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Exploring the Wild in Narratives, Practices and Place in Dark Green Spirituality

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Wild Enchantments in the Anthropocene

Wild Enchantments in the Anthropocene

Exploring the Wild in Narratives, Practices and Place in Dark Green Spirituality

Ive Brissman

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of The Faculty of Humanities and Theology,
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Wild Enchantments in the Anthopocene – Exploring the Wild in Narratives, Practices and Place in Dark Green Spirituality

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to study the intersection between dark green spirituality and the green movement in relation to climate change and ecological crisis, and to explore how some ecologically concerned people try to orientate themselves in facing the challenges and especially the role of spirituality in this context. The study is set in the period 2009–2015. My fieldwork was conducted in Devon and Dartmoor, UK. The work relates to the scholarly approaches to the geological epoch the Anthropocene. Given the aim and the field presented, I formulate three research questions: What are the points of negotiation in the intersection of spirituality and the green movement? What motivates individuals to turn to spirituality in relation to the challenges of climate change and ecological crisis? What is the relation between narrative, practices and place? The result shows that spirituality offers frames which enable reflections, and ways of working to explore the emotional, existential and ethical dimensions of facing these challenges. Further I have found three points of negotiation at the intersection between the green movement and dark green spirituality. Negotiating spirituality concerns how the trust in scientific reports on climate change comes together with a dissatisfaction with the disenchanted tale of science, in contrast to an "enchanted alter-tale" (Bennett). Negotiating ecological self-awareness is a form of ecognosis (Morton) which relates to the rewilding of the human mind – or the wild mind. Negotiating baselines refers to practices that work to read landscapes, to restore the lost memories and relate to deep time perspectives. The third question focuses on the relation between narrative, practice and place. In exploring various workshops, I found that narrative, practice and place form a node, which together offer ways to cultivate wild enchantment.

The theoretical framework relates to enchantment as a complex mood (Bennett) and making kin (Haraway) with the larger-than-human world (Harvey). Based on the study I chisel out my view of 'wild enchantments' which show various ways to cultivate wild enchantments or to work with wonder and wounds. 'Wild enchantments' is an invitation to wild places, it is an encounter with the eerie, ecological shadows and the riddling power of the Anthropocene.

Key words Wild enchantments, Anthropocene, ecological self-awareness, negotiating baselines, dark green spirituality, rewilding, the wild mind, wild places, deep time, the eerie, ecological shadows, riddling power, wonder and wounds, making kin, the larger-than-human world

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Ive Brissman

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To Henrik, Lizzie and Fox

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Chapter 1 Exploring Wild Enchantments

This dissertation is about how some ecologically concerned people try to orientate themselves in facing the challenges of living in times of climate change, ecological crisis and loss of biodiversity, how they strive to find alternative ways of living, and, not least of all, the role of spirituality in this context. The aim is to study the intersection between spirituality and the green movement in relation to climate change and ecological crisis. Modern environmentalism is based on the twofold assumption that the current Western, urban consumerist lifestyle causes too much pressure on natural resources, and that humans need to "go back to nature" in order to reform their way of living. This is an invitation to follow on a journey that will explore a green landscape and a green mindscape in contemporary green spirituality.

1.1. Introduction and Aims

Let us start from central London: from Paddington station the journey goes westwards, approximately three hours before arrival in Totnes in the south coast, in Devon, UK. In Totnes the cab takes you for a twenty-minute trip further into the countryside, outside Dartington, to the Old Postern, just by the church. Indeed, on arrival this place offers a scenery that evokes the green and pleasant land, the emblematic image of the English countryside, and this is where Schumacher College is located. This medieval English country house (which has its origin in the fourteenth century) is a point of gravity; people come from various places in the world to visit the college, and distinctive green thinkers are invited to host courses and workshops. My approach to understanding the green mindscape is to stay close to the green landscape. I explore the various practices that are performed and created in workshops that takes place in nature rather than in seminar rooms. These practices are intimately related to narratives using themes from environmental discourse, myths or legends. They are co-creative workshops which allow things to grow in an organic sense, and moreover, they take place, and 'place' and the landscape form a distinctive site for presence. Narrative, practice and place form a node, and together they offer ways of working which range between wonder and wounds. The theoretical framework of this study relates to enchantment, and my analysis will be

carved out in conversation with a number of scholars who approach enchantment on its own terms. On the basis of their contributions I formulate my ‘wild enchantments’. This work is set in the context of the Anthropocene, that is, in a contemporary context, and it relates to the parallel development of climate change and ecological crisis. My fieldwork was done in 2013 and 2014 but I set the frame between 2009 and 2015.

1.1.1 Research questions

Given the aim I have presented, and the field I study, I have formulated the following questions that I hope to be able to answer:

- What are the points of negotiation in the intersection of spirituality and the environmental movement?
- What motivates individuals to turn to spirituality in relation to the challenges of climate change and ecological crisis?
- What is the relation between narratives, practices and place?

My first question focuses on points of negotiation, and I do not consider points of negotiation to be conflicting lines, but rather ongoing constructions and adjustments to changes. In asking for the motivations, I consider personal stories which I have taken part of in conversation with people in the field. The third question focuses on the relation between narratives, practices and place, and initially I answer the question: Why focus on narrative, practice and place? My simple answer is that both narratives and practices take place. To study narratives without consideration of practices would make them rather airy constructions with little support in the social or cultural context. To study narratives *and* practices illustrates that creating and performing narratives and practices is something that is *done*, in the sense that these are part of an ongoing social construction, but more so, the social construction that is done in narrative and practice takes place. In considering narratives and practices in relation to the place, the place is not to be seen as a passive backdrop, a décor or a stage; it is “the ground” and it forms the basis that contributes to the social construction in the most concrete ways.

1.1.2 Background – Presentation of the Field

This study takes its departure from Schumacher College in Dartington, outside Totnes, in Devon. At the time I did my fieldwork it was located in the Old Postern beside Dartington Church, but since then the school has moved to Dartington Hall Estate. I say that my study takes its departure from this because the college is more like a hub than the centre of this thesis. Schumacher College offers one-year courses for a master’s degree (Economics for Transition, Holistic Science, Ecological

Design) in cooperation with Plymouth University, as well as short courses of variable duration, often one to three weeks. The college was established in 1991, funded by the Schumacher Trust together with Dartington Hall Trust, and is named after the British economist E.F. Schumacher. Schumacher is the author of *Small is Beautiful* (1973), an influential book in the green movement, and founder of *Resurgence* magazine (1966), which is a central organ for environmental discourse in the British public sphere. The college is well-known for its ability to attract guest lecturers who hold prominent positions in the green movement. The list includes names such as James Lovelock, founder of Gaia theory; Polly Higgins, eco-barrister and proponent of eco-rights; Bill McKibben, the American environmentalist who received the Right Livelihood Award in 2014; Vandana Shiva, Indian environmentalist and author; Joanna Macy, American environmentalism and Buddhist scholar; Rev. Peter Owen Jones, who has done several programmes on British television on religion, to mention just a few. A central figure is Satish Kumar, editor of *Resurgence* magazine who was part of the original initiative to create the college. Kumar is a long time peace and environmental activist, author of many books and a well-known public figure in Britain. Kumar has been the subject of a BBC documentary titled *Earth Pilgrim*, which is set in Dartmoor.[1]

Why is this a suitable place for a study of alternative green spiritualities? It must be made clear that Schumacher College is not a confessional institution, it rather gives a space for various spiritual approaches, and in this it is testimony to the complexity of the phenomenon of alternative spiritualities. I want to emphasise that this is *not* a study of Schumacher College based on the ambition to picture life at the College. From my perspective, Schumacher College forms a hub with distinctive relations reaching beyond the institution. Firstly, it is a part of an environmental discourse, with leading environmental activists invited as lecturers, and it is related to the British journal *Resurgence & Ecologist*. Secondly, it is a distinctive part of the landscape, Devon, in the south of England, where it is located. I think many of those who have visited Schumacher College would agree that the landscape of Devon and the closeness to the Transition town of Totnes are distinctive features in the experience of visiting this place. Part of the education takes place in the landscape and excursions allow participants to visit places in the area such as Dartmoor National Park, a place that occupies a special position in this study. Therefore, I approach Schumacher College as part of the landscape, and of the environmental discourse. Education at the college is not restricted to the classroom, and walks in the landscape are organised as part of the courses. Education coexists with other practices which are organised as workshops, and a central feature here is

[1] *Earth Pilgrim* was televised in the autumn of 2008, and it was watched by over 3.6 million people. *Earth Pilgrim* in available on DVD, and on the cover it is presented as "Conservationist Satish Kumar spends a year exploring the beauty of England's Dartmoor". In the portrait Kumar is wandering the landscape of the moor, interwoven with nature scenery and wild life, and the "Dartmoor scenes and that most inspire him" and he also visit Wistman's wood, and he tells the story of Wistman's wood as a place once sacred to the Druid in the wood.

that these often take place outdoors, in the landscape surrounding the college. It may be a simple walk in the countryside, or it may be excursions to various sites. Dartmoor is a central place and a recurrent site for outings for participants of the College.[2] Therefore, what I study is the practices performed in these various workshops, and particularly in relation to place and narrative.

In this thesis, Dartmoor is central, and I devote chapter 5 to Dartmoor. Dartmoor became a National Park in 1951, and it is famous for its open moorland with characteristic craggy granite tors standing out as silhouettes in the landscape, and for its reminiscences of the Bronze Age settlements that are found across the moor. Dartmoor is often described as one of the few remaining areas of wilderness in Britain; it is visited by tourists, roamers, outdoor adventurers and environmentalists. Apart from that, the ancient landscape has a spiritual attraction for many visitors because the place has so many legends and myths attached to it and it has gained a reputation as being one of the most haunted places in England. The place is a mythological landscape; archaeological reports as well as local legends bear witness to its ancient history. Dartmoor is a place that is frequently visited by Schumacher College, as it is located within easy reach of the college. The moor is a place for learning *in* nature, and a place for leaning *from* nature, and the place works as an example of how humans affect their environment. Apart from the beautiful moorland, pictured in any tourist guide, the place has a long history and Dartmoor has its own narrative.[3] Thus, the visit to Dartmoor is not only a roaming expedition for healthy outdoor exercise but also an example of the reflective practices I study. Dartmoor illustrates the importance of place as a node where narrative and practice come together, and I give fuller accounts of this further on in this thesis.

1.1.3 Setting the Task

The question of how we relate to nature is at the core of the activist discourse and practices that are studied in this thesis, and, for the sake of simplicity, I use the term ‘nature’, although in doing so I follow Donna Haraway’s term ‘natureculture’ that renders the conventional binary oppositions of culture and nature redundant. Although this is not a study of Schumacher College, what the people in this study have in common is that they have been visiting the college, and while this group of people are recognisable by their ecological awareness there is a large amount of heterogeneity among these people, for example in age, nationality or in the way they choose to work for change. Nor should their ecological awareness be taken to mean that they are followers of a particular view or form of environmentalism. On the contrary, today the green movement is characterised by heterogeneity, and this concerns the relation to spirituality as well. This makes the task somewhat

[2] Field notes 2013, 2014.

[3] Dartmoor is the setting for *Earth Pilgrim*, the BBC programme where Satish Kumar talks about his view of life and nature.

challenging for me because those I have met in my field are not a distinctive spiritual group, but persons with various approaches to spirituality; some are interested in spirituality, others are not. The task for me has been to find those who are drawn to spirituality, and my ways of doing so have been to listen to people, and if they express themselves in spiritual terms, and I have been careful not to be the first to use concepts of spiritual/spirituality. Hence, I focus on those who have spontaneously introduced spirituality in any form in the conversation. The study is based on fieldwork but adds further material such as internet resources, articles in journals or other publications, for example, *Uncivilisation −The Dark Mountain Manifesto* (2009).

As stated above, my aim is to study the intersection between spirituality and the green movement in relation to climate change and ecological crisis. A clarifying question is: if my focus of study concerns the role of spirituality, why do I choose to look at people who are part of the green movement? Why not go directly to a spiritual group? We might think of the green movement[4] as consisting of dedicated activists engaged in campaigning or in direct action, for example, to protect a forest from destruction; however, the activist's work includes more reflective practices, for example, strategic discussions on what kind of actions are meaningful, or deeper ethical or philosophical questions such as how mankind relates to the larger-than-human world. The scholar of social movements Alberto Melucci[5] pictures this as the invisible laboratories of social movements. To study these invisible laboratories means to form an understanding of social movements beyond public spheres, and to study what goes on behind the scenes. In simple terms, this can be preparations and organisational work, in relation to campaigns, but the work of social movement likewise includes activities such as ideological or strategic discussions, or more reflective discussions or practices. Social movements may gain or lose momentum, they are not static movements, they are, as the sociologist Emanuel Castells notes, emotional movements, and emotions play a vital role to keep them alive and kicking.[6] I think this is particularly true in times of challenges, and this momentum sums up the state of the green movement of today. The persons in my study all share an ecological concern, but they are not followers of a specific doctrine or ideology that is outlined in advance. My study does not target a particular organisation; therefore, organisational analysis or membership criteria are not relevant here.

1.1.4 The Purpose – Contribution to Religion and Ecology

My purpose with this work is twofold. The first purpose is that my empirical study may contribute to the knowledge of contemporary challenges of climate change, the

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[4] For a discussion of the green movement see Jamison and Eyerman 1995; Jamison 2001. For historical perspectives see Radkau 2014, Worster 2017.

[5] Melucci 1989.

[6] Castells 2012.

loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation in relation to alternative or green spiritualities. The second purpose is to contribute to theoretical discussions on enchantment and alternative spiritualities. This second purpose has emerged in the process as I have found that existing theoretical understandings in scholarly work on religion and ecology are based on an assumption that the love of nature is the basis for an environmental ethos. I found that these are somewhat outdated for working in relation to climate change, where the experience of loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation gives rise to very emotional and existential experiences of grief and loss. Therefore, I carve out my terms 'wild enchantments', 'negotiating baselines' and 'dark green spirituality', not only as I walk through my field, but also in continuous reflection and analysis and thereby I hope to contribute to the theoretical discussion as well.

From a general perspective my work is set within the theme of religion and ecology, the emerging field of environmental humanities and the scholarly interest in the geological era of the 'Anthropocene', which all have gained increasing importance in the last decade. A broader aim of this dissertation is of course to contribute to this field in my study of the intersection between the green movement/environmental movement and alternative/green spiritualities. Many scholars note that it is in the boundaries that the interesting things happen. The boundaries between the green/environmental movement and alternative/green spiritualities are one such boundary field.

Among scholars in the field of religion this intersection has been approached mainly from two perspectives: Either to study environmental activists as part of activist work or social movements in campaigning or protests and look at how they relate to spirituality, or to look at a specific religious/spiritual group and consider how it relates to the green movement. Examples of the first approach are Bron Taylor's works on Earth First! and Sarah Pike's study *Into the Wild* among young tree huggers who struggle to protect forests in the Appalachian Mountain. Andy Letcher has studied activists at roadblocks in the UK and what he refers to as "the pagan sentiments". Taylor, Pike and Letcher show how these activists often give expression to alternative spiritualities which form a vital part of their green concern and ecological awareness. The second approach proceeds from specific pagan groups and pays attention to their environmental concern and activism. Graham Harvey has introduced the concept Eco-Pagans, and Åsa Trulsson's study of the Goddess Movement depicts these women's concern for the Earth, showing that they often have a background in the women's movement, the peace movement or the green movement.

These approaches are equally workable within the scholarly study of religions; I find their coexistence to be a benefit because together they give a comprehensive picture of the intersection between environmentalism and alternative spiritualities. Nonetheless, there is a choice to be made, whether you take the first or the second approach. The field illustrates that interesting things happen at the boundaries. This is not to say that boundaries are definitive lines, but rather a space that works as a

common ground; therefore, boundaries are emergent spaces, and the construction or transgression of the boundary is of interest to study, because it is a space for unexpected encounters. Encounters are often the prelude to things that happen. My approach relates to the first perspective: I study activists and how they relate to alternative spiritualities, or rather turn to spiritualities, but there is a distinct difference in my approach because this is not a study of activists in relation to direct action, in campaigns, or protests. Instead my focus is on what I refer to as *reflective practices*. In taking the study beyond direct action it is possible to find otherwise elusive patterns and to consider a more complex picture of the various ways people try to work for change. As a historian of religion my aim is of course to explore the role of spirituality in this field.

1.1.5 Studying Spirituality in the Field – Locating Spirituality

The object of study for historians of religion is not only historical processes, including social and cultural dimensions, but the elusive and complex phenomenon we call 'religions' or 'spiritualities'. The concept of 'religion' is hard to define despite decades of scholarly pursuit; classic efforts such as those of Clifford Geertz and Emile Durkheim[7] are challenged by contemporary contributions such as Talal Assad.[8] Given this, it is no surprise that religions are a complex phenomenon to study. Whether you are studying religion or spirituality – or religions and spiritualities – you need to define what exactly you are studying, and what the focus of interest is. Religion as well as spirituality can be related to traditions, rituals, cosmology, worldview or a doctrine, or the teachings of a certain religious or spiritual leader. Whitney A. Bauman, Richard R. Bohannon II, and Kevin J. O'Brian argue that we need to study worldviews as well as practices, and in doing this we need to relate practices to activism.[9] A further approach is lived religion, which studies everyday life. Graham Harvey is a scholar who has developed this perspective.[10] In one sense this is a study of the everyday life of activists that may include practices that at first sight are not associated with activism. If the aim is to study religion in the field, in an ethnographic study you must ask: where to go, where to find a suitable place for a study?

Kim Knott's answer is that we need to *locate religion in seemingly secular spaces,* and this offers a valuable point of departure,[11] because it raises the basic

[7] For discussion see Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brian 2011.

[8] Asad 2003, 2018.

[9] Bauman et al. 2011.

[10] Harvey 2013.

[11] Knott 2005 and 2008. Knott draws on the spatial turn and asks how it can be relevant for religious study, because apart from some geologists of religion she found very little done within the field of religious studies in relation to space and religion.

question: where do we study religion, in which places? A central theme is the study of sacred places; however, Knott considers this to be problematic.

> The initial problem with these was their predication upon religion or the sacred either as an essential aspect of human experience of the landscape or as a condition of the domain to be studied. In my view I needed an approach to place and location that did not import religion or the sacred through its theoretical precepts or methods.[12]

In re-evaluating old ways of seeing space or place within the discipline – which often have focused on sacred places, she turns the attention to secular spaces, to places formerly unstudied by scholars of religion, such as street corners, her daughter's playground, or a walk in the local park, and with the insight gained in such places it is possible to return to sacred spaces with a fresh eye. I take the intention to locate religion in apparently non-religious secular places as a guide in my field.[13] Knott draws together resources and develops a methodology for the study of religion, in order to consider the relationship between religion, locality and community, and here 'locality' is a keyword.[14] I think Knott's approach – turning to places formerly unstudied – leads the study to a new and unexpected perspective. The benefit of locating religion is that it invites us to study religion as part of society, not set apart from it. The secularist constitution in Western society may (mis-)lead scholars to study religion as distinct from society, from politics, economics or ecology, which may follow from a secularist perspective where religion is restricted to the private sphere rather than the public.

In my approach to locate *spirituality* I start from the environmental and green movement to find new intriguing perspectives on alternative spiritualities. For my study, in treating 'locality' as a keyword, the southern English landscape of Devon becomes one such locality, which includes not only Schumacher College but also the countryside at Dartington Estate, outside Totnes, and the surrounding landscape of Devon where it is located, and particularly Dartmoor, which is frequently visited. Again, this is not a study of Schumacher College, the aim is *not* to study the life at the college from the perspective of the education and everyday life, it is a study of workshops held *in relation to* Schumacher College: some are held as part of the education, others are part of other activities. My focus is on the workshops that are held outdoors: in the garden, in forest that surrounds the college, at various sites in the landscape, along the coastline, and at Dartmoor. My main interest, how the landscape and various narratives and practices are performed, might lead us to rather unexpected places in which to locate spirituality.

[12] Knott 2005:156.

[13] Knott 2005: 177.

[14] Knott 2005:1.

1.1.6 Studying Contemporary Religions and Spiritualities in a Social and Societal Perspective

In studying religions and ecology in relation to climate change, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation you set off with a perspective that relates the study to central issues in the contemporary historical context. As a historian of religion, I find writing on contemporary history to be a feasible task, because historians are not only antiquarians dedicated to times long gone. Nonetheless, being a historian, working with a contemporary material does give rise to specific challenges. I first began my study in 2011, conducted my fieldwork in 2013 and 2014, and as I write this a decade has passed. Given that time never stands still, a contemporary study turns into history by *fiat* because it takes time to finish a scholarly work. Working with contemporary material sets your study as part of a contemporary society. This calls for special approaches as the work should to be guided by a conscious contextualisation and a social perspective.

The theologian Elspeth Whitney emphasises the necessity to anchor the study in social experience and in a historical context. Religious belief and practices are themselves "shaped by the societies that espouse them and therefore we must be considered in conjunction with their social, economic, and political contexts."[15] Consequently, Whitney argues, we cannot study religion as theological doctrines as determined by internal logic, standing in isolation from other aspects of cultural and social experience. Religious practices are anchored in concrete, time-bound, historical contexts. Hence, we need to look at the mechanisms by which beliefs are put into practice; religious values must be embodied in cultural and institutional practices to have a lasting and far-reaching effect beyond the individual, according to Whitney.

> Overall, it seems more faithful to human experience to conceptualize values, religious and otherwise, as a state of continual interaction with economic, political, and social conditions rather than as free-standing, completely autonomous agents of historical change.[16]

I adopt the perspective of religion "as a state of continual interaction" rather than "free-standing" in my study. From a historical perspective, religion is set in a historical context, and it is change that is relevant to study. This concerns a double change because just as much as society, or economic, political and social conditions change, the phenomenon that is the object of the study, i.e., 'religion', is in transformation. Today there is a vital development in what Christopher Partridge refers to as alternative spiritualities in the West, and the spiritualities that are emerging today are not only quite different from the dying forms of religion which

[15] Whitney 2006:27.

[16] Whitney 2006:27.

are in serious decline. Partridge links this to a "new spiritual awakening" [17] and the ways it "makes use of thought-forms, ideas and practices which are not at all alien to the majority of Westerners."[18] Contemporary alternative spiritualities emerge from an essentially non-Christian religio-cultural milieu; a milieu that both has resources and is resourced by popular culture or the 'occult milieu', in what Partridge refers to as 'occulture'. [19] He gives direct advice on how to study this and…

> …to keep our fingers on the pulse of contemporary religion and culture, we must make sure that the body of evidence we are testing is alive and kicking, not some dead cadaver that few outside the cosy halls of academia would recognize.[20]

To keep our fingers on the pulse of contemporary religion, to establish something that is "alive and kicking" may sound like a doctor's advice to reject the notion of the death of religion. Today climate crisis, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation raise challenges for contemporary societies, and scholars in different fields need to study how societies respond to these challenges. Of course, in any given society there are various individuals, groups, organisations and institutions who in various ways try to face and tackle this new reality, but this thesis is on the theme of religion and ecology. Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brian stress the importance of the relation between religion and ecology, but more so, that this is particularly important and in flux today because of the reality of environmental degradation.[21] Therefore, studying something which is in flux is itself a challenge. If reality is not fixed and steady, how can you give an account of it?

The anthropologist Tim Ingold, who suggests a relational perspective, gives one answer to this question. Ingold is a proponent of the relational turn, and while the relational turn has been fashionable and widely used among scholars, he is nevertheless critical of how the relational approach is used by many scholars. Ingold claims that these may be good at proposing arguments for relational perspective, but the problem is that they pay less attention to the question: what is a relation?[22] Relations are never static but always in flux, and Ingold uses a river metaphor to illustrate it. If we illustrate social interaction with two persons standing on the opposite banks of a river, then their relation is often pictured as a bridge between them, and this may sound reasonable; it is the bridge that makes it possible for them to reach each other. To pass over the bridge becomes the focus. Ingold finds this metaphor misleading because it is the river that we ought to focus on; it is the river

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[17] Partridge 2005:3.

[18] Partridge 2005:3.

[19] Partridge 2005:3.

[20] Partridge 2005:3.

[21] Bauman et al. 2011:1.

[22] Ingold, Tim Lecture in Lund, 20 September 2016.

that constitutes the relation between them, and this relation, just like the river, is in constant flux, or flow.[23] To follow this river metaphor, it would be necessary to dive and swim in the river to make a study of it, not just stand safe and dry on the riverbank or on the bridge. Ingold's river metaphor does not only illustrate the understanding of a relational approach, but also sheds light on the role of metaphors. Metaphors are an important tool for conceptualising our worlds, and I say it is equally true in everyday life and in art as for scholars for whom metaphors can contribute to the discussion, as illustrated by the river metaphor above. Metaphors, as the anthropologist Andreas Hejnol notes, are "always a double bind: they at once allow us to see and stop up our abilities to notice"[24] and they may betray us because they cannot capture the complexity of the world. I find the ambition to capture the complexity of the world to be far beyond our task. Rather the awareness of the complexity of the world is necessary to approach the larger-than-human world. Hejnol adds further to the power of metaphors:

> Metaphors are not static; they change because the world always exceeds them. While our vision and form of inquiry are undoubtedly shaped by metaphors of our times the world remains able to surprise us and disrupts our frames. The empirical is always stranger than we imagined.[25]

Indeed, the empirical *is* stranger than we imagined, and this can be given as an instruction tag to any scholar who sets off to do fieldwork, and metaphors can be both surprising and disrupting. At best they allow us to reflect that research does not just depend on theoretical concepts, but that metaphors play a vital role in how we conceptualise the world. I find the power of metaphors to be that they make things visible that otherwise would have been elusive. Terms may refer to things in a distinctive way but the imagery that metaphors offer deepens the perspective considerably. Perhaps the best ways to capture the flux of the river, not to be swept away or swallowed by it, is to go with the flow, and in this movement something "stranger than we imagined" may emerge. Of course, the strangeness is not the point here, the challenge is instead to recognise the previously unrecognisable, the new emergent shapes. In the words of Partridge, we might find that the emerging spiritualities are quite different from the dying forms of religion.[26] My hope is to contribute to the mapping of these emerging spiritualities that takes place in the awakening of the Anthropocene.

[23] Ingold, Tim Lecture in Lund, 20 September 2016.

[24] Hejnol 2017:100.

[25] Hejnol 2017:100.

[26] Partridge 2005:3.

1.2. Method

My work is an ethnographic qualitative study conducted according to ethnographic methodology. This study is based on participating in various practices, and in conversation with the people in my field. Throughout the work I have considered ethics in relation to my own role as a researcher, being open with my work in relation to my PhD dissertation. In writing from the collected accounts, I have been required to anonymise the individuals involved. The exception is public persons who figure with their name as they participate in their public role. Participating observations and conversations with participants are the primary sources of data in this study, but in addition there is a bewildering variety of documentary materials that have contributed such as web pages, journals and so on.

1.2.1 Doing Ethnography

Ethnography is described as a common-sense approach to the field, and it may sound simple, however, in order to make a scientific study, you must explain what you are up to. Therefore, what is ethnography and why is it common sense? Martin Hamersley and Paul Atkinson[27] offer a now classic introduction. Ethnographic work means participating in people's daily lives, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions. This way of working throws light on the issues that the researcher wants to find out more about. Ethnography assumes that people, scholars or not, make sense of their everyday life in social interaction with others all the time. Thus, trying to find out what is going on is an everyday activity, and therefore a researcher doing fieldwork is well trained for the job. This is not to say that an ethnographic study is just like hanging around to see what is happening, rather that the social character of common-sense knowledge makes the field accessible. There are refinements to add to a study as it requires reflecting on the role of participation, and the research work has to be guided by reflection.[28] Being in the field means "to observe our activities 'from outside' as objects in the world".[29] Rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher participating in the social interaction, participation in social interaction is the key to understanding the field. I think the strength of this approach is that by keeping it simple, it is possible to gain in clarity. I found that what you need in order to combine the common-sense doings of participation and the reflexivity that is required in your role as a researcher is what I describe as a listening skill: a kind of sensibility which allows things to emerge, lets them grow gradually into a pattern, and guides where you go next in the study.

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[27] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993.

[28] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:16.

[29] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:16.

1.2.2 The Ethnographic Study

The ethnographic study is characterised by flexibility, because it does not entail extensive pre-fieldwork design. The strategy and the direction of the research can be changed relatively easily, in line with changing assessments of what is required by the process.[30] The study is not designed in the pre-fieldwork phase; nonetheless, it begins with what Bronislaw Malinowski refers to as 'foreshadowed problems', which are not to be mixed with preconceived ideas, which is pernicious in any scientific work .[31] Foreshadowed problems are part of the researcher's skills, it is the knowledge of the field that can be gained from theoretical studies. The aim in the pre-fieldwork and the early steps in the field is to turn the foreshadowed problems into a set of questions to which the analysis may offer a theoretical answer, whether this be a narrative description of a sequence of events, a generalised account of the perspectives and practices of a particular group of actors, or a more abstract theoretical formulation.[32] Initially, as I set out on this study I wanted to find out how climate change and environmental degradation affected people in their lives and how they related this to spirituality, and I wanted to explore the intersection between the green movement and green spirituality. Turning these foreshadowed problems into research questions is done in close encounter with the actual field.

Hence, the ambition is to approach your field without a heavy load of theoretical assumptions, a little like being empty-handed, with nothing but your notebook and pen in your hands. A similar ambition to set out into the field without a preconceived research problem is central in grounded theory.[33] Although my study is *not* a study following this methodology, I found straightforward advice here: in the initial phase of going into the field, the researcher should not have made up a definitive research question. Instead, the researcher should point at a field that is to be studied, and the first task in entering this field is to try to understand, *what is the problem that the informants of this study experience*? The researcher should not assume that categories concerning, for example, gender or class, are relevant, because such categories should earn their way into the study by proving to be relevant; nor should the researcher assume that certain theories are relevant for the study in advance, but concepts and theories have to earn their place in the study. This make the study grounded, which means firmly related to the field. As I first entered the field, I felt overwhelmed by the amount of things that happened, and the amount of information, but eventually I was able to find some clues that made me figure out the problem that the people in this study were trying to handle. I was surprised to find that climate change and the ecological crisis were such an emotional matter, and that coping with these feelings was such a motivation to turn to spirituality.

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[30] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:24.

[31] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:29, Malinowsky 1922:8-9.

[32] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:32-33.

[33] Glaser and Strauss 1967.

1.2.3 In Conversation – Working with Reflexive Interviews

In my field I have chosen to work with conversational situations rather than interviews, and the difference is that in participating you take part of conversations all the time. The benefit with this way of working is that the conversation and the question emerge in a social context of participation and interaction. I prefer the term conversation, and conversational situations rather than interviews that seem to force a researcher-informant structure on the study. My ambition has rather been that of an encounter between participants. It allows the conversation to be part of an emerging field. Nonetheless, conversation must be guided by reflexivity. According to Hammersley and Atkinson, the reflexive interview means that the ethnographer does not decide beforehand what question to ask, though they may enter the interview with a list of issues to be covered. Question should be non-directional or open-ended.[34] The role of the interviewer, however, is not passive. Their advice is: to be "an active listener" and to "listen to what is being said in order to assess how it relates to the research focus and how it may reflect the circumstances."[35] Hence, listening skills are central in these conversations and this is likewise emphasised by the sociologist Richard Sennett.

> [A]nthropologists and sociologists can suffer from a peculiar challenge in conducting discussions. They are sometimes too eager to respond, going wherever the subjects lead. They do not argue, they want to show that they are responsive, that they care. A big issue lurks here, a dialogic conversation can be ruined by too much identification with the other person.[36]

The listening skill is a central skill that a researcher needs in doing fieldwork, and this is of course not only the ability to hear, rather, it is the ability to read what is going on in social and psychological interplay, or rather a kind of sensibility towards the field. Therefore, I say that it is not only in conversations that listening skills are up for a test; it is rather a central feature in participant fieldwork. An oft-repeated critique of working with interviews is that what people do and what they say that they do, does not always correspond. Therefore, if conservations take place in conversational situations, what you do and what you say that you do are easily coordinated. In this way something unexpected emerges beyond the control of the researcher. I want to stress the importance of listening rather than questioning, although I do not understand listening as simply being quiet, but rather being reflective in conversation. How to be part of a conversation without steering it but following where it leads? Part of this challenge is the recognition of the complexity of the field, which may be hard to handle at first. What can be gained in this approach is a sensitivity which is based on the recognition that frames may add

[34] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:113.

[35] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:115.

[36] Sennett 2013:20.

clarity to the picture, but they always leave something outside. Sensibility means noticing nuances and the small things that may be the tip of an underwater iceberg, and it allow the questions to emerge in that particular situation. My conversations have been part of conversational situations which have arisen in relation to practice and place and have not been planned in advance. This approach has been made a lot easier by the fact that my study was conducted in a place where deep and ongoing conversations are common, and I have found myself in conversations on life and death while cleaning the toilets, doing kitchen work or participating in a walk on Dartmoor. This leads to the question of the role of the researcher in the field, and this is discussed in terms of insider/outsider perspectives.

1.2.4 The Insider/Outsider Perspectives

The reason for doing research is to gain knowledge of that particular field through participation. Participation is a method to gather information, but it also leads to questions about the role of the researcher in the field. The insider/outsider perspective makes epistemological assumptions about the benefits of the respective perspectives. The outsider may study something that is unfamiliar to the researcher, and thus the argument for the outsider perspective is that being an outsider makes you see things that are taken for granted and never spoken of in the social context. It is by being from the outside, and by distancing yourself from what is going on that you can understand what is going on. The insider perspective assumes that the researcher needs to have special knowledge of the field, because it is only by being part of the culture that it is possible to understand what is going on. The insider perspective assumes that it is from the inside that it is possible to see these unspoken things, and you have to blend into the social context to reveal the social codes and interplay. The researcher's experience or identity is the key to the field, and the researcher's role is not to distance yourself from what is going on, instead participating full-out and being part of the social interplay in the field that makes an understanding of the field possible. Hence, the difference between the positions is not simply different methods such as observation or participation. The discussion of outsider/insider perspectives offers two alternative positions for the scholar; however, as Signe Buskin concludes from her study, the insider/outside perspectives are not simply approaches that the research chooses in advance in doing fieldwork. Rather the researcher becomes, or is constructed, as an insider or outsider in the field in a fluidity of roles, rather than fixed positions or social identities.[37] Buskin writes;

[37] Buskin 2019.

> Independent of the researcher's role as sponsored by the organization, the interactions with organizational members and context determine whether the researcher is assigned a role as insider or outsider, or even both within the same context.[38]

So, how can I apply this discussion to my own work? Would I consider myself, or did others consider me, as an outsider or an insider? In my fieldwork I have participated in various workshops, for example sharing circles, meditations and walks, to mention just a few. Before entering the field, I had had various experiences of these kinds of circles, for example in my practice of yoga and meditation. I have also worked in movements, for example in relation to the alter-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum movement. From my personal experiences I was familiar with these ways of working as I set out to do my fieldwork. This had been a great benefit in research work, not only that I knew in advance how these circles were done, they were recognisable to me, but more so, I knew that they are often modified, you cannot take for granted how they will be done in various contexts. Given this, many doors were opened in the field.

In one sense, my personal experiences made me an insider, I could feel at home in this context, but I found that participating in a workshop as a researcher differs from simply participating. Your sense and eye as a researcher cast a shadow or perhaps a light over your doings, and it helps you to get the sensibility of noting things that are significant in the study, that is, your perception becomes tuned into the study. This is of course something that emerges during the study as it becomes clearer what your focus will be. The reflexivity that guides your activities as a researcher forms a kind of estrangement, to borrow the term from Bertold Brecht's drama theory, as you need to take a step back and reset the scenery. You may step back occasionally to take notes, but when you cannot take notes, you must memorise things worth paying attention to make notes later. Therefore, you need a sharp eye, even in participating, and it seems that even though you want to be an insider, there is something "outsider-ish" that calls for attention from time to time. Still, this is not only about seeing, in the sense of being observant. You must tune in to the field and be receptive to others, and this is a further feature that makes fieldwork different from simply participating.

I find it misleading to assume that you must be an outsider *or* insider, in the sense of being in a fixed position throughout the fieldwork; it is rather different kinds of in-between positions that emerge in the field. Participating fully means that you forget that the reason you are there is that you are doing a study. This may indeed be the case sometimes. Participating means that you participate, but simultaneously you need to keep your mind alert and note – even make notes of what is going on. Being a participant in practices is in the core of participant fieldwork; here I want to emphasise the importance of what I call a listening skill, more generally listening to your field.

[38] Buskin 2019.

1.2.5 Theory Development − Writing and Storytelling

The work of a thesis is in many ways a journey, not just in term of travelling to your field and back. Steinar Kvale uses a traveller metaphor for the process from research to writing. Indeed, doing research is like being a traveller, and those who have been on a journey have a story to tell when returning home.[39] What distinguishes a researcher from an ordinary traveller is of course that the story is not just your own story, but the focus of interest is the stories of those you have met in the field. The role of an ethnographic researcher is to see the world through the eyes of those you met on the journey, but also to add the analytical perspective. To take this traveller metaphor a step further, I would add that often you must rely on these people to know where to go next, just as when you are on a journey and have lost your way. You need to ask a stranger how to find the way. From time to time, I have depended on their guidance. Throughout this work, I often felt that I am indeed lucky working with the material that I had, because I often felt that these people have taught me so much, about what it means to be human in times of climate change, being young or old, from all corners of the world. I am grateful to all those who have taught me so much, not just in sharing their experience, but that sometimes difficult, sometimes delightful thing called life, which we all share. I have had the great privilege of coming back from my field and saying not just that I have done a study, but that I have learned a lot, and perhaps I have become somewhat wiser on the journey. If so, it is all thanks to them.

Ethnography has sometimes been characterised as simply descriptive, or as a form of storytelling. However, the intention is not only to find out *what* people do, but also *why* people do the things they do. This takes the perspective a step further from simply being a description of what is going on, to a process guided by questions, and these questions replace the scientific experiment. Experiments are questions to the world: what would happen if? Such questions are common in everyday life, and scientific experiments are simply copied from it.[40] Hence, comparing the ethnographic study to storytelling emphasises the role of writing as a vital part of the whole research process; from the initial field notes to the theoretical reasoning that is part of the conclusive discussion. Hammersley and Atkinson remind us that the various products of ethnographic work, from description to theories, take on the forms of texts, therefore, ethnographic analysis is not only a cognitive activity but a form of writing guided by the principle of reflexivity. [41] The actual writing or the construction of the researcher's account is, in principle, no different from other varieties of description. There is no neutral language of description, no neutral mode of report. The reflexive ethnographer must be self-conscious of the style or modes of writing, and these should not be taken for

[39] Kvale 2008:19.

[40] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:15.

[41] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:206.

granted. Being a reflexive researcher means being self-conscious as an author.[42] In the following I discuss my own reflection on the process of writing ethnography.

1.2.6 Writing Ethnography

From my experience of doing fieldwork and writing I say that being a participant in various workshops leaves few opportunities to take notes during the practice, and if it is possible, it will only be a few words which work as memo notes. Actually, the notes are often not more than a few scribbled words, illegible to others. Therefore, you need a different writing technique than if you are conducting participant observations. To put it simply, when you are participating your hands are occupied with whatever you are doing. Therefore, taking notes in direct relation to the practices you are participating in may be difficult, and it may be limited to taking short notes. Hence, field notes in the form of memo notes, means that you need to return to these later and write a more elaborate account. It means that you must add what was left out in the first notes, which may have the form of simple jottings. Returning to the notes means thinking again.

In working with the notes you ask for details you might have missed, ponder your memory of the things that happened. Therefore, I found that your own body and senses become the record of the things you have participated in. Reading the notes makes you remember, recollect the things storied in your mind and body. Then you take the writing to a further level where you need to clarify details, for example. This means that when starting to work with your text as you write the account, you will not have that kind of body of text where it is possible to sample for certain codes. This is different from qualitative studies such as transcriptions of interviews, which consist of a distinctive body of text to code and to extract categories from. Hence, being a participant in one sense leaves your body to be the record of everything that goes on in the field. Writing the first draft from the memo notes offers an empirical and descriptive account of what happened, for example, in a particular workshop. Writing should be based on the effort to be close to the field, to mediate a sense of being there to the reader, but it should also take a further step towards analysis, and relate to a theoretical discourse as well, and at this stage it is a good thing to mind the gap.

