

## Book Reviews

Heather Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (Introductions in Feminist Theology, 12; London and New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), pp. ix +136. Paperback £20, ISBN 0-567-08207-5.

*Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* is one in a series of books, *Introductions in Feminist Theology*, which, as the titles indicate, introduce readers to some diverse perspectives of and developments within feminist theology. Some of the titles focus on theologies within cultural and regional contexts, such as African and Asian theology. Others deal with feminist constructions of traditional Christian themes, such as Christology and Redemption. All aim to give an overview of scholarship to date and indicate the directions in which feminist theology might or should move. They are accessible to the generally educated reader and to undergraduate students.

Heather Eaton's volume on ecofeminist theology brings together multiple dimensions of ecofeminism and indicates how these dimensions have interacted with Christian theology. This is a big task for a small book. Eaton uses the metaphors of intersection and roundabouts to capture the sense of a dynamic field of scholarship and praxis that is, on the one hand, new and emerging but, on the other hand, around long enough to have identifiable streams. She understands ecofeminism as a very broad umbrella term for the many ways in which scholars and activists have made connections between ecology and feminism or even just between the earth and women (pp. 2-3). Key to understanding these connections is the theme of domination, the dynamics of which are very well presented throughout this book.

Chapter one attempts to document all the avenues through which people come to consider the relationship of women to the ecological crisis. As traffic enters roundabouts, so too ecofeminists enter into a conversation from many different avenues, including social activism, scholarly activity, oppression, privilege, poverty, feminism, and ecology, to mention a few. Eaton documents some of the major early contributions (Rosemary Radford Ruether, Susan Griffin, and Mary Daly, among others) who were influential in shaping ecofeminism as a field. The chapter also contributes a brief timeline for key events on the global scene, such as major conferences and the initiation of United Nations organizations considering women's role in environment and development. There are also succinct summaries of contributions by non-theologians, Noël Sturgeon, Karen Warren, Hazel Henderson and others illustrating the diversity of ecofeminist positions and contributions.

Chapter two is a very broad-stroked overview of theoretical and historical work regarding the relationship of women and nature in Euro-Western cultures as constructed by ecofeminists. Topics include the meanings and usages of the term 'nature' with a brief account of the usage of the word in Christian tradition, the history of the association of nature with femaleness, the emergence of patriarchy, explanations of the origins of patriarchy, theories about the origins of the domination of nature,

critiques of dualisms, and accounts of the origin of the earth and the human within an evolutionary framework

Chapter three introduces ecofeminist theology. It begins with a critique of Christianity's implication in the oppression of women and the degradation of the earth. It mentions the early Christian thinkers, Tertullian, Augustine, and Jerome, and their linking of women with nature in a misogynist fashion, and the *Malleus malificarum*, the fifteenth-century Church document that was used in the identification and execution of women believed to be witches (p. 66). Some of the theological responses to the ecological crisis within the different areas of theology are given specific sections: systematics, biblical theology, ethics, liberation theology, as well as theological method and theory. The chapter concludes with three tips for ecofeminist theologians: know the full diversity within ecofeminism, take more account of the global political feminists and feminist praxis, and move from reconstructing theology into the political arena and resistance to globalization (pp. 91-92).

Chapter four is an overview of themes relating science (mostly evolutionary cosmology) and religion and the role that this relationship has in ecofeminist theology.

Chapter five suggests eight guiding principles for the future development of ecofeminist theology. The thrust is towards making ecofeminist theology more supportive of a liberatory or transformative praxis.

The scope of this book is both its strength and its weakness. On the one hand, the effect of including so much contextual material is to limit the space actually given to ecofeminist theology. While the works of ecofeminist theologians are mentioned, there is very little room to illustrate the development of their theologies (pp. 74-86) or to relate them to specific questions and critiques, such as common critique of Christology and Redemption theology and its traditional disconnection from Creation theology as Eaton rightly presents it (p. 78). The book would also have benefited from precise definitions of a few more terms ('paradigm' and the ecological paradigm' [p. 15]).

On the other hand, the book has laudable strengths. These include the diverse array of questions and themes all in one place that should invite a curious beginner to pursue. The book also raises a challenge to those who would attempt to engage with or critique ecofeminism as either a spiritual individualist movement or as a unified political ideology. The creativity and complexity of ecofeminism definitely comes through. What is most engaging and challenging is the sense of urgency and almost breathlessness that permeates the book. In fact, occasionally the need for scholarly precision and careful argumentation seems to vie with the sense of impatience to 'get something done quickly!' And the point of getting something done is well taken, given the evidence about increasing ecological devastation and the dire situations of women around the world. By her dual focus on scholarship to date and the urgent need for praxis now, Eaton also challenges theologians to think hard about the relationship of cultural renovation (new worldview, beliefs, attitudes, symbols), which gets a lot of attention in the book, and the socio-political action for which she also calls.

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Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. xii + 194. Paperback \$20, £14.99, ISBN 0-7425-3530-4.

The latest work in Rosemary Radford Ruether's *oeuvre* is a splendid summary and review of the last sixty years of post-World War II economic development and the globalization that ensued from it. Ruether weaves a triple braid as she aims to connect the discourses of ecofeminism: critiques of the problematic globalization following the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions, the growing resistance to its policies by women's movements across the globe and the reactions of major religious movements to a growing environmental crisis. With great clarity and sanity, Ruether's reliably succinct prose gives a highly useful summary of developments that have occurred during the time of her own career. Her familiarity with the people, movements and themes is more than coincidental—she helped shape the theological and ecofeminist responses to global environmental destruction.

