness? I think not. No previous age has been so profligate in its abuse of nature than ours. And that is not because of an outmoded theology. Rather, it has arisen because of neglect in the application of basic, traditional doctrine. We should not be too anxious to ensure that our Faith conforms to the scientific fashions of this world. Rather we should be anxious to ensure that our view of world conforms to the Faith.

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- ¹ For a most interesting account of Haeckel's views see: Richards, R.J. (2005). *Ernst Haeckel and the struggles over evolution and religion*. *Ann. History & Philosophy of Biology*. 10: 89-115
- ² My own position here is similar to that of the late David Stove who said that he had no problem with evolution as a fact – it was the theory that worried him!
- ³ Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre 1969. *The Future of Man*. (Transl. Norman Denny). Fontana Books, William Collins Sons & Co., London.
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 163.
- ⁵ Smith, Wolfgang. 1988. *Teilhardism and the New Religion*. Tan Books: Rockford, Illinois, USA. 250 pp.
- ⁶ Collins, Paul. 1995. *God's Earth: Religion as if matter really mattered*. Dove Publications, North Blackburn, Victoria.
- ⁷ As an example Sean McDonagh's *Greening of the Church* (Orbis Books, New York, 1990) puts forward similar arguments to Berry and Fox and, indeed, quotes them with approval.
- ⁸ Information on Vico and his ideas comes from 'Thomas Berry and the New Story' by Mary Evelyn Tucker. It can be found at internet address: <http://divweb.harvard.edu/csvpl/ee/tucker.htm>
- ⁹ Berry, T. 1988. *The Dream of the Earth*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, USA. p. 39.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, p. 40.
- ¹¹ Ibid, p. 42.
- ¹² Ibid, p. 126.
- ¹³ Fox, M. 1983. *Original Blessing*. Bear & Co, New Mexico, USA. p. 90.
- ¹⁴ This definition comes from the *Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*, Penguin Books, 1997.
- ¹⁵ St. Augustine. *De genesi ad litteram*, IV, 16 (Quoted in Nasr, S.H. 1996. *Religion and the Order of Nature*. Oxford Univ. Press. p. 56.
- ¹⁶ Fox, M. *op. cit.* pp. 316-319.
- ¹⁷ West, Angela. 1994. *Matthew Fox: Blessing for Whom?* The Jubilee Group (Blackfriars Publications), Manchester, UK. p. 12.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, p. 13.
- ¹⁹ Merton, T. 1989. 'Vision and Illusion' in: *A Thomas Merton Reader* (Ed. T. McDonnell). Image books, Doubleday, NY. p. 383.
- ²⁰ *Ecology – an Australian Perspective*. Eds. Attiwill & Wilson, OUP, 2003
- ²¹ Copleston, F. 1982. *Religion and the One*. Continuum, London & New York. Pg.7.
- ²² St. Augustine. *De genesi ad litteram*, IV, 16 (Quoted in Nasr, S.H. 1996. *Religion and the Order of Nature*. Oxford Univ. Press. p. 56.