1.2.7 Analysis and Theoretical Tools

Analysis forms the bridge between the empirical account and a theoretical approach. The leap should be small steps rather than a great jump; research is a process in several stages. In simple terms, being in the field and writing the empirical accounts is the basis for the analysis and theory, and if done accordingly the study can be

[42] Hammersley and Atkinson 1993:206.

considered as being grounded. Being grounded concerns questions of how to relate to theory. The analysis should be guided by questions rather than theories in order to mind the gap between data and theory, and Kenneth Pike's distinction between emic and etic terms is central here.[43] Emic terms are the terms that the informants use themselves, while etic terms are the corresponding terms that the scholar uses in analysis. Many in my study refer in various ways to 'spirituality' as an emic term, and I have chosen to use 'spirituality' and not 'religion'. But the emic/etic distinction sheds light on the fact that writing, analysis and developing theory is a form of translation of the original field notes. This translation must be characterised by transparency.

The analysis needs to be guided by 'theoretical sensitivity', meaning that the theoretical consideration should not be directed by theories. Tord Olsson, professor of the history of religions, often noted that "concepts can be useful to think with", they may allow us to formulate, to question, to address things that otherwise would have been unnoticed, and help to elaborate the analysis. For example, in my study, in asking why people are attracted to a place like Dartmoor, I have had great help from Jane Bennett's "places with the power to enchant", or Christina Fredengren's "riddling power" to further my discussion, and the question can be modified to ask what values people find in this site. I like the notion of theoretical tools, because it highlights that theories have to work in relation to the material, to enable a deeper understanding. Treating theories like tools draws attention to what a certain theory or theoretical concept can do for the study. If the tools work, they shed light on things otherwise unnoticed. The analysis should be driven by questions, and theories are not the answers to these questions; nonetheless, theoretical concepts and theories may be helpful to formulate the answers in an accurate way.

1.3 Theory − Religion, Ecology and the Environmental Humanities

In this section I position this thesis within the theme of religion and ecology, and the field of environmental humanities, and I present the theoretical conceptions of enchantment and (re)enchantment, disenchantment. Further I relate to theories of climate change and the Anthropocene, and further conceptions from the environmental humanities such as slow violence, and I discuss the concepts of narrative practice and place.

[43] Pike 1967.

1.3.1 Religion and Ecology

The field of religion and ecology investigates religious dimensions of ecological relations, it employs the methods and theories of religious studies, it includes perspectives from anthropology, history or cultural studies, and it extends central arguments in religious studies into a new domain. Religion and nature are a central theme in religious studies and traditions, as is seen in various creation stories, mythologies or cosmologies, but today the term 'ecology' sets religion in relation to modern environmentalism. Bauman, Bohannan and O'Brien consider the relation between religion and ecology to be in constant flux because of the reality of environmental degradation.[44] The field's two organising concepts and ways of connecting them are vigorously debated among scholars in the field.[45] The concept of 'religion' is a subject of extensive scholarly debate, and some suggest that "culture" or "spirituality" are far more suitable concepts. 'Ecology' is likewise debated; it has developed into a discipline of its own since the term was coined by Ernst Haeckel in the late nineteenth century.[46] Ecology, which comes from Greek *oikos* (household), assumes the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all living organisms and creatures in the ecosystem. Almost a century later, the ecologist John Passmore (1974) distinguished between problems in ecology, which are properly scientific issues to be resolved by the formation and testing of hypotheses in ecological experimentation, and 'ecological problems', which are "features of our society, arising out of our dealings with nature".[47] Ecological problems include society as part of ecosystems and it is this sense of ecology that is part of religion and ecology, an interdisciplinary branch of scholarship that touches upon ecology as the scientific study of ecosystems. Therefore, religion and ecology relate to the theme of religion and science, and this is, of course, distinctive in relation to climate change, which is based on scientific research.

Furthermore, religion and ecology relate to the theme of religion and politics, in relation to environmental policies, but also in relation to ethics, justice and law. According to Bruno Latour: "Ecology can be summed up not as politics taking nature into accounts, but rather, as the end of the Nature that served as the consort of politics."[48] For Latour the new climate regime is politics where the role of Nature is explicit, which has profound consequences not only for politics but for human self-conception. This shows the complexity of the field, how matters of ecology include society and politics, and why an interdisciplinary approach is preferable. The professor of religion, ethics and environment Willis Jenkins sees this as a sign

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[44] Bauman et al. 2011:1

[45] Jenkins, W 2017:23. Jenkins notes that the field of religion and ecology is characterised as a first-generation scholarship that tries to establish coherence within its own discipline and research programme.

[46] Bauman et al 2011.

[47] Passmore 1974:44, in Garrard 2012:6.

[48] Latour 2017:61.

of intellectual vitality, because robust academic fields typically foster arguments about how much diversity a coherent field can accommodate, and what terms of inquiry should inform new scholarship. Despite the range of the field, there is a core of implied assumptions, according to Jenkins.

> Among the minimal assumptions that make debate possible across diverse research programs is at least this: humanity's ecological relations have religious and cultural dimensions […] engaging them has potential to connect environmental questions with fundamental human questions of meaning, value, and purpose.[49]

I agree that "humanity's ecological relations have religious and cultural dimensions", but as a historian I want to add the historical dimensions. My study concerns the environmental questions in connection to questions of meaning, value and purpose, and I set my work within the environmental humanities, relating to the environment and matters of ecological concern, where the critical study of relations between man and nature becomes a core object of research.

1.3.2 The Environmental Humanities and the Environmental Turn

The field of religion and ecology is part of a broader intellectual collaboration of culture-focused approaches to environmental topics, which are gathered under the label of "environmental humanities".[50] These inquiries are distinguished by humanistic practices; they employ historicising methods, cultural memory, interpretative tools, evaluative skills or critical dispositions in order to interpret environments and engage ecological questions. The field is characterised by interdisciplinary approaches. The psychoanalyst Sally Weintrobe notes:

> It is increasingly clear that understanding human responses to climate change is just as important as – if not more important than – understanding climate change itself.[51]

Environmental humanities studies *human responses to the challenges* of climate change, and human culture in relation to our use of nature.[52] What can unite such a complex research field? Jenkins proposes an epistemological claim that there can be no adequate ecological knowledge without understanding the culturally embedded humans who are changing ecological systems.[53] The field of religion and ecology adds the religious dimensions of the human experience, which cannot be left out. Jenkins stresses that:

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[49] Jenkins, W 2017:22.

[50] Jenkins, W 2017:22.

[51] Weintrobe 2013:1.

[52] Jenkins, W 2017:23.

[53] Jenkins W 2017:24.

> Situating religion and ecology within the environmental humanities allies the field with a broad intellectual challenge to divisions of knowledge that continue to impede public understanding of complex ecological questions. In a context of a pervasive anthropogenic change, everything that shapes human action – from imaginations and ideas to technology and economic policies – reverberates throughout ecological systems. Disciplines interpreting the human condition therefore bear renewed importance for understanding the changing human role in nature. [54]

As a historian of religion, situating my study within the environmental humanities, my approach is not that of a theologian. From my perspective, religion is a social construct, therefore, the study needs to see religion as part of society, culture, everyday life, and a historical context. Hence, my work is set in a distinct historical context, in a contemporary perspective, and the historical contextualisation will contribute to the understanding and analysis, particularly in relation to the challenges of the geological era the Anthropocene, which brings exceptional long-term perspectives. It is, as Jenkins notes, "a context of a pervasive anthropogenic change that shapes human action",[55] and it focuses on how humans affect their environment and the emerging ecological crisis. This perspective is known as the environmental turn, and one of the first proponents is Lynn White Jr. with the White Thesis.

1.3.3 The White Thesis

In 1967 Lynn White Jr. published "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis". The article would set the agenda for the discussion of religion and ecology for decades to come. White, a scholar of medieval history, claimed that "Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen".[56] However, he found an alternative Christian approach in Saint Francis of Assisi, whom he designates as the patron of ecologists. White argues that Western Christianity's anthropocentric approach to nature, its linear conception of time, and the coming together of science and technology had been the basis for man's exploitation of natural resources that in the mid-twentieth century had reached a state where the ecological crisis was obvious.[57] Half a century later the ecological

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[54] Nye et al. 2012 in Jenkins, W 2017:24.

[55] Nye et al. 2012 in Jenkins, W 2017:24.

[56] White 1967.

[57] Bauman et al. 2011:59. Bauman, Bohannan and O'Brien claim that scholarship on religion and ecology began in large part because of White's influential article, and since then scholars and practitioners have produced a large array of literature to rediscover, recover, reform, and sometimes replace Christianity in the light of the ecological crisis. For eco-theology's answer to White, see Hessel and Radford Ruther 2000 call for an ecological reformation. See also Hamlin and Lodge 2006.

crisis has deepened, and scholars read the article in a new light.[58] Historians have been critical of Lynn White's thesis because it attributes too much impact to religious ideas and values, and White's view of technology is too deterministic.[59] The historians of science and technology Christopher Hamlin and David M. Lodge depicts, it as "vast and vague; it involved assumptions about causations with which historians were uneasy."[60] A further point concerns the role of religion in historical change. The environmental historian Donald Worster sees Max Weber's approach to religion as major source of inspiration for White, who maintained that culture "whether it is overtly religious or not, is shaped primarily by its religion."[61] Western culture was predominately Christian, therefore, Christianity, in White's words, "bears a huge burden of guilt" for the ecological crisis. Historians still hold different views on whether culture, as an independent non-material force, determines human/nature relations or whether culture is only a reflection of a society's technology, ecological conditions, and modes of production, as a Marxist materialist approach would assume.[62] Worster argues for a modified position that falls between the Marxist and idealist positions given above,

> Whatever connection religious ideas have with material reality, they are not sovereign powers that can summon new areas, new technologies, or new ecologies into being by fiat. They grow out of historical circumstances and, once again, reflect the constantly shifting human imperative to capture energy and dissipate it efficiently. Their power lies to a great extent in their proven efficiency for the task.[63]

As I agree with Worster and consider the historical circumstances, which here relate to environmental changes brought about by climate change, and the Anthropocene. These material conditions form a bedrock, but this does not entail material

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[58] At the time of the publication, the article immediately received harsh criticism, although the criticism came primarily from Christians, not from scholars. In response to the harsh criticism White wrote a second article where he sought to clarify his points. (White 1974) For further discussion of White see Worster 2017, and Hamlin and Lodge 2006. The lack of scholarly responses was primarily due to the fact that White was very much a pioneer in the field that is now known as environmental history. The environmental historian Donald Worster describes White as one of the first to appear on the scholarly scene, both as an analyst and advocate of a new paradigm. White was one of the first historians to make "the environmental turn"; to draw scholarly attention to a formerly neglected and unstudied issue. It is notable that the publication of the article in 1967 coincided with the birth of the new environmental movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where Rachel Carson´s *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, often is seen as a kick-off. Few historians formulated any critique at the time because the historical relations of religion and nature did not become a major focus of research until decades later. In 1967 environmental history as a discipline barely existed.

[59] See Whitney 2006.

[60] Hamlin and Lodge 2006.

[61] White 1967.

[62] Worster 2017:350.

[63] Worster 2017:351.

determinism. There is no rule for how the response to the challenges is formed; rather, religious ideas 'grow' out of historical circumstances, as growth in the organic sense indicates a kind of zigzag movement. To understand and explain how historical circumstances challenge religious ideas, climate change offers a case that is equally challenging for researchers as for religious practitioners. White was one of the first to formulate the question of the role of religion in relation to the ecological crisis. Although my project partly follows White's pioneer work, my work is not to study the *roots* of the ecologic crisis. My aim is contemporary and to study how people react and respond to the ecological crisis, more precisely, how they react and respond to the challenges that faces us living in times of climate change, and what role they give spirituality in this.

1.3 4 White's Legacy and The Greening of Religion Hypothesis

Apart from being a pioneer in discussing ecology and religion, I would say the lasting legacy of White is twofold. Firstly, the centrality of the distinctions between anthropocentric and ecocentric in order to differentiate and categorise various religious tradition, and, secondly, that a shift to, or a (re)turn to, a more ecocentric view (in White's version the tradition of Saint Francis) would be the remedy or cure for the ecological crisis. Many studies are occupied with the categorisation of religious traditions as being anthropocentric/ecocentric, or picture – and sometimes promote – a process of revaluation of the religious tradition towards a greener, that is, a more ecological/ecocentric stance. This has, for example, been a major task for eco-theology that in various ways and to various extents has rejected or embraced White's critique of Christianity.[64] Thus, at the core of this is the question: How do religious traditions respond to the challenges of the ecological crisis? Representatives of religious traditions, and scholars of religion, have responded to the challenges of the ecological crisis and climate change. Parallel to religious traditions going through transformation in relation to green matter, research on these changes becomes increasingly relevant.

The anthropologist of religion Bron Taylor labels subsequent claims that the world's religions are becoming more environmentally friendly as 'The Greening of Religion Hypothesis'.[65] Taylor distinguishes between green religion and dark green religion. In simple terms, green religion can be characterised as anthropocentric, and

[64] My point is not to reject the anthropocentrism/ecocentrism distinction, but there are further concepts to add (technocentrism, biocentrism or androcentrism, see Davies 2009.) to the discussion to cover the complexity of the field. A simple categorisation of my material as ecocentric/biocentric does not answer my questions. Neither would a model of anthropocentrism towards ecocentrism as a shift of worldviews cover the nuances of the material. In my work the focus is on a contemporary field, the historical perspective on the current situation is set in a historical contextualisation as part of the analysis.

[65] Taylor 2016:268.

dark green religion as eco- or biocentric.[66] Taylor argues that Christianity may reform and become greener but will always look at the environment from an ethical perspective and will never give priority to nature, as dark green religions do. Of course, several scholars and eco-theologians have rejected this critique of Christianity.[67] Taylor sees Christianity as firmly based on anthropocentrism, but a shift towards an ecocentric worldview is needed; dark green religion is the alternative, representing eco- or biocentric, or Earth-based religions. The shift from anthropocentrism to biocentrism is a shift of a moral paradigm, in Taylor's words it is a step "from a stewardship ethic to an ethic of reverence for the land."[68]

1.3.5 Dark Green Religion and the Dark

Green religion is characterised as anthropocentric, dark green religion, as eco- or biocentric,[69] and Taylor elaborated on the differences; green religion poses environmental-friendly behaviour as a religious obligation, dark green religion looks at nature as sacred, it has intrinsic value, is therefore due reverent care. Green and dark green religion are often in tension, sometimes in direct conflict. My contribution here is to relate to rewilding and investigate the intersection between rewilding and this spiritual field. In this thesis dark green religion is relevant, and a question is: why the *dark* of dark green religion? [70] Taylor makes some remarks on the term *dark* green religion'. He wants to avoid using deep ecology because it is

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[66] Taylor 2010:10.

[67] Hamlyn and Lodge 2006.

[68] Taylor 1991:265. In this critique of Christianity Taylor relates to the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee. In 1974, Toynbee argued that Christianity was doomed to an anthropocentric stance. Hence, Toynbee's criticism of Christianity was even more conclusive than White's. Toynbee advocated turning to Mother Earth – indigenous religions – as an alternative. It is notable that White, in his critique of Christianity in its Western form, saw an alternative in the Christianity of Saint Francis' ecocentric view, and therefore Taylor sharpens the critique of Christianity. When White wrote the article in the mid-sixties, he did not see Eastern religions, more precisely Buddhism as an alternative to Christianity because of cultural differences. Just a few years later, the alternative, counterculture of the hippie movement, did embrace various Eastern spiritual teachings, and Eastern religions have gained attention among counterculture ever since. Christopher Partridge has described this as part of an Easternisation, that together with Paganization is among the re-enchantments that are found in alternative spiritualities. I discuss Partridge further on.

[69] Taylor 2010:10.

[70] Taylor defines dark green religions as developing from a deep sense of belonging to and connectedness in nature, while perceiving the earth and its living systems as sacred and interconnected. Dark green religion finds its roots within animism and nature religions, often called "Earth-based religions", that is, religious traditions that emphasise nature or its "green" sides. For example, Neo-paganism, Druidry, Wiccan religion, new forms of spirituality such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, anarcho-primitivism, liberation theology. Taylor's research on dark green religion in relation to American radical environmentalism shows the importance of the intersection between dark green religion and politics.

associated with the philosophy of Arne Næss and the politics of radical environmentalism, and because some proponents of deep ecology reject the idea that it has anything to do with religion.[71] Taylor explains his use of 'dark' as a signifier, because it had not been used before, it had no baggage, positive or negative, nor any obvious meaning that would preclude the ability to give it an operational definition. Taylor clarifies the meaning of the dark:

> A second reason is that by adding the modifier *dark* I could through wordplay present a useful double meaning – *dark* as in a deep shade of green, involving a belief in the intrinsic value of nature, and *dark* as in perilous, evoking some people's fear of places without light.[72]

Since Taylor formulated dark green religion, a decade ago, the *dark* has become even more significant in relation to environmentalism. Taylor introduced dark green religion in 2010, when *Dark Ecology* by Timothy Morton (2016) had not yet been published. Various references to the dark are seen in relation to climate change as a distinctive dark time that entails exceptional challenges, and one use of the modifier dark that I will elaborate in this thesis is the darker emotions (such as fear and grief, or the eerie or uncanny) which are emotional responses to wounded places, or more generally, to the state of the world confronting climate crisis, environmental degradation or the loss of biodiversity. These darker aspects of our emotions can find expression in various practices and in artworks, in what I refer to as eco-occulture. A further feature of the dark is the loss of dark places in relation to light pollution, which I discuss in relation to Dartmoor.

To conclude, I am affirmative towards Taylor's 'dark green religion', and my hesitation concerns the use of the term 'religion' (which I discuss further on). Therefore, I modify the conception to dark green *spirituality*. In this, I avoid the term 'religion', but furthermore, I can relate to Roger Gottlieb's term Green Spirituality, which I present next.

1.3.6 Green Spirituality

The term 'green spirituality' was introduced by Roger Gottlieb, who, like Taylor, emphasises the relation between green religion and politics.[73] A spiritual perspective, in Gottlieb's use, means a discovery of sense of selfhood beyond the ego.[74] Spirituality does not require a conventional (Western) religious attachment to a personal God, nor does the spiritual imply "a *denial* of the manifest horrors of

[71] Taylor 2010:224.

[72] Taylor 2010:223.

[73] Gottlieb 1996:521.

[74] Gottlieb 1996:521.

human experience".[75] Gottlieb sees spirituality[76] as "distinct from dogmatic religious attachment", and he states that "an authentic spirituality does not ignore social suffering".[77] Gottlieb develops a model of socially engaged spirituality in a normative manner, not primarily as a descriptive notion in relation to a particular field; he is rather a player in the field. In this his perspective differs from mine as my intention is to depict how spirituality is understood in my field. Although he emphasises social justice, he is less concerned with the larger-than-human world. Despite my objections, I find Gottlieb's discussion of spirituality, politics and ethics to be fruitful in relation to my work. He emphasises the political aspects of green spirituality where religious environmentalism led to a convergence of the spiritual and political to such an extent that in some cases it may be hard to tell them apart.[78] He claims that environmental crisis and climate change give rise to ethical challenges which we cannot solve as individual, and therefore there is a need for political solutions. Through this new spirituality the Greens have then moved "beyond materialist values while at the same time embracing some preindustrial values derived from indigenous non-European cultures. These value shifts have been tied to specific issues that are crucial for the Greens but often ignored by the Democratic Left".[79] Hence, in going "beyond the materialist values" green spirituality is set in relation to theories of new social movement (NSM), which assume that social movements are based on immaterial values such as justice or liberation. Gottlieb claims that it is in the global environmental movement that the divide between religion and politics finally has been overcome.[80] The benefit of Gottlieb's approach is that he relates spirituality to politics and social movements, and asks: what gives this wide spectrum of green politics a religious or spiritual dimension? [81] According to Gottlieb this dimension is especially clear in deep ecology. As we have seen, Gottlieb, like Taylor, considers deep ecology as a major source of inspiration for green spirituality and dark green religion, and therefore I offer a short presentation of it here.

[75] Gottlieb 1996:521–522.

[76] Gottlieb 1996:521–522.

[77] Gottlieb 1996:521–522.

[78] Gottlieb 2003a:489.

[79] Gottleib 2003b:501

[80] Gottlieb 2003b:498–499. Gottlieb gives a historical perspective on the great divide between religion and progressive politics starting from the early nineteenth century. It was weakened by Protestant abolitionism, the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and this was taken further in the social gospel of the late nineteenth century, when it was abolished by Gandhi and King and the religious presence in the peace and anti-apartheid movements. It is notable that Gottlieb does not imply any inspiration from Eastern religions in this transformation.

[81] Gottlieb 2003b:499.

1.3.7 Deep Ecology

In 1973 the philosopher Arne Næss published an article in *Inquiry* titled "The Shallow and the Deep". The 1960s and 1970s is pictured as a kick-off for modern environmentalism, and deep ecology was an important source of inspiration, although it received harsh criticism.[82] Deep ecology formed an incentive for a new approach to science as well as politics, and the sociologist Andrew Jamison describes the period as "a phase of politicisation of the environmental movement".[83] Næss's distinction between shallow and deep ecology aims at a critique of the shallow environmental movement for focusing on preservation and conservation of nature but neglecting the deeper questions. The opening of the article sums up the message:

> Ecologically responsible policies are concerned only in part with pollution and resource depletion. There are deeper concerns which touch upon principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralization, symbiosis, egalitarianism, and classlessness.[84]

Thus, 'shallow ecology' is occupied with preserving nature without posing the deeper questions of how we live in modern society. Deep ecology stresses the relation between nature and society, and it assumes that our way of thinking about nature is reflected in how we live, in the social relations and organisations that are created and maintained in society. Næss set out a new vision for a deep ecological movement, a new global movement. The old or shallow movement fought against pollution in the wealthy industrialised countries alone. The deep ecological movement goes to the roots of the fundamental eco-problems in the structures of societies and cultures around the world. Næss considered deep ecology to be a philosophy, a quest for Sophia – a deeper wisdom, or ecosophy. This is perhaps a reason why it has been a source of inspiration for green thinkers, as well as for religious traditions that reformulate their ideas about the ecological crisis and the

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[82] Deep ecology has received critique from a leftist position. According to the environmental scholar Mark Dowie, deep ecology became an "ideal counterpoint to the centralized, bureaucratic environmental activism that in recent years has actively restrained radical thought. By challenging reform environmentalism's unwillingness to criticize industrial society, technological culture, and capitalism, deep ecology attempts to set a new agenda and strategy for environmentalism." Dowie 1995:227. But an unfortunate result of their tactics was that the deep ecological movement distanced themselves from the working man and women, particular rural blue-collar workers. The critique of consumerism and their arguing for reduced human standards of living were not popular notions among people living close to the edge, and they "tend to sanctify the species workers see as threatening their standard of living. The way to the logger's heart is not through the nest of a spotted owl. It's through the home of fellow workers", according to Dowie. The same dilemma was expressed by Murray Bookchin in his essay "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" in 1964. Bookchin argued that before humans can be in harmony with nature, they have to be in harmony with each other.

[83] Jamison 2001:156.

[84] Næss, Arne 1973.

challenges of climate change in the way described in the greening of religion hypothesis.[85] Bill Devall and George Session[86] claim that Næss had no objection towards those who emphasised or elaborated the religious aspects of his ecosophy.[87] Although Næss distinguishes between deep ecology as a philosophy and a movement, there is no priority as these are equally necessary.[88] Deep ecology emphasises relationism, assuming that the world is a network of relations, not an assembly of things. No object, animal or person has any identity without its essential connection to the world of relation around it. Today deep ecology is well integrated in the green movement, and there will be examples of this in my study as well. From a scholarly perspective much research has been done in relation to deep ecology, religion and environmentalism. I do not to deny the importance of deep ecology which is firmly set within the field, but the source of inspiration that I explore in relation to dark green spirituality is rewilding.

1.3.8 Dark Green Spirituality and Rewilding

Dark green spirituality is the term I introduce because I need to modify Taylor's and Gottlieb's terms in relation to my own study. I modify Taylor's dark green religion because I want to avoid the term religion, as I prefer 'spirituality', as the ambition is to ground the study in the fieldwork and spirituality seems to capture the reflective practices that I spotted in my fieldwork.[89] I elaborate this discussion of religion and spirituality further on, in the next section. A further reason for my conceptual demarcation towards Taylor and Gottlieb is their emphasis of deep ecology while my study focuses on rewilding. Hence, the conceptual modification is for the sake of analytical and theoretical clarity. My contribution in this scholarly approach to rewilding is to investigate the intersection with dark green spirituality

The philosophy of deep ecology is one example, while another is the biochemist James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis or theory, which he developed with Lynn Margolis. The Gaia theory is named after the Greek earth goddess. Lovelock elaborates the idea of ecosystem, and he sees the whole earth, its biosphere, as an ecosystem, a self-regulating and self-sustaining system. The idea of a living earth –

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[85] Barnhill and Gottlieb 2001

[86] Devall and Session 1985

[87] Næss explicitly said that he was walking in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, the non-violent tradition, the Buddhist tradition as well as Baruch Spinoza, his ambition being not just philosophical but to formulate a deep ecological platform for non-violent activism. He transformed this ambition into non-violent practice in relation to the Alta River in Norway that was threatened by dam building in the 1980s.

[88] Rothenberg 1995:202.

[89] My perspective also differ from Taylor as I make no claims on the role of Christianity, and this is perhaps due to the fact that I study a British context. In Hayes and Marangudaki's study (2001) of religion and attitudes towards nature in Britain they found no significant difference between Christians and non-Christians concerning environmental attitudes.

Gaia – is taken further to various spiritual versions of Mother Earth, for example inspired by Native American spirituality, or pagan goddess spirituality. Today both deep ecology and Gaia are well-established sources of inspiration within (dark) green spirituality, and just as with deep ecology, much research is done in relation to Gaia and religion, therefore my focus is yet another source of inspiration: rewilding. It is notable that these sources of inspirations come from outside religion. Deep ecology, formulated by the philosopher Arne Næss, Gaia theory, formulated by the biochemists James Lovelock and Lynn Margolis, and rewilding, advocated by the biologist Edward O. Wilson. That is, deep ecology is considered as a philosophy, while Gaia theory and rewild are theories formulated within a biological scientific context.

The term 'rewilding' was coined by Dave Foreman and became in use among grassroot activist in the US in the 1990s.[90] The biologist Edward O. Wilson's entry to this debate brought attention to matters of ethics. In recent years, rewilding has had a major influence, and part of its attraction is, no doubt, that it addresses the loss of biodiversity.[91] According to the UN report *Living Planet Report* (2018) the populations of living wild animals have declined by 60 per cent since the 1970s. Rewilding put forward a positive vision, that is, the mass restoration of ecosystems, but it also suggests *the rewilding of the human mind*. It is primarily the second form that is relevant to my study. The rewilding of the human mind brings, similar to deep ecology, critical and societal matters into the picture, but it addresses a deeper criticism of the human self-image; it challenges anthropocentrism, exceptionalism, and the myth of the modern man, and I develop this throughout this thesis. Wilson suggests in *Half Earth* that half of the Earth should be set aside for animals and wildlife.[92] In actively giving more of the Earth to non-humans, the mass restoration of natural eco-systems is perhaps the strongest way to hand power back to other species and to provide them with the living space to resist human domination. Wilson introduced the term 'biophilia', referring to what he sees to be a natural human instinct: a case of inner nature providing a more solid foundation to ecology for the protection of external nature.[93] I suggest that rewilding and biophilia can be summed up as a *love of the wild*. This love of the wild, or simply "the wild" is central in this thesis; it is a major inspiration for dark green spirituality. Similar to Taylor's dark green religion, the pagan traditions, or indigenous traditions, are important in this love of the wild, although it needs to be said that love here is not a romantic notion of love. It includes all the emotional aspects that a love relation can include, from the mesmerising joy of life to the deepest sorrow. Therefore, the love of the wild resonates with my conception of wild enchantments, and it is found in various

[90] Johns 2019.

[91] UN report *Living Planet Report* (2018). The report is based on a study of the population of 4000 wildlife species.

[92] Wilson 2016.

[93] Wilson 1984.

expressions of eco-occulture, of which I give examples further on. This love of the wild is central in dark green spirituality. What emerges here is how sources of inspiration outside spirituality or religions become distinctive.

1.3.9 Religion and Spirituality

I have set my work within the field of religion and ecology, and I have introduced my term dark green spirituality; my next step is to discuss religion and spirituality. The term 'religion' has been subject to much scholarly discussion, and classic scholars such and Emile Durkheim (the sacred) or Karl Marx have contributed their definitions of religion. Clifford Geertz's definition was, for many years, in common use. In recent time a criticism has been formulated by various scholars: Russell McClutcheon argues that the understanding of religion within the academic study of religion in the West has been shaped by Protestantism, which is seen in the focus on faith and the individual's relation to God.[94] Talal Asad argues from a postcolonial perspective that Geertz's definition is difficult to apply to religious traditions outside Christianity where community and rituals are far more distinctive than faith.[95] Given that the term 'religion' is much disputed, some have suggested talking about 'the religious'. Others such as Timothy Fitzgerald go further and suggest that 'religion' should be banned altogether and replaced with 'culture'.[96] A further challenge to 'religion' is 'spirituality', and Christopher Partridge has drawn attention to new forms of alternative spiritualities.[97]

Followers of these alternative spiritualities often questions firm conceptions of what religion is, and distance themselves from traditional faith traditions. I return to Partridge further on, but before continuing to spirituality, I give a brief reflection on religion and change. Roger Gottlieb distinguishes between four different approaches to religious change as answers to climate crisis:[98] (i) the recovery of neglected pro-environmental parts of their spiritual tradition, (ii) reinterpretations and/or critique of existing traditions, (iii) evaluation of new models within existing traditions, and (iv) radical innovation in creating entire new liturgies, rituals and stories etc. The third and fourth models of religious change have a more critical approach to pre-existing religious traditions and give an incentive to entirely new practices, and these are the ones that resonates with my field.[99] An example of evaluation of new models within existing traditions is how deep ecology has inspired religious

[94] McCutcheon 1997.

[95] Asad 2003.

[96] Fitzgerald 2007.

[97] Partridge 2005.

[98] Bauman et al. 2011:115.

[99] For discussion see Bauman et al. 2011.

traditions to become greener.[100] The fourth approach suggesting radical innovation, and the creation of entire new liturgies, rituals and stories etc., is the most radical form of religious change. In this approach, there is an openness towards new forms of spirituality, which emphasise nature or its "green" sides and inspire to new practices. Gottlieb's model of religious change proceeds from existing religious traditions, and he does not discuss the difference between religion, or religious traditions, and spirituality. When he discusses green spirituality, he emphasises the importance of the civil rights movement, and Martin Luther King Jr. and the non-violent tradition, but also liberation theology. The sources of inspiration are not only religious/spiritual but also political and non-religious, or spiritual. Bron Taylor mentions various sources of inspiration in dark green religion: deep ecology, neo-paganism, Druidry, Wiccan spirituality, ecofeminism, anarcho-primitivism, which often blend with radical environmentalism. I recognise the importance of such sources in formulating my conception of dark green spirituality, as my primary interest is rewilding.

Given these insights, we can understand not only the challenges of climate change and how this can push religious traditions towards change, but more so how the response can be to create "radical innovation" and "entire new liturgies, rituals and stories". The purpose of this discussion is not to question whether religious traditions may transform and become 'spiritual' or try to depict the extent that they encourage change, their affirmative or their conflicting sides. Instead, they form a bricolage where adherents mix their own blend. From a theoretical perspective, it is possible to define religion to cover these forms of alternative spiritualities as well, but this would require a theoretical sensitivity in relation to that particular field of study. As I focus on spirituality, I do not consider the religion *versus* spirituality discussion, instead I turn to Paul Heelas's "spirituality of Life" and Christopher Partridge's alternative spiritualities.

1.3.10 Spirituality of Life and Alternative Spiritualities

Paul Heelas's analysis of religions in the modern world takes a general approach from the secularisation thesis, and he sees a distinct feature: whilst institutionalised religions are not faring well, it appears that spirituality is flourishing.[101] Heelas rejects the idea that the religious is giving way to the secular; rather the religious is giving way to the spiritual. This can be compared to a kind of religion-will-eat-itself process, that is, in order to survive it must transform completely. Heelas sees two distinct features in religion and spirituality: Religion can be defined in terms of obedience to a transcendent God and a tradition which mediates his authority;

[100] Gottlieb 2003.

[101] Heelas 2005.

spirituality is defined as experience of the divine as immanent in life.[102] In simple terms it characterises religion as transcendence and spirituality as immanence. Heelas sums up the key characteristic, which has come to be associated with 'spirituality'. "Spirituality has to do with the personal; that which is interior or immanent". [103] Therefore, Life, rather than what transcends life, becomes God, and contemporary spirituality may more precisely be termed 'spirituality of life'.[104] Heelas's definition resonates with my material, where the personal, the immanent, existential and the lived experience are in focus.[105] However, this assumption of spirituality as immanence, personal or as "spirituality of life" should not lead us to take for granted that this spirituality of life is necessarily individualistic.[106] Paul Heelas claims on the contrary that spiritualities often challenge the notion of the bounded self as foundational to modern being, as they foster a relational subjectivism, rather than an individuated one. [107] [108] According to Heelas new spiritualities radicalise the expressivist strand in modernity; they both affirm the modern values and react against them. Although spiritualities are shaped by their time, they likewise encourage resistance and alternative to this.

As seen previously, following Gottlieb, radical innovation – creating entire new liturgies, rituals etc.[109] – is distinctive, it is a reason not to be too firm on defining 'spirituality' as the phenomenon is a shapeshifter. Hence, the theoretical discourse on spirituality sheds light on a complex phenomenon, and there is a need for a modifier to the term spirituality, and Christopher Partridge suggests alternative spiritualities. Partridge finds a paradox between the contemporary situation and the secularisation thesis: while religion appears to be in decline or on the retreat, conversely, spirituality seems to be alive and kicking. Partridge investigates the alternative spiritual milieu in the contemporary Western world, and the variety of ways an increasing number of Westerners are discovering and articulating spiritual meaning in their lives. Although new ways of believing are not allied to the state or located in large buildings next to the village green they are still socially

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[102] Heelas 2005:413.

[103] Heelas 2005:414.

[104] Heelas 2005:414.

[105] What I object to is that Heelas refers to 'God' and to New Age as an example of the spirituality he has analysed, and to label dark green spirituality as a form of New Age is not only problematic but even a mistake.

[106] Bauman et al. 2011. Lisa Sideris relates religion to institutions and spirituality to the individual. These two positions of religion/institution, and spirituality/individual sets spirituality as part of the private sphere and the private life of the individual, and this model is part of the process of secularisation, where secularisation and differentiation work to push religion back into the private sphere. Given this, it is reasonable to assume that these general conditions in late modernity also apply to spirituality, and these perspectives often found in studies of new age spiritualities.

[107] Heelas 2008.

[108] Heelas and Woodhead 2005:97.

[109] Bauman et al. 2011:115.

significant.[110] Alternative spiritualities are found outside institutions, and are entwined with popular culture and urban myths.[111] Again this relates to how sources of inspiration that is non-religious are an incentive for spiritual reflection, and this is central in my study, which is set in the intersection between spirituality and the environmental movement. In exploring these new forms of spiritualities it should be noted that the interest in alternative spiritualities is not a new phenomenon. Non-traditional re-enchantment has been a long time coming, particularly in the past forty years, according to Partridge. It has been a distinctive part of popular culture and counterculture since the 1960s. Nonetheless, the contemporary context, in relation to climate change and ecocide, poses a specific challenge. Partridge poses popular culture as a,

> …key component of an occultural cycle, in that it feeds ideas in the occultural reservoir and also develops, mixes and disseminates those ideas. This is important because, more generally, popular culture is also a key element in shaping the way we think about world.[112]

Partridge expands the narrow, technical definition of the term ‘occult’ to include a vast spectrum of beliefs and practices sources such as Eastern spirituality, paganism, spiritualism, theosophy, alternative science and medicine, popular psychology, and a range of beliefs emanating from a general interest if the paranormal.[113] Partridge carries out his task at the interface between contemporary spirituality and popular culture, he sees occulture as the new spiritual movement in the West, as “the reservoir feeding new spiritual springs; the soil in which new spiritualities are growing”.[114] The reason they are flourishing is because they function in a very different way, having adapted to a new environment, according to Partridge. Hence, those who study contemporary religion in the West need to reassess their methodologies, definitions of religion, and the criteria used in assessing ‘social significance’. Partridge warns scholars not to use inappropriate criteria in their survey of the religious landscape. The risk is that they either fail to notice central features or else misinterpret these as temporary outcrops or minor seasonal variations. Partridge hopes that his discussion is convincing to persuade others to continue the exploration, and I give credit to Partridge for setting my study off in this direction. As Partridge notes, the new religio-cultural milieu is in flux, and flourishing, therefore, in taking the intention further I modify the term ‘occulture’ to ‘eco-occulture’ referring to the *counterculture* of environmental movement and what today is seen as dark ecology.

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[110] Partridge 2005:3.

[111] Partridge 2005:2.

[112] Partridge 2005:4.

[113] Partridge 2005:4.

[114] Partridge 2005:4.

1.4 Theory – Enchantment, Environmental Humanities and Eco-criticism

The strength of enchantment as a theoretical framework is that it can be related to the emotional, existential and ethical considerations that are at the core of my field. Enchantment addresses how humans relate to nature in a discourse that involves spirituality. My ambition is to formulate a view of enchantment which resonates with the material that I study, and I call this 'wild enchantments'. I will also draw from the environmental humanities and eco-criticism.

1.4.1 The Tale of Enchantment

There is a renewed scholarly discourse on enchantment that goes beyond the dichotomisation between disenchantment and re-enchantment. The feminist philosopher Jane Bennett rejects the notion of modernity as a process of disenchantment. Bennett distinguishes between two tales: the tale of disenchantment and the tale of enchantment which tell different versions of the modern world. Too often the tale is told from the perspective of disenchantment, and so the story goes:

> There was once a time when Nature was purposive, God was active in the details of human affairs, human and other creatures were defined by a preexisting web of relations, social life was characterized by face-to-face relations, and political order took the form of organic community. Then, this premodern world gave way to forces of scientific and instrumental rationality, secularism, individualism, and the bureaucratic state – all of which, combined, disenchant the world.[115]

The story of how various forces disenchant the world has, according to Bennett, contributed to the very condition it describes.[116] Its rhetoric powers have real effects. The tale of disenchantment depicts nature and culture as orders no longer capable of inspiring deep attachments, inflecting the self as a creature of loss and thus discouraging any discernment of the marvellous vitality of bodies human and non-human, natural and artefactual. Bennett offers an alter-tale; the tale of enchantment, setting enchantment as the prime interest. Bennett sees enough evidence of everyday enchantment to warrant the telling of this alter-tale, and my hope is to contribute some further evidence. Bennett tells a story of contemporary life that accentuates moments of enchantment and explores the possibility that the affective force of those moments might be deployed to propel ethical generosity. She claims that the contemporary world retains the power to enchant, and that humans can cultivate

[115] Bennett 2001:7.

[116] Bennett 2001:91.

themselves to experience more of that effect.[117] I think that the benefit of seeing disenchantment and enchantment as tales is that we turn our attention from the scholarly pursuit of arguing in favour of dis- or re-enchantment. The disenchantment process is assumed to be accompanied by secularisation and rationalisation, and the assumed decline of religion. Consequently, the re-enchantment is, in simple terms, the revival of religion. Bennett's approach to enchantment is not as a reminiscence of a premodern world, nor as a remake of something lost; instead, it never really left the world, but merely changed its forms. What can be gained with this approach is that it addresses the relation between man and nature, or to the larger-than-human world, which is in focus in this study. The similar formulation of culture and nature is much contested in scholarly discourse. I discuss the relationship between man and the larger-than-human world from an epistemological perspective, and thus I do not assume that these are ontologically separate. I study how narratives and practices are created and constructed, and how this relation is expressed, especially in relation to place. In emic terms there is a variety of expressions which I discuss further on. In simple words, enchantment is a mood that is related to nature in a highly intimate way. The mood of enchantment is closer to life than to logos. Nonetheless, from a theoretical perspective, approaching enchantment as distinct from disenchantment has the analytical advantage of addressing the contrast to the structural social process of rationalisation of society, as well as to technology and science.

So far, I have introduced the theme of religion and ecology, but this theme includes religion and science, as well as religion and politics. This is particularly clear in relation to climate change, as climate change is a phenomenon that is defined in scientific terms, it is part of a context which leads to political policies and legislation, and, at the same time, it is an incentive for new forms of spirituality. Therefore, to approach this field, I not only relate to theories of enchantment but also to disenchantment and re-enchantment, but my purpose in this discussion is to bring clarity to enchantment.