Ruether takes Lynn White's challenge to Christianity (and by extension to all religions) as grounding heuristics: Assuming that ecological problems have a root in religious practices, concepts, and texts, the solutions to ecological degradation must also be grounded in religious and spiritual practices. In this volume, Ruether aims to collect and connect religious practices, the relationship to women and the earth, and economic practices together, to try to imagine more holistic ways of responding to the crises of our times and places.

The first chapter summarizes post-World War II development of corporate globalization and the resulting poverty, the often worsening state of women, the commodification of the earth, and religio-cultural tensions due to increased inequality caused by globalization.

Chapter two offers a summary of the conclusions to come out of the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions' series of conferences on the ecological import of major world religions and indigenous spirituality (p. 46). A sampling of ecofeminist thought around the globe is the focus of chapter three: starting with North America it covers Africa, India and Latin America. Chapter four then points towards some of the major forms that resistance against globalization has taken in the last decades, and especially since the 1990s. With the guiding question 'Is another world possible?' in mind, Ruether sketches three recent movements that have challenged neoliberal capitalist globalization: the Zapatista uprising in 1994 (p. 132), the 1999 'Battle of Seattle' convergence (p. 135), and the World Social Forum (p. 139). Other movements mentioned are the various direct action campaigns against globalization (p. 141), the global struggle for worker justice (p. 145), community supported agriculture (CSA), and a variety of ways in which women are involved in the struggle for their rights and for the preservation of the planet (p. 154). Ruether finally lists three structures that need profound transformation in the near future, if such alternatives should truly have a chance to change the way we do things: corporations, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, WTO, World Bank), and the US military (p. 160).

The book is vintage Ruether: brilliantly sifting through the evidence, she reliably summarizes the trends and developments, gives us much information, many causes to ponder, and reasons to hope for a different future. Forging connections diachronically and synchronically, she relates three different spheres of importance, spheres that need to be connected, more than they have heretofore: struggles for the environment,

for women's rights, and for the transformation of our economic practices. This laudable volume is a handy primer for students new to ecological and economic concerns. It brings the novice reader up to speed and ready to engage more deeply. For a reader familiar with many of the writers, movements, and critiques mentioned, it offers a valuable summary, bringing together a great wealth of information, of useful summaries on the work of ecofeminism, the attitudes of major world religions towards nature, women, and social justice, the process of globalization and the emerging resistance to it.

Those of us working and teaching within the Christian tradition may find that much of ecotheology and process theology must remain outside of the purview of this book, as it aims to be truly global, and Christianity is here only one of the players. To those of us who are thinking about how to begin and conduct conversations across religious boundaries, chapter two gives a basic framework to begin to think about possible points around which to form coalitional consciousness.

This work does not aim to cover any and all forms of alternatives to globalization. For this purpose readers may be better served by the International Forum on Globalization's *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible*. But unlike most works resisting globalization it highlights and connects the role of religions (often visibly excluded by secularist writers) in this process. One of the benefits of a survey is that it begs questions for future research: What is the place of China and other Asian countries beyond India in this scenario? What is the impact of the oil peak and the need for alternative fuel and power sources on the issues covered in the book? Where else in the world is research being conducted on the interaction between religious attitudes, women's situation and the environment? How can the growing alliances of evangelicals for the environment be connected to these streams of thought? How do we begin to move to truly collaborative coalitional consciousness beyond Western- and US-centered conversations and approaches? Do small movements really make a difference? How do we move from marginal to mainstream, to the transformation of entire societies? What are the theological and religious practices and teachings that will reliably transform the way we do things? How can such transformation become effective beyond our minds and beyond a small minority of the world population?

Questions like these leave us with much work to do. Ruether's harvest of the developments and work done during her lifetime gives us great gifts, among them the gift of many further questions.

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David M. Knight and Matthew D. Eddy (eds.), *Science and Beliefs: from Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700–1900* (Science, Technology and Culture, 1700–1945; Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), pp. xi + 272. Hardback £47.50, \$94.95, ISBN 0-7546-3996-7.

Most of these sixteen essays were delivered in 2002 at a conference on 'Science and Beliefs' held at the University of Durham. The authors set out to reevaluate and moderate the perceived clash between the natural sciences and religion since the scientific revolution. In the introduction, David Knight describes the electrifying effect

on graduate students of a lecture delivered in 1961 by Thomas Kuhn who argued that science, like all human activity, is subject to dogma and systems of belief. Much of Knight's subsequent career was given to analyzing connections between them. Many of the contributors to this volume acknowledged a debt to Knight.

Barry Gower argues that many features of the physical sciences in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had roots in an Aristotelian conception of metaphysics. Even Newton's chemistry was an implicit acknowledgement of the need for a first cause to underpin the mathematical principles of natural philosophy.

Eighteenth-century editions of Robert Boyle's rambling writings elevated his standing as a scientist. Harriet Knight claims that by systematizing and abridging his work, the editors engaged in a 'methodisation' which showed that his work was not a disorderly natural history but a systematic Baconian natural philosophy.

Wishing to understand how the discipline of natural history was 'constructed' in early modern England, Susan McMahon looks at one Patrick Blair who wished to persuade the botanical community to abandon John Ray's general method of classification and to replace it with one of his devising. He blamed his failure to do so on the market being glutted with Ray's works. Gower's, Knight's and especially McMahon's essays would benefit from less academic verbiage and a lighter touch.

