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Review: 'Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Religious, and Aesthetic Perspectives'

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perennialist thought with phenomenological terminology. Panikkar's most significant contribution perhaps can be found in his skillful and mellifluous use of language, and his demand that we see the human project in the broadest of strokes. He strives to include all men (if not all persons) at all times in all cultures in his vision of cosmotheandry and transhistoricalism. Like Eliade, William Blake, and Ortega y Gasset, he strives to both encompass and undergird all rationalities and mysticisms by providing an umbrella schematic. For Eliade, this schematic was expressed through the terms sacred and profane, mediated through ritual. For Blake, it was the tension between innocence and experience as expressed through his poetry. For Ortega, the umbrella was to be found in the march of history and the winnowing of the masses from the true thinkers.

One shortcoming of this book is that it ironically seems to exclude modalities of spirituality that seek to achieve goals similar to cosmotheandry. Although briefly acknowledging the existence of ecological and feminist thought, Panikkar dismisses such "popular movements," claiming that "they may readily give way to superficial clichés, extreme attitudes and one-sided reactions" (138). He seems to discount the importance of the ecological movement, stating that "a new science, ecology, has appeared and has all the earmarks of becoming yet another tool for human mastery of the Earth . . . today Man cultivates a new attitude toward Nature. . . . But Man is still the boss, the king" (43). Through such statements, and through his insistence that "the word *Man* means the androgynous human being" (3) it is clear that he is either not aware of or not sympathetic to the growing body of literature that in many ways owes a great debt to his pioneering work at convincing theologians and others to open their horizons.

Despite these minor annoyances, this book demonstrates Panikkar's continued commitment to seeking out and expressing truth in a mystical and trinitarian fashion. His Christian commitment is only thinly veiled, as found in such passages as "having touched bottom, we perceive signs of resurrection" (77), and in his definition of cosmotheandry: "the divine, the human, and the earthly—however we may prefer to call them—are the three irreducible dimensions which constitute the real" (60). And, in what continues to be an important theological contribution, he reminds us with clear prophetic voice that by examining the prehistorical, historical, and transhistorical modes of consciousness, and by taking heed of our current dilemma of environmental peril and human degradation, we must not fail to take action.

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CHRISTOPHER KEY CHAPPLE

Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Religious, and Aesthetic Perspectives. Edited by Christopher Key Chapple. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994. xii + 236 pages. \$19.95.

In recent years dozens of anthologies containing essays on ecological issues have appeared. Most are uneven at best, and very few merit use in the classroom. Christopher Key Chapple's volume is the exception to this trend.

This book is well conceived and well organized, a valuable contribution to the field, providing the reader both the context and detail necessary to ponder essays that provide an ecological framework for understanding scientific, historical, philosophical, and religious framework issues. Demonstrating that ecological issues require interdisciplinary efforts, Chapple has gathered fourteen scholars (including himself) representing a number of disciplines—including the natural sciences, philosophy, American studies, religion, theology, public policy, social ethics, and anthropology—who are in conversation with one another throughout the book, illustrating the “cooperative efforts” necessary for developing long-range solutions to the ecological crisis.

Chapple includes essays from academics and activists and some who combine both theory and praxis. The book is composed of an introduction and thirteen essays, divided into two parts focusing on “problems” and “solutions” to the global ecological crisis, viewed through the lenses of ecological cosmology, community, changing worldviews, and scientific paradigms.

Highlighting a few of the articles does a disservice to the others, especially when the whole is strong because of its individual parts. However, prospective readers might find these essays interesting and challenging: J. Baird Callicott writes on “The Wilderness Idea Revisited” and traces the history of American traditions of wilderness *conservation* (Gifford Pinchot) and *preservation* (John Muir), offering Aldo Leopold as a point of balance between these polarities. In addition he challenges common presuppositions about wilderness, aboriginal peoples, and the environment and sustainable development. Bron Taylor’s study of Earth First! in “Earth First!’s Religious Radicalism” comes as Earth First! has experienced a schism (he names them the “Wilders” and the “Holies”). He argues that religion, particularly a spirituality rooted in the sacredness and interconnection of all life as well as an ethics of intrinsic value, undergirds these activists. Both before and after this schism Taylor notes that the groups have been animated by a spiritual biocentrism and participate in and are nurtured by rituals (e.g., Council of All Beings) that emerged from Deep Ecology.

My only regret is that this volume is not larger, more inclusive. Several of the articles refer to or use the work of Thomas Berry as a starting point, and since one of the focal points of the volume is cosmology, one wonders why Berry is not among the contributors. The list of contributors reads like a “who’s who” of scholars writing and working on ecological issues (e.g., Lynn Margulis, J. Baird Callicott, Jay B. McDaniel, Rosemary Radford Ruether, etc.)—but a “who’s who” from North America. While several authors provide the global dimension of the crisis in their work, voices from beyond North America would enrich an already rich collection of essays.

The book is recommended for those interested in the intersection of ecology and religion, aesthetics, ethics, history, and religion and science; upper-level undergraduate and graduate classes; the college library.