1.4.2 Enchantment in its Own Terms

Ian Alexander Cuthbertson advocates an appraisal of enchantment in its own terms.[118] The problem of enchantment is that it is too often discussed as *dis*enchantment or *re*-enchantment, which has the consequence that enchantment does not get the attention it deserves. The discourse on enchantment show both disparate and contradictory views, and therefore Cuthbertson's advice to scholars is set out exactly what they mean by the term in the first place.[119] Enchantment has no

[117] Bennett 2001:3–4.

[118] Cuthbertson 2018:1–8.

[119] Cuthbertson 2018:6.

essential core, and it is necessary to specify precisely how and why the term is deployed.

> For those who describe disenchantment, enchantment often signifies belief in otherworldly influences or entities while for those who describe re-enchantment, enchantment often signifies an intense, if fleeting, affective attachment to the world.[120]

Cuthbertson sees a need of a new appraisal of enchantment following Bennett's view that "enchantment never really left the world but only changed its forms."[121] Rather than a return to a premodern way of thinking, enchantment involves fostering fleeting moments of affective attachment with the aim of experiencing wonder. The Gordian knot here is that the term 'enchantment' (as well as disenchantment and re-enchantment) is related to modernity, which is distinctive in the self-understanding of Western culture. The trajectory from a premodern state of enchantment towards a disenchanted rationality is part of the process of progress that is distinctive in the story of modernity. Consequently, a possible return to an enchanted worldview challenges the narrative of modernity.

In discussions of disenchantment, the term is often used as a marker of difference between a perceived modern, rational, mature, and usually Western *us* and a presumed non-modern, irrational, immature, and often non-Western or rural *them*. Consequently, the term carries an explicit value judgement and serves to single out "other" individuals, groups, societies, spaces, or places that are described as "enchanted."[122] Scholars have to be wary of presuming to know how premodern individuals conceptualised their world. While premodern or contemporary "non-modern" individuals might very have felt or continue to feel themselves to be porous and vulnerable to supernatural influences, this "fact" should not be taken for granted. If Christopher Partridge is correct and modern individuals are increasingly engaging with posited supernatural realities, then the automatic association of enchantment with perceived "others" is questionable.[123] Cuthbertson argues that owing to societal pressures coupled with the potential pleasure it provides, disenchantment constitutes a societal and/or personal project that reinforces and reifies a particular normative view of how modernity *ought* to be and how modern subjects ought to think and behave. Descriptions of disenchantment and appraisals of re-enchantment that encourage "rational" enchantments contribute to the very process, that is, rationalisation, which they describe or question, Cuthbertson concludes. I think Bennett's suggestion of two tales is a way out of this dilemma of rationalisation of enchantment. It should be noted that Max Weber's theory of

[120] Cuthbertson 2018:1.

[121] Bennett 2001:91.

[122] Cuthbertson 2018:6.

[123] Cuthbertson 2018:6.

disenchantment was formulated in the early twentieth century.[124] Today postmodern scholars offer an updated reading of these theories. In my perspective, hence, to address enchantment in its own terms is to release enchantment from Weber's sociological theory where the process of rationalisation sets the direction and renders enchantment a premodern state that we have left behind. In focusing on enchantment, I do not claim that disenchantment is a state left behind, or irrelevant. On the contrary, there are insights to gain from disenchantment as well. One key to escape the rationalisation of enchantment is to approach it through a particular metaphor – the iron cage of rationalisation.

1.4.3 The Iron Cage of Rationalisation and the Possible Escape (of Rewilding)

Weber's sociology of religion is an account of the emergence and development of religion, but more so, of modern Western culture and disenchantment. Weber pictures social processes on a structural level of capitalist modernity, and as my study is not a work in sociology my perspectives differs, I found Weber's metaphor of the iron cage of rationalisation to be a powerful image. The iron cage is an image that seems to give the process a bitter end and raises the question of a possible escape. Could enchantment hold the key to the cage? Can it offer an escape from the cage? For my part, in the perspective of rewilding, the iron cage of rationalisation becomes an even more powerful image, as rewilding sets out the prospect of the escape from any kind of cages. In order to put this metaphor to work I have to ask, what is this cage, what does it consist of?

One distinctive feature of the iron cage is, according to the sociologist Nicholas Gane, the devaluation of values, and the basic assumption of disenchantment is the possibility to master all things with calculation. This disenchanted scientific discourse is seen in my field where a central claim is that anthropogenic climate change, as a phenomenon in scientific discourse, is unable to relate to deeper meaning or to discussion of fundamental values of life, such as the value of community or respect for all living creatures. Therefore, I linger a little on the role of science and disenchantment.[125] In simple terms, the process of disenchantment

[124] Gane 2002:15. The sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) published the account of disenchantment in 1917. For a century the disenchantment of the modern world has been central in academic discourse on the role of religion in modern society. Weber's sociology of religion contains an account of the emergence and development, not just of religion, but of modern Western culture. This account reads the history of the West in terms of two interconnected processes: (i) the rise and spread of Occidental (instrumental) rationalism, and the process of rationalisation, and (ii) the accompanying dis-enchantment (Entzauberung) of religious institutions and myth.

[125] Gane 2002:15. Disenchantment is a process with several incentives. It was initiated with the elimination of prehistoric magic religiosity, continued in the rise of universal religion, and the subsequent disenchantment of universal religion with the emergence of modern rational science and the advance of the capitalist order.

and rationalisation is a quest for rational knowledge, and it is likewise a process where values are pushed into the background. In Gane's critical approach, disenchantment "lent legitimacy to a secular science that in turn rejected and *devalued* all religious values."[126] This is *a loss of both values and meaning*[127] which engenders a shift of the social order. It is a process of "depersonalization of the social world",[128] where "instrumental calculation steadily suppresses the passionate pursuit of ultimate values."[129]

This depersonalisation and the suppression of values will be relevant in my material further on, where "the personal" and "values" will be central.[130] The loss of values and meaning is one feature of disenchantment, which comes with the loss of unity that was present in premodern culture,[131] and a central split is between religion and science. There can be no reconciliation of modern values through modern science, and the conflict between science and values will be discussed in this thesis in relation to climate change. Scientific reports offer empirical evidence for the reality of anthropogenic climate change, which gives rise to questions of ethical concern, such as the role of humans as agents causing climate change. Although anthropogenic climate change is defined in scientific term, science cannot answer the ethical questions. This is relevant in my work because no scientific procedure can answer the question of values that arises in relation to climate change. The irony is that scientific knowledge is unable to resolve the very crisis it inaugurated, according to Gane.[132] The loss of values, meaning and unity forms a distinctive part of the grid of the iron cage of disenchantment. Richard Jenkins adds a further loss; disenchantment is the historical process "by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become experienced and *as less mysterious*".[133] The grid of the cage seems to consist of a number of losses: the loss of values, meaning or mysteries, the death of magic, and the death of nature.

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[126] Gane 2002:21.

[127] Gane 2002:15.

[128] Gane 2002:26.

[129] Gane 2002:26 for discussion see 23-27.

[130] Talal Asad (2018) discusses this depersonalisation in relation the calculative reason and secularisation "secularization doesn't merely enable human being to see the world as it really is; it does this by establish a distance between self and external reality, something the primitives (so the Europeans believed) can't do." Asad 2018:16.

[131] Gane 2002:35.

[132] Gane 2002:35 "[S]cience disenchants the traditional (religious) basis upon which values have been legitimated but itself provides no grounds upon which questions of values may finally be resolved. Rather, questions of value and meaning lie outside of the realm of science for they demand a subjective preference, the rightness of which cannot be proven through scientific means."

[133] Jenkins, R 2000:12.

1.4.4 Disenchantment – The Death of Magic and Nature

Many scholars discuss re-enchantment and the vitality of magic in modern society,[134] for example in relation to New Age, but in my perspective magic is a key to understand modern forms of spirituality, especially in relation to art and other forms of expression that can make us understand how humans relate to their environment, particularly in the art of the Anthropocene. Magic is not left behind but has prevailed; the so-called erosion of magic was rather a differentiation of magic, that is, magic became restricted, not only to the private sphere of secular religion, but to certain areas of life, but this should not be mistaken for the death of magic. The historian of philosophy and science Robert Ralley argues that magic differs from religion because it concerns matters like the need like food, shelter, avoiding and recovering from disease. It requires minimal theory and infrastructure.[135] This notion of the benefit of magic as meaning, as "the ideas and practices […] that gave meaning to the smallest aspects of daily life"[136] is a minimalistic notion of 'magic'. This may seem a modern secular version, but it makes it possible to find forms of magic that would otherwise have gone unnoticed, and this minimalist magic works in relation to my thesis. To reject the notion of the 'death of magic' means that it is still alive. Consequently, in being alive it is a phenomena that has undergone changes and continues to do so. Today's magic is not necessarily the same magic as in premodern times, but it may share the feature of offering meaning to life and events that otherwise would be hard to understand.

The distinction between religion and magic is implicit in the scheme; religion is considered to be a more developed form of culture than magic, which is seen as 'primitive' or premodern. Again, the understanding of the premodern society and modernity, which was discussed in relation to disenchantment, comes into the picture. Today scholars criticise the evolutionism of Weber's account of disenchantment,[137] which assumes that humans gradually become more developed, and even more civilised. If disenchantment, as part of rationalisation and progress, is considered to be a unidirectional process and a universalising tendency of modernity then this may be the case. Clearly his notion of religion as replacing magic falls prey to some evolutionistic traps in the trajectory of modernity. Edith Hanke, Lawrence A. Scaff and Sam Whimster consider the evolutionism as an

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[134] Hanegraaff 2003. Hanegraaff argues that that the transformation of magic under the impact of modernisation and secularisation resulted in the paradoxical phenomenon of a 'disenchanted magic', and it is in this form that magic has survived the disenchantment of the world.

[135] Ralley 2010: 142–143. In a historical perspective there was no theology or organising principles governing the divine powers harnessed by magicians as these powers were understood to operate automatically there was no question of having to behave with moral probity in order to be successful. Perhaps most importantly, there was no continuously existing group comprising practitioners and clients: practitioners were called in by clients each time they were needed.

[136] Ralley 2010:142.

[137] Hanke, Scaff and Whimster 2019.

erratic character of the theory which has become obsolete.[138] In a global perspective, modernity is far from a universalistic process. There are, as postcolonial voices such as Talad Asad have noted, multiple modernities.[139] Further, the theory of modernity depicts the social organisations of modern societies, but the notion of the modern man, as distinct from so-called primitive man, is nonetheless proven to be a myth, because the evolution of mankind shows that the species *Homo sapiens* is far older than the coming of modernity in the sixteenth century. Today the myth of the modern man, is challenged by the Anthropocene and the sixth mass extinction, which will be discussed later in this thesis. There is reason to reject, not only the evolutionistic bedrock, but even more the trust in continuous progress which may indicate a deterministic bedrock.

The argument rejects the evolutionistic notion of magic as a state left behind in human development, and the same is true of enchantment. Hence, rather than an evolutionistic model where magic and enchantment are left behind, they were never really ruled out by the power of rationalisation.[140] Although magic and enchantment may have persisted like any other social phenomena, they have changed throughout history, and ‘magic’ rather points towards art and an animated world within contemporary alternative spiritualities. Ian Alexander Cuthbertson notes that in arguing that the world is re-enchanted, scholars typically do not mean that there is a renewed preference for “magical means” over “technical ones” or a resurgence of belief in “spirits”, but rather that there is a renewed interest in the wonders and marvels that are associated with enchantment.[141]

1.4.5 Disenchantment – a Tameable World

The metaphor of the iron cage, and the prospect of a possible escape, is central for the development of wild enchantment. Richard Jenkins contributes to these metaphors that deepen my analysis as he states that in a disenchanted world everything is *tameable*, and this tameable world is of course a powerful counter-image to rewilding. Jenkins offers a critical contemporary rereading of Weber’s

[138] Hanke, Scaff and Whimster (2019) claim that Weber’s interpretation proceeds from the view that the history of religion must be understood in developmental or evolutionary terms, although the concept of ‘evolution’ should never be identified with that of Charles Darwin. Weber was always sceptical about his own time, and he often placed the word “progress” in quotation marks.

[139] Asad 2005.

[140] Ralley puts Max Weber in the same corner as Sir Edward Burnett Taylor and Sir James Frazer, who placed magic in their evolutionary schemes of how mankind developed from ‘savagery’ to that epitome of civilisation, the modern West. They are proponents of the assumption that magic belongs to a particular period of society’s development. They further claimed magic was being removed, or even should be removed from the world. In contrast we have Emile Durkheim (1858–1927) Marcel Mauss (1872–1950), and Henri Huber (1872–1927), Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), Sir Edward Evans Pritchard (1902–1973).

[141] Cuthbertson 2018:5.

theory of disenchantment, where scepticism about a certain concept includes a definition of what it is.[142] Disenchantment is a historical process by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become “less mysterious”:[143] The world becomes knowable, predictable and possible for humans to manipulate. It can be said that the world becomes numb. Thus, the world is conquered and incorporated into the interpretive schema of science and rational government. Jenkins draws the coordination between the less mysterious and tameable world and an increasingly human-centred world.

> In a disenchanted world everything is understandable and tameable, even if not, for the moment, understood and tamed. Increasingly the world becomes human-centred and the universe – only apparently paradoxically – more impersonal.[144]

Metaphorically speaking, the tameable world could easily end up in the iron cage of rationalisation. These metaphors of disenchantment, the “tameable world” or “the iron cage” contribute to a discussion of the wild enchantment I picture in relation to rewilding. I emphasise Jenkins’ notion of a disenchanted world as “tameable”, and disenchantment as an increasingly human-centred world, which will be important for my own analysis in relation to rewilding.

The tameable world addresses a distinctive feature in disenchantment: the belief that it is possible to master all things – especially nature – by calculation, and capitalism is the archetypical example of the ambition to master all things by calculation; a further one is science. Today in the era of Anthropocene, scholars such as Bruno Latour note that this control of nature is no longer possible. Thus, the process of disenchantment was most evident in the West, and Protestantism, the Enlightenment and capitalism were distinctive aspects of this, accompanied by rationalisation, and progress is one of its most distinctive features. Progress is, together with development and growth, central in modern history of the West, but it is subject to hard critique, not only as a scholarly pursuit; it is central in the environmental discourse, as will be discussed in this thesis. These metaphors – the iron cage and the tameable world – have the ring of Carolyn Merchant’s *Death of Nature*. Merchant offers a feminist perspective as she depicts how the modern mechanistic/scientific conception of nature as dead matter, with proponents such as Francis Bacon and René Descartes, replaced an earlier of conception of Mother Earth. The androcentric worldview, that is, the domination of women, is an expression of the human domination of nature, and consequently, nature has been pictured as feminine, wild, in need of control, and should therefore be kept under the domination of male power. Merchant saw the death of nature as a shift from an organic world to a mechanistic worldview, a shift that was conducted by the proponents of rationalisation

[142] Jenkins, R 2000:12.

[143] Jenkins, R 2000:12.

[144] Jenkins, R 2000:12.

in the birth of modern science. Bacon, saw knowledge of nature as a means for power and control over nature, and Descartes proposed a mechanistic worldview where the cry of an animal in pain was nothing but the creaking of the machinery. Merchant describes the scientific revolution as a process whereby,

> …the image of an organic cosmos with a living female earth at its centre gave way to a mechanistic world view in which nature was reconstituted as dead and passive, to be *dominated by humans*.[145]

The dead and passive nature has been the bedrock for an anthropocentric and androcentric worldview, and this is distinctive in the project of exploiting and conquering the world. Hence, the death of nature was a precondition for taming it. Merchant's and Jenkins' notion of a disenchanted world as "tameable" and increasingly human-centred world is highly relevant to my work as I discuss the challenges of rewilding. Disenchantment is an instrument for power and control of the world, but more so, of the larger-than-human world. In this sense it is not only the death of magic, but the death of the wild. Jenkins' analysis of disenchantment as the tameable and increasingly human-centred world contributes to my concept of wild enchantments. As I proceed from Jenkins' disenchantment metaphor of a tameable world, it is possible to escape creating a bipolarity or a dichotomisation between the terms, as I see wild enchantments as enchantment in its own terms.

1.4.6 Re-enchantment in the Heart of Modernity

Richard Jenkins and Christopher Partridge argue that enchantment and re-enchantment are found at the heart of modernity, not as a reminiscence of a premodern world but as a distinct feature of an alternative modernity where enchantment forms an alternative. Richard Jenkins stresses co-existence, in respect to disenchantment and (re)enchantment, as modern societies are an array of opposing tendencies, themes and forces.[146] Despite the scepticism about the disenchantment thesis, as a one-directional view of history, it is not necessary to get rid of the notion of disenchantment altogether.[147] Jenkins considers enchantment and re-enchantment as equally distinctively modern. These are responses to modernity, and while disenchantment has been the stimulus to re-enchantment, enchantment may generate its own disenchantments.[148] In respect of disenchantment and (re)enchantment, modern societies are an array of opposing tendencies, themes

[145] Merchant 1990:xvi italics added

[146] Jenkins, R 2000:11. Jenkins draws from his study of the Millennium Dome in London, and the celebrations of the millennium shift.

[147] Jenkins, R 2000:13.

[148] Jenkins, R 2000:11.

and forces, according to Jenkins.[149] As scholars focus on enchantment in its own term, and various forms of enchantment are suggested, the further ambition is to free enchantment from the discussion on the role of religion in modern secular society, and the academic quest concerning the disappearance or revival of religion.

Christopher Partridge sets the re-enchantment in the contemporary West in the alternative spiritual milieu, which concerns a variety of ways an increasing number of people are discovering and articulating spiritual meaning in their lives.[150] It involves new ways of believing and the transmission of those beliefs in societies where the old ways of believing are declining. Partridge claims that these spiritual reflections are entwined with popular culture and urban myths. Although new forms of spirituality differ from traditional religious forms, it would be a mistake to dismiss them. New spiritualities may not require their adherents to sit in pews and believe in systematic theologies; it is erroneous to simply compare this spirituality to mainstream religious beliefs and consider it to be insignificant in the lives of those people. These new ways of believing are not allied to the state or located in large buildings next to the village green, but this is not synonymous with them being socially insignificant. Partridge emphasises that beliefs may be transmitted through popular culture, but this does not mean that they are trivialised.[151] He describes "the alternative and holistic spiritual milieu" as a "constantly evolving religio-cultural milieu."[152] Re-enchantment takes place in alternative spiritualities, in a non-Christian milieu that falls outside traditional notion of religious institutions. Institutions are replaced with other forms of social organisations, and religious traditions, with their religious canon and authority, are replaced with popular culture. In formulating his ideas of 'occulture' Partridge goes beyond what Colin Campbell defines as 'the cultic milieu' and he defines the 'occulture' in popular culture as the new spiritual atmosphere in the West; the reservoir feeding new spiritual spring; the soil in which the spiritualities are growing, the environment within which new methodologies and worldviews are passed on to an occulturally curious generation.[153]

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[149] Jenkins, R 2000:13.

[150] Partridge 2005:1 Partridge's definition of re-enchantment is partly an answer to the secularisation discussion that is going on within the study of religion. Partridge argues that traditional forms of religion, such as Christianity in the West, might be part of a process of secularisation, but this is far from the whole picture.

[151] Partridge 2005:1.

[152] Partridge 2005:2. Partridge argues in polemic with Steve Bruce, who is known as a proponent of the secularisation thesis. Partridge claims "What we are witnessing in the West is a confluence of secularization and sacralization. Spiritualities emerge that are not only quite different from the dying forms of religion, but are often defined over against them, and are articulated in ways that do not carry the baggage of traditional religion. Unlike those forms of religion which are in serious decline, the new spiritual awakening utilizes thought forms, ideas, and practices which are not at all alien to the majority of Westerners. They emerge from an essentially non-Christian, religio-cultural milieu." Looking at traditional religion and leaving out alternative and holistic milieus leads to erroneous assumptions about the continuous secularisation of the West, Partridge concludes.

[153] Partridge 2005:2.

1.4.7 Enchantment as a Complex Mood

Jane Bennett's phenomenological approach pictures the enchantment of modern life, and it is worth noting that while Weber considered the disenchantment of the *world,* Bennett's enchantment is a complex *mood*. This mood may include a sense of wonder, but this is not the whole picture. She approaches enchantment with a certain degree of caution, and even warns that enchantment may charm and disturb.[154] In Bennett's view enchantment involves an *encounter* and a meeting with something unexpected.[155] I consider this important because the kind of enchantments that I am interested in are not only inner transcendental experiences.

> [E]nchantment entails a state of wonder, and of the distinctions in this state is the temporary suspension of chronological time and bodily movement. To be enchanted, then, is to participate in a momentarily immobilizing encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound. […] The mood I'm calling enchantment involves, in the first instance, a surprising encounter, a meeting with something that you did not expect and are not fully prepare to engage.[156]

Bennett offers a number of synonyms for being enchanted; "a momentarily immobilizing encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound" and "a surprising encounter, a meeting with something that you did not expect and are not fully prepare to engage."[157] Rather than simply asking for a definition or analysis of enchantment, Bennett asks: What does it mean to be enchanted? How does it feel be enchanted? In what circumstances does this mood come to us? I include these questions in my study, as I develop my notion of "wild enchantment", in conversation with Bennett. The enchantment Bennett pursues involves momentary or fleeting attachments: "moments of enchantment rather than an enchanted way of life",[158] but these moments can be fostering moments with the aim to experiencing wonder. What is relevant in relation to my work is that Bennett describes deliberative strategies for fostering enchantment, for experiencing or engaging with enchantment, and I relate this to various practices that I have studied.[159] Further, Bennett separates enchantment's affective appeal from any intellectual engagement with posited supernatural beings or moral forces. Rather than enchantments in the form or 'spirits' or magic, she turns the attention to "natural and cultural sites that have the power to enchant",[160] and in my work I present of a number of places at

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[154] Bennett 2001:34.

[155] Bennett, 2001:5.

[156] Bennett 2001:5.

[157] Bennett 2001:5.

[158] Bennett 2001:10.

[159] Bennett 2001:4.

[160] Bennett 2001:3.

Dartmoor in Devon, UK. Visiting these sites that have "the power to enchant"[161] offers experiences of the complexity and hybridity of the natural world.

As I draw on Bennett, the question is why I need to the modifier *wild* enchantments. The mood Bennett calls enchantment involves a surprising encounter, a meeting with something unexpected. This contains both a pleasurable feeling of being charmed by the novel and yet unprocessed encounter and "a more *unheimlich* (uncanny) feeling of being disrupted or torn out of one's default sensory-psychic-intellectual disposition."[162] Taken together this gives the overall effect of enchantment "as a mood of fullness, plenitude or liveliness, a sense of having had one's nerves or circulation or concentration power turned up or recharged."[163] Bennett mentions fear as one of those extraordinary states, although she states that "fear cannot dominate if enchantment is to be".[164] At this point I find Bennett's view insufficient, and my critique is that Bennett do not offer a way to overcome the fear or the moods of uncanniness, and these darker moods become distinctive in relation to climate change, loss of biodiversity and ecological crisis. I develop this throughout this thesis, as I elaborate on my own concept of wild enchantments, in relation to my field and in discussion with Bennett. Next, I turn to another important contributor, Christopher Partridge.

1.4.8 Eco-enchantment and Paganisation

Christopher Partridge introduces eco-enchantment, which is a form of enchantment of green concerns. Partridge distinguishes eco-enchantment from eco-theologising within contemporary mainstream religious traditions, sometimes referred to as the greening of religion. Eco-enchantment is the sacralisation of nature and environmental ethics; it is an alternative spirituality that can be found within the green movement, one that is particularly influenced by Paganism and deep ecology and which, according to Partridge, can be understood as essentially neo-Romantic in orientation. Partridge sees two distinctive forms of eco-enchantment: Paganisation, and Easternisation, that is, they draw mainly on Pagan or Eastern sources of inspiration. I focus on paganisation and the reason why paganisation is relevant in my work, despite the fact that I do not work exclusively with Pagan groups, is that there is an important intersection between rewilding and Paganism and particularly between the conception of 'the wild' and 'the pagan' that I am exploring. I share Partridge's focus on the eco-enchantment and green concerns, and eco-theologising in religious traditions falls outside my discussion.

[161] Bennett 2001:3.

[162] Bennett 2001:5.

[163] Bennett 2001:5.

[164] Bennett 2001:5.

The strength of eco-enchantment is that it relates to the green movement, and there is a further point and that is the relation to the dark. Partridge argues that "environmental concern has much in common with key occultural themes and tends to be inherently eclectic, it has a strong socializing bias".[165] He uses the term 'occulture' to refer to these darker sides of the alternative spiritualities which are related to popular culture. Partridge makes a distinction between occulture and esoterism. While the esoteric tradition goes back to the Hellenistic world, what today is referred to a contemporary esoteric thought can be traced back to the Renaissance, to the modern revival and romanticism in the nineteenth century, and to the late modern period in the 1960s. The western tradition of esoterism is challenged by the emergence of a political and cultural context that has proved particularly conducive to the proliferation of broadly esoteric ideas. What Partridge refers to as 'occulture' is not occultism or esoterism in the sense of being hidden or exclusive only for the few who have been initiated or concerned with a Gnostic privilege. Occulture is embedded in a culture, and primarily in the focus is on popular culture or counter-culture, and, in the words of Partridge; occulture is ordinary: it is neither hidden nor unfamiliar, but ordinary and part of everyday life.[166] The term 'occulture' has been criticised for being vague, as it could include a vast range of popular cultural phenomenon. Still, the advantage for my part is that the term 'occulture' *refers to darker sides of the alternative spiritualities*.[167] It relates to the darker sides, as seen in my concept of dark green spirituality.

My interest is in counter-*culture*, rather than popular culture, because the relation between counter-culture and social movements is quite distinctive, and in my case, it is the green movement. Through this relation to social movements, counter-culture has a social and political ambition to contribute to change. Therefore, I modify 'occulture' to introduce the term 'eco-occulture', which refers to the cultural expressions of darker sides of the green spiritualities. My interest in the dark is seen in my critique of the simple sense of wonder. In times of climate change and ecocide there is a need to address the darker moods, and Partridge's approach contributes here. My term 'eco-occulture', referring to forms of expressions of counterculture within the green movement, thus defines counterculture in relation to social movements.[168]

[165] Partridge 2005:43.

[166] First, the term 'occulture' has been criticised for vagueness; it can include any sort of references in popular cultures and popular cultural phenomena. Moreover, it can be objected that occulture, and its relation to popular culture, is a trivialisation of the occult. Popular culture may be in sharp contrast to, or even a contradiction to, occultism and esoteric teaching of the hidden knowledge, which is only open to the initiated.

[167] Partridge 2005:43.

[168] Braunstein and Doyle 2002.

1.4.9 Wild Enchantments and Eco-occulture

In dark times, facing anthropogenic climate change, it may be difficult to maintain feelings of wonder and enchantment. The loss of these moods would indeed be a tragedy, but fortunately, this is not the state of the world. Although wonder and enchantment do not stay unaffected by the times we are living in, I have found that the reconciliation between the sense of wonder and enchantment and the darker moods – such as grief over the loss of biodiversity – to be the core of my work. 'Wild enchantments' is the term I use in relation to my own field, and it is notable that I refer to enchantment*s* in the plural, as one way to mark the complexity of the term. As we have seen, Bennett's view contribute a great deal to my conception of wild enchantments, but I also gain insights from scholars such as Jenkins, Partridge, and a number of others, and draw on their contributions in formulating my understanding of wild enchantments. Following Cuthbertson, enchantment ought to be addressed in its own terms, that is, not just as form where the prefix, dis-enchantment or re-enchantment, determines the discussion and makes enchantment secondary. Therefore, I set out with the aim to approach enchantment in its own terms, but as Bennett shows, it is a complex mood we are dealing with. Hence, to get rid of the prefix, there may still be a need for an accompanying term to make clear what exactly what kind of enchantment is being discussed, and to further analyse the complexity of enchantment.

In introducing my term 'wild enchantments', I follow the model of other scholars who have contributed to the analysis of enchantment in a number of suggestions that elaborate on the term; such as Partridge's eco-enchantment. A further contribution is the archaeologist Christina Fredengren's 'deep time enchantment', which contributes significantly to my notion, as well as the anthropologist Jay Griffith's 'reciprocal enchantment', and the historian Patrick Curry's 'radical enchantment'. I discuss these contributions continuously in this thesis and develop my conception of 'wild enchantment' in a discussion with them. Further; 'enchantment' has been applied in a number of studies where it is related to new areas and practices, such as enchantment and skill in relation to craftsmanship, enchantment and nostalgia, enchantment and heritage, enchantment and storytelling, enchantment as method, to mention just a few works, and I come back to these later on. I take all these studies as a sign of how 'enchantment' is a frame that make us able to see and to address something that otherwise would escape our attention.

I introduce the term 'wild enchantments' because I need to address the full range of the complex mood of enchantment, and to reach beyond the simple notion of enchantment as a sense of wonder, or emotions such as love and reverence. Environmentalists are often pictured, or even stereotyped, as activists driven by the love and reverence towards nature which they work to protect, but this is just half the picture. Environmentalists may work to protect a site they love, such as a beautiful forest, but all too often they fail to protect it and instead they have to witness how timber companies turn it into a clear-cut. These places are ecologically

wounded places and they give rise to feelings of grief and sorrow. In times of climate change, these feelings are not only related to specific places, but more generally, the emotional responses that come with the global threat of climate change and ecocide. Thus, the moods that are set in play here range from the "dark" shades of grief and sorrow to eeriness or uncanniness, and they include bright moods, such as love, reverence and a sense of wonder. Therefore, this colourful spectrum of moods ranges from light to darkness, and it is necessary to be able to address this from a theoretical perspective.

1.5 Theories of the Environmental Humanities

Theories of the environmental humanities are characterised by interdisciplinary approaches that are distinctive in the field, and this chapter opens with a discussion of the Anthropocene. I present theories from environmental history and eco-criticism, and introduce central concepts and conceptions, I discuss narrative, practice and place, which I take to be in the centre of my study.

1.5.1 Anthropocene – a New Geological Epoch

Climate change will change the world, and there is a name for this new world: the Anthropocene. Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoemer[169] introduced the term in 2000, characterising the present as a shift between geological epochs: the Anthropocene is a new geological epoch, and its condition differs greatly from the old epoch, the Holocene, that has come to an end. The idea of a shift between geological epochs and the terms Anthropocene and Holocene has steadily gained acceptance, not only among scientists, but among scholars of the environmental humanities. The Anthropocene illustrate the interdisciplinarity of environmental humanities, which often relates to scientific conceptions or reports. Scientific evidence has increasingly mounted that the changes wrought by global warming will affect the world's climate and biological diversity as well as geology, and not only in this century, but for millennia to come. The idea behind the term Anthropocene is that we have entered a new epoch in Earth's geological history, an epoch that is characterised by the advent of human species as a geological force.[170] The human species is a geological force, due to its numbers, and the statistics on population growth predict an accelerating number to come, and secondly due to its lifestyle that is based on overuse of nature resources. This should not be taken to mean that man is in control. On the contrary, the control, in the sense that man has the power to tame nature, was

[169] Crutzen and Stoermer 2000.

[170] Scranton 2015:20.

to a certain extent possible in the Holocene as the climatological stability offered a world that was predictable and controllable, but that stability is now lost.

Climate change is not the only thing that calls for a geological time perspective, the sixth extinction, or the sixth mass extinction, is part of the conception of Anthropocene. The present can be understood as a key period, where the transformation of the earth is happening at such an accelerated rate that it could threaten the life conditions for many species on the planet, a situation that is referred to as the sixth mass extinction, which is an extreme form of loss of biodiversity. Biodiversity is a term that refers to life on Earth in all aspects of its diversity, interactions living organisms, and importantly, the fates of these organisms.[171] The notion of the sixth mass extinction and the massive loss of biodiversity that are taking place right now was suggested in 2008 an article by David B. Wake and Vance T. Vredenburg,[172] This is not a unique incident – five extinctions have happened before, but what is unique is the cause:

> Intense human pressure, both direct and indirect, is having profound effects on natural environments. […] The increasing pressure from habitat destruction and climate change is likely to have major impacts on narrowly adapted and distributed species.[173]

Wake and Vredenburg refer to research that shows that we are now entering a profound spasm of extinction and that one of its main causes is global climate change. Furthermore, both global climate change and many other factors (e.g., habitat destruction and modification) behind extinction events are directly related to the activities of humans.[174] In the words of Wake and Vredenburg: "One weedy species has unwittingly achieved the ability to directly affect its own fate and that of most of the other species on this planet."[175] Elizabeth Kolbert writes that if they are correct, "those of us alive today not only are witnessing one of the rarest events in life's history, we are also causing it."[176] Extinctions have happened before in geological history, and can be seen as natural, but the sixth has, according to Kolbert, "an unnatural history". Hence, the notion of the sixth mass extinction challenges the survival of life on earth, and furthermore, challenges human species who are causing this through climate change.

Living in times of climate change is a gigantic change of the conditions on planet Earth Bruno Latour, anthropologist of modernity, compares it to a "counter-

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[171] Wake and Vredenberg 2008.

[172] Wake and. Vredenburg 2008.

[173] Wake and Vredenberg 2008.

[174] Wake and Vredenberg 2008.

[175] Wake and Vredenberg 2008.

[176] Kolbert 2014.

Copernican revolution".[177] Latour describes the Anthropos of the Anthropocene as Babel after the fall. Humans are no longer set apart from terrestrial history.[178] From now on we will be living in the New Climate regime. The New Climate regime forces humans to turn their gaze towards the Earth – to face Gaia. Facing Gaia means losing the modernist/scientific *control of nature*, where the laws of nature were considered to be stable. It is no longer possible to contemplate the tragedy from a distant shore, as a place that has *no history.* Latour claims: "from now on there are no more spectators, because there is no shore that has not been mobilized in the drama of geohistory."[179] This marks the end of the distinction between nature and culture, and in its place, Latour puts 'the world,' or Gaia. Thus, Gaia forces us to give up looking at the Earth as an object, and humans as the only creature worthy of being subjects. Latour claims that "the Earth is no longer 'objective,' in the sense that it can be kept at distance, considered from the point of view of Sirius".[180] Besides questioning who can be a subject, he likewise asks what it means to be a subject; especially in encounters with nonhuman beings.

> As soon as we come close to nonhumans beings, we do not find in them the inertia that would allow us, by contrast, to take ourselves to be agents but, on the contrary, we find agencies that are no longer without connection to what we are and what we do.[181]

Being subjects poses everything as agents in the network, and this includes non-humans as well. Latour's agency theory is much discussed and criticised, I not take sides in this criticism because it would lead astray in the discussion here, but I see one benefit with the perspective of agency, which is based on my (possible fallible) understanding of Latour, and which contributes to my work. In simple terms the perspective of agency encourages us to turn the analysis away from asking what something is (as an object) and instead ask what it does (as a subject). This has the consequence of allowing us to see old things in a new perspective and to see new thing, previously unseen, but more so how to be able to be less anthropocentric in your study. To shift the question to ask; what climate change does – not just to human beings, but more generally to all living things on earth, will contribute much to the analysis in this thesis. Applied to climate change, defining anthropogenic climate change as increasing temperature due to emission of carbon dioxide is not an analysis that adds anything new. However, if we ask what climate change does, the answer might be that it will change living conditions on Earth dramatically. The analysis leads further by asking how it will change our living conditions, self-

[177] Latour 2017:61, italics added.

[178] Latour 2017:122.

[179] Latour 2017:40.

[180] Latour 2017:62.

[181] Latour 2017:62.

understanding, and how it is possible to adjust to these changes. Facing Gaia concerns questioning man's self-image as a creature that is given a privileged position, separate from the rest of the living world. The Anthropocene is not an immoderate extension of anthropo*centrism*; it means that humans are no longer set apart from terrestrial history.[182] The Anthropocene means living on a planetary scale.

1.5.2 La Longue Durée and Deep Time

For a scholarly pursuit, it may seem to be an immense task to study the shift between the Holocene and the Anthropocene in a contemporary perspective; in a Foucauldian spirit, however, it is precisely shifts and discontinuities, rather than epochs and continuity, that are of interest to study. Thus, for a historian working with a contemporary study, it means writing history in real time, because this is not a shift in the sense of entering a new *historical* epoch; it is the new *geological* era. This is somewhat extraordinary; it forces historians to approach a new kind of shift, and it strengthens the perspective of environmental history. The timespan that becomes part of the perspectives is far wider than what historians usually deal with. Being in the midst of shifting geological epochs is rare; we are in a kind of in-between days, which poses particular challenges for the historical discipline. It concerns firstly, the understanding of time and epochs, secondly, man's relation to nature/culture and to geological processes, and thirdly, it is in these in-between days that our fundamental values are on trial. Taken together these challenges make it all the more interesting to study, because this shift means totally different living conditions.

How can historians reach beyond the time range of human history? It challenges the frame of the discipline to go beyond the well-known footprints of human history. Two theoretical terms that enable us to think these new time scales are *la longue durée* and deep time. As the first concerns millennia, the second refer to ranges of geological scale. Climate change marks the beginning of the Anthropocene, the new geological era that follows the Holocene, the era that was characterised by climatological stability. The loss of stability is one of the key features of Anthropocene.[183] The present is a key period, where the transformation of the earth is happening at such an accelerated rate that it could threaten the life conditions for many species on the planet. In order to understand the present, this extended time perspective, *la longue durée*, is necessary. Hence, the Anthropocene is more than a

[182] Latour 2017:122.

[183] Weintrobe 2013:xix. The psychoanalyst Sally Weintrobe writes: "After 12,000 years of unusual stability, the world's climate is on the move. The magnitude of the changes and their impacts on humans have so far been modest. But the scientific evidence shows that evolving patterns of temperature and precipitation will become increasingly apparent and significant, as will slow but ineluctable sea level rise. […] The nature and scale of the challenge is daunting. Indeed, it is already too late to avoid some climatic change as the Earth's systems respond to the disturbance we have already created."

historical epoch which may last for decades or centuries. This is quite extraordinary; the present shift is different from the shift between historical epochs, such as between, let us say, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The philosopher Timothy Morton[184] stresses the difference between being in the Anthropocene and other eras, because the very idea of being 'in' an era is in question. We are, Morton notes "'in' the Anthropocene, but that era is also 'in' a moment of far longer duration."[185] Thus, the challenge of the Anthropocene is to face the task of thinking on temporal and spatial scales that are unfamiliar, even monstrously gigantic, and I come back to this throughout the thesis.

Thus, living in a geological era means covering long-term perspectives, beyond the range of human history: The Anthropocene is the first fully anti-anthropocentric concept, because it becomes necessary to question many of the taken-for-granted boundaries, such as human and non-human. As noted before, the Anthropocene is, despite its name, not an immoderate extension of anthropo*centrism.* Latour pictures the Anthropos of Anthropocene as Babel after the fall, when humans no longer are set apart from terrestrial history.[186] To think of human history as part of terrestrial history would extend our time scale considerably. Modern industrialisation took off two hundred years ago; this is a very short period, set within the perspective of terrestrial history. Yet, during the industrial period, the consequences of fossil fuel combustion and accelerating use of natural resources have caused the current climate crisis. How could such a short moment become so distinctive for times to come? How can we put this short moment in a context?

There is a concept for thinking these extended time scales – 'deep time'. The concept of deep time is related to the ancient landscape because it illustrates the intersection between long-term geological and relatively short historical processes. 'Deep time' is rooted in challenges to the biblical narrative. James Hutton observed deep stratigraphy exposed in the strata of Scottish sea-cliffs, and he concluded that the Earth was 4.5 billons years old, much older than Bishop James Ussher's proposal that it had been created in 4004 BC.[187] The deep time perspective concerns the important relationship between history and natural science, as firmly acknowledged in the current era of major climate and environmental challenges. Yet how this relationship is actually nurtured and worked out is often more uncertain.[188] Natural science concerns not just the facts about the reality of climate change but also biology and zoology, how man and the larger-than-human world has interacted. Environmental historian Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that that in order to understand our situation and responsibilities within the contemporary world with its climate and environmental problems, we need to question the barriers between histories of

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[184] Morton 2016.

[185] Morton 2015.

[186] Latour 2017:122.

[187] Fredengren 2016:484.

[188] Fredengren 2016.

geological deep time, natural and human history. This has major implications for how history is studied and comprehended. Such a union has the capacity to query what a world without humanity might be like, and analysing the important boundary of the Anthropocene, where following the Holocene, human beings are understood to have crossed the nature/culture boundary to become one of the main actors in global geological change.[189] Chakrabarty offers arguments for the need for deep time perspective in a theoretical discourse, and as the philosopher Timothy Morton notes, we live on more timescales than we can grasp.[190] This gives rise to challenges in relating these perspective to a field study. The question is: how this can deep time perspective be brought on board in an empirical study?