More readable is Michael Honeybone's account of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society which flourished from 1710 to 1760. Following the distress of civil and religious wars, Honeybone argues, its members, including many clerics, extolled the primacy of law and its values were based on notions of natural law.

Matthew Eddy shows how medicine and botany shaped mineralogical vocabulary in eighteenth century Scotland where naturalists still taught the subject in their medical courses. Randolph Cock examines the significant role played by scientific servicemen in the Royal Navy between the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars. It was an era of 'Humboldtian Science' which required expensive fieldwork worldwide.

By the 1830s, cheap print provoked warnings about the dangers which some types of reading matter posed for the working classes. Aileen Fyfe analyzes the debate about the role of popular publishing in the dissemination of scientific ideas in popular literature in the 1840s and 1850s. Peter Bowler also considers the nature of the popularization of science looking specifically at the work of J. Arthur Thomson, a Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen between 1899 and 1930, who scaled down his scientific career to write for the general public. Because he endorsed vitalism and a creative evolutionary viewpoint, Thomson's viewpoint diverged from mainstream scientific opinion.

Richard Somerset compares two nineteenth century histories of the French Revolution. Jules Michelet interpreted it as critical for the establishment of human liberty, whereas Thomas Carlyle saw it as a consequence of political and moral degeneration. Somerset goes on to link their respective 'organicist' historiographies to Lamarck's evolutionary interpretation of biology. Admitting that he can claim no direct influence of biology on historical interpretation, he claims merely to be dealing with 'modes of conception of organic becoming'. The argument is strained and the excess verbiage does not flesh out the scant theme.

Charles Darwin's intentions notwithstanding, his great synthesis most strongly undermined the authority of Christianity. Momme von Sydow shows that ironically, it was itself based on religious ideas. Darwin knew well William Paley's argument for design in nature. Slowly and reluctantly, he abandoned it for Malthus' viewpoint that

the creation of higher animals had come about through cruel and remorseless struggle with no divine hand outstretched to the losers. Frank James looks at the famous exchange in 1860 between Thomas Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce at Oxford's University Museum. Historians have blithely accepted Huxley's claim of total victory over the bishop in their debate about Darwin's theory and Huxley's ancestors. Looking at various accounts of the meeting, James shows that there was, in fact, much disagreement about just who got the best of it.

There is a light touch in Geoffrey Cantor's account of Michael Faraday's relationship with the elegant and intellectually precocious Ada, Countess of Lovelace, who wrote to him introducing herself as a 'High Priestess' of science. There are morals to be drawn from the tale, not all of them having to do with religion and science.

In 1830, Auguste Comte coined the word 'altruism' and argued that it is an innate human trait. Comte came to see himself as a kind of High Priest in a contrived Religion of Humanity. Thomas Dixon shows how the notion provided a way to articulate atheistic views without giving up on ethics and religion. Later, altruism came to be associated with socialism. Dixon sees a link between it and the current notion of the 'selfish gene'.

William Brock illustrates a dispute about the proper range of scientific activity with an account of a six year long dispute between the physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter, who believed that science must be confined to things measurable, and the chemist William Crookes, who would have it encompass the intangible, odd and quirky. In 1870, Crookes published a paper on 'Spiritualism Viewed in the Light of Modern Science'. Speculating that radiant matter from which the universe evolved might link our world to others in different dimensions—a kind of transformed psychic force—Crookes was intrigued by a new gadget, the radiometer. Carpenter argued that the radiometer's motion was due to the impact of light on the surface of the vanes. Although Crookes confirmed his conclusion, Carpenter engaged in vicious *ad hominem* attacks in which he deplored the 'duality' of Crooke's mind.

By the late-nineteenth century, most scientists agreed that 'God-talk' lay outside the boundaries of science. In the concluding chapter, John H. Brooke strives valiantly to find a unifying theme to tie the above together. It is perhaps noteworthy that, early in this century, we hear echoes of many of the arguments and threads mentioned here.

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Lorraine Daston and Greg Mitman (eds.), *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. vii + 230. Paperback \$25. ISBN 0-231-13039-2. Hardback \$49.50. ISBN 0-231-13038-4.

The essays in this book examine the general topic of anthropomorphism from a variety of viewpoints. They arise from a workshop held in May 2001 at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. The authors include prominent scholars in anthropology, ethology, history and philosophy, along with film-makers and photographers (sadly, the book does not list their addresses, specialities and affiliations).

The aim of the book is to take a close look at how the ways in which humans imagine and interact with animals have transformed, figuratively and literally, both

humans and animals over time. The general conclusion is that anthropomorphism is useful in a remarkably wide range of different contexts addressed in the various essays. For an ordinary biologist trained in the empirical tradition, this is all very surprising. We have long been told that anthropomorphism is a sin to be avoided at all costs, so to many it might now feel disorientating to be told otherwise. Perhaps that is why the authors of a few of the essays, mostly the academics, have felt it necessary to write in language so oblique as to be unreadable. But the book is saved by other authors who offer some delightful insights into completely different worlds.

In their Introduction, the editors make some useful distinctions and point to the various understandings of animals that have led to various kinds of use and abuse. These are helpful in illuminating some of the concepts discussed in the chapters which follow.

In a fascinating chapter entitled 'People in disguise', James Serpell analyses the benefits and harms of pet ownership. The benefits work both ways, and are understandable in evolutionary terms. From the animals' viewpoint, selection for co-operative, human-like behaviour in pets explains the much higher reproductive success and vastly greater numbers of domesticated dogs and cats compared with their wild ancestors. From the pet-owners' viewpoint, companion animals are a form of social support, and they enhance the health and quality of life of their owners. Research has found that pet owners scored their dogs higher than other humans on several specific 'relational provisions' (p. 127).

All of that is not to deny that anthropomorphism still causes a lot of problems for animals today. The harms of advanced anthropomorphic selection (defined as 'selection in favour of physical and behavioural traits that facilitate the attribution of human mental states to animals', p. 129) are deeply disturbing, as illustrated by some of the problems encountered by Serpell at the veterinary hospital where he works.

Greg Mitman draws an interesting contrast between two ways to study African elephants. One was directed by the population biologist Richard Laws, and the other by the behavioural ecologists Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton. Laws worked by conducting large-scale aerial surveys and culling hundreds of elephants for systematic sampling, the Douglas-Hamiltons worked on the ground with smaller groups of living elephants, each known by sight and personality. Inevitably, the Douglas-Hamiltons were accused of anthropomorphism in the old, bad sense. Yet, as Mitman points out (pp. 191-92), by viewing elephants as individuals and making films that brought their lives and problems into the homes of millions of TV viewers, the Douglas-Hamiltons and like-minded colleagues found that ethological and behavioural studies of individual elephants were far more compelling to powerful lobby groups and media organizations than the methods of population ecologists. The result has been greatly improved success in enlisting public support for research and conservation of elephants—to a level that other scientists working on less charismatic animals may well envy. They need not, since elephants require very large areas of protected land, and extended reserves for them will benefit very many smaller species incidentally. Whatever one's opinion of the argument about whether such studies should be based on analyses of populations or individuals, surely everyone can applaud the general benefits to conservation.

Cheryce Kramer contributes a puzzling essay on the work of the Getty Images photographer, Tim Flach. Unlike the other chapters, it gets into ideas that require one to think about animals in an entirely unexpected and, in places, almost offensive way.

Kramer introduces the term 'pornomorphism' and invites us, for example, to find sexuality in a close-up picture of a horse licking its lips (p. 164), complete with unmistakably equine whiskered muzzle and velvet nostril. Such a concept is hilarious to anyone who knows horses well enough to be able to imagine the feel, the smell, and the *presence* of the rest of the real horse behind the picture. If 'aesthetic taste is a self-defence mechanism' (p. 167), mine was working well, and it ensured I didn't get the point of Kramer's assertion that, to the extent that spectators looking at Flach's pictures can suspend disbelief, they 'enter into a technologically assisted process of narcissistic self-projection'.

Instead, let me strongly recommend the succinct summary of the place and value of anthropomorphism in contemporary science and moral philosophy, given by Sandra Mitchell (pp. 114-15). Calling for a 'deeper understanding of the lives of other animals [than humans]', Mitchell refocuses the question away from how alike or unlike humans are to animals. Rather, what is important she claims is 'a more generalized analysis of what capacities, whether found in humans or not, ought to be the basis of moral consideration' (p. 115). This idea raises many new questions on the role of anthropomorphic perceptions at the boundary between science and philosophy, especially the concept of morality.

An excellent example of the crumbling of old barriers is the chapter by Sarita Siegel, a documentary film-maker reviewing the process of making her own 2001 film about the rehabilitation of orang-utans, *The Disenchanted Forest*. Siegel was pleased to discover that anthropomorphic associations and metaphors were 'increasingly acceptable in primatology' (p.199). She quotes the opinion of Dr. Anne Russon, a primatologist who has studied orang-utan intelligence in the Bornean rainforest for fourteen years, that anthropomorphism is useful because it recognizes the recent common evolutionary roots of primate and human behaviour. For example, 'culture', the capacity to accumulate knowledge and share it socially, was once considered unique to humans, but when multiple examples of social learning and animal traditions are set in an evolutionary context, it becomes clear that genuine culture is found in primates too. Siegel's chapter suggests answers to many of Mitchell's questions concerning the basis for moral consideration of animals.

Although some chapters were (to me) deadly boring or irrelevant, in the breadth and variety of the essays collected here, I found much to think about. The dust-jacket's claim, that this book aims to show how anthropomorphism 'works' in a range of different contexts, is justified to a surprisingly large extent. In the end, the title 'Thinking with Animals' is appropriate, because in their performance on many stages and in different ways, animals do move us to think, and we really *should* think about them.

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Gay Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. xii + 151. Paperback \$24.00, ISBN 0-7425-3013-2.

In a consumer culture such as ours, waste is just supposed to disappear. No fuss, no muss. Put it in the bin and trust that someone will take it away and, if we don't see it, we don't have to think about the implications. This wasn't always so. Before the era of

disposability and convenience was ushered in towards the end of the nineteenth century, an ethic of conscientious reuse prevailed. The throwaway culture has had a short history but has created a huge problem in terms of land use and resource depletion. But our relationship to waste can change again, and in *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish*, author Gay Hawkins explores what approach might work best in effecting this reversal: 'If human relations are dynamic, open-ended social entities, in the sense that new meanings and practices are always immanent, the ethical and political question is, how might new waste practices emerge? How might a new ethos of waste surface that is less destructive of the planet?' (p. 3).