The archaeologist Christina Fredengren argues that archaeology may contribute to the anthropogenic predicament, not just that the encounter with heritage may stimulate engagement, but from a more theoretical perspective, the need for a shift from an understanding of heritage as social constructs to an acknowledgement of heritage as an emerging onto-ethic-epistemological phenomenon.[191] In this deep time perspective, encounters with materiality from the past contribute to the discourse on environmental ethics. Fredengren discusses the intersection between deep time and history and her study concerns how people's experiences of meeting with materialities from the past may give rise to religious effects, which she refers to as deep time enchantment (as in experiences of the otherworld, in enchantment, hierophanies or hauntings), which may inform modern ecological ethics.[192] Fredengren's study and her term 'deep time enchantment' is an important contribution to my conception of 'wild enchantment'. This deals with how the encounter with archaeological deep time, in past and present, can be powerful. I give examples of such encounters of deep time in my study, which partly takes place in Dartmoor, a place famous for archaeological remains from the Bronze Age. Deep time and history contribute to discussions on environmental engagement, spirituality and religion. Fredengren formulates a number of questions that are relevant for my study. How can meeting with the deep-time archaeological material provide encounters that give rise to enchanting effects? How can these deep time

[189] Chakrabarty 2009:213–20.

[190] Morton 2015.

[191] Fredengren 2016 discusses archaeology's central role in drawing the long-term perspectives that cover climatological and environmental changes in ancient times. This is referred to as deep time perspective. This is not simply a matter of constructing long-term models of palaeo-environmental change. Archaeology has a central role in evidencing anthropocentric impact, and thus achieving a well-founded evaluation of "the anthropogenic predicament". The subject has the potential to contribute to the wider debate on environmental humanities. Though it deals with memory and time, considers archaeological deep time materialisation processes. When deep time and material formation processes came to the fore in discussions about climate and environmental change, the deep time perspective is distinct from the social constructivist heritage research which argues that heritage should be understood in a contemporary context.

[192] Fredengren 2016.

encounters play a role in development of environmental ethics and issues of intergenerational care?[193]

In my study I give accounts of participants' experiences of the ancient landscape of Dartmoor, and I have participated in workshops that work with conceptions of deep time, which try to give an answer to the challenge of how to make these vast time spans into something that we can grasp. I think these perspectives contribute to my study, as they offer models of "the anthropogenic predicament" in relation to deep time perspectives which contribute to the discourse on environmental ethics, and second, in my thesis I give accounts from my field, with visits to Dartmoor, a famous for its Bronze Age remains, where the encounters with archaeological materialities will be discussed in relation to deep time enchantments. My theoretical contribution here is to bring together deep time perspectives, and "deep time enchantment"[194] with another central concept in environmental discourse, shifting baselines, because I have found that many of the workshop are working to negotiate baselines.

1.5.3 Central Concepts in Environmental History – Shifting Baselines, Ecological Awareness and Social Resilience

There is no lack of theoretical models that explain why people do not see or engage in environmental degradation, but these theories can be helpful in analysing those who actually do engage. 'Shifting baselines' is a central term in environmental discourse. The term was introduced by S.K. Papworth, J. Rist, and E.J. Milner-Gulland.[195] Due to short life-spans and faulty memories, humans have a poor conception of how much of the natural world has been degraded by our actions, because our 'baseline' shifts with every generation, and sometimes even in the life of an individual. What we see as pristine nature would be seen by our ancestors as hopelessly degraded, and what we can see as degraded our children will see as 'natural'.[196] The experience of current conditions of nature is taken for granted and seen as natural as when experience of past conditions is lost. If we cannot remember how things were before the environmental degradation, then we will be blind to the changes that have taken place. This is a form of amnesia.[197] In the words of Milner-Gulland:

> The shifting baseline syndrome is the situation in which over time knowledge is lost about the state of the natural world, because people don't perceive changes that are

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[193] Fredengren 2016.

[194] Fredengren's notion of deep time enchantment departures from heritage as deep time phenomena. Fredengren 2016:493.

[195] Papworth, Rist, and Milner-Gulland 2009.

[196] Hance 2009:1.

[197] Papworth, Rist, and Milner-Gulland, 2009:93.

> actually taking place. In this way people's perceptions of change are out of kilter with the actual changes taking place in the environment.[198]

Thus, the shifting of baselines takes place on a personal level in an individual life, as well as on a more long-term level, between generations. It is a loss of memories on a personal and intergenerational level: as people no longer remember how it once was, they are blind to the environmental degradation that has taken place.

In this thesis I take this notion further to discuss some practices which aim to make people remember how it actually was, to realise to what extent humans throughout history have reshaped the landscape, and to allow them to imagine how it once was. I conduct this discussion in relation to Dartmoor and in what I refer to as *negotiating baselines*. Hence, if shifting baselines refers to the inability to see ecological degradation, ecological awareness asks what it means, not only to see the change that is taking place but the insight that follows. The philosopher Timothy Morton claims that ecological awareness forces us to think and feel at multiple scales, scales that disorient normative concepts like 'present', 'life', 'human', 'nature', 'thing', 'thought' and 'logic'. These are all "layers of attunement to ecological reality more accurate that what is habitual in the media, in the academic and in society at large."[199] Thus ecological awareness goes beyond the perspective of consumers' lifestyle choices; it is a rather a radical co-existence. Morton call this ecognosis, which he sees as a form an attunement.[200] Hence, ecological awareness is not simply awareness of the outer world or nature as *the other*, but a form of self-awareness. The geologists Owain Jones and Katherine Jones note that becoming self-aware in terms of an ecological self means putting oneself in a very ethical and emotionally challenging position.[201]

A further concept that is central in environmental discourse is social resilience, which is increasingly replacing 'sustainability' which has been heavily criticised for being trivialised and misused.[202] Social resilience addresses how people cope with the changes that come with environmental crisis, and thus it refers to a property of the social dimension, different from sustainability which may concern economy or technology. Markus Keck and Patrick Sakdapolrak suggest that social resilience has three capacities:[203] (i) coping capacities – the ability of social actors to cope with and overcome all kinds of adversities; (ii) adaptive capacities – their ability to learn from past experience and adjust themselves to future challenges in their everyday

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198 Hance, Jeremy (2009) "Providing the 'shifting baselines' theory: how human consistently misperceive nature ", *Mongabay*, 24 June 2009.

199 Morton 2015:2.

200 Morton 2015:2.

201 Jones and Jones 2017:157.

202 See Bauman et al. 2011.

203 Keck, Markus, and Sakdapolrak, Patrick (2013) "What is Social Resilience? Lessons Learned and Ways Forward" *Erkunde* Vol. 67, No. 1, 5–19

life, and (iii) transforming capacities – their ability to craft sets of institutions that foster individual welfare and sustainable societal robustness for future crisis.[204] This model of social resilience to meet a process of change can be summed up as: coping, adapting and transforming.

1.5.4 Concepts of Environmental History – Collapse, Thresholds of Vulnerability and Slow Violence

Environmental history sees environmental degradation and climate change as parts of social, economic and cultural processes in society, and I take these theoretical perspectives and conceptualisations further in my analysis. The framing of climate change in terms of collapse will be the first one, and the most familiar contribution is that of the geologist Jared Diamond.[205] Diamond claims that civilisations collapse when they reach the full demand of their ecologies, because at that state they become highly vulnerable to natural fluctuations. No doubt history has seen the rise and fall of many civilisations: the Roman Empire, Easter Island, to mention just two. Diamond does not only look at these examples of collapsing civilisation from an historical interest; he claims that there are parallels between these collapsing scenarios and our own civilisation.[206] The historian Brian Fagan proceeds from a long-term perspective, ranging from the period in European history in the seventeenth century known as the Little Ice Age, towards a contemporary age. Fagan asks: what is distinctive about modern man's relation to nature, to changing climate and changing living conditions? Human history is, in one sense, the story of changing climate, of crop failure, humiliation, even disasters, as well as adaptation and human responses, and this is a spiral that continues today. Fagan argues that modern society and progress, despite all its benefits, has led to an *increasing threshold of vulnerability*.[207] Fagan argues that humans' relationship to the natural environment and short-term climate change has always been in flux. To ignore

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[204] Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013.

[205] Diamond 2005.

[206] Diamond 2005. Diamond's collapse theory has been taken further by many scholars, such as John Michael Greer, who describes the current crisis in the West as a slow decline. Rather than an instantaneous collapse, beginning at the centre and spreading through the country, the collapse as a slow decline, starting in the periphery rather than the centre, and more so, in certain areas the collapse has already taken place. According to Diamond, the historical examples of collapsing civilisations are caused by ecological misuse of the resources, but the historical examples all escaped climate change. This is a difference that has to be kept in mind. Ecological misuse means facing a situation with empty warehouses. Climate change might bring empty warehouses, but the instability and vulnerability are caused by a sudden change of conditions.

[207] Fagan 2004:xv. Fagan writes "Humanity had stepped over a threshold of vulnerability into a world where the costs of rolling with climate shifts were infinitely higher. With population growth, urbanization and the global spread of the industrial revolution, this vulnerability has only increased. […] today, in a much more heavily populated and warmer world, the potential for disaster is open-ended."

climate is to neglect one of the dynamic backdrops of human existence. What is new in our time is that humanity has become more and more vulnerable to long- and short-term climate change, as it has become even more difficult and expensive for us to respond to it. For tens and thousands of years, the human population was miniscule, and everyone lived from hunting and the gathering plants for food. Survival depended on mobility and opportunism, on flexibility of daily existence that allowed people to roll with the climate punches.[208] With population growth, urbanisation and the global spread of the industrial revolution this vulnerability has increased and continues to do so.

A further example is the professor of English, Rob Nixon, who offers valuable theoretical contributions to the field. Nixon has studied the processes in relation to privatisation of land and environmental refugees in the global south, what he describes as the environmentalism of the poor, and in this he introduces the term 'slow violence'. [209] In simple term, it concerns how violence may have long-term and intergenerational consequences. Thus, the violence wrought by climate change takes place gradually and is often invisible, and Nixon argues that it is urgent need to rethink this – politically, imaginatively and theoretically. [210] One of the features of environmental history that Joachim Radkau stresses is the difficulties of writing from a general perspective since every time and place has its own formulation of environmental degradation.[211] Radkau observes that the research done on environmental movements, despite the vast literature on the field, contains major gaps that are particularly striking for a historian. There is an extensive no-man's-land between *pièces d'occasion* and general works, between theoretical models and journalistic reportage, between literature about what *is* and literature about what

[208] Fagan 2004:xiv.

[209] Nixon 2011:2. Nixon claims that slow violence is not just something that affects those living in that area today: slow violence is a form of violence that reaches in between generations, the descendants of those who have been driven away from an area due to privatisation of land. It takes generations to form the kind of relation to a place again, Nixon argues. A similar concept is "time violence", introduced by the peace researcher Johan Galtung, meaning violence against future generations.

[210] Nixon 2011:2. "By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales. In so doing, we also need to engage the representational, narrative, and strategic challenges posed by the relative invisibility of slow violence."

[211] This is something I recognise from my own work in writing this thesis. Much history of the environmental movement focuses on the USA, as the "fathers of environmentalism" such as Henry Thoreau, or John Muir, or following the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, the kick-off for modern environmentalism in the USA. As I write from a British perspective, this has to be considered.

ought to be (that is, between descriptive and normative works).[212] Radkau emphasises the perspective of writing contemporary history: "Environmental movement and politics are a theme without end, and we certainly do not know the end of the (hi)story".[213] My own work is an effort to write contemporary history, and in working with local material my ambition is to relate to a more general perspective, for example in the conceptualisation of climate change.

1.5.5 Cultural Frames of Climate Change

Environmental history as a scholarly discipline was established before climate change appeared on the agenda, and environmental history had to find ways to address this as well. The British geologist and historian Mike Hulme is one of the most prominent representatives of climate change and humanities. Hulme focuses on the relation between science and political policy making, and he emphasises the need to look at the social meaning of climate and climate change.[214] In a long-term perspective of the last two thousand years, the modification and control of nature has been an enduring theme; nonetheless, it is in the last two to three hundred years that human either through technology or by the sheer weight of numbers, have realised to a full extent their influential abilities. Hulme stresses that the idea of climate exists as much in the human mind and in the matrices of cultural practices as it exists as an independent and objective physical category. The multiple meanings of climate, and the ideological freightage we load onto interpretations of climate and our interactions with it, are, according to Hulme, an essential part of making sense of what is happening around us today in our climate change discourses.

> Understanding climate – and hence understanding climate change – as an overly physical phenomenon too readily allows it to be appropriated uncritically in support of an expanding range of ideologies […] The important point is that by disconnecting climate from its cultural forms – by framing climate as overtly physical and global – we allow the idea of climate change to acquire a near infinite plasticity. Detached from its cultural anchors, climate change becomes a malleable envoy enlisted in support of too many rulers.[215]

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[212] Radkau 2014:5. Movements are shy about themselves and written records suitable for research tend to have been kept only at a certain level of solidification. It is therefore not surprising, according to Radkau, that theoretical studies of ecological movement are more common than empirically based investigations, and the empirically based investigation that are to be found are mostly "comparative transnational literature".

[213] Radkau 2014:5.

[214] Hulme 2009:21.

[215] Hulme 2009:28.

Hulme stresses that climate change has to be considered in a context of Western intellectual and cultural history. Although changing climate has been part of human history, what we now refer to as climate change appeared in public debate in 1988, in what Hulme calls the greenhouse summer.[216] Although the phenomenon 'climate change' was first conceptualised in scientific discourse, the environmental humanities have added a new perspective. Hulme points to a scientific definition of 'climate change' as referring to the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere. This is described as 'anthropogenic' climate change.[217] The understanding of climate change as 'anthropogenic', defined as "the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere" is not the only definition. It is a narrow definition that focuses exclusively on the emission of carbon dioxide. Lucy Sargisson offers an alternative definition, as: "Climate change presents multiple and interwoven problems", which includes the social dimension as well.[218] It has to be made clear that the first use addresses climate change in a strict sense, referring to climatic changes with increasing temperatures caused by emissions of greenhouse gases and caused by human activity (i.e. anthropogenic climate change), while the second addresses climate change as multiple and interwoven problems, which takes anthropogenic climate change to be part of the picture, but not the whole picture. Hence, climate crisis as multiple and interwoven problems puts climate change or climate crisis in a wider social, cultural and political perspective that include the economic crisis, the energy crisis, peak oil (peak everything). It is an ecological crisis that concerns the use of natural resources, as well as social and cultural processes, socially and culturally framed in terms of disasters, collapses or apocalypses.

1.5.6 Hybrid Disasters and Ambivalent Apocalypses

Natural disasters are part of the Earth's geo-history and human history. Volcanos have erupted, hurricanes and blizzards has ruined landscapes and lives, but climate change, ecological devastation or the sixth extinction are not natural disasters, they are hybrid disasters. According to one definition, "a hybrid disaster is a manmade one, when forces of nature are unleashed as a result of technical failure or sabotage"[219] Anthropogenic climate change is one such hybrid disaster. It may come as floods, hurricanes or other phenomena that we can recognise as natural disasters,

[216] Hulme 2009:234. In the English language, the terms most frequently used to describe the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere have varied over time, according to Mike Hulme. Initially, between the 1980s and the 1990s, the 'greenhouse effect' was widely used, but it has been replaced, either by the evocative expression of 'global warming' or the more generic term 'climate change'.

[217] Hulme 2009.

[218] Sargisson 2012:116.

[219] Boyarsky and Shneiderman 2002.

but these are not natural, but caused by human industrial activity, the combustion of fossil fuel and the emission of greenhouse gases.

Historians refers to the earthquake that levelled Lisbon in 1755 as the first modern disaster; it was a natural disaster. What marks it as modern is that it could be explained by science and geology, according to historian Marie-Hélène Huet. As science provided a rational understanding it repudiated the supernatural causes that had long attributed disaster to cosmic influences of the wrath and punishment of gods. The Enlightenment project is widely credited with the recognition that natural disasters were not sent by a wrathful god but stemmed from the workings of a violent universe.[220] If volcanoes erupted and the earth shook, and this had nothing to do with any kind of divine intent. Humans were left with an even greater damage, and the grievance to bear. Thus Huet examines how reactions to natural catastrophes may lead to political upheavals, and argues that the state of emergency that characterises current Western culture – which is related to 'a state of exception' – stems from a pervasive anxiety about catastrophic events now freed from their theological meaning and worsened by human failures.[221] What distinguishes 'modern disasters' is not that they have ushered in rational discourse about disasters, nor is it the recognition that humans bear a responsibility for all forms of disasters. What Huet finds to be strikingly modern is that it gives evidence of a "anthropologically primitive fear and need to control rebellious nature".[222] By getting rid of the divine will and making disasters a properly human concern, humans are left with the task of handling them on their own. Huet notes: "Each natural disaster challenges both the mastery that was our goal and the political system that was put in place to serve such a purpose."[223] Thus, humans end up in a position where they are left to handle the consequences of disaster, but in hybrid disasters man is likewise the cause of these disasters, and therefore man has to face a deep moral responsibility in the midst of crisis.

The intellectual historian Susan Neiman draws on Auschwitz which is called the first postmodern disaster. Neiman claims that at the beginning of the modern world the Lisbon earthquake became an example of "natural evil", but today we do not think of earthquakes as evil; the concept is reserved to describe human actions, and the paradigmatic example is Auschwitz. Through the centuries evil has been transformed from the 'natural evil' of Lisbon to the 'moral evil' of Auschwitz.[224] But where does this lead in relation to anthropogenic climate change? The point here is not to compare these historical events, but to illustrate humans' moral responsibility. Thus, Auschwitz was caused by humans, who bear the full moral responsibility, but nonetheless I think the distinction between natural and moral evil

[220] Huet 2012:2.

[221] Huet 2012:2.

[222] Huet 2012:6.

[223] Huet 2012:7.

[224] Neiman 2002:22.

raises the question whether, in times of anthropogenic climate change (that is, climate change, caused by human industrial activities), climate change may be seen as a 'moral evil', side by side with Auschwitz rather than Lisbon. Indeed, climate change raises the moral issues in relation to the deep responsibilities of living, in a world where neither God nor nature seems to offer a remedy.

'Apocalypse' is, in simple terms, not only a story of the end of the world, but more so, a promise that a new and better world will emerge in its aftermath. Although 'apocalypse' may have an origin in religion it is frequently used in secular versions today. Bron Taylor sees apocalypticism as part of radical environmentalism.

> What often makes religions politically rebellious and sometimes violent is a millennial or apocalyptic expectation, which is often combined with a belief that it is a religious duty to resist or usher in the impending end, or to defend sacred values in the face of an unfolding cataclysm. Thus, what separates radical environmentalism from many other forms of dark green religion is apocalypticism. But it is an apocalypticism that is radically innovative in the history of religion – because it is the first time an expectation of the end of the known world has been grounded in environmental science.[225]

An apocalypticism grounded in science may lead to expectations which Taylor characterises as "inseparability of pessimism and optimism, and the ambivalence about the coming catastrophe".[226] The ambivalence in the core as the collapse of human societies may pave the way back to an earthly paradise. Today scientific models agree on the problem, climate crisis is not just a prophecy of some environmental group; it is a problem that a majority of society agrees on even if there might be strongly divided views about the cure. Nor is the theme of a civilisation in deep crisis restricted to radical environmentalism. Taylor argues that ecological problems reflect and express a profound change in cultural models which are fused together, like bricklayer or mason piecing together a wall or a building with mortar and stone. Today there is a global environmental milieu where shared ideas incubate, cross-fertilise and spread. It is a process characterised by hybridisation and bricolage.[227] As apocalypses may offer a way towards something different to come, the interest turns to what is to come, that is, the post-apocalypse. The post-apocalyptic theme, according to the political scientist Lucy Sargisson, "strips away society to see what lies beneath."[228] This is in tune with the etymology of *apocalypse*, which is connected to 'uncovering' and 'revelation'.[229] Post-apocalyptic fiction, then,

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[225] Taylor 2011:84.

[226] Taylor 2010:85.

[227] Taylor 2010:14.

[228] Sargisson 2012:114.

[229] Sagission2012:114.

> …imagines human society after the removal of current institutions, structures and norms. Dystopias are often pessimistic about human nature. But these examples of twenty-first century, post-apocalypse dystopias are ambivalent.[230]

The ambivalence in the core of these apocalypse is the vague hope that it offers; that somehow the collapse of human societies – which may cause the decline or collapse of ecosystems – may pave the way for an alternative future. In this sense 'apocalypse' or apocalypticism is used in rhetoric in order to increase mobilisation. The political journalist Sasha Lilley refers to this as catastrophism,[231] which presumes that society is destined for a collapse. Although climate change apocalypses are based on science, or they are framed in a narrative that is recognisable from ancient religious traditions, these are, as Taylor notes, "radically innovative".[232] This relation to science is not a minor difference; climate crisis is not a prophecy. Nonetheless; 'apocalypse' arouses associations with some kind of doomsday, and the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein finds reason to talk about "doomsday" today as virtually everyone agrees that there has been a serious degradation of the environment in which we live.[233] To sum up, climate change is often framed as 'catastrophes', 'disasters', 'apocalypses' or even 'doomsday', and these are used metaphorically and in rhetoric. Therefore, in writing about climate change one has to be careful with words, in order to avoid such references to doom and gloom.

1.5.7 Environmental Criticism – Eco-Criticism

To approach environmental problems in cultural terms can be seen as a manual for how to conduct eco-criticism.[234] The eco-critic Greg Garrard writes:

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[230] Sargisson 2012:114.

[231] Lilley 2012.

[232] Taylor 2010:85.

[233] Wallerstein 1999:76. "Of course the appreciation of the degree of the problem of seriousness of the contemporary problem ranges from those who consider doomsday as immanent to those who consider that the problem is one well within the possibility of an early technical solution. I believe the majority hold a position somewhere in-between."

[234] It would be a misunderstanding to claim that eco-criticism simply concerns reading and analysis of texts from an environmental perspective. An eco-critical perspective may ask "how is nature represented in this poem?" or "how has the concept of 'wildernesses in British poetry changed over time?" The eco-critic Cheryll Glotfelty offers the following definition: ecocriticism is the study of the relation between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modern production and economic class to its reading of text, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to cultural studies.

> [E]nvironmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as in scientific terms because they are the outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection.[235]

Eco-criticism offers a critical approach to the conceptualisation of landscapes,[236] and Garrard has drawn attention to how modern environmentalism relies on literary genres, such as the pastoral as well as apocalypse, and these rest on pre-existing ways of imagining the place of humans in nature that may be traced back to such sources as Genesis and Revelation, the first and the last books of the Bible.[237] For example, the pastoral landscape resonates with the paradisiac, a harmonious place for humans in nature, but from a critical perspective it is an anthropocentric landscape, shaped by utility and use.[238] Garrard finds a number of eco-critical tropes, such as 'Pastoral', 'Wilderness', 'Apocalypse', and 'Earth', and while the 'pastoral' is the most deeply entrenched, the analysis leads to the most conclusive construction of the 'Earth', the whole.[239] I discuss 'wilderness' in relation to Dartmoor, 'the pastoral' in relation to the English countryside, or 'the earth' in relation to the practices of Earth Meditation and Deep Time Walk. Eco-criticism contributes here because it offers a "reading" of the landscape, as well as a wider cultural analysis. This perspective on places or landscapes is referred to as the social construction of the landscape. Constructivism is a powerful tool for cultural analysis, but the social construction is not simply an image, a conception, or an idea. I agree with Garrard who claims that,

> …it does suggest that 'nature' is only ever a cover for the interests of a privileged or embattled social group. The challenge for eco-critics is to keep one eye on the ways in which 'nature' is always in some ways culturally constructed, and on the other on the fact that nature really exists, both the object and, albeit distantly, the origin of our discourse.[240]

This takes eco-criticism beyond the study of landscapes in classical literature, for example in nature writing, and turns the eco-critical gaze directly to the landscape, to read the landscape as if it were a text. A reading of the landscape turns the

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[235] Garrard 2012:16.

[236] Glotfelty 1996: xix as quoted in Garrard 2012:3. For discussion see Garrard 2012:3ff.

[237] Garrard 2012:2.

[238] Garrard 2010:16. Garrard writes: "The study of rhetoric supplies us with a model of cultural reading practice tied to moral and political concerns, and one which is alert to both the real or literal and figural or constructed interpretations of 'nature' and 'the environment'. Breaking these monolithic concepts down into key structuring metaphors, or tropes, enables attention to be paid to the thematic, historical and geographical particularities of environmental discourse, and reveals that any environmental trope is susceptible to appropriation and deployment in the service of a variety of potentially conflicting interests."

[239] Garrard 2010:17.

[240] Garrard 2012:10.

attention to how human agency and the use of natural resources created the landscape as well as the mindscape of the landscape. The contribution of these readings of landscapes is the reflection of cultural landscapes: Robert MacFarlane, a scholar in English literature, who explores what he refers to as "the new eerie of the English landscape" in relation to environmental degradation, and Rob Nixon, whose contribution to the postmodern notion of place I present further on.

1.5.8 Reading the Landscape – Hybrid Landscapes

The archaeologist Francis Pryor stresses the need to read the landscape, to uncover the topography, and to ask, for example, how come a city was placed in a particular location. What were the values that people saw in this particular place that made them settle here? Was it arable land, a river for transportation, a forest that offered protection from the wind and rain, as well as timber, which all can be seen as economic or utilitarian values, or perhaps a sacred grove that would be seen as a spiritual value. The question is: What do people value in relation to nature? Mark J. Smith offers a model to approach the relation between society and nature, in asking, first,[241] how we value the environment, and, secondly, what implication these values have for how the environment is affected by human agency. These questions relate values to human agency, and the consequence of it.

The environmental historian William Cronon[242] claims that, in a historical and cultural perspective of urban industrial civilisation, we have been accustomed to seeing and valuing nature in some places but not in others. If the extent to which we evaluate something as nature is dependent on the extent to which human beings are present – real nature is a less populated place, it is the wilderness. Cronon's criticism of the romanticism of wilderness gives proof of the ambivalence in man's relation to nature. Wilderness as 'pure or pristine nature' makes human presence complicated. Nathalie B. Corbett turns the attention from the conception to how nature is communicated[243] because a great deal of what is communicated is both unrecognised and unstated, and not even recognised as being communicated at all.[244] The attention to landscapes is a central theme in the environmental turn. Linda Nash argues that previous scholars have been too preoccupied with lamenting the narratives of environmental decline; instead environmental history needs to push the insights on hybridity. The conceptualisation of landscapes as hybrid goes beyond

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[241] Smith 1998:8–9.

[242] Corbett 2006: 4–5.

[243] Corbett 2006. Corbett claims that to understand how human beings relate to nature, we have to make a reading of how our society is constructed. Roads crossing the landscape or bottled water from a certain well are everyday things that have a taken-for-granted quality, particularly for those who feel that the environment exists somewhere "out there" and distant from our lives. Corbett 2006:2.

[244] Corbett 2006:2–3.

either natural or social/cultural, and Nash sees the task, insisting that the world is natural *and* social.

> (T)o show how changing material worlds have altered the very possibilities of being human in particular times and places, to insist on the place of the physical-material world in the (always contingent) shaping of human bodies, societies, and understanding.[245]

The modern world, including those aspects most worth advocating for, is thoroughly hybrid. The task for environmental history is that the concepts "still need to be brought down to earth",[246] Nash concludes. My contribution takes Nash's attention to the hybridity of landscape further in relation to my fieldwork, particularly in Dartmoor. A further contribution is the anthropologist Andrew S. Mathews' approach to the complex Anthropocene landscapes. The perspective of historical ecology pays attention to the partial and historical relation between plants, animals, soils, and politics. Mathews suggests reading ghost forests, where "the ruin of past landscapes of cultivation remain ghostly present",[247] and which contrast the "past histories" with the "present-day", and the "possible Anthropocene futures". Through this historical ecology, it is possible to find out what ghost forests and natural history have to say about the Anthropocene. The practice of reading ghost forests can be seen as a form of ecological awareness where landscapes require a close and speculative attention to what we see and how we describe or categorise it.[248] The reading of ghost forests tells us how the forms of trees derive from partial relations between multiple actors and the actors themselves are constantly changing as a result of the relations with others. The theme of "the ghostly" has been given increasing attention in relation to environmental degradation and the arts of the Anthropocene, and I consider this in relation to the haunted Dartmoorian landscape.[249]

1.5.9 Narratives and Practices

In my approach to narratives, I consider two levels, personal narratives and more general narrative on the changes brought by climate change, loss of biodiversity and ecological crisis. These are corresponding in that the personal stories are set within the general frame. As my study is based on fieldwork, my approach to narratives is

[245] Nash 2013:134.

[246] Nash 2013:135.

[247] Mathews 2017:147.

[248] Mathews 2017:154 Thus, Mathews advocates "paying attention to the coemergence of material forms and linguistic terms, of causal accounts, and of histories that can multiply our way of thinking and acting in the face of overwhelming environmental change."

[249] For a more general discussion on the ghostly see Lincoln and Lincoln 2015.

not primarily narratives as texts, but mostly in the form of storytelling. I have worked with the conversational situation where I have heard personal narratives. Pertti Alasuutari describes life-story narrating as an everyday-life phenomenon, which serves certain functions.[250]

> Individuals do not have their readily narrated life-stories in their back pockets or in the back of their minds, waiting for the researcher to collect them. Any account of one's personal past (also when to told a researcher in a life-story interview) makes a point and serves a function. A particular case of life-story narration must be related to its local setting in order to see what it is needed or used for.[251]

My accounts of personal life-story narration will be related to the local setting, that is, where my fieldwork took place. These stories are related to the more general narrative of life in the Anthropocene. Linda Nash sees a need in the contemporary world for "stories that show how human aspirations are grounded in and achieved through finite material worlds – in people's continuing ability, or inability, to engage in diverse ways with the multiple potentialities of the earth."[252] My ambition is to contribute to these stories in my own research.

The geologists Owain Jones and Katherine Jones offer a methodology that is helpful here. They relate narrative and ecology, in an approach that is based on the interconnectedness of ecology and "the ability of stories to creatively capture the complex ecology of the unfolded (history and unfolding world)."[253] They picture stories and storytelling as "the key fabric by which we construct the world individually and collectively".[254] Stories relate the individual to a global scale, the present to deep time, To capture this complexity requires some effort in "imaginal groundwork", as the ecological networks "are extraordinarily opaque, complex, long and entangled."[255] I take this methodology as a springboard towards narratives that can picture, not only the interconnectedness but also the complexity of the Anthropocene. Complexity is more or less about the density of interaction within systems. Hence, to tell the story of a complexity – or to tell complex stories – will allow the teller to "move from one point to another in terms of connection".[256] For example, in my visits to Dartmoor, historical Dartmoor becomes present for contemporary visitors in the telling of the stories of how it used to be, in the long-lost forest of Dartmoor, and in local lore and legends. According to Jones and Jones, narratives created in such a way are 'alive' to the ecology of the world, these stories

[250] Alasuutari 2004: 111.

[251] Alasuutari 2004: 111.

[252] Nash 2013:135.

[253] Jones and Jones 2017: 157.

[254] Jones and Jones 2017: 157.

[255] Jones and Jones 2017: 157.

[256] Jones and Jones 2017: 150.

are flexible enough to gather all the complexity, and follow it wherever it leads, and make paths through it. The philosopher Donna Haraway proposes a multispecies storytelling, which is about recuperation in complex stories that are as full of dying as living, as full of endings, or even genocides, as beginnings.[257] It is, in the words of Haraway, "a multispecies storytelling and practice of companions". Haraway's multispecies stories allow us to see a radical relatedness, to form a community in relation with the larger-than-human world. Haraway sets herself a task, to make kin, "to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places".[258] Multispecies storytelling, to make kin with other species, is part of the art of the Anthropocene. The anthropologists Elaine Gain, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson and Nils Budant address the traces of the more-than-human histories through which ecologies are made and unmade.[259] The new stories are the stories of the Anthropocene, which are created in various practices, such as storytelling and constructed in relation to place, such as Dartmoor.

To approach narratives as storytelling emphasises the closeness between narratives and practice. The historian and anthropologist Marcel Détienne, who examines ancient Greek stories, considers stories to be practices.[260] Détienne chose to tell stories because stories are not objects of knowledge or objects to be known. Tales, stories, poems, and treatises are already practices. They say exactly what they do and constitute an act which they intend to mean. There is no need for a gloss to know what they express, or to wonder what they are the metaphor of. The story does not express a practice, it does not limit itself to telling about a movement. In Détienne's words: "It *makes* it."[261] In simple terms stories that cease to be told cease to exist, but myths and legends seem to have a remarkable ability to survive, albeit by transformation. Storytelling is a practice that, following Walter J. Ong,[262] can be described as secondary orality, or oral culture, and it differs from old or traditional notions of oral tradition because it depends on literacy and text as well. I discuss this further on, but first I examine stories and place. The anthropologist Tim Ingold's phenomenological approach considers the telling of a story of a place as a way of being intimate with places. The telling makes the landscape unfold, and it creates an ambience of the place. Rather than the form of landscape, Ingold focuses on 'temporality' as a key term. Taken together, these activities make up what Ingold refers to as 'taskspace'.[263]

Within the field of religion practices are often related to beliefs, and this gives an argument for studying religion beyond theological doctrines. The theologian

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[257] Haraway 2016:10.

[258] Haraway 2016:1.

[259] Gain, Tsing, Swanson and Budant 2017.

[260] de Certeau 1984: 80.

[261] de Certeau 1984: 80.

[262] Ong 1971.

[263] Ingold 2000:194.

Elspeth Whitney argues that we need to look at the mechanisms by which beliefs are put into practice; how religious values are embodied in cultural and institutional practices, and how these practices may have a lasting and far-reaching effect beyond the individual.[264] Practices do not stand alone, in isolation from other aspects of cultural and social experience, instead they are anchored in concrete, time-bound, historical contexts. Taking practices into consideration therefore emphasises the necessity to anchor the study in social experience and in a historical context. Practices are, following Whitney, "shaped by the societies that espouse them and therefore must be considered in conjunction with their social, economic, and political contexts."[265] Bauman et al. argue that we need to study both worldviews and practices, and in doing this we need to relate practices to activism.[266]

In simple terms, a practice is a way of doing things. For example, in my study, the telling of stories is a central practice. This is not only the implication of ideas put into action, distinct from theory. Social practices are a way of doing things that makes sense in a social context, whether customary or habitual. According to the social theorist and geographer Theodore Schatzki,[267] practices make up people's "horizon of intelligibility", and the practices people perform make sense to them. In Schatzki's work, practices are defined as "open-ended spatial-temporal manifolds of actions",[268] they are sets of hierarchically organised doings/sayings, tasks and projects.[269] However, what is distinctive in my material is that people consciously try to do things differently, to experiment, modify and elaborate alternative ways of doing things, as in the many workshops I have studied. The political scientist Lucy Sargisson's term 'utopian practices' is central in my study. Utopian practices are ongoing experiments at many levels, such as social structure, the relationship with each other and the larger-than-human world, as well as "economic, ethical and spiritual forms of activity, behaviour and expectations."[270] In defining 'utopian practices' Sargisson points to a set of utopian functions: (i) profound creativity, (ii) the creation of new conceptual and real spaces, and (iii) the imagination of alternatives. Sargisson stresses the heuristic function of utopias: they allow us to explore alternatives and the relation between imagination and practice emphasises the feature of trying out. Sargisson refers to them as experimental utopias.[271]

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[264] Whitney 2006:27.

[265] Whitney 2006:27.

[266] Bauman et al. 2011.

[267] Schatzki 1996 and 2002.

[268] Schatzki, 2005: 471.

[269] Schatzki, 2005: 471.

270 Sargisson 2012:132.

[271] Sargisson 2012:127.

1.5.10 The Postmodern Notion of Place

'Place' is, according to the eco-critic Lawrence Buell, an indispensable concept for environmental humanists, "not so much because they have precisely defined and stabilised it as because they have not; not because of what the concept lays to rest as because of what it opens up."[272] Buell draws on the contrast between traditional place-centredness and postmodern displacement.[273]

> One cannot theorize scrupulously about place without confronting its fragility, including the question whether "place" as traditionally understood means anything anymore at a time when fewer and fewer of the world's population live out their lives in locations that are not shaped by a great extent by translocal – ultimately global – forces.[274]

Examples of the traditional notions of belonging or dwelling as discussed by the anthropologist Tim Ingold, are not the focus of this thesis. The postmodern notion of place lies within the local-global distinction and considers its fragility. The postmodern notion of place, sometimes referred to as post-place, focuses on the loss of place and the loss of meaning in relation to places. Rob Nixon introduces the concept 'displacement' to refer to a situation where people are forced to leave their land because of privatisation of land and large-scale projects, such as dam building or mining,[275] Nixon proposes a more radical notion of displacement, as "displacement without moving". Nixon stresses that looking at landscapes makes it necessary to have several perspectives because there is not just the environmental asset stripping, but more so "the mingled presence in the landscape of multiple generations, with all the hindsight and foresight that entails."[276] Against this backdrop Nixon argues for the temporalities of places.

> Place is a temporal attainment that must be constantly renegotiated in the face of changes that arrive from without and within, some benign, others potentially ruinous. To engage the temporal displacements involved in slow violence against the poor thus requires that we rethink questions of physical displacement as well.[277]

Displacement is not only related to the spatial dimension, but to the temporal. Displacement is a form of violence that ranges in time, even between generations. Edward S. Casey has a phenomenological approach to place, stressing the importance of place in human life, and he proceeds from a fundamental question

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[272] Buell 2055:62.

[273] Buell 2005:61.

[274] Buell 2005:62.

[275] Nixon 2011.

[276] Nixon 2011:17.

[277] Nixon 2011:18.

that cannot be neglected: Can you imagine what it would be like if there were no places in the world? Casey's answer is that we cannot begin to comprehend a world without places, a placeless void. Yet the experience of displacement is not unusual: wartime refugees, people lost in a snowstorm, those whose house has burned down can experience something that Casey calls 'place-panic'. Place-panic strikes when we confront the immanent possibility of there being no place to be or to go. This is not just about displacement, it is being without a place. Placelessness is the reality for refugees from natural catastrophes or strife-torn countries, the homeless on the streets of modern cities, human refugees as well as "stray" animals. To bring in the animal perspective here helps to add a new angle to the concept of place and displacement.

The anthropologist of religion Graham Harvey notes that nature wildly refuses to recognise artificial boundaries, such as urban and rural realms or areas seen as wilderness or the countryside. This is a "messy context", and it challenges what we mean when we talk about wilderness or wild places.[278] It gives rise to the simple question: Where are these places to be found? Harvey offers some direction here as these places are often *marginal places,* and such places can be found, for example, on the outskirts of towns. These places are often set on the periphery rather than at the centre. These marginal places have a special attraction, as being ambivalent places. The notion of marginal places contributes to my study because it addresses the places that are to be found. In Britain, as elsewhere, distance from urban construction is deemed emblematic or definitive as 'nature', and as urban construction increases the required distance is harder to find. A further notion of place is Marc Augé's term non-place, which refers to generic places, such as bus depots, train stations, and airports which, however elaborate and grandiose, do not confer a feeling of place.[279] In direct contrast to places which we tend to think of as being relational, historical, and concerned with identity, non-places are designed and intended for the frictionless passage of a nameless and faceless multitude. Augé discusses non-places in urban settings, but I find the term to be useful to address places created by industrial exploitation of natural resources, for example sites of deforestation. In one sense these places are rural non-places, they become places void of meaning.

While the boundary between the urban, rural and wilderness may be strictly defined in a theoretical discourse and separated in the human mind, the landscape we face might force us to reconsider our notions, and I take this question with me, particularly in relation to Dartmoor. As I draw on a postmodern notion of place I add further critical perspective. While the postmodern notion of place, sometimes referred to as post-place, focuses on the loss of place and the loss of meaning in relation to places, Thomas F. Gieryn pays attention to how places make people

[278] Harvey 2012: 270.

[279] Augé 2008

believe.[280] How come certain assertions or propositions or ideas become credible and believable by being located somewhere on the skin of the earth? Gieryn asks what things are to be experienced at a certain spot and how that place is culturally understood. He refers to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz: "Place makes a poor abstraction. Separated from its materialization, it has little meaning."[281] The notion of places as truth-spots contributes to my study, in being complementary the post-place theories, particularity as Gieryn refers to actual places to which he relates narratives, and places such as the oracle at Delphi of the Acropolis in Athens, or Henry Thoreau's transcendentalist nature philosophy and Walden Pond. In my study, Dartmoor is the actual place that will be given our attention.