Hawkins, who lectures in cultural theory at the University of New South Wales, has taken an aspect of our surroundings (waste) that usually flies under the radar and put it up on the screen for examination. And that is one of her main concerns – that too little attention is paid to rubbish, or at least, the wrong kind of attention is paid to it. Rather than ignore it, or notice it only as a necessary evil in our lives, she argues that we should be looking for ways to redefine our relationship to garbage.

The book is cleverly arranged around the familiar daily forms of refuse. Symbols of waste serve as chapter headings: The Overflowing Bin, The Plastic Bag, Shit, Empty Bottles, A Dumped Car and Worms. The reader should not expect a straightforward discussion of these objects, however, because Hawkins simply uses them as springboards for discussion of everything from poststructuralist theories of self to the litter recovery practices of Australian aborigines in the movie *Bush Mechanics*. This is a relatively short book but it is dense with ideas and stories relating to how we interact with things we think we no longer need or want.

In the chapter entitled 'Dumped Car' she draws on research in material culture studies to discuss how we sometimes learn to see new value in old things – how we glean, scavenge and make-do with objects that would otherwise become value-less. In 'Empty Bottles' the discussion shifts to the types of cultural economies at play in the world of recycling and how cost-benefit analysis can be applied in either utilitarian or non-utilitarian systems, or sometimes in a blend of the two. (Paper recycling, for example, is a hybridized calculation using both utilitarian and non-utilitarian components. Householders provide 'free' labour and raw material for ethical reasons and industry happily takes the paper away to create profit.)

Hawkins suggests that the small acts we perform in our daily lives have ethical significance that resonates in society at large. The micropolitical acts that constitute our daily habits do not exist in isolation; they are shaped by the prevailing culture and, in turn, influence the macropolitics of that culture. We sort our garbage. But do we do so because the municipality dictates we should? Because environmental education has said we must do so to save nature, or because of peer pressure from our neighbours? Irrespective of the motivation, does the act of sorting our garbage, of paying attention to our waste, predispose us to being more environmentally aware in other spheres of our lives? In other words, how is a recycler made, and does what motivates him/her have macropolitical implications?

In the exploration of these questions Hawkins draws heavily on poststructuralist political theory to 'think through the relations between ethics and affect, and how our waste habits might be changed without recourse to guilt or moral righteousness' (p. 16). She argues for the development of a new ethical framework of material management in which we relate to our waste in ways that depend more on sensibilities than on prescriptive moral codes.

She also examines the themes that have been used in environmental education and suggests that the disenchantment stories of nature's vulnerability, which are the basis of many waste reduction programs, have become counterproductive. The resulting moralistic coercion, while undeniably successful at many levels, has run the risk of triggering resentment and backlash and has failed to tap in to other, more enduring, sources of motivation.

This search for an alternate ethos of waste relations takes a decidedly non-utilitarian turn in the final sections of the book ('Worms'), in which Hawkins considers the idea that waste, while representing death and loss, holds within it the possibility of transience and renewal. The work of worms in breaking down waste in order to build something new serves as an inspiration for a new ethos of waste as a generative force in our lives. This, and the concepts of corporeal generosity and gift economies also discussed by Hawkins, are reminiscent of the Buddhist teachings of mindfulness, selfless generosity and an acceptance of the value of transience.

It is hard to say for whom *The Ethics of Waste* was written. Although not addressed adequately in this review, the bulk of the author's discussion is academic in tone and was obviously not written for readers unfamiliar with the terminology of postmodernist theory. Yet, she also illustrates her points with engaging stories such as those of the Toilet Festivals of Mumbai or the linkages and networks of meaning that flow from as simple an act as the gleaning of potatoes in the Beauce region of France. When she draws on Italo Calvino's essay on putting out the garbage ('La Poubelle Agréée'<sup>1</sup>) to describe the potential beauty in everyday acts, she is appealing to the mind's eye, and the academic arguments pale in comparison.

This raises the question of how interesting ideas generated in the world of academic research make their way into practical, everyday reality. How might Gay Hawkins' theories on a new ethos of waste become public policy? It would be wonderful to see this book rewritten in layman's language for a more general market where it could become a timely addition to the current debate in the environmental sector about the failure of fear-based public education and the need to rethink the place of values in the promotion of sustainability.

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Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), pp. xii + 184. Paperback \$22.00, ISBN 0-8006-3727-5.

In *God and Power*, Catherine Keller brings us a book that to a large degree presents in shorter and somewhat more linear fashion arguments offered in her two most previous books, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Beacon

1. Italo Calvino, 'La Poubelle Agréée', *The Road to San Giovanni* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993).

Press, 1996) and *The Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (Routledge, 2003). But this is no mere reprise (several chapters originated as conference papers before *Face of the Deep* was published). This is Keller as dazzling in her prose and as daring in her reach across disciplines as ever. As the subtitle suggests, Keller is continuing to journey through the desolate terrain of a post 9/11 American demo/theocracy and is not sitting down on a bit of rubble to rest her feet. It is 'counter-apocalypse' that dominates the journey – that is, a refusal to settle for mimicking apocalyptic gestures calling for the end of apocalypse and apocalyptic theology. One apocalypse is as bad as another, even if in a seemingly kinder, more just, more equitable formulation. For Keller life is more complicated than that and hence the 'counter': apocalypse is so wired into our cultural modes of becoming and imagining that renunciation is no option, especially when apocalyptic has inspired some of the Left's most favoured ideals of feminism, economics, and politics. We are in this text; those who renounce it forget it does not renounce them. To forget all about apocalypse or to exile this text as a sexist, militaristic, world renouncing book that has no place in good liberal company is to renounce one's own self, with the consequence that what is repressed uncannily returns to motivate, steer, and accomplish. Hers is therefore a politically charged post-modernist version of apocalypse that seeks consciousness of our apocalyptic habits, however veiled. She urges us not to settle down on any single version of cultural apocalypse, and instead invites us to live a counter-apocalyptic journey that teases into recognition the Apocalypse's polyvalent meanings both in the world of the text and in the multiple worlds which arise from it in its history of effects in the West.

*God and Power* – the God who can will and do anything and by willing make it right, that God who forges ahead through apocalyptic rivers of blood to make a new Jerusalem from the Babylon abandoned, Keller redefines along the lines of process thinking that marks her theological *oeuvre*. There is much at stake here since Keller wants us to believe that there is a direct link between the America-championed preemptive strike as a morally defensible foreign policy and the God of Jean Calvin who acts preemptively to elect by fiat who shall be damned just to prove omnipotence. If for this reviewer that link is too linear, the argument's result is no less compelling: in 'the most religious nation on earth', all – Christians and non-Christians alike – need to think about how representations of deity transform themselves into political manifestos and vice versa. Indeed, the future of our planet requires this. Counter-apocalypse means counter-political theology, a politics of God by other means, and a way of imagining the incorporation of God that stresses not God's sovereign power to do anything He damn well pleases, but as lure amidst the infinite array of possibilities of any lived moment into new becoming. It is not order Keller celebrates, but the potentialities of a God ever becoming, who lingers with us in our materiality in the wild spaces of the Bible's opening verse. The Deep (*tehom*) offers an antidote to a theopoetics killing all of us, and would urge us to take a cue from Revelation's many-eyed creatures in Revelation's throne room (4.6), and learn to see and live multiply. Keller's counter-apocalyptic journey asks that we take more than a single pair of shoes, or one set of looking glasses. To break open chaos in this blessed rage for order requires more – an intentional theopoetics of committed materiality, not only for us, but for our partner in chaosmos, God.

To write more – and do so briefly – is in a way to do injustice to Catherine Keller. A reviewer's presentation, reduced to a particular time and space, threatens Keller's arguments. The book is divided into three parts. The first makes an appeal to recon-

sider the God of omnipotence along the lines sketched out above. The second urges a deconstructive reading of Revelation that refuses the myopia of a single vision. Gone are all those charts of the End, whether from the Christian Right or Left, each in its own way imagining the conclusion to history and certain of how God wills its outcome. What replaces them are rather the elliptical, conflicting narratives that make up what culturally has come down to us as *the* narrative of the Bible's last book, and in them potential for rethinking geography, gender, and political vision. The third, in this reviewer's opinion, the most brilliant of the triptych, breaks new ground in dragging the reader from the End to the Beginning, to a reformulation of the God of infinite power (makes right) toward encountering the divine amidst the material conditions of our lives. Here in perhaps some of the loveliest chapters of Keller's work to date come thoughtful appropriations of post-colonialism and ecotheology to urge citizens toward a 'counter-imperial theology of love' (p. 116). Taking a page from Gayatri Spivak's insistence on love in committing oneself to a cosmopolitan subjectivity, Keller urges us to be in love with the world, to commit ourselves to 'postcolonial incarnality' (p. 132). 'We are in but not of empire', she quips (p. 133). Being 'not of' calls forth a daring rejoinder to empire's organizations of time and space to commit oneself to practice and love a 'wisdom of uncertainty' (p. 151) that lives ever new, with a God ever creating, always becoming amidst this vital planet earth. No one who reads this journal should leave this anthem to such a little known God unread.

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Helen Bergin and Susan Smith (eds.), *Land and Place: He Whenua, He Wāhi: Spiritualities from Aotearoa New Zealand* (Auckland: Accent Publications, 2004), pp. 245. Paperback NZ \$35.00, ISBN 0-9583454-5-7.

A few years ago New Zealand's tourism campaign used the very catchy song *Slice of Heaven* to entice visitors to come to this spectacular scenic place:

When love shines over my horizon, she's a slice of heaven to me  
Warm moonlight over my horizon—she's a slice of heaven, yeah.

These intertwining themes of love, nature and religion flow through the volume *Land and Place: He Whenua, He Wāhi: Spiritualities from Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Helen Bergin and Susan Smith. The book brings together personal and reflective essays on the connection between religion and nature grounded in the beauty, the anthropology and the ecology of this nation of islands.

The essays emerged out of a research and discussion group associated with the Catholic Institute of Theology, now part of the School of Theology at the University of Auckland. Contributors engage in both their individual notions of religiosity and their diverse relationships with land and sea. The book is designed as a project of reframing the sometimes critical approach within ecospiritual studies initiated by Lynn White in 1967. White claimed that the origins of the current ecological crisis can be found in the Judeo-Christian desacralisation of the earth, particularly as reflected through the

Genesis creation story. In contrast, contributors to *Land and Place* celebrate their spiritual traditions, seeking a connection between their Christian beliefs, their relationship to local places and their concerns about the plight of the planet. As the book explains, 'Knowing our connections to places is a way of recognizing the limitations of the human species within the planet Earth' (p. 2).