A theoretical challenge for me and my study in relation to the notion of place is to relate these notions of place to Knott's approach to place, and the intention be able to locate religion in apparently non-religious of secular places.[282] For example, how can the notion of locating religion in secular places be compatible with displacement, marginal places or non-places? I take these challenges with me as the adventure begins.

1.6 Outline

The thesis has the following outline. Chapter two offers a contextualisation in relation to the period of time studied, 2009–2015, and particularly in relation to climate change and the environmental discourse, and the rise of scholarly interest in the Anthropocene. I relate my study to its particular British context and the eco-critical discussion of the landscape. The following three chapters are dedicated to the accounts from the field. In Chapter 3 I offer accounts from personal stories of how people turn to spirituality in response to the challenges of ecological crisis, and I ponder on the question of what motivates people here. In chapter 4 the study focuses on reflective practices and how workshops are constructed in order to explore new ways of interacting with nature. I discuss the relation between narrative, practice and place in various workshops that take place in nature and that relate to the Earth, the larger-than-human world, and deep time perspectives. Chapter 5, visiting Dartmoor, proceeds from Bennett's notion of places with the power to enchant. I discuss how Dartmoor both challenges conceptions of wilderness and illustrates themes of environmental discourse, and what is distinctive here is the use of local lore and legends. I examine how all this comes together in a landscape that I characterise as a wild place. In this discussion I outline my concept of negotiating baselines, which relates to how the history of a place can offer perspectives that

[280] Gieryn 2018.

[281] As quoted in Gieryn 2018:19.

[282] Knott 2005:177.

enable reflection of how man is remodelling the landscape. I go on to present the points of negotiation that I have found in the material and relate the discussion to the research questions. Concluding, I present my conception of wild enchantment, hopefully contribute to the theoretical discussion, and outline the prospects for further research.

Chapter 2 Contextualisation – Public Discourse on Climate Change and Britain in Times of Crisis

To introduce the reader to this field I offer a contextualisation in relation to time, place and themes. First, I consider the period studied in relation to the reality of climate change, and I define and discuss climate change in relation to political policymaking (the climate change summits in Copenhagen 2009 and Paris 2015). Secondly, I present the environmental discourse in a British context. I consider environmental debate in British public media, paying attention to a particular case: the publication *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* (2009). I will relate to the cultural framing of climate in relation to civilisation. Thirdly, I present the British environmental discourse and relate to various conceptions of the landscape, such as the countryside as a safe place, the pastoral notion of the countryside as "the green and pleasant land", but also to the contemporary changes in the landscape and the increasingly man-made landscape of Britain. I will also relate to the sacramental values of wilderness and the new interest in 'wild places''. I will present Dartmoor National Park, which is a distinctive place in this thesis.

2.1 Setting a British Context

My approach to understanding the green mindscape is to stay close to the green landscape. I have invited my readers on a journey take departure from central London: from Paddington station the journey goes westwards, approximately three hours before arrival in Totnes, in Devon, UK. Journey give you time for reflections as well as unexpected encounters.

2.1.1 Prelude – a Short Reflection Before Setting Out

On my first visit to Totnes, Devon, in February 2013, the fields of Devon passing outside the train window were flooded, and the rivers were running wild, coloured reddish-brown from the soil they brought with them in the stream. The summer of

2012 had been the rainiest summer for a hundred years.[283] On the seat beside me an elderly man was sitting and as he commented on the flooding we started to chat. He told about the last week's continuous rain and the damp and wet weather throughout previous summer, and I said something about the strange weather these days and mentioned the extremely cold winter we just had in Sweden, without saying anything about climate change. Still, the subject seemed to linger because, like an answer to an unspoken question, he said that he did not believe in climate change. I did not argue – knowing that simply listening is sometimes the best way to have your question answered. He continued; the weather had been extreme during the war as well. The wartime winters had been long and cold indeed. As the man turned out to be a historian, he was looking into diaries from the Second World War to understand the experiences of the war, these wartime experience became the topic of our further conversation. Being born in London 1937 he had experienced the London Blitz, because he was too young, so his mother did not want to evacuate him to the countryside where British children were sent away from cities to be safe from the air raids. He asked if I had seen the famous photograph of St Paul's Cathedral that stands out as a silhouette against the bombed and burning city. I nodded, and he said that he had seen that in real life; his mother was carrying him in her arms, and he recalled what she had said "This is war, this is what war does to people", and he added, "and she was Irish". He told me about the scarcity of food during the war and how the problem lingered in the post-war decades.

As a scholar you may find input in various ways during the intellectual process of research, and for me this conversation was one of these occasions. The man declared that he did not believe in climate change, despite the flooded landscape that was passing outside the window of the train, and the unusually heavy rain that had fallen since the last summer. The weather had been strange even during the war, he declared. His view illustrates both the common confusion of climate and weather, but his disbelief in climate change illustrates that in 2013 some chose not to "believe in climate change". Despite our different views of climate change, the conversation with this man made me reflect on the similarities between these different ages in history: The man's memories of the war bore witness to the experience of living through crisis, and this crisis theme relates his personal story of Britain and the wars of the twentieth century to the contemporary climate crisis in the twenty-first century. These historical periods share some features concerning the relation between cities and the countryside, or the urban and rural life, not ignoring the differences such as the emergency of actually living through the Second World War. People were leaving the cities to find safety in the countryside in the war, when cities were bombed and ruined. The countryside became the safe place to turn to, and it had the benefit of food production. Today food production is an emerging

[283] Rowell, Alexis (2013) "Will extreme weather bring climate action", *Transition Free Press*, Issue No. 1, spring 2013.

global issue, not only a national one.[284] During the war, the countryside was a safe place, and I asked myself how much of this wartime conception of the countryside as a safe place lingers today. As we have seen, my study is located in rural Devon, in the south of England, and the theme of the English countryside is part of the field. People come here from various parts of the world, it is an international milieu, and just like myself, they make a journey to get there. Therefore, I focus on the urban-rural relation, and how the conception of the pastoral countryside corresponds to the countryside as a safe, or at least, a safer place, and a place to seek shelter and escape the dangers of the crisis. What is distinctive here is the coming together of the notion of climate change as a spiritual crisis, and the countryside as a spiritual resource.

2.1.2 Climate Change and Political Policymaking

I initiated my PhD studies in 2011, and I choose the period 2009–2015 to frame my study because it is the years between of two Climate Change summits:[285] the Copenhagen Climate Change summit in December 2009 and the Paris Summit in November 2015. In Copenhagen the world leaders failed to reach an agreement. The hopeful expectations of the Paris summit were overshadowed by the terror attack in the French capital. The summit took place in the shadow of security restrictions and the protests and demonstrations in support of an agreement were cancelled. There were high hopes of the Paris agreement, and the strategy was to reach a non-compelling agreement that proposed voluntary efforts on the part of the nations that signed the agreement. The agreement was much criticised because the voluntary approach made the settlement weak. To study the period between 2009–2015 is to follow the process when climate change was redefined.

The climate summits of Copenhagen and Paris set the framework, but I give a short historical background. In 1997, the Kyoto Agreement was signed in Tokyo, the summit having gathered many of the world's leading nations, but in 2001 the US president George W. Bush decided to withdraw from the agreement.[286] He claimed that the agreement gave the US, the world's leading nation when it came to the use of fossil fuel and emission of carbon dioxide, an unfair burden compared to other countries. Bush claimed that there was no scientific support for the reality of climate change. Bush's withdrawal from the agreement was not only a national

[284] Rob Hopkins discusses the experience of food production during the Second World War as a source of important knowledge for the ecological transition today in *The Transition Handbook – From Oil dependence to Local Resilience,* published 2014.

[285] The year 2009 is in one sense the prelude to my fieldwork that took place in 2013 and 2014. Nonetheless, as historian you must turn the perspective; you cannot look at the period studied from a present-day perspective, you have to go back further and, so to speak, look from behind to get a historical perspective.

[286] The Senate never ratified the Kyoto Agreement; therefore, it had not been implemented in political decisions when Bush withdrew from it.

concern for the US, but an affair of global concern.[287] In 1997 Al Gore, at the time vice president, had signed the settlement on behalf of the US, and later Gore became a distinctive voice, calling for political action in relation to climate change. In 2006 his documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* brought the subject to a wider public. The focus of the movie was the robust scientific research giving support for anthropogenic climate change, i.e., that the changing patterns in climatological reports of increasing temperature were caused by human activity in the form of industrial burning of fossil fuel. Gore's account of the scientific data was illustrated in hockey-stick models of rising temperatures and emissions. The movie was awarded an Oscar for best documentary in 2007, which further emphasised the movie's impact on public concern for climate change.

The debate in the first decade of the new millennium concerned the question whether there was scientific support for anthropogenic climate change, or, as the climate sceptics maintained, that the changes were natural occurrences that had happened repeatedly throughout history. Parallel to this, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released reports that formed a compilation of scientific research. The IPCC was established in 1988, with the ambition to provide the world with scientific information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of the risk of human-induced climate change, as well as its natural, political and economic impact. It formed an expert panel on the risks and possible response options. The IPCC published its first Assessment Report in 1990 and since then report has continuously been released: in 1995, 2001, 2007, 2014, and currently the panel is planning to release a sixth report in 2022. The reports have given increased evidence for the reality of climate change. The third report in 2001 stated that most of the global average warming over the past 50 years is "very likely", with greater than 90 per cent probability, due to human activities. The fifth report, in 2014, sharpened the statement and stated that human influence on climate system is clear: "It is extremely likely (95–100% probability) that human influence was the dominant cause of global warming between 1951 and 2010." That the reports were formulated in terms of probability and offered increased numbers from 90 to 95–100, led to a comprehensive discussion on the difficulties of scientific discourse communicating with the public.

The fact that the report did not offer 100 per cent certainty became a point of criticism and opened a door for sceptics to refute the report. Researchers replied that science can hardly ever give that kind of support, because researchers are aware that theories may be falsified later. The geologist and environmental historian Mike Hulme points to this as one of the reasons *Why We Disagree on Climate Change* (which is the title of his book, published in 2009). There are several difficulties in communicating a complex scientific phenomenon such as climate change, the common mix-up between weather and climate being just one. These obstacles concern the public sphere, or the common man or woman, as well as politicians,

[287] Borger, Julian (2001) "Bush kills global warming treaty" *The Guardian*, 29 March 2001.

where the reports are the basis for political decision and policymaking. This concerns the relation between science and laypersons which is much discussed in the environmental movement, and which I discuss in this thesis.

At the end of the first decade, in the new millennium, the impact of the inconvenient truth (i.e. Al Gore's movie) resonated in the world, and climate deniers seemed to be in retreat and decline. There appeared to be increasing knowledge and concern that the shifts in climate that were occurring were caused by human activity in the form of emissions of greenhouse gases, created by the combustion of fossil fuel. However, in 2008 the economic crisis stuck hard, and the consequences of the crisis spread around the world. Many in the Western world experienced economic hardship, particularly young people, in countries like Greece and Spain, which added to a general feeling of crisis. In 2011, a 26-year-old vegetable dealer in Tunisia was driven to despair as he was facing economic ruin and set fire to himself as a protest. This would be the spark that initiated the Arab Spring, the series of uprisings that spread through the Arab world, where youth were often in midst of the action.[288] Similarly, in the US the Occupy movement dedicated their protest to the moneymen in power on Wall Street, and the Occupy movement spread beyond the US. Young people were at the centre of these protests. For example, in Britain the protests were coordinated with protests about the inflation of higher education, as many who had paid expensive fees for their education did not get any employment after taking a degree. The social unrest in relation to these various social movements has to be kept in mind, as it created an atmosphere that resonates in this particular period. I think it is fair to say that there was a general mood of crisis that echoed through the world, and climate change was considered to be part of a larger predicament. My fieldwork took place between the climate summits of Copenhagen 2009 and Paris 2015, and I met various approaches to possible settlements. While some looked forward to the Paris summit and hoped for an agreement, others considered the climate summit in Copenhagen 2009 as the last and lost opportunity to stop the increasing global temperatures caused by emissions of carbon dioxide. This illustrates the different approaches to climate change policymaking among the participants, bearing witness to hope as well as disillusion.

2.1.3 Copenhagen Climate Summit 2009 – The Last Hope

Since George W. Bush's withdrawment from the agreement, strong voices in the environmental movement called for a political decision to limit emissions of greenhouse gases and prevent global warming from becoming real by limiting the warming to 2 degrees (compared to pre-industrialised levels). Before Copenhagen many had had hopes for an agreement that would come to terms with climate change. The Copenhagen conference had created a narrative of Copenhagen as the

[288] Mason 2012.

last hope. Both the expectations before and the disappointment afterwards played on the theme of the last hope which contributed to this narrative. The failure of an agreement is often pictured as a deciding moment as the summit was viewed by many as the last chance for a political solution, because time was running out. When the summit postponed the agreement, *The Guardian* published an editorial that likened the global community to…

> an alcoholic who has decided to save up for a liver transplant rather than give up drinking. It is a sad tribute to collective failure that the all-important question at the end of Copenhagen is: what happens next?[289]

This sad tribute to the failure sums up the mood in the aftermath of Copenhagen, and the lingering question – what happens next? – seemed to give little hope. The American environmentalist Bill McKibben expressed his disappointment; after Copenhagen there is a need to face the reality of climate change:

> As many people had invested great hope that the Copenhagen conference would mark a turning point in the climate change debate. If it did, it was a turning point for the worse, with the richest and most powerful countries making abundantly clear that they weren't going to take strong steps to address the crisis before us. […] To see hope dashed is never pleasant.[290]

Similarly, when Naomi Klein reflects upon the Copenhagen summit 2009 in retrospect, she sums it up "That's what happened with Copenhagen in 2009. A lot of people got deeply depressed afterwards."[291] The Copenhagen conference turned into a narrative of lost hope where the postponed climate agreement was considered to be the last – and lost – chance. Within a few years, before 2009, the situation changed drastically: the reports on melting ice sheets in the Arctic, deforestation, desertification, loss of biodiversity, rising temperatures, and repeated incidents of extreme weather all over the world; together it was taken as a sign that there was no time to lose – climate change was already taking place. Scholars who commented on the Copenhagen climate conference likewise described it as a turning point. Clive Hamilton, a scholar in public ethics, considered it "the last hope for humanity to pull back from the abyss".[292]

> But a binding commitment from the major polluting nations to shift their economies immediately onto a path of rapid emission cuts proved too hard. In the light of the

[289] "Copenhagen climate conference: The grim meaning of 'meaningful'" *The Guardian*, Editorial, Saturday 19 December 2009.

[290] McKibben 2010:xiv.

[291] Rousseaux, Agnes. Chapelle, Sophie (2015) "Naomi Klein: If you can marry an economic justice agenda with climate action, people will fight for that future" *Basta!* 24 April.

[292] Hamilton 2010:xi.

> fierce urgency to act, there was a sense at the Copenhagen conference that we were witnessing not so much the making of history, but the ending of it.[293]

The Copenhagen Conference marks a distinct date in history but it is not an isolated event. In 2012 it was followed by the UN's Climate Change Conference in Doha, which was a new failure by world leaders to achieve an agreement concerning climate crisis. This put further pressure on Paris. What many activists that I have spoken to testify to is how *the process* whereby meetings repeatedly postponed an agreement not only led to disappointment, disillusion or frustration, but to a growing distrust of the possibility of a political solution to the climate crisis.[294] For some this led to distrust in the politicians, and an urge to replace the politicians. Other said that they lost their trust in the political system, and efforts to affect the politicians and world leaders so they would take action to prevent the situation from getting worse seemed to be in vain. At the same time, activists I have spoken to refer to a parallel trajectory where the continuous publications of scientific reports on the reality of climate change brought attention to the emergency of the crisis.[295]

2.1.4 Paris – the Deepening of the Crisis

In the aftermath of Copenhagen scientists began to express the fear that now haunts them – that the consequences of global warming are much worse than we thought, and the world will not act to stop it.[296] The sociologists David Ciplet, Timmons J. Roberts and Mizan R. Khan argue in *Power in a Warming World: The New Global Politics of Climate Change and the Remaking of Environmental Inequality* that the Copenhagen climate summit 2009 has to be considered as a failure. The world leaders did not reach any agreement, and the attempt to prevent global warming from rising, which the activists had hoped for, was suddenly a lost cause. Although Copenhagen did not become the positive turning point that many had hoped for, Ciplet, Roberts, and Khan argue that Copenhagen did become a different kind of turning point. Before Copenhagen, the Kyoto Agreement had been a binding agreement where the nations were obliged to fulfil their share of the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases. In Copenhagen, very much due to the initiative of the US President Barack Obama, this was replaced by voluntary agreement. The nations would themselves propose what they were ready to do. The voluntary agreement meant that the instrument for balancing the inequality between the Global South and the Global North was taken away. Therefore, the agreement became a weaker tool for implementing change. Furthermore, since the Copenhagen summit the repression of protests – that is, protests in *support* of a potent agreement – at the

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[293] Hamilton 2010:xi.

[294] Field notes 2013–2014.

[295] IPCC reports 1990, 1995, 2007, 2014, Hulme 2009.

[296] Hamilton 2010:2.

summits has increased. Those in authority want to keep the people away from the summit, Ciplet, Roberts and Khan conclude.[297]

While massive demonstrations had been planned in Paris in support of an agreement, the right to demonstrate was reduced due to the emergency power acts introduced after the terror attack in Paris on 13 November. The demonstrations, which were expected to gather thousands of people, were replaced by the 20,000 pairs of shoes that activists placed on the Place de la République "Pour le Climate". Although the Paris summit succeeded in reaching an agreement, the comments in its aftermath were far from celebratory. The focus in Paris was to reach an agreement on carbon dioxide emissions, and the ambition to keep the global warming under two degrees from the pre-industrial temperature. Paris left a record of voluntary contributions, and the future would tell whether they will be fulfilled or not. The Paris Agreement put an increased focus on technical solutions rather than global justice, which was subject to much criticism after the settlement. The environmental historian Mike Hulme writes:

> …the truth of the matter is that neither 2 degrees nor 1.5 degrees of global warming is 'safe'. There are huge burdens of disease, poverty, violence, unemployment, political oppression and war which today make life miserable for billions of people. And here is the rub. "Climate change" *is* concerning, but not primarily because of changes to climate. The discourse of climate change has drawn attention to many issues, but the political concern, civic passion and diplomatic energy thereby released should be used to address the many social, ecological and political ills in the world.[298]

Hulme's argument that political concern in relation to climate change should be used to address these ills in the world illustrates a fundamental question: is climate change a crisis that concerns the increasing global temperatures due to emissions of carbon dioxide, or, as Hulme stated, something that should be used to address many social, ecological and political ills in the world? Hence, the narrative that emerges here is that climate change is a far more complex crisis than the notion of anthropogenic climate change suggests. A further voice is the anthropologist Chris Smaje, who rejects the common faith in technology, which holds that the converging crises of our times can be reduced to a set of 'problems' in need of technological or political 'solutions', but he also adds a spiritual dimension:[299]

> At issue here is partly a range of other problems which are wholly or partially independent of climate change – habitat and biodiversity loss, other forms of air and water pollution, loss of cultivated diversity, deforestation, overdriven water use, the

[297] Ciplet, Roberts and Khan 2015.

[298] Hulme, Mike (2015) "Living with climate change, with or without the Paris Agreement", http://www.mikehulme.org/2015/12/living-with-climate-change-with-or-without-the-paris-agreement/ accessed 13 January 2016.

[299] Smaje, Chris. 30 December 2015 "After Paris" the dark Mountain Blog" http://dark-mountain.net/blog/after-paris/ accessed 13 January 2016.

> mining of soils and minerals, not to mention social justice and the burden of human diseases. More importantly, these are surely all symptoms of a deeper malaise connected to the ways that we relate economically, socially and spiritually to other people, other beings and other things.[300]

Smaje depicts climate change as a deeper malaise that concerns how we (humans) relate economically, socially and spiritually to other people, as well as other beings. This is not only a concern for economic and social relations, but also spiritual relations, which indicates that climate crisis is a *spiritual crisis*. Hulme's and Smaje's comments in the aftermath of the Paris settlement illustate the conception of climate change as a crisis that is far deeper concern than the emission of carbon dioxide, and technological solutions. In the aftermath of Paris, the understanding of climate change as a far more complex phenomenon is emphasised, and this takes us to the next question; how does the cultural framing of climate change?

2.1.5 Conceptualisations of Climate Change − Cultural Framings of Climate Change

As a scientific phenomena climate change can be properly defined, and this is addressed as anthropogenic climate change, i.e. emissions of carbon dioxide causing higher temperatures. The discussions following the Paris settlement illustrate disagreements concerning the understanding of climate change: the settlements focus strictly on emissions of carbon dioxide causing higher temperatures, but the critics sees a far more complex crisis, which includes social and economic dimensions of society and culture. As seen in the discussion above, there are two different definitions of (i) climate change as anthropogenic climate change, and (ii) climate change as far more complex crisis, that include the social dimension as well as the spiritual.

The geologist and historian Mike Hulme draws attention to the social construction of climate throughout history. He points to the scientific definition of 'climate change' as referring to the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere,[301] known as 'anthropogenic' climate change.[302] These human modifications depend on the use of fossil fuels, with the emissions of carbon dioxide, which has increased continually since the industrial revolution. Changing climate has been part of human history, and colder and more temperate climates have prevailed throughout history and have occasionally led to drastic changes, such as the period known as Little Ice Age that began in Europe in the late

[300] Smaje, Chris 2015 30 December "After Paris" the dark Mountain Blog http://dark-mountain.net/blog/after-paris/ accessed 13 January 2016.

[301] Hulme 2009.

[302] Hulme 2009.

fourteenth century and lasted in the following centuries.[303] What we now refer to as 'climate change' appeared in public debate in 1988, in what Hulme refers to as the greenhouse summer.[304] As soon as the issue of climate change first hit the public there were disagreements in a debate that reached outside scientific society and that would continue in the following decade.[305] What brought about a public interest in anthropogenic climate change was, according to Hulme, a convergence of politics, institutional innovation, and the intervention of prominent public and charismatic individuals.[306] Today the idea that humans not only could be, but really are, warming the planet's climate are firmly embedded beyond the confines of science, among the world leaders, national politicians and the media.[307] The series of UN reports, published in 1990, 1995, 2007, 2014, and forthcoming 2020,[308] has offered increased evidence for the reality of anthropogenic climate change. Climate change is a phenomenon that is defined in scientific vocabulary, but it is communicated to a wider society in political policymaking and mediated by the environmental

[303] Fagan 2000.

[304] Hulme 2009:234. In the English language, the terms most frequently used to describe the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere have varied over time. Initially, between the 1980s and the 1990s, the 'greenhouse effect' was a term widely used, but it has been replaced, either by the evocative expression of 'global warming' or the more generic term 'climate change'.

[305] See Hulme 2009. Initially there were two positions in climate change debate: those who argued that there was enough scientific support for climate change and those who denied that this was the case, often called climate change deniers or climate sceptics. The problem in focus was: Is there scientific evidence to show that climate change is real, and a result of human activity? In this debate evidence from nature science was in focus, and it was a debate that was to a large extent conducted between researchers from the natural sciences, or it was research from these sciences that was referred to for support. The disagreement concerned the reality of climate change, that is, the physical transformation of the global climate through human modification of the atmosphere. There was also disagreement as to whether the changes in climate were caused by human activity in the form of emissions of greenhouse gases, that is anthropogenic climate change, or if it was so-called natural variations in temperature that had been seen repeatedly in history.

[306] Hulme 2009:63–64.

[307] Hulme 2009:65. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, was established in 1988, mandated by the UN General Assembly to undertake international assessments of scientific knowledge about climate change, its impact, and the range of possible response strategies. Whilst the Panel consisted of scientists, its work was seen to be serving the needs of government and policy, but the reports played a major role in public debate on climate change, and in creating a public awareness of the matter. Hulme 2009:96.

The IPCC is supposed to assess: the risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts, and possible options for prevention. "The IPCC was created to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation options. Through its assessment, the IPCC determines the state of knowledge on climate change. it identifies where there is agreement in the scientific community on topics related to climate change, and where further research is needed. The report is drafted and reviewed in several stages, thus guaranteeing objectivity and transparency." See further https://www.ipcc.ch accessed 8 November 2019.

[308] See further https://www.ipcc.ch/reports/ accessed 8 November 2021.

movement to the man in the street.[309] The fact that climate change is a scientific phenomenon emphasises the relation between the environmental movement and science, and this turns out to be a somewhat ambivalent liaison, to which I will return later on in this thesis.

'Anthropogenic' climate change, defined as the physical transformation of global climate through human modification of the atmosphere, focuses exclusively on the emission of carbon dioxide and its consequences. Within the environmental humanities, scholars such as Hulme have emphasised the social dimension of climate change, for example, by examining the social construction of 'climate' in Western intellectual history (which will be discussed below). Climate change is not a problem waiting for a solution, it is an environmental, cultural and political phenomenon, which reshapes the way we think about ourselves, our societies and humanity's place on Earth, according to Hulme.[310]

> The full story of climate change is the unfolding story of an idea and how this idea is changing the way we think, feel, and act. Not only is climate change altering our physical world, but the idea of climate change is altering our social worlds.[311]

The story of climate change is about the meeting between Nature and Culture, Hulme sums up. The political scientist Lucy Sargisson likewise includes the social dimension and writes: "Climate change presents multiple and interwoven problems."[312] Similarly Dipesh Chakrabarty describes "climate change not simply on its own but as part of a family of interlocking problems"[313] Climate change as multiple and interwoven problems assume that anthropogenic climate change is part of the picture, it is, however, not the full picture of this troubled world and it is necessary to bring in the social dimension to fully understand the situation. This view of climate change as multiple and interwoven problems resonates with the Brundtland report *Limits to Growth – Our Common Future*. The report, published in 1987, emphasises the notion of 'sustainability' and uses the concept of 'interlocking crises'.

> In addition, key contributions of *Our Common Future* to the concept of sustainable development include the recognition that the many crises facing the planet are *interlocking crises* that are elements of a single crisis of the whole.[314]

The report brought attention to a planetary scale, showing that "the many crises facing the planet" were interlocking crises. Although the report was published a year

[309] Hulme 2009:65.

[310] Hulme 2009:xxxviii.

[311] Hulme 2009:xxxviii.

[312] Sargisson 2012:116.

[313] Chakrabarty 2016:380.

[314] *The Brundtland Report*: *Limits to Growth Our Common Future* 1987.

before climate change was introduced, its definition of 'sustainability' as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"[315] has been integrated in the discussion of global climate change. Thus, to use resources with a thought for future generations means to bring in considerations of the social and cultural dimension, and this has had an increasing impact on the understanding of the climate crisis.[316] The social dimension of climate change presents multiple and interwoven problems and includes cultural, economic and political perspectives. It is an ecological crisis that concerns the use of natural resources, it is part of the economic crisis, the energy crisis, referred to as peak oil, and it is related to ecological issues such as the loss of biodiversity (the sixth mass extinction) deforestation, desertification. The social dimension of climate change stresses social and global justice, but parallel to the accelerating loss of biodiversity the question of eco-justice has been increasingly emphasised during the period.

Consequently, these different conceptions of climate change led to different suggested solutions. Anthropogenic climate change relies on technological solutions to handle climate change, as seen in the critical comments on the Paris Agreement. If climate change is seen as "multiple and interwoven problems"[317] then the crisis calls for solutions that include the social and cultural dimension, and, therefore, a far more complex pattern of both crisis and solutions emerges in this field. Although some solutions may be technological, technology alone cannot solve the deeper predicament. Instead, climate change is an indication of a deeper cultural crisis; the multiple and interwoven problems, or the interlocking crisis, is a complex pattern of economic, political, social and cultural crisis and to describe this as a whole is beyond the scope of this thesis. My contribution to the discussion, taking the perspective of history of religion, is to explore how climate change is seen as a cultural crisis, or in an emic discourse a *spiritual crisis*. A question I ponder on is how this conception of climate crisis as a spiritual crisis is related to the re-enchantment that Christopher Partridge argues is taking place in the environmental movement today.

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[315] *The Brundtland Report: Limits to Growth Our Common Future* 1987.

[316] Sustainability has become a buzz word within green discourse – sometimes describes as sustainababble – and it has been much criticized, partly for being trivialized (Bauman), and therefore the term 'resilience' is often posed as an alternative, and '*social* resilience' is often emphasised among radical environmentalists. 'Sustainability' and 'resilience' should not be seen as synonyms because there are differences: The terms 'sustainability' and 'resilience' are both originally from research on material. Sustainability refers to the ability of harder material to resist changes, while resilience refers to softer material and its ability to adjust to changing conditions. Sustainably as the ability to stand against environmental changes presupposes the control of nature, which Latour, for example, argues has been lost in the Anthropocene, and therefore resilience, the ability to adjust to changes, is more in tune with an understanding of man as part of nature, rather than master or crown of creation. For discussion see Bauman et al. 2011:96-111.

[317] Sargisson 2012:116.

2.1.6 A Point of Departure 2009

Historians writing a study have to define the period they study and answer the question why they chose to study this particular period. I set the year 2009 as a point of departure in relation to climate change; it is the year of the climate change summit in Copenhagen, which many considered to be the last opportunity to reach a political agreement that could help to manage the future.[318] The world leaders failed to arrive at an agreement that was pictured as the last hope. In 2009 the disagreements concerning the scientific evidence for climate change were pushed into the background. Voices within the scientific community were now heard who proclaimed that climate change was a new reality. At the time, there was evidence for actual events that could be related to climatological changes. In 2009 Johan Rockström and his colleagues at Stockholm Resilience Centre published an article in the respected journal *Nature,* claiming that Anthropogenic climate change is now beyond dispute, and it is time to create "a safe space for humanity".[319] The year 2009 is a crucial year in relation to climate change as the year of the failures of Copenhagen, but from a British perspective there is a further reason for setting this as a distinctive year. The year a small self-published pamphlet titled *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* stirred up a heated public debate about the reality and consequences of climate change in Britain. The debate concerned whether climate change was a new reality; would it even be the end of industrial civilisation?

2.2 Climate Change in British Public Discourse – the Case of *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto*

Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto was written by British environmental activists, journalists and writers Paul Kingsnorth and Dougal Hine.[320] I will pay much attention to this publication in this chapter because I consider it to be crucial material in my study. Therefore I will approach it in relation to the public debate and furthermore, as I have had the opportunity to meet Kingsnorth and Hine I will offer a more elaborate discussion.

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[318] McKibben 2010:xiv.

[319] Rockström, Johan et al, "A Safe Operating Space of Humanity" *Nature* Vol. 461, 24 September 2009.

[320] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009. The publication *Uncivlisation: The Mountain Manifesto* is freely available online: https//dark.mountain.net/about/manifesto, or https//dark-mountan.net/product/uncivlisation-the-dark-mountain-manifesto, accessed 21 November 2021.

2.2.1 Presentation of the *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto*

The title *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* (DMM) is inspired by the American poet Robinson Jeffers.[321] In the 1930s Jeffers saw the rearmament before the Second World War and wrote in a poem about the "masses dragged down the dark mountain". Kingsnorth and Hine consider our time to be in a similar momentum as in 1939 when Jeffers saw the war approaching, because today we have to face climate change.[322] The manifesto's call for uncivilisation implies a profound criticism of "civilisation" but it also questions man's self-image, and it gave expression to ideas inspired by American radical environmentalism. Kingsnorth and Hine claim that rather than continuous campaigning to stop climate change, we have to admit that it is too late to stop climate change – it is already happening. They portrayed climate change as a cultural crisis, as a crisis for industrial civilisation:

> And over it all looms runaway climate change. Climate change, which threatens to render all human projects irrelevant; which presents us with detailed evidence of our lack of understanding of the world we inhabit while, at the same time, demonstrating that we are still entirely reliant upon it. Climate change, which highlights in painful colour the head-on crash between civilisation and 'nature'; which makes plain, more effectively than any carefully constructed argument or optimistically defiant protest, how the machine's need for permanent growth will require us to destroy ourselves in its name. Climate change, which brings home at last our ultimate powerlessness.[323]

The manifesto's authors received responses from many readers that expressed a profound sense of relief that someone had expressed in words their own feeling that it actually was too late to stop climate change.[324] Kingsnorth and Hines claim that the manifesto met enthusiastic support from people who "did not believe that the future would be an upgraded version of the present".[325] The DMM sets out to reveal "the myths of progress" and civilisation and to forge this criticism into a new cultural response to the human predicament, and call for "a vision of the future that is far outside the mainstream".[326] It places climate crises alongside ecocide and the crisis of industrial civilisation, it exposes environmental and political ideologies in

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[321] Field notes 2014.

[322] Field notes 2014.

[323] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009

[324] Kingsnorth 2010 "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain", *The Guardian*, 29 April 2010.

[325] Field notes 2014.

[326] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009.

the search for new visions and "a clear-sighted view of humanity's true place in the world".[327]

Apart from the responses from the readers, *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* gave rise to a harsh debate in significant British periodicals such as *The Guardian* and *The New Statesman*, although in this context, the response was very different. They were called both 'apocalyptic' and 'luddites'[328] and the manifesto was characterised as "pretty gloomy stuff",[329] and the Dark Mountain was renamed the "gloomy mountain".[330] As a reply to the criticism, Kingsnorth wrote in *the Guardian* "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain":

> Together we are able to say it loud and clear: we are not going to 'save the planet'. The planet is not ours to save. The planet is not dying; but our civilisation might be, and neither green technology nor ethical shopping is going to prevent a serious crash.[331]

The theme of a civilisation as dying is significant here, but Kingsnorth dismisses solutions in the form of green technology or ethical shopping. What I consider to be central in this debate is that the manifesto has a new approach to climate change: it is no longer a *future* threat, it is not something that *might* happen; climate change is here already. The British environmentalist and writer George Monbiot replied in *The Guardian* that he did not agree with this, however, his objection did not concern whether the industrial civilisation will come to an end or not. Monbiot admits that it will, but not right now: "not in this century, perhaps not even in the next".[332] The end of industrial civilisation is, in Monbiot's view, still at a comfortable distance in the future, for future generations to handle. Still, to say climate change has stopped being something that might happen in the far future, and that it now had become a new reality, as Kingsnorth and Hine claimed, was not uncontroversial at that time. For some the claim that climate change was a new reality was like an unwanted wakeup call early on a Sunday morning, when everyone expected to sleep at least until brunch-time.

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[327] Apart from the publication of the manifesto, they initiated the Dark Mountain Project that gathers artists and writers to work for forthcoming publications in the same spirit.

[328] Appleyard, Bryan 2014 "The new Luddites: why former digital prophets are turning against tech", *The New Statesman* 29 August 2014.

[329] Townsend, Solitare (2010) "Get down off your Dark Mountain: you're making matters worse", *The Guardian*, 4 June 2010.

[330] Townsend, Solitare (2010) "Get down off your Dark Mountain: you're making matters worse", *The Guardian*, 4 June 2010.

[331] Kingsnorth, Paul (2010) "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain", *The Guardian*, 29 April 2010.

[332] Monbiot, George "I share their despair, but I'm not ready to climb the Dark Mountain", *The Guardian* 10 May 2010.

2.2.2 Climate Change as a Future Risk

2009 is a distinctive year because by then some voices were starting to talk about climate change in the present tense. When climate change was introduced in public media in the last decade of the twentieth century, there were generally two assumptions: first, it was pictured as something that *might* happen, and secondly; if it did, then it would be in the far future. In 2008 the British environmentalist and journalist Mark Lynas wrote *6 Degrees – Our Future on a Hotter Planet*, which he describes as "a degree-by-degree guide to our planet's future"[333], and a "journey into humanity's likely future". The process of writing made Lynas feel "like Dante at the gates of Inferno – privileged to see what few others have laid eyes upon, but also deeply worried by the horrors that that seemed to lie ahead."[334] Lynas does not claim that the scenarios pictured will come true exactly as described, nonetheless, climate change is "the canvas on which the history of the twenty-first century will be painted."[335] Lynas sets climate change in our own century; it is no longer a threat in the far future, the future is getting closer. Still, at this time, the idea of climate change as something that might happen in the far future seemed to have stuck to the concept.

In 2009 the sociologist Anthony Giddens described global warning as a future risk. It is a problem unlike any other, because of the scale, and because it is about the future, this makes the dangers seem abstract and elusive.[336] To cope with them we need to mobilise on a level comparable to fighting a war, and the challenges are "of epic proportions".[337] Giddens does not underestimate the efforts needed; nonetheless, climate change is a future risk, not yet a reality. Giddens claims: "We are currently living in a civilisation that, as far as we can determine future risk, looks unsustainable."[338]Although climate change is referred to as a "future risk", the calculation and prediction of how fast climate change proceeds turned out to be a tricky task for scientists. There are several reasons why it has been difficult for researchers to predict how fast global warming will increase the temperature. Scientists talk about 'feedback mechanism', and 'tipping points' which lead to a

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[333] Lynas 2008:xvi.

[334] Lynas 2008:xxii.

[335] Lynas 2008:xxii. Lynas writes: "I would be foolish to expect that prediction to come true in any literal sense – history teaches us that human events are too unpredictable to support such a deterministic approach. But on this I have no doubt: climate change is the canvas on which the history of the twenty-first century will be painted."

[336] Giddens 2009:10. Giddens points to a number of books that describe future scenarios in relation to climate change, and he sees these books as a special genre, 'Doomsday books'. My point here is not to categorise *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto*, or *6 Degrees* as doomsday books, rather to consider the historical context where they were published.

[337] Giddens 2009.

[338] Giddens 2009.

complexity which makes it hard to calculate.[339] What I want to emphasise here is the change in the conception of climate change, from a future risk to a new reality, which I consider to form a distinctive mark of change. And it seems that around 2009 the first voices that made such claims were heard.

2.2.3 Climate Change – a New Reality

When Paul Kingsnorth and Dougal Hine came together in 2008 they had both spent years campaigning in the environmental movements, but they had come to share a realisation that climate change was no longer a future threat but a new reality. In order to deal with this new reality they started to write the manifesto, with the intention of asking for different narratives, "beyond the false hope of environmentalism".[340] They wanted to look "beyond the self-satisfied stories"[341] of man's ability to "manage the future". [342] Instead they turned to literature, music and art, rather than environmental campaigning. The manifesto called, not for new technological innovation, but for new stories, and it suggested that art and literature offer tools for coping with the challenges of climate change. The publication of *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* would initiate The Dark Mountain Project, a new offspring of the three environmental movements. What is unique here is the focus on art and literature, and on new stories. Kingsnorth describes it as "a new cultural movement for an age of global disruption."[343] The Dark Mountain Project is a network of writers, artists and thinkers, centred on the Dark Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain" have also arranged Uncivilisation festivals and hold courses at Schumacher College.

In the summer of 2014, in June, a short course was held at Schumacher College; *Dark Mountain: New Stories at the Cliff Edge*, and the hosts were Paul Kingsnorth and Dougal Hine. The course offered a space for reflection and communication about what it means to live in times of climate change, and at the same time it was a sort of fifth anniversary of the publication of *Uncivilisation – The Dark Mountain Manifesto* in 2009.[344] The anniversary gave them a reason to look back and ask what had happened in public approaches to climate change during the interim period.

[339] Empson 2014:257–260. Feedback mechanisms mean that melting ice and warmer oceans cause further warming. This is sometimes called runaway climate change, it is unpredictable and beyond control, and it is heading towards a tipping point. A tipping-point is when an environmental system moves from one steady state to another, but radically different state.

[340] www.paulkingsnorth.net Accessed 2011-11-20.

[341] Kingsnorth (2010) "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain" *The Guardian*, 29 Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain", 29 April 2010

[342] Kingsnorth (2010) "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain", *The Guardian*, 29 April 2010.

[343] Kingsnorth (2010) "Why I gave up environmentalism and started the Dark Mountain", *The Guardian*, 29 April 2010.

[344] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009.

During the course, they made a public speech in the Earth Talk series[345] titled "Five Years on the Mountain".[346] Kingsnorth and Hine see a major changes in the discourse on climate change in public debate: in 2014 it would have been much easier to say what they said in 2009, and it would not have stirred up so much agony. During the in-between years, the reality of the climate crisis became more apparent, and it was increasingly difficult to neglect the signs of what was happening. When Kingsnorth and Hine said that climate change was a reality in 2009, few agreed, but five years later, they were no longer solitary voices.[347] *The transformation of the understanding of climate change, from future risk to a new reality,* was a process that that took years, but the Uncivilisation debate illustrates an initial step in this transformation, and I see this as a reason why this pamphlet provoked such an infected debate. In the *Dark Mountain Manifesto* they pose a crucial question: How do we tell the story of climate change? In this they wanted to go beyond scientific reports and political policy documents. Before continuing the discussion of Kingsnorth and Hine I will linger on the scientific reports on climate change.

2.2.4 Telling the Story of Climate Change – Imagine Future Scenarios

In the initial phase, the climate change scientists and environmental activists hoped to raise awareness in support of political policymaking in order to limit the emission of greenhouse gasses and prevent global warming from rising above two degrees from the pre-industrial levels. Two degrees was the threshold where the tipping point would be passed.[348] Today, more than a decade later, many voices talk about climate change in the present tense; it is no longer a possible future scenario, it is happening right now. In 2019 an article published in *Bioscience* stated that the climate crisis is accelerating faster than any research could have predicted. Some 11,000 experts stand behind the article, led by ecologists William Ripple and Christopher Wolf.[349] They describe the current situation as "a climate emergency". In 2021 the *Climate Adaptation Summit* – the first summit dedicated to the question of how to adapt to climate change – took place.[350]

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[345] The Earth Talks are public events held at Schumacher College that are available on Youtube: Earth Talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPteW0dvOHI accessed 17 December 2015.

[346] Field notes 2014, also seen in Earth Talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPteW0dvOHI accessed 17 December 2015.

[347] Field notes 2014.

[348] Empson 2014:261. Recent research, such as James Hansen, the head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, in 2008, argues that old calculations are too generous, and the threshold and tipping point will be sooner than anyone thought.

[349] Ripple, William J. Wolf. Thomas et al (2017) "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice" *BioScience*, Volume 67, Issue 12, December 2017, Pages 1026–1028.

[350] Climate Adoption Summit: https://www.cas2021.com/ accessed10 November 2021.

What would it be like, living in times of climate change? Science pictures scenarios of extreme weather: floods and rising sea-levels, storms, hurricanes as well as heatwaves and droughts that may lead to forest fires are part of the scenarios of what can be expected.[351] The social dimension brings in a far more complex estimation of the risk of conflicts (for example in relation to lack of water resources, or food crisis), which put pressure on humanity. From a biological perspective, in times of extreme extinction of species and loss of biodiversity, there is no guarantee that human beings are immune to the same fate that many other species have faced as their numbers have been decimated. The link between rapid climate change and human extinction is that the planet will become uninhabitable for humans if the average temperature goes up by 4 or 6 degrees.[352] James Lovelock, biologist and founding father of the Gaia theory, claims that this time we have to "take seriously the possibility that global heating may eliminate all people from the Earth".[353] To see the human species as one of many species, robbed of the privilege of being the crown of creation, is a challenge that calls for a new self-understanding for mankind, and this is a vital part of the rewilding of the human mind, which I elaborate in this thesis.

Human history offers a record of challenges – famines, crop failures, floods – that have been part of human history, but how such catastrophic events have been understood and explained has varied greatly. The historian Marie-Hélène Huet claims that "Our culture thinks through disasters",[354] but perhaps it is more accurate to say that we struggle to find meaning in disasters. Finding a meaning in such events is not the same thing as offering a scientific explanation of why they happen, what gives meaning is rather the ability to tell the story about it. Disasters may be distinctive historical events, but the understanding of the world that is expressed in these events illustrates the conception of the world. In this study I ask for narratives concerning what it might be like living in times of climate change. These narratives illustrate the kind of expectations people have in relation to climate change. These

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[351] In June 2019, EASAC (European Academics Science Advisory Council) released *The Imperative of Climate Action to Protect Human Health in Europe.* The report states "Climate change is the defining issue of our time and now is the defining moment to do something about it". The work of the council focuses on the interlinkages between climate change and human health. Increasing temperatures may lead to the spreading of mosquitos further north, and there is a risk that these mosquitos will spread epidemics, such as dengue fever. Flooding will have consequences such as diarrhoea, and infections spread through food, such as salmonella. Higher temperatures will have consequences such as deteriorating cognitive capacity, which lead to declining productivity, and mental ill-health following extreme weather conditions. https://easac.eu/fileadmin/PDF_s/reports_statements/Climate_Change_and_Health/EASAC_Report_No_38_Climate_Change_and_Health.pdf, accessed 6 June 2019

[352] Curry, Nathan "Humanities is Getting Verrrrrrry Close to Extinction", the.vice.com, http://www.vice.com/read/near-term-extinctionists-believe-the-world-is-going-to-end-very-soon accessed 21 November 2021.

[353] Lovelock 2009:6.

[354] Huet 2012:2.

may depict the natural disasters, the heavy rain and the flooding, but also how people in various ways respond to these disasters, emotionally, socially or culturally. Science offers models for the climatological changes and geological processes to come, but how people respond to them today and how they prepare for the challenges that are ahead is for studies like mine to find out. The question to ponder on is how it is possible to make a record of people's efforts to deal with these coming changes – in entering the Anthropocene – and how to approach it from an analytical and theoretical perspective. Anthropocene comes from Greek *anthropos* meaning 'man' and *kainos* meaning new. Despite its name it is not an immoderate extension of anthropo*centrism,* on the contrary – *the Anthropocene means losing the modernist/scientific control of nature*, where the laws of nature were considered to be stable. This kind of control was possible in the Holocene, the period that offered a stability that made nature predictable. The Anthropocene means that humans are no longer set apart from terrestrial history.[355] The loss of stability, such as a stable climate, will change the world.[356] Indeed, the times they are a-changing, as the poet wrote, and one conceptualisation of this is the shift from the Holocene to the Anthropocene.[357] The scholarly task is to study this shift in a contemporary perspective. With this in mind I return to the *Dark Mountain Manifesto*

2.2.5 The Age of Ecocide and the Jilted Generation

"We are the first generation to grow up surrounded by evidence that our attempt to separate ourselves from 'nature' has been a grim failure, proof not of our genius but our hubris." [358] Paul Kingsnorth and Dougal Hine (who were born in the early 1970s) describe their age on behalf of their generation. They state that "Our age is the age of ecocide." They are the first generation that has to face the challenges and cope seriously with climate crisis. Hine poses the rhetorical question: If we woke up tomorrow and someone said the climate change was off, it was a mistake on the part of the scientists, would that mean that everything was all right?[359] Hine's answer is "no". In picturing the climate crisis as layers of crisis, climate change is not a single crisis. "It's a feature, it's not a bug" in the words of Hine.[360] In this, the climate change discourse is part of a wider critique of society, culture and economy, in what is often summed up as "the industrial civilisation". As Hine writes:

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[355] Latour 2017:122.

[356] Archer 2009 Archer's book, *The Long Thaw: How Humans are Changing the Next 100,000 Years of Earth's Climate* lays out a clear and concise argument for how huge concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and melting ice will radically transform the planet, beyond freak storms and warmer summers, beyond any foreseeable future.

[357] Crutzen and Stoermer 2000.

[358] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009:6.

[359] Field notes 2014.

[360] Field notes 2014.

> …a more general disillusion has spread through the Western world, beginning in the crisis of the 1970s, muddied by the neoliberal boom years, then given new clarity by the systemic crisis that broke out in the autumn of 2008. Opinion polls confirm that the basic assumption of economic progress – that each generation will grow up more prosperous and with greater opportunities than their parents – no longer rings true for most of us. The failure of the promise of modernity is no longer a theoretical matter, but part of everyday experience of people in western societies.[361]

The promise of progress was the foundation for political policymaking throughout the twentieth century, when everything was getting better and better, and as Hine writes, each generation would be more prosperous than the previous one. This promise is at the heart of the ideas of the Enlightenment. Still, this is not only the failure of an idea or an ideology, or "a theoretical matter" because it is very much "part of everyday experience" according to Hine. The end of progress is a complex phenomenon; rather than the end of constant technological innovation, it means the end of economic growth. The notion of planetary boundary has shown that endless economic growth is neither possible nor desirable. The economic crisis of 2008 gave support for the claim that endless economic growth was no longer a practicable model for the future. Given this, it is no longer true that the younger generation will grow up more prosperous than the one before. Intergenerational relations have been in the focus of attention since the Brundtland report *Our Common Future* (1987) defined 'sustainability' with consideration for future generations.

In fact, there are several voices that give support to this. In 2010 Ed Howker and Shiv Malik published *Jilted Generation: How Britain Has Bankrupted Its Youth*, where they identified the perilous position of Britain's young adults. The jilted generation refers to the generation born between 1979 and 1994 (and that is also the case with many of those who are part of my study). Howker and Malik identify four basic areas that form the foundation of people's lives regardless of the generation they are born into: housing, jobs, inheritance – how wealth is transferred between generations – and politics. From a comparison between generations Howker and Malik establish that "Britain's young adults really are having an unexpectedly rough time."[362] Although they do not address environmental degradation and climate change, their results are relevant for understanding the young generation of today, also setting the context of my work. The problem addressed as the jilted generation is not only a British dilemma. In the American magazine *Newsweek*, Joel Kotkin[363] gives a report on a *generation screwed,* that is, a generation of well-educated but

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361 Hine 2015:60 "When the promises of progress fail us", *Resurgence & Ecologist*, March/April 2015, No. 289.

362 Howker and Malik 2010:4. Britain is not unique in this; in a North American context the term 'generation screwed' refers to the same issue. The changes in the labour market make it difficult for the youth of today to establish themselves, in terms of secure income, to get a home, and a family, it become difficult to become all those things that are generally seen as being an adult.

363 Kotkin, Joel (2012) "Generation Screwed", *Newsweek*, 23–30 July 2012.

poor young people that have not yet entered adult life, even though that they may very well be in, or beyond, their mid-30s.[364] A further contribution is by the journalist Paul Mason, who has coined the phrase "the graduate with no future" and he sets out to explore the reasons why numerous protest movement, revolutions, civil wars and internet-based revolts kicked off in 2009–11. What Mason places at the centre of this new global movement is the new sociological type, i.e. the graduate with no future.[365] In his reportage, Mason travels from Cairo to Manilla, to Athens and beyond. Mason describes the situation as being "in the middle of a revolution caused by the near collapse of free-market capitalism combined with an upswing in technological innovation, a surge in desire for individual freedom and a change in human consciousness about what freedom means."[366] From a global perspective, the Arab Spring that started in Tunisia and spread to Egypt and both the urban poor and the organised working class played a crucial part in shaping the course of the global unrest, but at the centre of the protest Mason nevertheless finds another figure:

> … it was to 'the graduate with no future that it fell to kick things off. From the rich world to the poor world, it is educated young people whose life chances and illusions are now being shattered. Though their general conditions are still better than those of slum-dwellers or some workers, they have experienced far greater disappointment.[367]

The graduate with no future makes a coordination between higher education and broken dreams, and Mason sets this figure at the centre of the uprisings, the Arab Spring and Occupy that swept through the world in 2009–11. In *Occupy Spirituality* Matthew Fox and Adam Bucko provide a perspective from the US: In the aftermath of the Occupy movement they underscore that what defines the Occupy generation, the kind of dreams it cherishes and gives birth to, does not depend on the success of Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Spring, because these movements had far more long-term effects.[368]

> Its vision is more long-term than that. Revolutions will come and go. Movements will change names and forms. But what is emerging in people's hearts will continue. Most likely it will continue quietly, in small communities, among friends, mostly unacknowledged by the dominant media. It will continue quietly creating a counterpoint to all the institutions and power structures, eventually moving the center

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[364] http://www.generationscrewed.ca/about-us/ But his has also given rise to a new movement Generation shrewd who front their webpage with the slogan: "They partied for 40 years, and you got stuck with the bill". The economist Tylor Cowen describe the stagnation in the American and global economy (2011).

[365] Mason 2013:66.

[366] Mason 2013:3.

[367] Mason 2013:72.

[368] Bucko and Fox 2013:xvii–xviii.

> of life from values that no longer serve life to relationship that nourish and celebrate life.[369]

Fox and Butko describe a change that is taking place “unacknowledged by the dominant media” and that will ”continue quietly” in “creating a counterpoint to institutions and power structures”, and they continue the youth already living it”.[370] This discussion about today’s youth relates to the question of future generations which is at the core of environmental discourse as the ethical implications of overuse of the Earth’s resources resonates into the future, to those who will follow in our wake. The ethical consideration of intergenerational justice resonates into the distant future, while the intergenerational perspective relates to those who live today. A reason to shed light on the theme of generations is that it is of direct relevance to my study, where many of those I have met in my fieldwork are part of the jilted generation (or if we refer to the screwed generation or the Occupy generation). Although my study is not exclusively a study of younger persons, this must be kept in mind throughout the study, and therefore I elaborate on this discussion of intergenerational justice.[371]

Three decades have passed since 1987 when *The Brundtland Report: Our Common Future* defined sustainability as meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The report draws the line towards future generations.

> We borrow environmental capital from future generations with no intention or prospect of repaying. They may damn us for our spendthrift ways, but they can never collect on our debt to them. We act as we do because we can get away with it: future generations do not vote; they have no political or financial power; they cannot challenge our decisions.[372]

Who are the “we” and the “they” in this quote from the Brundtland report? This is relative to time; “We” are the people living in the twentieth century; “they” are those in the twenty-first. Thus, when the report was published, the “future generations” were seen as the great-grandchildren, those who will live in future days; however, today the future generations of the report are the youth of our contemporary own era. Those who were born in the late 1980s or the 1990s (referred to as the jilted generation) are now young adults, and some of them I have met during my fieldwork

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[369] Bucko and Fox 2013:xvii–xviii.

[370] Bucko and Fox 2013:xxiv. “While most pundits still argue about whether another world is possible, the youth already living it… they are living it in how they choose to interact with each other, in how they do spirituality, in how they say no to politics as we know it, by moving from wanting to impose a fixed rule to proposing a new way of life, on which we put aside our egos and relate to each other in ways that can produce communities that work for everyone.”

[371] For discussion on the ethical issues from a philosophical perspective, see Barry 2003.

[372] *The Brundtland Report: Our Common Future* 1987, available at http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-ov.htm#1.2 .

and should be kept in mind in a general of understanding today's youth, and particularly in relation to my study.

2.2.6 At the Edge of Times – The Collapse of Civilisation

"Our time is often pictured as the edge of time, but people have always been living at the edge of time, not to deny that our time is exceptional."[373] These are the words of the storyteller, mythologist and scholar of English literature Martin Shaw. The experience of living at the edge of time is both perennial and existential. It refers to the challenges that people have to cope with, and that people who lived before us had to cope with. Living in exceptional times entails feelings that may range from fear and uncertainly to adventure and hope: nonetheless, one consequence of climate change is that there seems to be an increasing sense of living in exceptional times. As seen previously, the shift between the Holocene and the Anthropocene is one conceptualisation of this change of time which has been influential in scholarly discourse. Another one is the discourse on climate change and civilisation, which I refer to as the narrative of climate change as the end of civilisation. In this chapter I outline this narrative, in relation to a wider environmental discourse, and of course in relation to the *Dark Mountain Manifesto.* In simple terms the narrative of the end of civilisation addresses the current situation of climate change. As we saw in the previous chapter, one of the central questions was: how can we tell the story of climate change? Here I will consider the context of environmental discourse, which is necessary before continuing the discussion.

The contemporary environmental discourse on the collapse of civilisation concerns the future of industrial civilisation. From a general perspective, the geologist Jared Diamond's theory assumes that civilisations collapse when their resources run out and they ruin their environment, so that they no longer can support themselves. Diamond has many followers, who are called peak or collapse theorists, and they offer various models of the collapse. The authors of these books are distinctive figures in the environmental movement. John Michael Greer (aka The Arch Druid) describes the collapse as a "slow decline" starting on the periphery.[374] Derek Jensen's *End Games* relates to radical environmentalism and the loss of biodiversity and the collapse of ecosystems. A general assumption in collapse theories is that *all* empires or civilisations eventually collapse, and therefore it is reasonable to expect that this will be the case with our industrial civilisation. Thus, collapse theories relate to climate change and the contemporary use of natural resources in relation to fossil fuel and peak oil. The collapse of industrial civilisation is related to the end of (Western) industrial capitalist hegemony in a postcolonial discourse. This discourse on the end of civilisation depicts our industrial civilisation

[373] Field notes 2014.

[374] Greer 2008.

as dependent on a colonial world order, in its exploitation of natural resources and fossil fuel. Fossil fuel is the primary energy source in the industrial era, but access to fossil fuel has reached its peak.[375] Fossil fuel is the basis for industry and the capitalist mode of production. Consequently, when fossil fuel runs out, capitalism and the industrial mode of production will collapse. This is Naomi Klein's model for collapse in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs Climate.* These voices are all from an American context, and they relate to the economic crisis of 2008, as well as the ecological crisis. The theme is carried on with new modifications, but, as will be discussed next, the relation between civilisation and climate is an ancient one.[376] Collapse theories predict that industrial civilisation will unavoidably come to an end due economic factors in combination with climate change. What I refer to as the narrative of the end of civilisation concerns how people come to terms with these new conditions.

2.2.7 Civilisation and Climate

The narrative of the end of civilisation addresses the collapse of the industrial civilisation, and it is set within a contemporary environmental discourse, but the relation between climate and civilisation is an ancient one. Mike Hulme looks at the social meaning of climate and includes how concepts such as 'climate' are historically constructed. The genealogy of the idea of climate shows that it was first given linguistic form by the Greeks in the word κλίμα*,* or *klima*, which was first used in the early sixth century BC by Pythagoras's disciple Permenides.[377] Even these early attempts to classify climate reveal the precariousness of the human relationship to the climate, according to Hulme. The Greeks talked about climates in the plural, and divided climate in distinctive zones: the zones in the far north were too cold, those in the south too hot to be inhabitable. Their own zone, however, was the perfect place to be.[378] Hulme emphasises that the idea of climate has changed

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[375] Peak oil theories assume that the foundation for the industrial civilisation has been fossil fuel, and when fossil fuel runs out the industrial economy will no longer work. Peak oil theories describe the topography of ups and downs as being similar to empires past and present. Peak oil theory was first formulated in the mid-twentieth century by King Hubbart, an American petroleum geologist who made a survey and predicted that the oil resources will run out sooner than anyone expected. He saw the road leading downward from where he stood, and this has become known as Hubbert's peak. Peak oil has been elaborated to include not just fossil fuel but natural resources of all sorts. This peak theory proceeds from Richard Heinberg's *Peak Everything* (2010) the point where more or less *all* natural resources run out and civilisation is heading for a point where collapse is unavoidable. See Greer 2008:xi.

[376] It should be noted that the narrative that I refer to as the end of civilization is distinct from the clash of civilisations-discourse that was initiated by Samuel Huntington, (1996) and primarily discussed Western civilization in relation to Islam.

[377] Hulme 2009:5.

[378] Hulme 2009:18. The climates of the intermediate Mediterranean zone, on the other hand, were just perfect for the blossoming of human creativity, expressed through culture, wealth creation

just as much as, if not more than, the physical climate itself, and it has been a carrier of ideologies, in the past as it continues to be in the present. It has been loaded with burdens of racism as well as ideas of the human mastery of nature. Therefore, climate and civilisation must be seen as ideology, Hulme concludes.

> Understanding climate – and hence understanding climate change – as an overly physical phenomenon too readily allows it to be appropriated uncritically in support of an expanding range of ideologies […]The important point is that by disconnecting climate from its cultural forms – by framing climate as overtly physical and global – we allow the idea of climate change to acquire a near infinite plasticity. Detached from its cultural anchors, climate change becomes a malleable envoy enlisted in support of too many rulers.[379]

One link between climate and culture is in the idea that a stable or benevolent climate is a condition for civilisation, and part of this ideology is the idea that the human character, and even different races, are shaped or even determined by climate. This notion is, in Hulme's words "one of the more enduring in the intellectual history of climate".[380] Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that 'Civilization,' "is a value-laden and therefore contested word that humanities scholars in recent decades have done much to demystify".[381]

The idea of civilisation-and-climate, particularly in relation to the hegemony of the Western civilisation, was brought further into the twentieth century by the geographer Ellsworth Huntington,[382] who states that "No nation has risen to the highest grade of civilization except in regions where the climatic stimulus is

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and innovation. This circularity of reasoning was therefore a way of simultaneously explaining and justifying Greek hegemony in the classical world.

379 Hulme 2009:28.

380 Hulme 2009:19 Hulme refers to Immanuel Kant who in *On the Different Races of Man* (1775) made the following remark "The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world, above all the central part, has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world. That is why at all points in time these peoples have educated the others and controlled them with weapons." In the eighteenth-century Edward Gibbon's classic account of the fall of the Roman Empire related climatic factors to the declining civilisation as the climate changes weakened agriculture in the areas known as the Roman breadbasket.

381 Chakrabarty 2016:377.

382 Hulme 2009:20. Drawing on empirical studies on the productivity of factory workers under different climatic conditions, Huntington nevertheless echoed the old idea of a connection between climate and human character and claimed that people of "a damp and steady heat" are "slow and backward". While these ideas are seen as naïve or dangerous today, they nevertheless show how, in the words of Hulme, "the deterministic philosophy underpinning such thinking can still lurk near the surface."

great",[383] and "a favorable climate is an essential condition of high civilization."[384] The corollary of this reasoning is clear: if the climatic stimulus is withdrawn or weakened, decline will inevitably follow, and this intellectual legacy has endured throughout the twentieth century.[385] All through history, changing climate has been invoked to explain the decline of civilisations, and the contemporary discussion of climate, civilisation and climate change is one example of this legacy. Clive Hamilton, a scholar in public ethics, writes:

> The kind of climate that has allowed civilisation to flourish will be gone and humans will enter a long struggle just to survive. It is hard to accept that human being could so change the composition of Earth's atmosphere that civilisation, and even the existence of species, is jeopardised.[386]

Today scientific references to how climate change threatens civilisation are based on the end of the Holocene geological era, which is characterised by stability, now replaced with the Anthropocene, characterised by instability. One example of this is an article by Johan Rockström and his colleagues published in *Nature*. The threat to human civilisation is related to the loss of stability that the Holocene brought.

> Although Earth has undergone many periods of significant environmental change, the planet's environment has been unusually stable for the past 10,000 years. This period of stability — known to geologists as the Holocene — *has seen human civilizations arise, develop and thrive. Such stability may now be under threat*. Since the Industrial Revolution, a new era has arisen, the Anthropocene, in which human actions have become the main driver of global environmental change. This could see human activities push the Earth system outside the stable environmental state of the

[383] Hulme 2009:29 originally in Huntington's *Civilization and Climate* 1915:270. Huntington is not to be confused with his later namesake Samuel Huntington who put forward the clash of civilisation thesis in 2003.

[384] Hulme 2009:29 originally in Huntington *Civilization and Climate* 1915:270 For Huntington this climate-civilization connection was taken to demonstrate the racial superiority of whites over blacks. See further Hulme 2009:29. Huntington stated that "If we can conquer climate, the whole world will be stronger and nobler" (Huntington 1915: 294, as quoted in Hulme 2009:21). Yet the idea of climate as a physical manifestation of the natural world that is available for 'conquering' is recurrent through the intellectual history of the West, according to Hulme. This is not just part of intellectual history; it can also be seen as a part of the colonial history of the West. The Victorian colonisers saw the tropical climate as a dangerous threat, questioning whether white Europeans could settle, survive and rule in this hostile climate. Improvement in tropical medicine and later air-conditioning were some of the scientific and technological ways to conquer the climate. But this also went together with Western civilisation's colonisation of the world.

[385] For examples see Hulme 2009:29–30.

[386] Hamilton 2010:2.

> Holocene, with consequences that are detrimental or even catastrophic for large parts of the world.[387]

Thus, the climatological stability of the Holocene is the condition for civilisation, and while this climatological stability is “under threat” it undermines the foundation for civilisation. Here, the stability of climate offers the conditions for civilisation to flourish, and conversely the loss of climatological stability is a threat to civilisation. This framing is found in Western intellectual history, in contemporary scientific discourse (Rockström) and in scholarly discourse (Hamilton). Therefore, when we find the same framing in *The Dark Mountain Manifesto*, this cultural framing of climate change forms the logic behind the call for Uncivilisation.

2.2.8 The Principles of Uncivilisation

In *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* Kingsnorth and Hine draw attention to the theme of civilisation, as they state: “The time for civilisation is past. Uncivilisation, which knows its flaws because it has participated in them […]is the project we must embark now.”[388] The theme of civilisation became central in the public debate that followed the publication. In an article in *The Guardian* George Monbiot admits that the industrial civilisation might be heading towards its end, but not in this century, probably not even in the next, because “industrial civilisation is much more resilient than it proposes”.[389] In *The New Statesman* the political scientist John Gray agrees with Kingsnorth and Hine on the point that the ecological crisis cannot be avoided,[390] nonetheless he disagrees that civilisation is a myth, nor will he equate the spread of civilisations with the destruction of the biosphere.[391] Gray

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[387] Rockström, Johan et al, “A Safe Operating Space of Humanity” *Nature* Vol. 461, 24 September 2009 (italics added).

[388] Kingsnorth and Hines 2009:12.

[389] Monbiot 2010. Monbiot takes the Dark Mountain’s position to be an “undiscriminating attack on industrial technologies”. Technology can be helpful in the green work, and there is a world of difference between windfarms and tar sands, according to Monbiot. It is notable that the Dark Mountain Project, which formulates a call for new stories and does not agree that technological innovations alone can solve the problems of climate change, is pictured as being *against* technology.

[390] Gray, John (2009) “Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Review”, *The New Statesman* 10 September 2009. “Rightly, Kingsnorth and Hine insist that our present environmental difficulties are not solvable problems but are inseparable from our current way of living. When confronted with problems that are insolvable, however, the most useful response is not to await disaster in the hope that the difficulties will magically appear. It is to do whatever can be done, knowing that it will not amount to much. Stoical *acceptance is practically unthinkable* at present.” Gray, 2009 italics added.

[391] Gray, John (2009) “Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Review”, *The New Statesman* 10 September 2009. Gray describes how this “slim pamphlet aims to demolish contemporary beliefs about progress, industrialism and the place of human beings on the planet”, and he admits that up to a point it succeeds; much in contemporary thought is made up of myths masquerading as facts.

sees no future in the call for Uncivilisation and rejects the notion that a societal breakdown could be the prelude to a better world. Although Gray admits that Kingsnorth and Hine do not say what they expect to happen after the end of civilisation, he nevertheless fills in the blanks and assumes that "it may be something like the post-apocalyptic, neo-medieval world imagined by the nature mystic."[392] Why did this pamphlet gain such attention in public media? One reason is that the theme of civilisation is well integrated in both environmental discourse (as seen in the discussion of the collapse of industrial civilisation) and political debate (where the clash of civilisation theme has been predominating, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, and the war on terrorism). There are historical examples of collapsing civilisations, such as the Roman Empire (assuming that civilisations collapse when they reach the limit to their natural resources), and in Western intellectual history there is an ideological assumption about the relationship between climate and civilisation (assuming that a temperate and stable climate is a condition for civilisation to flourish). These are all versions of a classic theme of civilisation. However, what I found emerging today in the *Uncivilisation* manifesto is how civilisation acquires a somewhat new meaning: that is, *civilisation as anthropocentric culture*. In an article Kingsnorth characterises 'civilisation' as "human civilisation" which is "rooted firmly in the urban".[393] What is new here is, firstly, it addresses loss of biodiversity in the age of ecocide, and secondly, it questions man's self-image. Therefore, I dwell a little on the manifesto for a closer reading. In *Uncivilisation – The Dark Mountain Manifesto* Kingsnorth and Hine formulate a list of principles of uncivilisation, and the last one says:

> The end of the world as we know it is not the end of the world full stop. Together, we will find the hope beyond hope, the paths which lead to the unknown world ahead of us.[394]

Gray agrees that the most powerful of these myths is "the idea that we are separated from the natural world, and free to use it as we see fit."

[392] Gray 2009. See Hine's response to Gray "Defusing the Apocalypse: A response to John Gray" http://dark-mountain.net/blog/defusing-the-apocalypse-a-response-to-john-gray/ accessed 10 November 2021.

[393] Kingsnorth 2009:38. Deep green politics presents a radical challenge to existing mores, which has the disturbing effect of undermining the philosophical basis of human civilisation (indeed, the very *concept* of civilisation: the word stems from the Latin *civilis*, meaning 'townsman' – an idea rooted firmly in the urban).

[394] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009. It is worth noting that the American band R.E.M. had a hit with "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" in 1987. When *The New York Times* portrays Paul Kingsnorth in an article in 2014 the title is "It's the end of the world and he feels fine" and the title of course alludes to the song. Smith, Damie "It's the end of the world and he feels fine", *The New York Times Magazine* 17 April 2014.

The end of the world as we know it is a powerful slogan, but it is not equal to "the end of the world full stop".[395] Although they became known in media as proponents of the end of the world, their view is more nuanced than the debate suggests.[396] What they refer to is "the loss of our Western middle-class life",[397] and they ask what will happen when "the patterns of ordinary life" are broken, when "the fragility of its fabric" is on display, and everyday needs that "we once took for granted" are challenged.[398] Their ambition is to draw "a map of the unfolding breakdown – not to be proponents of the end of the world."[399] *Uncivilisation – The Dark Mountain Manifesto* questions the myths that rule our lives; the myth of civilisation, the myth of progress, as well as the human self-conception, that is, the myth of modern man. Kingsnorth and Hine picture our time as the age of ecocide, and they see themselves as representing the generation that has to grow up in times of ecocide. Ecocide forces us (humans) to question the human self-conception, and this is central in the call for Uncivilisation, which is pictured as a change from "from man to notman".[400]

2.2.9 The Myth of the Modern Man

The core in the rejection of the ideal of being civilised, as we have seen in *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto*, is to get rid of all the forms of otherness that civilisation has created. The myth of progress suggested a morality: humans should not be primitive or backwards; that is part of the concept of being civilised. Christopher Manes claims that proponents of progress often presuppose that "the undisturbed processes of nature are somehow stagnant or defective or detrimental and must be improved by human intervention." Therefore, "there is an unspoken representation of nature in any appeal to progress". [401] Although the means of progress may vary, as do the behaviours it is used to validate, it nevertheless carries with it "a representation of nature, a socially defined view of how the nonhuman world relates to the human world."[402] The myth of progress and civilisation are intimately related, as civilisations assume that they can rise above, and become superior to, the other people – the uncivilised – and to nature. Therefore, a civilisation is not only an organisation of society; in defining people as citizens, citizenship is delegated to some, while others become non-citizens. The suggestion that humans ought to be *civilised* distinguishes between those who are civilised and

[395] Field notes 2014.

[396] In relation to climate change "the end of the world as we know it" had become like a slogan. It is also found in a more enigmatic form: TEOTWAWKI. Lilley 2009.

[397] Field notes 2014.

[398] Kingsnorth and Hine 2009.

[399] Field notes 2014.

[400] Kingsnorth and Hines 2009:7.

[401] Manes 1990:40–41.

[402] Manes 1990:40–41.

the others who are not; whether those ‘others’ are referred to as ‘Savages’ (the term used by Claude Lévi-Strauss[403]) or ‘villains’. Jane Caputi, a scholar in American studies,[404] claims that being civilised, apart from defining the relation to ‘the other’ as other human beings, is to hold oneself in opposition to nature. Being civilised means to hold oneself in opposition to, and to be ashamed of, the animality of the self, which to the fully civilised means the “filth” of the self. This destroys any possibility of communication with anyone, except for other civilised humans. Caputi continues:

> If we listen to the creatures and to the elements, and even to our bodies, we are primitive, backwards. So we learn very early to put that away. We learn to despise ourselves and to feel ashamed of our bodies, to hate the dirt and to hate everything about us, because we’re human, which means we’re humus. They come from the same Latin root: Earth and dirt.”[405]

Caputi pictures the psychology of the civilised man, and this has a background in Western intellectual discourse. In *Civilization and its Discontents*,[406] published in 1930. Sigmund Freud considers civilisation to be the root of many of the psychological ills and neuroses he saw among his patients. A contemporary example of this diagnosis of civilisation is the American anarcho-primitivist John Zerzan’s *Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilisation,* published in 2002.[407] These examples illustrate the range of this critique of civilisation. There is not only almost a century between them. Freud, as the father of psychoanalysis, is part of a European intellectual discourse, while Zerzan, an American anarcho-primitivist, is an icon of radical environmentalist discourse. These are part of a cultural critique that questions civilisation, and that partly predates climate change. Today the discourse on civilisation – its discontents, pathology or collapse – is more vital than ever, and to fully cover this is beyond the range of this work. I continue to discuss civilisation in relation to man’s anthropocentric self-image, and this leads further to how the critique of civilisation today converges with the ideas of the rewilding of the human mind.

2.2.10 Beyond Civilisation – Wilderness and the Wild

Civilisation as against wilderness is more than a conceptual relation; in the historical process of colonisation, the explorers and colonisers set out to conquer new territory, which they saw as the taming of the wilderness. This taming included the indigenous

[403] Lévi-Strauss 1962.

[404] Caputi 1987.

[405] Quoted in Jensen 2006:87.

[406] Freud 1930.

[407] Zerzan 2002.

peoples in the area, who were seen as villains or savages. Christopher Manes notes that from its origin civilisations were defined in relation to the natural world, contrasted with wild nature.[408]

> By the division of the world between cultivated lands and wilderness *civilized* people became *citizens* (the two words are cognate), with an allegiance to a politically ordered space distinct from the "disorder" of wild nature. The distinction between the natural and the cultural world enforced by civilization generated a number of concepts that have dominated human thought, with differing emphasis and varying forms ever since.[409]

From a conceptual perspective, nature and culture stands in contrast, just as 'civilisation' stands in contrast to 'wilderness', and to some extent these conceptions overlap as civilisation is seen as culture and wilderness is part of nature. Historically the Western colonisation of the world was seen as the taming of the wilderness as part of the spread of civilisation. The environmental historian William Cronon writes:

> …wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth. It is an island in the polluted sea of urban-industrial modernity, the one place we can turn for escape from our own too-muchness.[410]

Wilderness stands as an outpost for civilisation, or more so, it is beyond civilisation. It is a place to seek retreat from the "too-muchness" of modern life. Cronon discusses the sacredness of the wilderness in cultural history, with its roots in romanticism, in the form of 'the sublime', and in the American version as 'the frontier'. Further, saving or protecting wilderness has been a sacred mission for the modern environmental movement. The eco-critic Greg Gerrard[411] describes the idea of wilderness, signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilisation, as the most potent construction of nature available to new world environmentalism. It is a construction mobilised to protect particular habitats and species and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city. "Wilderness has an almost sacramental value", according to Gerrard. Wilderness is the promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth; it is, in the words of Gerrard, "a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity founded on an attitude of reverence and humility."[412] In a contemporary context we

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[408] Manes 1990. Manes's study of radical environmentalism in the US in the 1990 is titled *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization*.

[409] Manes 1990:40–41.

[410] Cronon 1995:1.

[411] Gerrard 2012.

[412] Gerrard 2012:66.

find the ideas of rewilding, where the idea of 'the wild' as a remedy for modern life has been given a new formula. Whilst rewilding is critical of earlier conservationism's ambition to protect nature in reserves, it nevertheless shares this understanding of wilderness or the wild as loaded with spiritual values. However, these are not just post-Christian, as Gerrard describes them because the new conceptions of the wild often resonate with what anthropologist of religion Andy Letcher refers to as "pagan sentiments",[413] and the notion of wilderness or the wild is most frequently used in relation to paganism. I develop this theme, the construction of a culture of the wild, throughout my thesis.

The contrast between 'civilisation' and 'wilderness', is central but both these concepts have to be considered in a British context. There is a particular British conception of civilisation that is based on British history. One woman said in a conversation "The Romans stopped at Exeter". In this she wanted to describe Devon as a special place, not only different from urban Britain, but to picture Devon as a place somewhat wild, as a place beyond civilisation. In classical history writing the Romans are said to have brought civilisation to the British island, in the forms of roads, towns, state structure, laws and literacy, and later Christianity.[414] The Roman colonisation concurred the ancient pagan Celtic Britons and drew them furthest to the West, such as the county Devon. In this storyline there is a conflict between civilisation and the pagan/ancient Celts. Civilisation then sums up to roads, state structure, laws and literacy, or simply to power structure. Secondly, civilisation, in a British context, is related to the history of the British Empire, where the British colonisation of the world often were legitimised as the spreading of civilisation to the colonised areas. Military power and trade came hand in hand with Christian missionaries. Today a post-colonial discourse is formulating a critique of civilisation that is based on social and global justice, and that relates to the global south and the struggles of indigenous people. Again, civilisation implies a colonial power structure, and it is notable that in both these versions, civilisation comes with Christianity, and stands against people of another faith, in ancient Britain, the pagan Celts, and in the colonial areas, the indigenous people. Lurking under the surface is the religious underpinnings where Christian civilisation clashes with 'the wild', represented by pagan or indigenous culture

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[413] Letcher 2004.

[414] This version of the Roman colonisation is questioned today, for example by the archaeologist Francis Prior in the BBC Documentary *The History of Britain: King Arthur.* Prior claims that "our history books tell us that when the Romans pulled out they took with them all vestiges of civilisation and effectively turned out the light. The country the bounced into centuries of cultural and economic chaos, known as the Dark Ages. Now all of this would be fine were it not complete rubbish." Transcription by I.B. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftDthA_8u14&list=PLt2hmfPlqgXv9sZbVluZfuDRdaq9qvNq3 accessed 10 November 2021.

2.3. Contextualisation – Setting a British Landscape

The birth of modern environmentalism is set in the late 1960s. The histography presents certain events as a kick-off, for example, the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, The Earthrise photograph in 1968, or the first Earth Day in 1970. These events become canonical in a narrative of the formative years of the environmental movement. My point here is not to reject this histography, but I found that many writings about the environmental movement, or the history of the environmental movement, are situated in an American context, and since my study is set in the UK this has to be considered. For example, the discourse on wilderness, such as William Cronon's influential article "The Problem with Wilderness", is very much shaped by American history, which has to be noted if applied to a British context. In working from a British context I want to convey that my field is set in the southern English landscape, its green and pleasant countryside, and its haunted moorlands. Therefore, I invite readers to follow me, on the journey that departs from Paddington Station and heads towards Totnes Station. As seen in the opening of this chapter, this journey through the English landscape made me reflect on the urban and rural in times of crisis, but the journey will reach even further, into the wild areas, to Dartmoor National Park, often described as one of the few examples of British wilderness.

2.3.1 The Green and Pleasant Land – The Emblem of the English Countryside

I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

"The green and pleasant land" refers to England, the landscape of the English countryside. The phrase originates from William Blake's poem, published in 1808, and it is often used as a powerful image of the land. Yet, why so green and pleasant? In this section I will departure from this query to discuss the English landscape.The historian Roy Strong's answer it that it is partly due to its geography, as an island sited in the Atlantic Ocean. The British island is characterised by a temperate climate, it is warmed by the currents of the Gulf Stream to the south and west, the winters are mild and wet, and summers are cool. This allows a variety of plants to

thrive, large numbers of which were brought to the land from all over the globe.[415] Although, this is not the whole truth, Britain is also the birthplace of industrialisation, and in the 1950s Britain was known as the Dirty Old Man in Europe, an epithet suggested by the large amount of smoke from coal burning that the Atlantic wind brought to continent. In 1952, a great smog, known as the pea soup smog, killed more than four thousand people. Despite the history of industrialisation, the phrase "the green and pleasant land" resonates with images of the pastoral landscape and seems to omit any conflict between the rural and the urban. The historian Roy Strong puts the English landscape under scrutiny, and asks: How come people still dream of a place in the country? It is a query that is relevant to my field, where it can be said many, in some sense, dream of a place in the countryside.[416] Today, as eighty per cent of the population live in cities and towns, urban life nevertheless seems to be left out of the iconography of green England.

Strong offers a historical perspective; by the time of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, English identity was already framed in terms of the countryside.[417] Strong traces the conception of England as far back as the Elizabethan era, and at that time it was indeed a predominately rural country. As national identities exist primarily in the imagination, sometimes referred to as imagined communities,[418] the vision of England's green and pleasant land remains the touchstone of English identity, and it seems to be unaffected by factories and furnaces and the social changes that followed with urbanisation.[419] Yet, the green and pleasant land is a symbol of the landscape that stands out through the centuries, it is, in Strong's words, "a vehicle for a complex of ideas and emotions". In large part this was an idyllisation of something lost, and a compensational image of a better life, where the countryside is attributed a paradisiac quality. The historian Wolfgang Rüdig traces the conception of the green and pleasant land to the city dwellers in the late twentieth century who wanted to see the countryside as a rural idyll, in contrast to their polluted cities:

[415] Strong 2012:129.

[416] Strong 2012:129.

[417] Strong 2012:10.

[418] For discussion on 'imagined communities' see further Anderson 2006.