The book opens with a review of New Zealand's history, the Maori struggles under colonialism, the current impact of globalization and the drive for sustainability. It sets the scene in a cultural context. This chapter seems slightly misplaced, however, in a text honouring the divinity in place. From then on, the reader is taken on a journey whose embarkation point is the lyrical yet detailed explanation of Maori worldviews by Tui Cadogan ('A Three Way Relationship: God, Land, People: A Maori Woman Reflects'). This important chapter reveals, and unravels through a glossary of Maori terms, the precious attunement between people and place within Maori spirituality. For Maori, there is no distinction between land and people. Compare this sacred intimacy with the colonial project which saw land and Maori as 'other', and denigrated both.

At the end of the chapter Cadogan raises an important question not sufficiently addressed in the volume – the dangers of cultural misappropriation by non-indigenous New Zealanders. Since white settlement, Maori have suffered 'misuse and abuse' of their sacred ideologies and oral traditions and now may be reluctant to 'commit their deepest religious beliefs and spirituality to print' (p. 40). It is a lesson that indigenous people worldwide are grappling with – the desire of non-indigenous spiritual seekers to appropriate indigenous wisdom in their search for personal fulfillment and ecological insight.

Recognizing this concern, Elisabeth Julian writes in 'Landscape as Spiritual Classic' that 'as non-Maori New Zealanders we have inherited our spiritual traditions from elsewhere' (p. 99). She describes how Catholics particularly have moulded their traditions to place, inspired by the breathtaking Aotearoa landscape, which she defines as a 'classic text' which can be read, engaged with, but never fully understood. For Julian, this 'spiritual classic' is (de)constructed through a mysterious coalescence with the grandeur of the land where the power of place leads to self-transcendence and self-transformation. In this sensitive (eco)responsiveness to place, she confronts not only her (eco)responsibility, but also her relationship with God.

Likewise, contributions from the editors, Helen Bergin ('The Waters of Aotearoa: Experience of the Holy Spirit?') and Susan Smith ('The Healing of Our Land') travel from feelings of joy in communion with the Other (place and creation), to despair, in Bergin's case, for the devastation of river and ocean, and in Smith's case, about the 'sacrilege' and 'abuse of what is sacred' (p. 147). Through a reassessment of the Christian-Cartesian duality (e.g. between sacred and profane), and a re-imagining of the Christian, notably Catholic, forms of worship and sacrament, both authors challenge the reader to re-envision their own spiritual practice with earth in mind. They urge us to foster an interconnectedness with non-human others and make a commitment to heal the earth. Importantly, these two deeply reflective articles are solution-focused and give the book a solid foundation in practical ecospiritual approaches for the benefit of both self and land.

The majority of articles in *Land and Place* are grounded in the biblical context and the Christian/Catholic faith of the writers. As contributors explore the diverse layers of their own spiritual expression, they call into question the sacredness of the land

itself. This is illustrated through their 'love stories' with New Zealand's naturescapes, a cross between the mighty vistas from the film of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (where the land was both actor and partner in Frodo's quest), and a Genesis-like Garden of Eden. Green, fecund, luscious, filled with God's presence.

But not all is well in this heavenly place, and the writers raise questions of environmental devastation, agribusiness, and (in one moving story by Peter Murnane 'Common or Garden Spirituality'), the narrow-minded destruction of a flourishing community garden after ten years of dedicated community involvement.

These personal narratives work well. Sometimes it seems as if the contributors are sitting in some beautiful elfin glade sharing stories of their engagement with the beauty and spirit of place. This is both the book's strength and its weakness. On one hand the book is innovative, laying the groundwork for a much broader discussion of ecospiritual theory and praxis in the New Zealand context, but on the other, there is limited engagement with the wealth of discourse in the fields of religion and ecology, and sense of place, that have emerged in the past fifteen or so years—far too many relevant texts and theoretical perspectives to cite here. So while I'm puzzled that the authors bypassed this highly significant resource, *Land and Place* is a generous attempt to evaluate, within the Christian tradition, the precious relationship between God, Land and People. It is indeed a 'slice of heaven'.

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James Lovelock, *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back – and How We Can Still Save Humanity* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. xiv + 177. Hardback £16.99, ISBN 0-7139-9914-4.

*The Revenge of Gaia* faithfully delivers something I have always imagined would emerge from the scientist who looks into his crystal ball of predictive data and sees a very bleak future indeed, if any at all, for the human species. Lovelock's analogy of the effects of economic growth to the drug addict fully aware of their self-inflicted damage (p. 150) is thus useful if only to describe the frustration of one who knows not how to communicate with the addict. What do we do when rational argument is not enough? How do we communicate on a more than factual level that we must create new values for supporting human life while it remains? To his credit, Lovelock comes across as neither hysterical nor in need of communicating optimism at all costs. Since William Golding suggested the name, Gaia, to Lovelock in the 1960s, the concept of a planet alive and responsive to its hosts in ways so underappreciated by the classical division between organic and inorganic matter, has been surpassed only in the scale by which its 'sickness' is now being diagnosed. The immanence of catastrophe wrought through global warming is worse than anyone predicted, and demands immediate strategic and political actions.