[419] The geographical divide between north and south of Britain is not a new thing. Strong claims that the pastoral vision of England that began to shape in the 1880s was selective. For one thing, it did not include London, which has always been a cosmopolitan melting pot, harbouring, Italian, Flemish, French and German merchants in the Middle Ages, Protestant exiles from France and Flanders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Jews escaping persecution in Russia in the nineteenth century. But the rural vision of England, as it was formulated in the Victorian era, was also firmly rooted in the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom of the south. The north, the country that stretches beyond York and up to the Scottish border, has been fought over throughout history and the tensions remain today. Strong points to the confrontation between the miners' union and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s (Strong 201:201). This must be kept in mind when the rural vision is held up as a source of the nation's identity.

> Increasingly it was town dwellers who sought to protect nature from further destruction or gain access to nature to escape from the pollution of the industrial towns. In this context, the notion of the 'countryside' became the key cultural concept which framed the early environmental agenda. England as a green and pleasant land was, of course, a social construction, and not necessarily in tune with the realities of rural life.[420]

The increasing industrialisation and urbanisation have led to a major transformation in the perception of 'nature'. In the face of economic processes which more than anywhere else in Europe separated the vast majority of the population from agriculture and forced them to live in polluted cities, the notion of 'rural idyll,' of the 'real' country, had a widespread appeal, according to Rüdig.[421] The fact that people have been separated from the countryside has been a force in the creation of an idyllisation of it. The rural idyll is a conception of the countryside which is very much in the form of the pastoral. Terry Gifford, the literary theorist, has examined pastoralism in literature, portraying country life and in particular the life of shepherds, but the pastoral describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban.[422] The pastoral evokes idyllic images of the countryside, often reproduced and represented in art, and according to *The Oxford Dictionary* 'pastoral' may refer to land that is used for keeping or grazing of sheep or cattle, or it can refer to a work of art portraying or evoking country life, typically in a romanticised or idealised form. How the introduction of sheep herding drastically transformed the landscape will be discussed later on. This has also been the inspiration for pastoral representations of the landscape, representations which can be addressed as the mindscape of the landscape

2.3.2 The Social Construction of the Landscape

The social construction of the landscape invites us to reflect on man's relation to places, and in this perspective, landscapes are not to be seen as objects but as processes, they are not static but ever changing. It is not only through the actual effect that human beings have on the landscape, in relation to the larger-than-human-life, for example in creating a countryside that is shaped by agriculture, but more so how ideals and values are constructed in relation to the landscape, for example, how a certain landscape is considered to be particularly beautiful, picturesque (fulfilling some aesthetic notion) or "English" and worth conserving. For millennia man has shaped the landscape, primarily through agriculture, but even the Bronze Age has examples of "industry" such as mining which has transformed landscapes (particularly in Devon and Cornwall where tin mining became a major

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[420] Rüdig 1995:222 (quoting Newsby 1980).

[421] Rüdig 1995:222.

[422] Gifford 1999.

enterprise). The Roman colonisation brought cities and infrastructures, and considerable construction sites, for roads and transportation as well as colonial administrational, mercantile and military settlements. The memories are still present in the landscape and form part of the cultural heritage, but modern times have contentiously remoulded the landscape through infrastructure and industry. The story of the development of the British landscape is not a single coherent narrative. Instead there are numerous themes and sub-plots that criss-cross and intervene, which the archaeologist Francis Pryor associates with a climbing wisteria or grapevine. In this "Chronology might be seen as the framework across which they scramble."[423] Pryor continues:

> The study of landscape history has shown that human relationships, patterns of trade and commerce, religion, warfare and politics have had greater effect on the making of the British landscape than landforms alone.[424]

What Pryor describes as being able to read the landscape, depends on a sense of place; it goes beyond what is seen in the actual landscape. Just as the landscape has been remoulded through centuries, even millennia, so have conceptions, ideals and images evolved in historical, social and cultural processes. The green and pleasant land is a powerful image of the English landscape, but just like the rural idyll, or the pastoral, or 'wilderness', such conceptions are called into question in relation to ecologic crisis. The conception of the green and pleasant land, or the rural as natural in contrast to the urban as artificial, is very much contested as the modern countryside is a landscape that is shaped by centuries of agriculture, and even more so today by industrial agriculture. Hence, the social construction of the landscape is a historical process where the landscape, in this sense, has been made. The human-made landscape is part of the increasingly human-centred world that Jenkins places at the heart of disenchantment. Mark J. Smith notes that the English landscape is actually human-made.

> For instance, the forest and wood clearance in Britain pre-dates the industrial revolution and really accelerates during early modern period, with increase in demand for wood to be used for the construction of ships. Much of the land had already been turned over to farming so that the patchwork quilt of the English landscape was already well established as the natural landscape. This process was simply accelerated by the growing demands for agricultural produce for the emerging towns. The familiar pattern of the English landscape was already human-made.[425]

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[423] Pryor 2012:xiv.

[424] Pryor 2012:xiii.

[425] Smith 1998:8–9.

Smith points out how even ecocentric and holistic thinking "tended to confuse the natural with the human-made environment"[426] and this makes British environmentalism different from American environmentalism where "the experience of the uncluttered and unaltered wilderness generated deeper stirrings in the human imagination."[427] The American environmental movement has its own version of the frontier mentality of American society. The Britons' conception of the agricultural and pastoral landscape in the south of England is, as Graham Harvey notes, a landscape that is created by human interference throughout the centuries, which nonetheless is seen as 'Nature' or even pristine nature in contrast to the seemingly more constructed urban realms. Many areas may have been seen as 'wild' despite the evidence of farming forestry or quarrying.[428] To talk about the English countryside as homogeneous can be questioned, because local regions often see themselves as distinct from England. For example, Devon is characterised by small farms, rather than large landowners. The western counties have a strong identity as Celtic that goes back to the Roman colonisation as they then were beyond the Roman Empire.[429]

2.3.3 Idyllisation and the Pastoral

Idyllisation and pastoralism are a central theme in eco-criticism, which concerns approaches towards the landscape, or the countryside, which have dominated among those living in cities, who wanted some compensational imagery for their longing back to the land. Others see the origin of this idyllisation in the landowning class in the eighteenth century.[430] The rural idyll found both its expression and its inspiration in landscape paintings. The appreciation and enjoyment were to become so widely spread throughout society, with a return to the very roots of the landscape ideal – the painterly view. Today the images in the media reproduce the rural idyll, and this

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[426] Smith 1998:10

[427] Smith 1998:10

[428] Harvey 2012:268. Distance from urban construction is deemed emblematic or definitive as 'nature', but as urban construction increases the required distance is harder to find. While boundary between the urban, rural and wilderness may be strictly separated in the human mind, Harvey notes that nature wildly refuses to recognise this artificial boundary. Foxes and other wild animals transgressively move into town and hunt in gardens. Wild birds are now more common in suburban gardens or parks and cemeteries, than in the countryside. This "messy context" challenges what we mean when we talk about wilderness or where we can find it. Harvey writes;" the term wilderness is not common in British discourse about the world as the terms like 'countryside' or 'nature'. while references to "wild" animals, birds, habitats and locations (again often remote uplands or seacoast) proliferate, these are less commonly associated with or identified as "wilderness" than they are elsewhere. Nonetheless, the same dubious dualities (nature/culture; people/other species; species/environment) are now at paly globally." Harvey 2012:268.

[429] Field notes.

[430] Pryor 2012:508.

affects how people look at landscapes. Pryor contends that the physical landscapes can be seen and understood in different ways by different people. Therefore, their interpretations of what they see amount to a second set of landscapes, albeit mental images rather than grass, trees, brick and mortar. Increasingly, too, 'real' physical landscapes are being supplanted in many people's minds, not so much by virtual, computer-generated, cyber-versions – although that will doubtless happen soon – but by an idealised, romanticised and 'safe' version dished up by glossy magazines and on television. These versions of the landscape in the media perpetuate many of the myths that Pryor wants to debunk, even though he admits that they may be "upmarket and nearly always well crafted".[431]

Andrew Motion, the president of The Campaign to Protect Rural England, claims, in an article in *Resurgence & Ecologist*, "Protecting the Countryside", that images such as the green and pleasant land actually are an obstacle to any real engagement in protecting nature.[432] Instead of looking at the real facts, people tend to admire it half blindly.[433] Thus, idyllisation is a "way of seeing the countryside – safe, predictable, cheesy aestheticized", according to Motion. However, it seems that the countryside of today is far from being a safe place, nor is it predicable, and rather than aestheticised, something else is lurking under the green and pleasant surface: the new eerie of the English landscape, or, the green and no longer so pleasant land.

2.3.4 The Green and not so Pleasant Land – the New Eerie and Eco-occulture

The green and pleasant land cannot be reduced to a praise of the pastoral, a representation of the rural idyll, or an aesthetic imagery. It is a metaphor that is very much alive and in use, and thus it is subject to continuous reinterpretation. I have found that references to the green and pleasant land are often evoked in a critical

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[431] Pryor 2012:684.

[432] Motion, Andrew "Protecting the Countryside" *Resurgence & Ecologist*, November, December 2013, No. 218. The organisation was founded in 1926, by among others, Neville Chamberlain. The great risk today that Motion sees is that people is more and more cut off from the countryside, particular in the last increasingly urbanized generation, and this has the consequence that people, if they care for the countryside at all, start to idealize it. There get their ideal image of the countryside, not from real encounters, but from television, cinema and advisements and any other forms of media, that, in the words of Motion, "produce a constant stream of chocolate-box images."

[433] Motion, Andrew "Protecting the Countryside" *Resurgence & Ecologist*, November, December 2013, No. 218. Motion writes; "Images that make us feel soothed but not engaged, and that increasingly turn the countryside into a lifestyle choice – something that is nice to have, rather than something vital for our sense of self. We end up looking at anything that doesn't live up to the cinematic ideal as being scruffy or dull; as being expendable. /…/[…] And although it sounds like a paradox, this way of seeing the countryside – saf.e, predictable, cheesy aestheticized – is adjacent to indifference." Motion, 2013:19.

environmental debate. It may concern matters such as litter in the streets,[434] whether the English landscape is increasingly covered with asphalt and concrete.[435] Beyond the rural idyll – the English landscape as a pastoral landscape – a critical discourse and an alternative conception of the landscape takes shape in contemporary discourse, which finds cultural expression in eco-occulture. This is the green and *not so* pleasant land.

Robert Macfarlane pictures "the English countryside not as a place of beauty, calm and succour, but actually a green and deeply unpleasant land."[436] There seems to be something about the English landscape – as constituted by uncanny forces, part-buried suffering, contested ownership, and enclosures. A landscape is never a smooth surface or simple stage-set, there to offer picturesque consolations. Rather it is a realm that snags, bites and troubles. There is a theme in contemporary counterculture, particularity in children's literature, where the picturesque turns pictureskew.[437] The pastoral – the green dream of natural tranquillity and social order – is repeatedly invoked only to traumatise it. This new landscape culture nourishes a fascination with ideas of unsettlement and displacement, Macfarlane concludes.[438] Hence, the English landscape has been pictured as pristine nature, a rural idyll in the pastoral, but in recent years it is the subject of an eco-critical discourse. Scholars, as well as activists, put the notions and conceptions of landscape under scrutiny and turn the focus to the landscape as socially constructed through historical processes that include social, economic and cultural dimensions. This landscape is far from the safe place that nature reserves offered; these places are rather marginal, uncertain and uncanny, or even haunted.

Hence, the green and deeply unpleasant land is a powerful image, but the green and pleasant land likewise figures in critique where it is contrasted to various forms of environmental degradation. This is present in the original context of Blake's poem, which opened this section. In 1804, as Blake was writing the poem, he saw

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[434] Paxman, Jeremy (2007) "Green and Pleasant land?", *The Guardian* 6 March 2007. Paxman discusses the floods of plastic litter found in the streets, and he misses the old Keep Britain Tidy campaign, because today the once so "green and pleasant land" has turned into a "filthy island".

[435] Mark Easton, on the BBC News 2012, 28 June, "The Great Myth of Urban Britain" http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-18623096 accessed 6 August 2015 The UK Nation Ecosystem Assessment completed their mapping of the landscape, and they gave an answer to what areas could be classified as urban and what could not. One example of this use is Mark Easton, on the BBC News, who wrote an article on "The Great Myth of Urban Britain" after reading a report from The UK Nation Ecosystem Assessment – *Synthesis of the Key Findings*. Apart from the conception of Britain as "the green and pleasant land" there is another side of the story as well and the fact that Britain being the birthplace of industrialization renders it a reputation of being an exceptional urban land.

[436] Macfarlane, Robert (2015) "The Eeriness of the English countryside", *The Guardian* 10 April 2015.

[437] Miéville, China (2016) "China Miéville: Beatrix Potter, Enid Blyton and the 'pictureskew'" *The Guardian* 18 June 2016, and Jones Jonathan (2016) "The Cult of the Picturesque view ignores the reality of modern Britain", *The Guardian,* 7 December 2016.

[438] Macfarlane, Robert (2015) "The Eeriness of the English countryside" *The Guardian* 10 April.

how “England’s pleasant pastures”, once the home of “the holy Lamb of God” had turned in to the “dark Satanic Mills”, and this was his description of the early days of industrialisation when mills were proliferating in English industry. Today “the green and pleasant land” is a living metaphor that is deconstructed and reconstructed and is able to communicate a new message in relation to environmental issues.[439] Hence, the green and pleasant land, with its history of being a vehicle of Englishness, works as a point of reference in critical discourse on ecological concern and cultural criticism. This inspires a new discussion of the construction of the landscape where the eeriness of the English landscape, rather than the Englishness, is in focus, and the source of this eeriness can be found in the marks of environmental degradation and climate change.

2.4 Historical Perspectives on Landscapes and Conceptions of Landscapes

To understand a landscape is to ask; what has shaped this land, because more than landforms alone human relationships, patterns of trade and commerce, religion, warfare and politics have had effect on the making of the landscape. The landscape has been remoulded through centuries, even millennia, and so have conceptions, and ideals. The pastoral countryside or the wilderness are conception that has an enduring power.

2.4.1 A Historical Interlude

The pastoral landscape is related to land as pastures, and sheep herding is often regarded as central to the creation of the English landscape, the green hillsides of grazing land, with hedges and small forests standing out in the landscape. This landscape is a product of a specific historical process, and therefore, in order to picture how this landscape emerged I offer a short historical interlude going back a few centuries. In doing so I illustrate the need for a long-term perspective, which is at the core or environmental history.

The Little Ice Age, signifying the period between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century in Europe, when a changing climate with lower temperatures caused crops failures and crises which led to a transformation of society, in the social dimension as well as in the economy and politics. The historian Brian Fagan relates the changing climate of the Little Ice Age to the enclosure of the commons that drastically transformed the landowning structure towards private ownership, and

[439] Young 2010:206.

which first took shape in an English context.[440] 'The commons' refers to the old system of the commons, when land was common land in the sense that every man living in the village had access to land, he or she could keep some cattle or collect firewood. They had the right by tradition to use the land but had no legal right to the land in terms of ownership. These rights are rights in terms of access, defined in *Magna Charta* in 1215.[441] The enclosure of the commons meant that these areas were closed off and fenced in by the landlords, and those who lived there were thrown off the land.[442] The enclosure process, often referred to as the Tudor enclosures, is the end of the feudal era, the birth of a new mercantile economy, and the prelude to the industrial revolution.[443] Making land more profitable was central in the ambition behind the enclosures, using land as grazing for sheep in the growing wool production, and this came together with a new conception of land ownership and a new economy. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the sociologist Max Weber posits the individualised tenets of the Protestant Reformation as the force behind the new profit-driven enterprise that expresses the spirit of capitalism.[444]

The introduction of sheep herding is seen as a central factor in the process of enclosure, because wool production was a growing business in the mercantile economy.[445] Sheep herding brought with it a need for grazing land, and it drastically changed the landscape. As seen above, sheep herding is a vital part of the pastoral image of the countryside. The images of the English countryside are characterised by the green landscape of pastures. The construction of this pastoral landscape, the green and pleasant land, is based on certain historical and economic conditions that created a regulation of land ownership, and the loss of access to land for those who did not own it. These conditions define the relation between man and land and led to massive rural to urban migration in the centuries to come. The enclosure of the commons is a privatisation process, it is history, but the consequences are still visible in the landscape. The English countryside is characterised by signs saying, "Keep off private land", "No trespassing" or "Trespassers will be prosecuted". The

[440] Fagan 2000.

[441] In British history access to the commons was first regulated in *Magna Charta* in 1215. This document regulated the relation between the king and the subjects, and it gave the subjects rights to the commons, in terms of the right to take, for example firewood for their personal need from the forests, that is, for self-sufficiency, but not for commercial purposes.

[442] Linklater 2014:17 See Linklater for historical examples.

[443] Heilbroner 2000. The late fourteenth and early fifteenth century marked the birth of the new mercantile economy. The old feudal economy, which produced chiefly for the household or the local market, was replaced by an economy that was more orientated towards the market and foreign trade. This is also a shift from a rural-centred economy to an urban-centred economy where the marketplace is the most important centre.

[444] Linklater 2014:19.

[445] Thirsk argues that there has been too much focus on sheep herding as a motor behind the enclosure process.

enclosure of the commons is a historical process that transformed the landowning structure which still shapes the landscape and demography.[446]

This summary of the historical process may seem rhapsodic, but three points should be noted. First, the changing climate in the Little Ice Age created an incentive for the process, secondly, it transformed the landowning structure of the land and led to changes in the economy, and thirdly, it transformed the social structures of demography and work and triggered urbanisation. Therefore, this historical interlude depictures a historical process that has lasting consequences, continuously shaping the landscape and its inhabitants. *In Reclaiming the Commons for the Common Good* Hildyard, Lohmann, Sexton and Fairlie describe how the enclosure redefines community and shifts the reference point by which people are valued. Individuals become "units" and their "value" to society is defined by their relationship to the new political entity that emerges from the enclosure. The sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies conceptualises this social transformation with rural to urban migration in terms of 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft'. According to Hildyard, Lohmann, Sexton and Fairlie, the new relation to land ushers in a new political order in which the environment is turned over to new users, who will use it for their own benefit. Thus, "Enclosure not only redefines the forum in which decisions are made but also redefines whose voice counts in that forum."[447] The historian Arno Linklater emphasises the great changes for those who lived in the time of the enclosure, which brought with it a drastically reshaped the landscape.[448] The intention behind the process was to make land more profitable, which may have borne fruit, but the consequences were unmistakable.[449] The British agricultural historian Joan Thirsk suggests a brief definition of enclosure as "a method of increasing the productivity or profitability of land".[450] Today this is rather a

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[446] In *The Killing of the Countryside* 2011 Graham Harvey presents the statistics; 1 per cent of the population in the UK consists of landowners, but these have the power to transform the countryside according to their preferences.

[447] Hildyard, Nicholas et al. 1995:14.

[448] Linklater 2014:14.

[449] Linklater 2014:22. While the enclosures meant a drastic change for those who lost their common land, it also led to drastic changes for those who remained on their farms. In the feudal model, the manor's population grew enough food to feed them, and only sold some surplus. The work was organised to make the best of communal labour, everyone followed the same agricultural calendar, and by coordinating the work families could cooperate and help each other out. But the new farms did not live off their produce; instead, they aimed to sell the majority of the crop to earn the money they needed for food and subsistence. With landlords pressing to increase the rents and tenants eager to improve their margins, everyone had to find ways of making the land more profitable.

[450] Thirsk 2003 :65. In the crudest account the movement is described thus: all over England men were enclosing their land and turning it into sheep pasture, because the wool of the sheep was more profitable to grow that any other produce of the farm. Enclosure was carried out with ruthless disregard for the rights and interests of the smaller farmers and cottagers, and was the cause of much misery and social unrest. Thirsk claims that the picture is far more complex. In

continuous process, and contemporary privatisation of land in the Global South comes in the form of "land grabbing", where global corporations claim their ownership and local or indigenous peoples are driven from their tradition land when companies set out to exploit the area. Rob Nixon describes these as people whose relationship to the land is historically deep but legally informal.[451] Thus, the enclosure of the commons is a not only a process of increasing productivity, or how the landscape was created, it is a narrative of how a social and economic system was created that has lasting consequences for man's relation to the landscape. Today the narrative of the enclosure of the commons – or the struggle of the commons – forms a vital narrative within environmental discourse.[452] With this historical background in mind, I now return to my own field.

2.4.2 The Countryside as a Spiritual Resource

The changes in the aftermath of the enclosures resulted in rural to urban migration.[453] For those who were living in cities the countryside became an object for alienation, desire and dreams. In the Victorian age the city dweller and those living in the countryside started to look at each other as mutual projections, creating mirror images of their respective abodes. They were, in the words of Amato, looking at each other "across the same fence," but from different sides. While many in the countryside looked to the growing cities as places with greater opportunities, or as places with too many distractions and crowded unhealthy conditions, those living in the cities acquired a new and often rather idealised view of the countryside.

> They looked to it for relief from congestion, poor housing, noise and crime. They had forgotten it as a place of marginal production and never-ending work, as the peasants knew it. It was the middle-class country walkers, hikers, or amateur explorers of nature, who worked, competed, and aspired in town, to conceive of the country as a *spiritual resource* – a place where they could be fancy-free and footloose and return to their true and natural selves.[454]

The countryside becomes "a spiritual resource" as it offers compensation for the stress and discomfort of urban life. I think "the country as a spiritual resource" is an important notion here, yet we need to be careful, because, as I already noted, it has

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fact, the enclosure took many different forms, and it was carried out for many different reasons in different parts of the land.

[451] Nixon 2011:151.

[452] Lindebaug 2014.

[453] In the increasing industrialisation cites became a point of gravity for poor people who sought their livelihood. In *The Condition of the English Working Class in England* Friedrich Engels (1845) describes the harsh social situation of the industrial workers. The slum quarters of the cities offered an unhealthy environment and increasing social injustice.

[454] Amato 2004:202 italics added.

to be put to test whether the longing for the countryside expressed by many of those I have spoken to in my field can be said to reproduce the idyllisation of the urban Victorians. Nonetheless, a historical perspective may help to understand the negotiation that takes place today. The environmental activist and writer Marion Shoard claims that "After 300 years as one of the world's most urban peoples, the British retain a fierce attachment to their countryside", and she finds this obsession to be more intense now than ever, and for "the British, the countryside is a pastoral Eden of peace and spiritual refreshment".[455] The countryside is pictured as a 'spiritual resource' or a place for 'spiritual refreshments, but the crucial question that I want to ponder on is how this spiritual quality of the countryside is implemented in the pastoral or the rural idyll and what alternative images are to be found, such as the present attraction of the wilderness, or wild or marginal places, that is pictured as the new eerie of the English landscape, in contrast to the tranquil and idyllic countryside. As Graham Harvey notes, the wilderness that is found today is often marginal places.[456]

The interest in marginal places, as spiritual resources, stands in contrast to a landscape that became more and more characterised by utility. The geologist Ian G. Simmons describes a process of fragmentation of land that since the nineteenth century has replaced an older cosmology of an organic society,[457] as land become a resource that is used with no reflection on how it affects the ecology. Land and water are apportioned to the owners, who may exercise their rights exclusively, whether in the form of production or protection. Simmons sees this process of fragmentation of land as parallel to that of individualisation. I regard this as a *disenchantment of the landscape,* where the landscape is defined in terms of utility, and where places with the power to enchant are pushed back to the margin.

One of the marginal places that has had the function of a spiritual resource is the garden. In an otherwise disenchanted landscape the garden became increasingly important as a place to seek peace and quiet. Shoard gives a historical perspective on the blossoming taste for the English garden as "a pastoral sanctuary from the cares of the world".[458] First popularised in the Tudor and Stuart periods, the creation of gardens led to a new form of enclosure by the end of the eighteenth century. The

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[455] Shore 1999 also available at http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php accessed 18 October 2021.

[456] Harvey 2012:268.

[457] Simmons 2001:328 "The nineteenth century was a time of loosening of ties as fewer and fewer goods were re-used and recycled and there was a shift to emphasis on the new."

[458] Shoard, 1999 "The notion of a pastoral sanctuary from the cares of the world, first popularized in the Tudor and Stuart periods, began to appeal to the only people now in a position to put it into effect – the countryside's large-scale owners. They realized that as well as providing economic benefits, their land could give them a particular kind of pleasure, which because it was becoming fashionable could also enhance their status. Unfortunately for the rest of the population, satisfying this new need was to require even more rigorous steps to exclude outsiders." http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php accessed 18 October 2021.

English gardens became a new dimension in relation to country estates as they grew into parks, and the notion of the English park incorporated pastoralism, copies of ancient ruins and a new taste for wilderness in the designed parkland, which attracted the nobility.

> Interest grew in the creation of spacious and peaceful rural enclaves in which landowners could retreat for their own private pleasure. These sanctuaries would be designed not for profit but as 'amenities'– for relaxation, quiet reflection, and creating an impression.[459]

The creation of a park transforms the landscape as well as people's relation to the land. The privacy of the park became the incentive for a new enclosure. The medieval deer park became fashionable, high walls were built around the estate, demarcating the private space to keep intruders out. Shoard notes: "parks required outsiders to be excluded for the very purpose of bestowing exclusivity on the space involved."[460] Hence, the park was not open to everyone, it was a private space, and the land was private property. What Shoard depicts as the cult of the park was based on the "idea of excluding others from the attractive landscape".[461] The Eden restored in these parks would not welcome everyone to enter, it embodied a paradisiac notion of parks as areas set off from the mundane world, areas reserved for the happy few.

While the eighteenth century saw the creation of parks on major private estates, the twentieth century would introduce new forms of parks, not only public parks in cites, but national parks, such as Dartmoor. These areas were not only saved for conservation projects, but publicly available for recreation and for rambling tours. Although national parks differ from the parks on private estates, the notion of national parks as retreats, or "a pastoral sanctuary from the cares of the world",[462] is still very much part of the conception of national parks.

2.4.3 The Sacramental Values of Wilderness and the Enchantment of Rewilding

As seen in previous chapter, 'wilderness' stands in contrast to 'civilisation' conceptually and historically in the Western colonisation of the world. The

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[459] Shoard 1999 http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php accessed 18 October 2021.

[460] Shoard 1999: The English garden became, in the words of Shoard, a "rustic retreat in which privileged individual could remove himself from sight or sound of the ugliness of the age appealed to who were not already rural landowners." http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php accessed 18 October 2021.

[461] Shoard 1999: http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php accessed 18 October 2021

[462] Shoard 1999 http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Books/A-Right-To-Roam/Sample-Chapter-Forbidden-Kingdom.php, accessed 18 October 2021.

exploration and colonisation of these territories was seen as a taming of the wilderness as part of the colonial project to spread civilisation. Areas that were unaffected by the influence of civilisation would stand out as wilderness. The eco-critic Greg Gerrard takes the idea of wilderness, "signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilisation"[463] to be the most potent construction of nature available to new world environmentalism.[464] The environmental historian William Cronon describes wilderness "as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth."[465] Wilderness is set apart geographically from civilisation; given the ills of industrial civilisation, as discussed previously, it offers a retreat and healing from modern urban life. In this section I discuss both the conceptions of 'wilderness' and 'the wild' and relate this to the impulse to escape urban modern life.

The protection of wilderness was a major ambition for conservationists. Still today 'wilderness' has positive connotations as a place unaffected by the ills of modern society and as nature in its pure form. Wilderness is a place set apart, and it is the objects of longings for a return to a lost natural state, whether in the Judeo-Christian form of the Garden of Eden, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idyllisation of the civilised 'noble savage', but assumptions of wilderness as 'natural' or 'pure nature' should immediately alert the critical enquirer. A closer inspection reveal that these are culturally specific and historically contingent. The belief rests upon an implicit assumption: there is a universal or essential state of harmony with nature, and humans due to some misbehaviour or accident were forced to become culture-creatures. Hence, culture and nature are in conflict, and this is the source of the dichotomisation that has been predominant in Western intellectual history. Throughout cultural history we find expressions of this original state of happiness and harmony in mythology – the Garden of Eden in *Genesis* is one example – but these are not to be mistaken for historical sources that are evidence of an actual past reality. Historians and archaeologists have made us aware of how our views of the past are tempered by attitudes and dispositions of the present, and these views say more about us than they can say about the people who came before us. The idea of an original or ancient state of harmony with nature is not an exception, it is part of the utopian sentiments that accomplished romanticism in the early nineteenth century, and it was carried further into conservationism in the early twentieth century. To save or protect wilderness was the aim of conservation projects based on the ambition to create safe havens or sanctuaries, and the fact that these are described in terms of 'sanctuaries' or 'safe heavens' indicates their religious/spiritual connotation. Although these sanctuaries were places set a part for wildlife, the wilderness was a place where humans could seek retreat, a place beyond the ills of modern life or civilisation. A further reason why wilderness holds

[463] Gerrard 2012:66.

[464] Gerrard 2012:66.

[465] Cronon 1995:1.

this benevolent power is because it is seen as a place of sacramental values. Gerrard writes:

> Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out a promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth, a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity founded on an attitude of reverence and humility.[466]

The realisation of the "authentic relation of humanity and the earth" or "an attitude of reverence" is dependent on the wilderness, and this is not just a conceptual relation, it a platform for projects where humans need to actually go out into the wilderness to fully achieve the benefit of it. For conservationism the idea of wilderness is a construction that is used for mobilisation in the protection of particular habitats and species, but for humans it is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those who are tired of the moral and material pollution of the city.[467] Although rewilding is a critique of conservationism, it nevertheless keeps many ideas from conservationism about how a return to the wild may cure man from the strains of modern life.[468] Rewilding additionally brings the sacramental values, although it may be in different terms, such as enchantment and wonder.

George Monbiot is a proponent of rewilding in the British public sphere. In *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* he pictures rewilding, not only as an answer to the loss of biodiversity, but a new attitude to the wild; it is a plea for wonder and enchantment. In a *TedTalk*[469] he makes an appeal "for more wonder, rewild the world". In an article in the *Guardian* he writes:

> This is what rewilding, the mass restoration of ecosystems, is all about; and why I wrote my book *Feral* – which is a manifesto for rewilding – and for wonder and enchantment. But I'm beginning to see that this is not just another method: expounding a positive vision should be at the centre of attempts to protect the things we love.[470]

The mass restoration of ecosystems is not an attempt to restore ecosystems to a prior state, but to permit ecological processes to resume. Rewilding recognises that nature consists not just of a collection of species, but also their ever-shifting relationship

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466 Gerrard 2012:66.

467 Gerrard 2012:66.

468 The critical approach towards conservation projects can be seen already in Arne Næss's distinction in 1973 between shallow and deep ecology, where deep ecology implied a criticism of an environmental movement that was too focused on wilderness restoration, in saving nature or conservation projects, leaving out the deeper societal questions. This is still prevalent in the environmental discourse and is part of the discourse on rewilding.

469 Monbiot, George "For more wonder, rewild the world" *TedTalk*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rZzkpyPkc accessed 21 November 2021.

470 Monbiot, George (2014) "Saving the world should be based in promise, not fear". *The Guardian*, 16 June 2014.

with each other and with the physical environment. Monbiot puts rewilding in relation to climate change as the ecosystem that will emerge today cannot be the same as those prevailed in the past, and this is one of the differences between conservation and rewilding, as conservationism looks to the past and tries to recreate a previous state, whereas rewilding looks to the future. Rewilding is a call to be Feral – a wild state, especially after escape from captivity or domestication.[471] There is a second form of rewilding which concerns humans, which Monbiot sees as a rewilding of human life.

> Some people see rewilding as a human retreat from nature; I see it as a re-involvement. I would like to see the reintroduction into the wild not only of wolves, lynx, wolverines, beavers, boars, moose, bison […] In other words, I see rewilding as an enhanced opportunity for people to engage with and delight in the natural world.[472]

Rewilding is to "love not man the less, but Nature more".[473] Rewilding defines its ambition in contrast to conservationism. Part of the critical approach concerns the role of man in relation to other species. When conservationism created nature reserves, it saw these as set apart, *separated from human influence* – as safe places or sanctuaries. Rewilding aims for the mass restoration of ecosystems, which *involve human species* as well as other species. Further, the rewilding of the human mind requires a reformation of the human mind, but more so of human culture. In this sense, rewilding is taken further by anarcho-primitivists and radical environmentalist who apply it to human life, proposing a wilding of people and culture, and is an incentive for a conflict between the rewilding of the human mind and civilisation.[474] Thus, the human species is one of the many domesticated species that need to become feral and go back to their wild state. Still, lurking under the surface I found a common feature: the sacramental values of wilderness can be seen resonating in rewilding, or wildness, although it may be in different terms, such as enchantment and wonder. Further on I will elaborate on the culture of the wild in relation to wild enchantment and eco-occulture. What the rewilding the human mind adds is to view humans in relation to the other-than-human world and to question anthropocentrism more critically. Consequently, places that offer encounters with the larger-than-human world become attractive. These may be places on the margin, they may be seen as wild places, and one of these places in contemporary Britain is Dartmoor.

[471] Monbiot 2013.

[472] Monbiot 2013:11.

[473] Monbiot 2013:10.

[474] Smith 1998:8–9.

2.4.4 Dartmoor National Park – The Trouble with Wilderness

Dartmoor is an upland area of 954 km^2 (368 square miles) in southern Devon, England, which was designated as a national park in 1951. The moor and surrounding land are protected by national park status. When it was created it was one of the first national parks in the UK, and today it is one of fifteen. It is governed by the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA); the national park authority in England is legally responsible for Dartmoor in Devon, governs the conservation projects and offers tourist information. On the website the National Park Authority describes Dartmoor as a "unique place" with "wild, open moorland and deep river valleys, with a rich history and rare wildlife",[475] and this uniqueness was the reason why Dartmoor was considered a suitable place to become a national park. The website presents it in the following manner:

> Dartmoor doesn't just have places; it has special places. These are places that are set apart from the *ordinary or the mundane*. This could be due to their history, their setting, their offer or often due to all of this and more.[476]

Dartmoor is special, due to its history and setting, but more so in being set apart from the mundane. This presentation of Dartmoor by the Dartmoor authority resonates with the conservationists' ambition to create sanctuaries to protect nature of special interest. Further, describing it as "apart from the ordinary or mundane"[477] echoes the sacramental values of the wilderness. The authority of Dartmoor National Park is not the only voice that takes part in the construction and negotiation of the Dartmoorian wilderness. Creating a national park may seem to be a praiseworthy project from an ecological perspective; still, it is not beyond environmental disputes. Demarcating an area, setting it apart in order that it will be protected, by rendering it unique and worth saving, is just one way in which humans affect the landscape. It may seem like a paradox, but these areas, which are often presented as examples of wilderness, are very much in the hands of man, and in this sense, it is a man-made landscape. This kind of criticism of conservation projects and the creation of national parks has been part of the environmental discourse for decades. The environmental historian William Cronon refers to this as "the trouble with wilderness", the conception of wilderness as nature untouched by man, a place beyond human interference, a pure or pristine nature. This romantic conception of wilderness is a human creation which appeared in the late nineteenth century.[478]

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[475] Welcome to Dartmoor National Park: https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk accessed 22 November 2019.

[476] Enjoy Dartmoor/Places https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/places accessed 22 November 2019 italics added.

[477] Enjoy Dartmoor/Places https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/places accessed 22 November 2019.

[478] Cronon 1995:2 Cronon traces the conception of wilderness back to the end of the nineteenth century. Before that wilderness did not have any of the attraction it later would gain. In the Bible the wilderness is a place where it is easy to "lose yourself in moral despair", as when Christ

> Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation – indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history. It is not a pristine sanctuary where the last remnant of an untouched, endangered, but still transcendental nature can for at least a little while longer be encountered without the contaminating taint of civilization. Instead, it is a product of that civilization, and could hardly be contaminated by the very stuff of which it is made. Wilderness hides its unnaturalness behind a mask that is all the more beguiling because it seems so natural. As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own examined longings and desire.[479]

Nature as a pristine sanctuary is compensational and a projection for unspoken longing. Cronon concludes that is a mistake to see wilderness as "the solution to our culture's problematic relationship with the nonhuman world, for wilderness is itself no small part of the problem".[480] The romantic notion wilderness has been a fundamental tenet, and a passionate mission, for environmentalists since the early days of the twentieth century. It has guided their work of protecting and preserving nature, and it is coordinated with the creation of national parks.[481] There is a paradox in the creation of national parks; although wilderness is seen as untouched by man, part of the ambition behind the creation of these national parks is to preserve wilderness in order to go there and look at 'Nature' in its pure state.[482]

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struggled with the devil in the desert, and before that, when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden, they were thrown out into a wilderness that was far from hospitable, it was a place that required hard labour to survive.

479 Cronon 1995:2.

480 Cronon 1995:1.

481 This romantic notion of wilderness, defined by the absence of human beings is, for example, found in the US Wilderness Act of 1964. See van Wieren 2017:269.

482 Saving wilderness or preserving nature for the sake of mankind seems to have been the primary concern for the early conservationists; this anthropocentric twist seems wrong to many of today's environmentalists. This is not the only reason why scholars disagree as to whether the old conservationists can be seen as the forefathers of today's environmentalism. Historians writing on American environmentalism discuss whether conservationists and preservationists are to be seen as the progenitors of modern environmentalism, or if the environmentalism of the 1960s is a completely new phenomenon. Environmentalists in the early twentieth century never used the word 'environment', or 'environmentalist' to describe themselves or the natural world. Until the early 1960s they referred to themselves as 'conservationists', although more radical figures such as John Muir insisted on the term 'preservationist'. According to Dowie (1995) the word 'environment' used to describe an all-inclusive category comprised of both human and natural habitats did not come into common usage until Rachel Carson used it in 1962 in *Silent Spring*. This is not to say that earlier conservationists were not environmentalists, but simply that they used different words to define their interests. In the words of Dowie: "When the designation environmentalist first appeared and the notion of protecting both natural and human environments entered the American consciousness, most conservationists were still preoccupied with preserving wilderness and protecting wildlife. Before long, however, new issues would be added to the environmental agenda". Dowie 1995:2.

The creation of National Parks was based on an ambition to create reservations or sanctuaries for wilderness and wildlife. Nature sanctuaries offer safe places for flora and fauna that otherwise would become extinct, but they also work as places where man who can go as a retreat from civilisation, an escape from modern life. This keeps the nature reserve as a resource for human benefit. Nature is a resource, a place for leisure activity and for recreation, or a 'spiritual' resource for healing and retreat; to refer to these places as 'sanctuaries' illustrate how wilderness is sacralised. These 'natural sanctuaries' have been criticised for being more like living museums than a living wildness, or the artificial recreation of a past state that is taken as an ideal.[483] Paul Kingsnorth writes:[484]

> [T]hey are man-made intrusions into the landscape. They reduce the grandeur, its wildness. They tell you what to look for and at. They define what matters and what doesn't. They bring places like this one step closer to the urban world that I come to places like this to escape from.[485]

The purpose of conservation projects is fixed and limited, it "implies stasis", in this sense the projects are artificial or even instrumental.[486] They are man-made because human beings decide what is worth conserving.[487] Flora and fauna are saved as rare examples of how it used to be at a certain time, and often a specific time is considered as pristine; a golden age before degradation took place.[488] They are maintained in what is called "favourable condition".[489] A major difference between conservationist and rewilding projects is that the first looks to the past and tries to recreate a previous state, the second looks to the future, and this is relevant in relation to climate change as the ecosystem that will emerge cannot be the same as

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[483] Kingsnorth 2008, Monbiot 2013.

[484] Kingsnorth 2008:132. In *Real England*: *The Battle Against the Bland* Kingsnorth travels throughout the English countryside, the purpose of the journey being to make a report and depict the current changes in the countryside. The book is inspired by the classic reportage *Rural Rides* by William Cobbett. Cobbett was a journalist, agriculturalist and political reformer, who embarked his reportage in Southeast England and the English Midlands, in the 1820s.The book was published in 1930 in two volumes.

[485] Kingsnorth 2008:132–133. Kingsnorth writes: "But that's not the only reason. This landscape was man-made anyway – sheep farming is hardly natural. This valley has been man-made, or at least man-managed, for millennia. The difference is the way it is used. Hill-farming is ordinary people making a hard living from a hard land. This is a government-funded bureaucracy doing good works for tourists and researchers. And while the works are good, something essential has been lost."

[486] Kingsnorth 2008:132–133.

[487] Monbiot 2013.