The thrust of the book's message is time-scale. Based on current predictive trends of rising carbon emissions, the latest thesis is a climatic trend known as 'positive

feedback', in which the rise in global heat is amplified through the failure of various mechanisms normally in place to regulate temperature tolerable for life (for instance, the rate of melting ice caps due to a certain level of carbon emissions disables the ability for white ice to reflect heat away from the earth, further increasing temperature and producing the positive feedback loop [p. 33]). Lovelock believes that all Earth systems related to climate temperature can now be shown to amplify, not resist, heat rise (p. 34). The current trends of temperature rise suggest to Lovelock that by the year 2100 only the Arctic will be habitable by humans. Whilst many who are better placed to do so may critique the scientific precision of the timescale and magnitude of Lovelock's apocalyptic predictions, I would suggest that the value of his work lies not primarily with its scientific credentials (of which both Lovelock and his supporters remind us *ad nauseam*, as if to forestall his being labelled a 'holistic' thinker by scientist friends). The value of Lovelock's analysis is, rather, parallel to that of his first two publications of the hypothesis (*Gaia*, 1979, and *The Ages of Gaia*, 1995): in its search for that mode of communication, rhetoric and the 'crude tool' of metaphor (p. 139) that might initiate a paradigm shift in the way humans view their responsibility to the wider organism on which their lives depend. Lovelock's response to positive feedback is therefore to introduce a fundamental change in the way humans should now regard the scope of their action: 'It is much too late for sustainable development; what we need is a sustainable retreat' (p.7).

If the simple honesty of this scientist's prognosis makes us sit up and listen, the conclusions he draws from it should make us squirm. For Lovelock is torn, it seems, between biological determinism ('tribal behaviour is surely written in the language of our genetic code, or why else would we as a mob or a crowd do the things that only psychopaths would do alone' [p. 9]) and an inherited enlightenment commitment to the inherent value of human civilization ('through civilization we redeem ourselves and have become a precious asset for the earth' [p. 14]). So whilst 'we need, most of all, that change of heart and mind that comes to tribal nations when they sense real danger' (p. 14), Lovelock makes it clear exactly what kind of 'change of heart and mind' is necessary. It is the promise of certain selected (by the nuclear scientist, specifically) 'saviour' technologies and the silencing of alternatives in the interest of consolidating our energies into a unified project (p. 104). But this acknowledgment seems academic, having condemned *any* campaign to promote renewable energy sources in the foreseeable future as 'feeble offerings', and worse, as stalling tactics of an inevitable meltdown, the palliative medicine to the patient Gaia that 'renders the last stages of treatment unbearable' (p. 151). Here Lovelock's conservatism gets firmly in the way of his rationalism, since the objection to mass wind-farm installation remains at the level of the worst argument it can produce: the aesthetic one ('extravagant and intrusive', 'unpleasant and intrusive power system', p. 14). That the same arguments apply equally to the installation of costly and time-consuming new nuclear power stations needs hardly repeating here. From his point of view alone his warnings of the likely climate-related deaths to arise from *not* capitalizing on the existing nuclear technology seem plausible. But his motivation for doing so gains no credibility through its re-entrenchment of polarized solutions of rational scientists on the one hand and the irrational 'anti-nuclear-activist [who] will never hesitate to exaggerate and speculate' (p. 92) on the other.

I must conclude that what emerges from Lovelock's analysis is the imperative to pursue the very hopes that he condemns as a waste of time and resources. Solutions to

the global energy crisis can and are already being provided by the will of local people and progressive governments to harness a diversity of alternative energy sources,<sup>2</sup> combined with the promotion of a *cultural* shift away from fossil-fuel dependence at every level of society. If Lovelock is a fatalist in only one crucial respect, it is in regard to a rigorously causal view of the path from human knowledge into political action, a cynicism towards the ability of new ideas to take hold of popular imagination. As an eighty-six year old who has witnessed the successive failures of world governments to respond adequately to the knowledge of Gaia's warning systems, of which he has himself been a life-long pioneer, this is entirely understandable. But what if we applied his love of the Gaia metaphor to the complexities of cultural production, including a *theological* appraisal of what makes certain beliefs believable, or of what constitutes a transformation of human values and moral positions? His thesis would have an impact far beyond the outdated battle between 'rationalists' and 'idealists'. Lovelock himself has paid more than lip-service to the influence of a diversity of philosophical, religious, and cultural capital as transformative agents in the generation of a new Gaia-centred ethos, including the development of eco-theology itself. As in the past, Lovelock once again exhorts the function of 'sacred texts' and the hope that religions can yet turn around their distortion of the model of 'stewardship' (p. 135) that has translated so easily into domination. His own hope is that out of such mistakes come a repaired value-system (and the closest one that Lovelock comes to reverencing is deep-ecology; deep-ecologists being our own contemporary religious 'contemplatives' [p. 154]) that acknowledges the limits of faith in science alone: 'there is a deep need in all of us for trust in something larger than ourselves, and I put my trust in Gaia' (p. 148). But if we extended the possibility of a need for a spiritual as well as scientific paradigm-shift, might we not also be permitted to hope against his assumption that *only* a global catastrophe such as war will enable people to imagine alternative ways of living in harmony with Gaia?

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2. Lovelock cites the 'inadequacy' of many renewable energy technologies, such as solar, wind, tidal, biofuel and hydrogen fuel cell technology. He bases this on calculations that they alone would provide negligible proportions of the world's energy needs, and on sincere doubts that infrastructure to support such technologies will arrive in time to prevent the worst effects of rising carbon emissions. There are strong alternate views. Cf. local examples ([www.greengolddieseldiesel.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.greengolddieseldiesel.co.uk/index.htm)); and the Campaign for a Hydrogen Economy (Mike Koefman, co-ordinator@hydrogen-heauki.org).