[488] The idea of a past golden age is something that conservationism shares with conservatism

[489] Monbiot claims that Europe, and especially Britain, has lost most of its mesofauna: bison, moose, boar, wolf, bear, lynx, wolverine, even, in most parts, wildcat, beaver and capercaillie. All this has been forgotten today, "even by professional ecologists". These losses, paradoxically, have often been locked in by conservation policy. Monbiot 2013.

what prevailed in the past. Rewilding as the mass restoration of ecosystems should not try to restore to a prior state, but to permit ecological processes to resume. Rewilding recognises that nature consists of a collection of species, but more so their ever-shifting relationship with each other and with the physical environment.[490] Kingsnorth's and Monbiot's critique is based on the ideas of rewilding; they advocate the mass restoration of ecosystems, opposing traditional conservationist policies. This sets Dartmoor in the midst of environmental debate, and in this sense, it is neither set apart nor a safe place. I will develop this in forthcoming chapters in relation to Dartmoor. Wilderness has been at the heart of the environmental movement since its early days, and the protection of wilderness has been a main concern.[491] Today wilderness is a contested notion, therefore, visiting a place like Dartmoor – often referred to as one of the few remaining wildernesses in Britain – will make a case to test our conceptions. The discourse on 'the wild' that flourishes in British environmentalism today focuses on how humans modify the landscape, and it is questioning our social construction of the landscape, that is, the mindscape of the landscape. This leads to questions such as: how do we form conceptions of 'wilderness', 'countryside' or 'the pastoral'? This is more than a matter of words because conceptions have an effect on how we come to see certain landscapes, how we come to describe places such as Dartmoor.

2.4.6 The Loss of Wilderness and Radicalisation

In 1887–89 the British poet Gerard Manley Hopkins asked how the world would be once bereft of the wilderness.[492] If he returned today, he would been able to answer the question. Today many voices discuss the loss of wilderness. The archaeologist Eddie Procter runs a blog titled "Landscapeism" where he discusses the study of landscapes from various disciplines, and he argues for a new landscape aesthetic and a fresh approach. What Procter refers to as the *loss of the wilderness*, has two features: first, the increasing land taken over by development projects eats away geographical areas, and second, the fact that wilderness really does not fit with the classical conception of wilderness.[493] Procter sees a common leitmotif in writings

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[490] Monbiot, George 2013 27 May "A Manifesto for Rewilding the World" http://www.monbiot.com/2013/05/27/a-manifesto-for-rewilding-the-world/ accessed 18 October 2021.

[491] For further discussion on wilderness and arguments for preservation, see Nelson 2003, Callicott 2003, and Noss 2003.

[492] Gerard Manley Hopkins in "Inversnaid" from *Poems* 1887–89. In Simmons 2001:188. "What would the world be, once bereft/ Of wet and of wilderness? Let them be left, / O let them be left, wilderness and wet;/ Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet."

[493] Archaeologist Eddie Procter's website Landscapeism http://landscapism.blogspot.se/2015/02/towards-new-landscape-aesthetic.html accessed 21 November 2021.

and commentary on landscapes – urban as well as rural – which is that wildness, and nature itself, is on the retreat, clinging on in only a few hard-to-find redoubts.[494]

> Received wisdom has it that in crowded overdeveloped Britain, and particularly in England, wild, little visited places are 'increasingly' hard to find: there is no escape from the all-pervasive noise, speed and stress of the man-made technologies that we have created. We are now enslaved by the forces that have also impoverished our environment.[495]

Many who write about the wilderness seem to have a particular place in mind, shaped by the conception of wilderness characterised by the absence of human beings and interference, and where the individual can have an experience of the sublime. This echoes Cronon's critique, but Procter looks in another direction: if we look for wilderness that is supposed to look like the sublime wilderness, freed from human interference, then we will miss the wild spaces that are actually there to find, because "remote places are all around and do not require arcane or esoteric knowledge in order to be enjoyed".[496] Procter's advice is to explore the *wildness*, i.e., the wild places that can be found, and to form a personal bond with them. Robert Macfarlane makes a similar point in *Wild Places*: "Time and again, *wildness* has been declared dead in Britain and Ireland."[497] Many fail to see the wild places that are still to be found because we expect them to look in a particular way and to fulfil some aesthetic notion of places that are seen as beautiful and worth protecting. The focus shifts from 'wilderness' towards 'wild places'. 'Wild places' are far more multifaceted, not just in relation to the involvement of humans or the presence of wildlife, but more so in relation to the realm of the rural and the urban. The point is, if looking for wild places, we must look for something other than the wildernesses that are gone. Graham Harvey pictures the Britons' conception of wilderness as equally odd as their conception of the agricultural and pastoral landscape of the south of England (which is primarily seen as nature in contrast to the seemingly more constructed urban realm). In Britain, as elsewhere, distance from urban construction is deemed emblematic or definitive as 'nature', and as urban

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[494] Archaeologist Eddie Procter's website Landscapeism http://landscapism.blogspot.se/2013/01/finding-wildness-places-to-be-left.html accessed 7 September 2016.

[495] Archaeologist Eddie Procter's website Landscapeism http://landscapism.blogspot.se/2013/01/finding-wildness-places-to-be-left.html accessed 7 September 2016.

[496] Archaeologist Eddie Procter's website Landscapeism http://landscapism.blogspot.se/2013/01/finding-wildness-places-to-be-left.html accessed 7 September 2016.

[497] Macfarlane 2008:8. Macfarlane refers to the writer E. M. Forster who in the 1960s claimed that two great wars had eliminated the wildness of these islands. A hundred years before, in the 1860s, some considered Britain so thickly peopled, so intensively farmed and so industrialised that wilderness was nowhere to be found.

construction increases the required distance is harder to find, while the boundary between the urban, rural and wilderness may be strictly defined in theory and separated in the human mind. Harvey notes that nature wildly refuses to recognise this artificial boundary.[498] Foxes and other wild animals transgressively move into town and hunt in gardens. Wild birds are now more common in suburban gardens than they are out among the fields and (surviving) hedges of the countryside. Cemeteries have been found in a recent survey to be vital for wildlife in Britain.[499] Harvey suggests a second notion of wilderness, one that is up to date with a contemporary English landscape:

> The second notion is that wildernesses are places fatally damaged by too much activity of inappropriate kinds, usually by humans who decline to dwell harmoniously and work cooperatively alongside other species. Put another way, wilderness is the result of human disruption. Human activities create rather than destroy this wilderness.[500]

This turns the perspective to the wilful construction of "monocultural wilderness"[501] which he considers to be the most dramatic of contemporary assaults of humanity against the larger-than-human world. Such places are shaped by humans, they are damaged places, often found on the periphery, such as the edges of cities or in a countryside shaped by industrialised agriculture. Harvey notes that, for example, Pagan groups often exalt and value such places positively. Such places may be what I refer to as wounded places and 'wild places'.

In coming to grips with the list of terms with the prefix 'wild' we should avoid the "dubious dualities", because this is, as Harvey concludes, a "messy context", and it challenges what we mean when we talk about wilderness or wild places.[502] It give rise to the simple question: where are these places to be found? Harvey offers some direction; these places are often *marginal places,* for example, places can be found in the outskirts of town. Marginal places have a special attraction as being ambivalent, and I will discuss Dartmoor as one such marginal place. In fact, contemporary wild places are more in tune with the premodern notion of wilderness. Laura Feldt relates wilderness to mythology, and a distinctive feature here is not the absence of human interference, but rather that wilderness is a "space of encounters"

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[498] Harvey 2012:268. The term 'wilderness' is contested but references to 'the wild, such as wild animals, birds, habitats and locations (again, often more remote uplands or seacoasts) proliferate. Nonetheless,"these are less commonly associated with or identified as 'wilderness' than they are elsewhere. Nonetheless, the same dubious dualities (nature/culture; humans/world; people/other species; species/ environment) are now at play globally."

[499] https://www.countryfile.com/wildlife/cemeteries-become-havens-for-british-wildlife/ accessed 1 November 2021.

[500] Harvey 2012:279.

[501] Harvey 2012:279.

[502] Harvey 2012:270.

between the human self and the supernatural other, and between humans and natural alterity.[503]

> People go to the wilderness to meet themselves, their demons, and their gods; it is simultaneously framed as refuge, paradise, waste land, and hell; it is where you can be lead astray, into idolatry or death, or where you can discover a new subjectivity, where you can find the deepest wisdom or great ignorance.[504]

In fact, in the premodern conception of wilderness it is an ambivalent place of dangers and enticing secrets, it is far from the romantic notion of wilderness. It is a distinctively darker place. The darkness is part of the attraction.

Wilderness conservation has been a theme that has been dominant in the mobilisation of radical environmentalism, according to the environmental scholar Wolfgang Rüdig,[505] although in Britain wilderness had not had the same radicalising effect as the fight to preserve wilderness areas in other countries, such as the US, which is due to the fact that that Britain practically has no real wilderness left.[506] Rüdig's comment is dated two decades ago, and therefore a contemporary context must be considered. Concerning the lack of wilderness, we cannot expect to find more areas referred to as wilderness (in the sense of places untouched by human interference) today than in the second half of the 1990s. Whether the lack of wilderness may have a radicalising effect or not must be considered in my contemporary material. What I see in my study is *au contraire*; the absence of wilderness, or the loss of wilderness, works as an incentive for radicalisation, particularity in relation to the theme of "the wild" and rewilding.

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[503] Feldt 2012:2.

[504] Feldt 2012:1.

[505] According to Rüdig, Britain was in a special position because there was no major nuclear expansion in the 1970s and 1980s, and therefore the anti-nuclear movement was rather weak. It is notable, however, that he was speaking specifically about 'nuclear energy' and he did not refer to the intimate link to nuclear weapons, particularly in the era of the Cold War. His analysis of the radical environmental movement thus leaves out the relation to the peace movement and the women's movement and the issue of nuclear weapons that was crucial for the activism in relation to Greenham Common in the early 1980s.

[506] Rüdig 1995:221.

Chapter 3 Dark Green Spirituality in Times of Climate Crisis and Ecocide

3.1 Exploring Narratives and Points of Negotiation

In the previous chapter, I wrote about the man who accompanied me on the train on my journey to Totnes, and how this encounter offered input for reflection in approaching my study. The man told about his wartime experience, and this encounter made me reflect on how people tell their own personal narratives in relation to distinctive historical events. For this man, his childhood was related to the Second World War. In my encounters in the field, I have found that this form of narrativisation is common among people: Today many tell of their personal experiences of living in times of climate change, loss of biodiversity and ecological crisis. In this the general narrative is related to a personal narrative. In this chapter I offer examples of several such personal narratives.

This study is set in the intersection between the environmental movement and dark green spirituality and my aim is to explore the points of negotiation that emerge here. Given that the connection between spirituality and ecology is in flux, the study needs to pay attention to change, but changes are not only responses, adjusting to changes because people are agents of change. In my field, I had many encounters with people who have shared their experiences of turning to spirituality in relation to the ecological crisis. Reading reports on the ecological and climate crisis it is easy to picture a dystopian future, yet this is not the purpose, rather, the question that is immanent is: how to cope with this new reality?

I explore the relation between this new reality and alternative spiritualities, or more precisely dark green spirituality, and a central query is: what motivates people in their turn to spirituality? Practical effort is needed to handle these devastating events and challenges, but what is often expressed in this material is a need for new stories that can address the situation, and these new stories may be created on the basis of from myths and legends as well as modern stories. Thus, to tell the story of climate crisis and ecocide is a central theme in this thesis, and I offer examples throughout this work.

3.1.1 Spirituality and Living Through Climate Crisis

What is it like to live in times of climate change? I have participated in a sharing circle where this question was up for discussion, and I give an account of some of the voices here. In this sharing circle, the participants in the course had divided into two smaller groups which consisted of 6–8 persons sitting on chairs that were rearranged and placed in a circle in the room that usually worked as a seminar room. In this sharing circle, rather than an ongoing discussion, participants took it in turns to speak and all shared their reflections, one after the other. The sharing circle is a reflective practice that aims to find forms of communication that are less hierarchical and that allow all voices to be heard, and I will discuss these practices later. Hereon, however, the focus is on the stories told and how they are commented up on and understood in the sharing circles. From this sharing circle I present two voices, Janine and Margaret, who offer their reflections on the role of spirituality when living in times of crisis. While Janine elaborates her view of spirituality in contrast to traditional religion, Margaret's view of spirituality is rather spirituality on its own terms, that is, for her spirituality is not understood in relation to traditional religion but instead elaborated from everyday life. As will be seen, these voices proceed from personal experiences of living through crises; for Janine it is the 2008 economic crisis in the US, and for Margaret, her childhood in the UK during the Second World War and her youth in the scarcity of the post-war years. I start my analysis with a story that was told by Janine in this sharing circle, which is the story of "the pious man". This is a parable on the challenges that lie ahead, and the hard rain falling, causing a flood, is just one these future scenarios. I open my thesis with these stories since they allow the reader to meet some of the persons who have shared their stories with me, and to let their voices be heard, and because these stories are representative of the theme of this thesis.

Janine is a woman in her forties from the US. Janine's reflection is based on her personal life, as well as the economic crisis of 2008, when many Americans had to leave their homes. During the years after the crisis of 2008, she lost her elderly parents and her employment in the real estate business. She describes herself as someone who reached rock bottom and who had to find a way from there. When she reflects on the role of spirituality in relation to living in times of crisis, these experiences form the background to her story. When Janine shared her reflection on why spirituality is needed in our time, she referred to the story of the pious man. Janine asked if anyone had heard the story, some nodded and confirmed that it was a well-known story. For me, and some of the others who were present on this occasion, however, it was a new story, and therefore she told the story in this circle. I have written the story as it was told at this occasion, but there are many versions and different titles of this story to be found, for example, on the internet.[507] My

[507] For examples search the web for "Good will save me".

intention here, however, is to analyse it in the context where it was told, not to compare different versions.

> Once there was a pious man living as a hermit in a simple cabin in the forest, by the river. He spent his days in constant prayer and praising the lord. One day, however, there was a heavy rain coming on, and the rain kept falling for days. Soon the water in the river began to rise, on the banks and it got closer to the man's home. He heard a knock on his door and outside stood his neighbours, they were all wet from the rain and they asked him to come with them as they would seek shelter in the hills where they would be safe from the rising floods. The pious man shook his head; he would stay where he was, pray and put his trust in the Lord. So, the neighbours left. The following day the water had risen inside the house and the man was sitting on his table to keep dry.
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> Again, there was a knock on the door; the neighbours were back and this time they came in a boat to ask the man to come with them, but just as before the man refused to follow them. He was a man of God, and so he would continue to pray and put his trust in the Lord. Boats were for those who did not pray. The next day the rain was still pouring down, and the man had climb up to sit on the roof of the house. Now the neighbours returned a third time, this time in a helicopter, and they really begged him to follow them back to safety from the flood. Nevertheless, like the previous times, the pious man gave the same answer: "God will look after me, I will stay here, and say my prayers and nothing can harm me. God will see to that," the pious man said with conviction in his voice. The neighbours made a last effort to persuade him without success, and shook their heads before leaving the man, knowing that there was no point trying to convince him to come with them.
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> As the water was rising continuously, the pious man intensified his praying, nevertheless, he soon came to the point where he fell into the water and drowned. When he stood outside the gates of heaven, facing the Lord, he could not but ask the Lord. Why? Had he not been a good Christian? How come he, who had been such a pious man, who had always said his prayers, who had avoided sins and lived a righteous life, why hadn't he been saved? Why had the Lord not even tried to save him? The Lord looked at him, with a firm eye and answered: "Why did I not save you? I sent you the neighbours, I sent them again, a second time, with the boat, I sent them again, a third time, with the helicopter, but each time you refused to accept the help I offered you."

From a general perspective of environmental discourse, the story of the pious man is open for various interpretations. It is, for example, possible to see the main character, the pious man, as a climate change denier; a man who refuses to listen to the warnings of the oncoming storm, who is stuck in his beliefs, neglecting the signs even after the water is rising in his own place. My intention in presenting it here is to analyse it in the context where it appeared, that is, as part of a conversation about what it would be like living in times of climate change, and more precisely on the

role of spirituality in times of climate change. A central point in Janine's reasoning is that spirituality is seen as distinct from religion.

3.1.2 Dark Green Spirituality and Religion

Janine presents herself thus: "I see myself as being spiritual but not religious", and as she places herself on the side of spirituality rather than religion, her expression is very much a slogan in alternative spiritualities. It sets up being spiritual as distinct from being religious. The distinction between religion and spirituality has gained much attention among scholars but Janine shows that the distinction is not only a scholarly pursuit, because it is of real relevance to her. The anthropologist of religion Anne-Christine Hornborg notes that "I'm spiritual, not religious" has become a key expression of a new form of globalised religion focusing on a specific notion of spirituality signifying a universal human essence located deep inside each individual. Hornborg concludes: "The message is: Spirituality unites us into a single humanity, while religion, with its dogma and rituals, separates us."[508] In this sharing circle, Janine shared the meaning of spirituality and told the story to illustrate what she meant by spirituality, as different from religion. The pious man may be the main character in this story; however, he is not the hero of the story; the heroes are the neighbours who come to offer their help to the pious man, living by himself by the river. Hence, I would not characterise this as a story that mediates a critique of religion in general from a secular perspective – that is not the point made by Janine – and neither can it be read in the story. What is criticised is the specific religion of the pious man, who represents a religious faith that is dedicated to praying and praising God. It is an otherworldly religion, not a religion of participation in the world. Although the pious man spends his days in prayers and praise, the moral of the story rather points to the neighbours. It is the neighbours who are sent by God. It is the neighbours, making repeated efforts to save their fellow man, who are pictured as those who are closer to God, in the sense of being directed in their actions and following God's plan. The religious activities of the pious man are primarily motivated by life after death, which makes him deaf to his neighbours in this world. When Janine told the story, she made a point out of this: for her the story illustrates the difference between religion, as exemplified by the pious man, and spirituality, exemplified by the neighbours, but more so, that the spirituality of the neighbours, not the religion of the pious man, would be vital to manage the challenges that comes about in times of climate change.

Janine tells the story as a parable, a genre which is part of a traditional Christian discourse, but although she follows in the tradition of telling parables she distances herself from traditional religion. Janine tells the story as an illustration of the question, what kind of religion/spirituality is needed in times of climate change? In

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[508] Hornborg 2011. Hornborg draws on fieldwork in Canadian Mi'kmaq reserves and examples of contemporary spirituality, mainly from Sweden.

the story of the pious man there is no explicit references to climate change, nonetheless, the story is set in a context where it works as an example. The flooding is of course related to weather, and it is possible to associate with climate change in the form of extreme weather and rising sea levels. The story of the pious man can be seen as an inverted version of the biblical legend of Noah; the heavy rain resonates with the biblical rain that fell for forty days until the world was drowned. In the Bible Noah is a man of action, building an ark for himself and his family and two each of all the animals in creation. The pious man is a counter-figure to Noah's practical effort to save creation, that is, his family and the animals that were included in the ark.[509] Hence, Janine takes an existing story, places it in a context of environmental discourse where it takes on a new meaning. A new story is created through reinterpretation or retelling of an old one. "The Pious Man" originates from a religious discourse that is here set in a context of environmental and spiritual discourse. As Janine told the story, the pious man represents a traditional form of religion where piety is described as withdrawing from the world; the narrative has a critical approach to this form of religion. Spiritual life is on the contrary something related to an engagement in the world here and now and is set up as a model for how to act in times of crisis.

The distinction between religion and spirituality is emphasised among many informants, and although they turn away from traditional forms of religions, they are open for alternative spiritualities. The narrative "The Pious Man" concerns the distinction between spirituality and religion, and from a theoretical perspective, there is a comprehensive discussion on spirituality as distinct from religion, which I have outlined in the previous theoretical chapter. Spirituality is considered as personal and closer to everyday life. For example, Roger Gottlieb sets spirituality and spiritual practice as a means to self-transformation, and a committed involvement with others.[510] Similarly Heelas claims; 'Spirituality has to do with the personal; that which is interior or immanent"[511] and contemporary spirituality may more precisely be termed 'spirituality of life".[512] Both Gottlieb's and Heelas' conceptions of spirituality resonates with the view expressed in the circle above. I will not linger on the theoretical discussion of spirituality here, because the point is that from an emic perspective there is a real difference between spirituality and religion, and this is important to take in considerations.

Janine considers spirituality to be different and distinct from religion. In the story told, the otherworldly religion of the pious man is in contrast to the this-worldly

509 The story of "The Pious Man", also known as "God Will Save Me", is part of a Christian religious discourse on the role of prayer versus action, which in one sense is part of the discussion as it is set in the context of climate crisis and spirituality.

510 Gottlieb 1996:521–522. Gottlieb sees spirituality as "distinct from dogmatic religious attachment to a particular rituals, creeds or organisations".

511 Heelas 2005:414.

512 Heelas 2005:414.

spirituality of the neighbours. The story of "The Pious Man" communicates a model for spirituality in relation to climate change. The religion of the pious man, who focuses on his individual relationship to God, instead of the relation to the community, stands in contrast to the spirituality of the neighbours who represent community, care and compassion, as well as practical efforts. It is the neighbours who stand as a model of the kind of spirituality that is needed to handle the challenges that come in time of climate crisis. While Janine draws this distinction towards religion, others, who are the majority in my material, approach spirituality not as different from religion but on its own terms.

3.1.3 Spirituality on Its Own Terms: "Spirituality for Me is Compassion and Creating Community"

Margaret shared her story in the same circle as Janine, so their stores share the theme of living in times of crisis. Margaret outlines her view of spirituality in relation to her personal life story. Margaret was born in the UK and called herself a war-child, because she was born during the Second World War. Her earliest memories were from the wartime, and she grew up in the scarcity of post-war Britain, a hard time which forms the background to her reflection on living in times of climate crisis. Margaret tells how as a teenager she was irritated by how people handled crises, because every time someone was having a hard time, people always came up saying, "Let's have a cup of tea, dear." And if things were really bad, they would say, let's have a good cry, dear, and then we'll have a nice cup of tea."[513] Being a rebellious young woman in the radical spirit of mid-1960s, she said "are we going to solve all our problems by drinking tea?!!" Four decades later, Margaret spent much of her career working in aid projects fighting poverty in West African countries, and on the way she learned to revaluate this form of tea drinking. Because when looking back Margaret admits:

> It worked! It took us through the war, and it took us through the difficult years of poverty after the war. If someone did have a breakdown, there was always someone taking care of that person, while some put the kettle on to make tea. People cared for each other.

Hence, it was not really the tea that did the trick, rather that people took care of each other, and Margaret says that she came to value this kind of knowledge of living through crisis, as she sums up: "Spirituality for me is compassion and creating community". The emphasis on the role of community in Margaret's story resonates with Janine's story above. For Janine, the religion of the pious man, who focuses on his individual relation to God, rather than his relation to the community, stood in contrast to the spirituality of the neighbours who represent community, care and

[513] Field notes 2014.

compassion. In Margaret's story the important thing is to take care of someone who has had a difficult time and had a breakdown, to offer compassion, community and "a nice cup of tea". Thus, these narratives put forward a model for how spirituality may help to handle the challenges that come in a time of climate crisis. There is a further thing to note in these women's stories: their understanding is based on the role of spirituality in living through crisis, as fundamental in forming community and care, based on actual crises they have experienced earlier in life. For Margaret, her early years in wartime and post-war Britain, and her experience of working with aid projects in West Africa forms the background to her story. Janine's background, or rock bottom, is the experiences of the economic crisis 2008, and the loss of her elderly parents and at the same time losing her job. Janine and Margaret take these personal experiences of crises to form a concrete and positive vision of how to cope with the challenges of living in times of climate change and ecocide. The common feature of Janine's and Margaret's stories is that they mediate a model of spirituality that can be summed up in the words "compassion" and "creating community". Spirituality is characterised by immanence and an engagement in your community. The narratives convey a spirituality ethos that focuses on these worldly matters, on caring for your neighbour, on action and community, and this socially engaged spirituality resonates with the term 'social resilience', a term that is central in environmental discourse. Social resilience takes the notion of 'resilience' and emphasises the social dimension for creating safety. As we have seen, Keck and Sakdapolrak characterise social resilience through three capacities: coping, adapting and transforming.[514] The coping capacities are the abilities of social actors to cope with and overcome adversities, adaptive capacities are their ability to learn from past experience and adjust to future challenges in their everyday life, and the transforming capacities concern their ability to craft sets of institutions that foster individual welfare and sustainable societal robustness to cope with future crisis. I found all three of these capacities to be present here, and I will elaborate on this.

3.1.4 Spirituality, Community and Social Resilience

Conversations between participants may take place in various circumstances; sometimes they emerge during a simple walk in the garden, or back to your lodgings, and on these occasions the conversation may return to themes previously discussed, and to questions that linger. My conversation with Fiona was one such occasion and it was rather brief as we were on the move. Fiona had been engaged in the Transition movement, and part of a project of creating an eco-community for some years. She said, "There are no safe places – there are only safe people"; Fiona emphasises that "safe people" are those who have been making a transition towards ecological living. In saying this she stresses that there are no safe places, in the sense that there

[514] Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013.

is nowhere to seek refuge because climate change is a threat that it is impossible to escape from, its global effect is inescapable. The 'safe people' are those who have made a transition, that is, those who have changed their life and have adjusted their lives to new conditions, who are part of a community, and who are partly self-sufficient and grow at least part of their food and form a spiritual relation to the land. Again, creating community plays a vital role in Fiona's story; what she adds to the previous examples which emphasise community is self-sufficiency. While 'community' is an emic term, it is term that is part of a spiritual discourse, and a corresponding etic term is social resilience, emphasising the social dimension of resilience, in contrast to technological solutions.

Fiona describes a change in where, and how, safety is to be found. What does it mean to say that there are no safe places anymore? The fact that climate change is of global range is of course one reason why it is impossible to escape. This also tells us something of the role of spirituality because what she calls a spiritual relation to the land is not a retreat, neither is it a safe place. Nor does it mean praying, as in the story of the pious man told by Janine. Fiona's understanding of 'safe people' resonates with both Janine's and Margaret's view of spirituality. For Janine the neighbours' effort to save the pious man works as a model for the kind of spirituality that is called for in times of climate change, and Margaret places "creating community and compassion" at the core of spirituality. Fiona claims that "there are only safe people" and her model for safety is found in the eco-community. Hence, safety is *created* in the community, and by the community, that is, the people in the community, and in creating this safety there are concrete questions to deal with, for example, which skills will be needed to adjust to an ecological life? Among those mentioned there are practical skills such as growing food, carpentry, or craftsmanship and artistic skills. *Social skills* are helpful in creating community as well as *spiritual skills*, for example, being able to practise healing, to offer workshops that help in relating and communicating with the larger-than-human world. I will elaborate on this in forthcoming chapters. Spirituality that focuses on this-worldly matters, on caring for your neighbour, on action and community, resonates with the term 'social resilience', a concept that is central in environmental discourse. What is central here is how the spiritual value of community and that of social resilience very much converge.

3.1.5 The Spiritual Value of the Countryside

The global range of climate change and ecological crisis makes escape from the effects futile, but as Fiona stressed, while there may not be any safe places, it is nonetheless a great benefit to be in the countryside rather than in a city. The British environmentalist and writer Dougal Hine emphasises the values of creating small social communities, proceeding from a story which he referred to as "Life Survives in Pockets". This is originally a biological theory that describes how life returned after the last ice age in Northern Europe. As the ice sheet cover the landscape, life

forms disappeared, but as soon as the ice melted away life returned very rapidly, and scientists have formulated new theories as to how this happened. The old theory assumed that the ice had eliminated all life in Europe, and that life returned because seeds were spread from the south, by wind or animals that migrated to the areas after the ice was gone. However, a new theory assumes that seeds were able to survive under the ice – in pockets – and as soon as the ice disappeared, they were ready to flourish. Hine takes this as an example of how we can create small communities – and survive under the ice in pockets – in times of climate change. It is notable that this is a biological, scientific theory, but it is extrapolated and turned into something more – a narrative of surviving in times of crisis. Hine turns the theory to a story set in in our own times, which tells about how to survive in times of climate changes, and which illustrates social resilience. These small-scale communities are more easily created in the countryside than in an urban environment.

A feature that is often repeated in my field is the value of being close to, or part of nature in everyday life: some express their need for certain things in nature, such as oak trees, birds, squirrels, dawn, the moon or the starry sky at night, or the sea which they have formed a spiritual bond with. For example, Miki, a woman I was in conversation with during a walk on Dartmoor, expresses her lifelong longing for the sea, and she told how she looked forward to her retirement, the following year, because she had decided to move to the coast in order to be close to the sea. For her,

> Walking barefoot by the sea, with the water swilling over my ankles, and gazing towards the horizon, that is the most spiritual thing to do for me. [515]

For Miki, it was the sea and the beach that were the places to which she had formed a spiritual bond. Many express the importance of specific places. Some referred to particular places that they needed to be close to as a spiritual resource, for example Dartmoor. Others referred to things to do that required being out in nature; one informant described it as “a place to listen”, and again being away from the urban realm – in simple terms, being closer to nature – is seen as something that feeds spirituality. Robert is a man who had lived as a Buddhist monk for years, both in England and abroad, and at the time of my field study he lived in a mid-sized city in Britain, but before that he lived for years in London and in visiting Devon he concludes.

> London is no good for meditation. There is too much distraction going on. This is a good place for meditation. There’s a lot of good people here.[516]

For Robert it is the combination of place and people, together with the absence of the distractions of city life that makes him see Devon as “a good place for

[515] Field notes 2013.

[516] Field notes 2013.

meditation". Many appreciate being part of the shifts of day and night, or the changing seasons (I will discuss silence and darkness in forthcoming chapters) and relate this to spiritual practices, such as seasonal or personal rituals, healing, contemplating or meditation. Hence, the project of moving to the countryside is part of the transition, it is a project of creating this safety, rather than escaping to a safe place, and although there are no safe places, there seem to be places that have clear advantages in creating safety. Among those I have been in conversation with there are two features that are repeated: the countryside is considered a place that offers two major benefits, and that seem to be major forces in the attraction of it. First, the countryside is a place where it is possible to live a more ecological/resilient life, and secondly, the countryside is a place where it is easier to live a spiritual life.

The relation between the landscape and life can be conceptualised as 'bodies-as-place', which according to Edward Casey focuses on situatedness and social contextualisation, and concerns physical embeddedness rather than emplacement within a physical environment.[517] I think bodies-as-places can be related to individuals as body-as-place, and more so, it should be noted, the distinction between an ecological/resilient life, and a spiritual life is made for analytical purposes and those I have been in conversation with do not necessarily distinguish between these; often they do not, as in the account above. First, one way of living a more ecological/ resilient life can be to grow your own vegetables, if not fully then at least partly self-sufficient, and what many describe can be summed up as a life of down-shifting, which concerns both ecology and economy. I give examples of this later in this chapter. Secondly, the countryside is seen as a place where it is easier to live a spiritual life. One describes the countryside as a place where "you can live a more spiritual life" and many emphasise the value of being in nature as part of your everyday life, to be in tune with the rhythm of day and night, and the changing seasons. From a general perspective, social resilience is concerned with social relations, but what is emphasised here is that our social relations are not restricted to humans but imply the larger-than-human world. Again, the focus of community and compassion is part of the picture, but also the value of encounters with the larger-than-human world. I will elaborate on this later in relation to practices and various workshops.

So far, I have discussed how stories put forward a model for spirituality which emphasises the ideals of compassion and community, and how they draw on personal experiences of living through crisis, emphasising community. Creating and sharing narratives is a distinctive tool for creating community. Set in an environmental discourse there is a point of convergence between the value of spirituality and community and the term 'social resilience'. Many of those narratives which express the value of spirituality and community are related to practices that

[517] Casey 1997:323 and 285–330. Casey's notion of place is different from the traditional sense of place, seeing place as place-attachment, and 'bodies-as-place' helps to get beyond the contested notion of 'environment' that rests upon the nature-culture distinction.

are to be found in this field, such as sharing circles, which aim at creating community, but also reflection on the value of community (as seen in the story of the pious man) and practising the skills needed to create community. I discuss practices in the next section of the thesis, but first I will turn to activism and discuss how working for social change in new ways takes engagement beyond the protest of the public sphere.

3.2 Dark Green Spirituality and Ecological Awareness

Protest in relation to the ongoing climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, or in support of agreements, such as the Copenhagen or Paris agreement (2009 and 2015), has been a priority on the activist's agenda. The ambition has been to reverse the development, and to work for an incentive for a new development. However, due to the absence of success and the accelerating reality of climate change, have many have revalued these forms of activist work. There is an effort to find new ways of working in the transition to a resilient life.

3.2.1 Dark Green Spirituality – Beyond Traditional Forms of Activism

In summer 2014, on one of my visits to Schumacher College, a small group consisting of a number of participants on a short course *Uncivilisation – Stories at the Cliff Edge* came to talk about the then forthcoming Climate Change Summit in Paris in autumn 2015.[518] Discussions are of course not only a part of workshops or seminars but may emerge in various circumstances and situations, for example, during a coffee break. On one such occasion a group had gathered outside in the garden. It was a lovely day in June, with sunshine and a soft breeze in the trees. Still the theme of the course concerned living in times of climate change, and the subject lingered during the coffee break as well. Among those who took part in this conversation there were various views regarding whether the forthcoming summit would make a change or not.[519] One of the hopeful voices was Elizabeth, who expressed her enthusiasm for the conference, and suggested that all of us should reunite in Paris the next year to participate in the demonstrations in support of an agreement. She was convinced that in Paris the world leaders would finally get together and come up with a settlement that would take action to turn the changing climate. Elisabeth had worked as an activist in many years, for example, in local campaigns to make political authorities create well-functioning public transport, and in projects for creating allotments. She had a strong conviction that it was possible – even necessary – to work for change, on various levels. Despite her enthusiasm,

[518] Field notes 2014.

[519] Field notes 2014.

the suggestion did not get the immediate and positive answer she might have expected. Jens was one participant who did not agree about the positive expectations of a settlement at the Paris summit. Jens told us that he had felt that kind of hope and enthusiasm for the world leaders' ability to take action against climate change in 2009, in relation to the Copenhagen climate summit. In Copenhagen he had participated in the demonstrations, he had even been in the Bella Centre, close to the negotiations, and he had then held great hopes that President Barack Obama and the other world leaders would arrive at an agreement. Nonetheless, at the Copenhagen summit world leaders failed to reach an agreement. Jens considered Copenhagen to be the last chance for world leaders to take action, and their failure had made him lose his confidence in the ability of world politics to act against climate change. Among those who participated in the conversation, several agreed with this view: the climate summit in Copenhagen 2009 was indeed the last opportunity to stop the increasing global temperatures caused by emissions of carbon dioxide gases. Even if there were a climate agreement in Paris, it would be too late; too late and probably too little, they said.[520] It notable that Jens said that he used to have the same hopes as Elizabeth expressed, but there were five years between Copenhagen and Paris.

This conversation is an illustration of the different approaches to climate change and policymaking among the participants. The UN General Assembly has been governed by an understanding of climate change as anthropocentric, and the agreement focused strictly on the emission of carbon dioxide, but among many activists and laypersons climate change is more often seen as layers of crises. Hence, the summit's focus is regarded as "too late and too little" because it neglects the depth of the crisis. This conversation took place in 2014 and the climate summit of 2009 was then five years in the past. As seen from this account, the approaches to the efficiency of settlements and policymaking among the participants are not univocal. Among those I was in conversation with, there were various voices with different opinions; there were some who supported the work of politicians, and some who themselves worked in green politics, some locally and some in the EU parliament, while others considered politics to be an inefficient method, and many expressed the same disappointment as Jens above. Jens had been an engaged activist, he had been supporting the world leaders' ambition to find a settlement, and the disappointment was not something that made him give up, instead he now wanted to find new ways of working to make a change. The visit to Schumacher was part of this process towards a new form of engagement. The focus in this thesis is precisely on this process towards new forms of engagement, and part of this is done in what I refer to as reflective practices.

The account above and the different expectations to the Paris conference illustrate one aspect that I have seen in many of the stories from activists that I have heard. There were different hopes and expectations related to the forthcoming meeting,

[520] Field notes 2014.

nonetheless, many (seemingly the majority) say that they have been engaged in activist work where they have been dedicated to campaigning, and some have tried to get their message across to political leaders, and some are still trying, however, there are also those who say that they, in a sense, have given up these ways of working and that they want to find new ways of working. I will present examples of this further on in this chapter, and throughout the thesis. For many this effort to find new ways of working includes a new interest in spirituality. What is particularly interesting from my perspective is how new narratives and practices are created and constructed. The discussion in the account above, with Elizabeth and Jens, concerned climate change and political policymaking, and if the voices in these kinds of conversations were far from univocal, there was less disagreement about the understanding of climate change described in scientific reports that offer evidence for the reality of climate change. There was a general agreement on the reality and emergency of climate change and ecological crisis, nonetheless with an awareness that climate change is not only a cognitive understanding of scientific facts, it is rather a very personal experience of coming to terms with the state of the world. This personal aspect came to the fore in the conversation with Jens and Fiona.

3.2.2 The Moment You Realise Climate Change – The First Follower

"Everyone has a moment when you realise the reality of climate change, and this moment may come differently to each of us". These are the words of the British environmentalist and writer Dougal Hine, and he continues: "Today it is not a single crisis; it is a layer of crises."[521] Hine poses a rhetorical question; "If it turns out that climate change is a mistake, does that mean that everything is okay?", and his answer is of course that even if climate change (that is, anthropogenic climate change, increasing temperatures due to emissions of greenhouse gases) were a mistake, there would still be a number of difficult crises for mankind to deal with. Hine sums up "It is a feature, not a bug." [522] This resonates with Hulme (to whom Hine also refers), who sees climate change, not as a problem waiting for a solution, but as an environmental, cultural and political phenomenon, which is reshaping the way we think about ourselves, our societies and the place of humanity on Earth.[523] There is no simple solution to the crisis, no fix that everything can go back to how it was before.

Everyone may have moments of realisation of the reality of climate change, just like Hine says, but I found among those I have been in conversation with that the way this realisation comes to each person varies greatly. It is not just the realisation of changing climate due to global warming, but rather a more *general* sense of crisis.

[521] Field notes 2014.

[522] Field notes 2014.

[523] Hulme 2009:xxviii.

For some there might be the loss of biodiversity, or animal rights, the lack of global and social justice, or facing environmental degradation, in what is referred to as the loss of place, for example in relation to deforestation, to mention just a few examples. Given these various modes of awareness, it is a highly personal experience. What many refer to is how this awareness of climate crisis also opens up a process where they start to question "things taken for granted", which may concern how to live your life, and this may have social consequences if the people in their circles do not share their insights. Among those I have been in conversation with, I often heard this dilemma addressed as "the first follower".[524] The meaning of "the first follower" is that if you are the first to get up to dance on an empty dancefloor you will feel uncomfortable at first and think that people see you as a fool. However, as soon you get up and dance, you will soon get the first follower, someone else who takes the floor and dances along with you, and then it will be all right, you are no longer alone and soon more followers will take the floor. Similarly, If you start questioning things taken for granted, among your friends or family, in a social movement, in the public, or any other social context, you may initially be seen as mad, until someone else follows you. Gradually you will find like-minded people, and your voice is no longer a solitary voice in the void.

In my field, I had encounters with participants who told me their story of this process of realising climate crisis or being the first to hit the dancefloor, and I give examples of this further on in the personal stories of Steven, Kim and Pierre who are some of those who shared their experiences with me

3.2.3 The Therapeutic Importance of Spirituality and Ecological Awareness

One of the personal stories of being the first to hit the dancefloor is Steven from the US. During a coffee break we come to talk about his background, perhaps as an answer to the question "what brought you here?" Steven has a background in the art world, but he describes himself as "a long-time environmental activist", and he says that his understanding of nature has always been based on science, but in recent times he found that spirituality became necessary in his life because:

> Spirituality is the only way I have been able to deal with depression. For me spirituality is a form of self-reflection, and it has taught me to live with uncertainty and to get out of the unreal bubble.[525]

In this new trajectory towards spirituality, many of his friends (who were equally based on science and part of the environmental movement, where he had been working for so long) did not share his attraction to spirituality. On the contrary, his

[524] Field notes 2014.

[525] Field notes 2014.

friends had difficulty understanding why he suddenly became interested in spirituality, and some even mocked his newly awakened interest in spirituality. "Will you speak to stones and trees rather than us from now on?" they asked laughingly. Steven says that he feels empty towards those who have not understood those things, though many of them are his old friends.[526] Steven's story differs from the previous examples which emphasises community because Steven seems to be very much alone in his attraction to spirituality. This seems to be more of an expression of his present situation than a statement that community has nothing to do with spiritually.

As a long-time environmental activist, Steven's story is not a narrative of developing an ecological consciousness, or becoming ecologically concerned, because he had been engaged in the environmental movement for almost two decades. What Steve's distances himself from is not only the environmental activist work he has done, but he also says that he has had a view of nature that has been based on science, which he finds insufficient in dealing with depression. I discuss the role of science further on in this chapter, but here I will focus on Stevens' account of the crisis in his engagement, and how spirituality became part of his life. Steven considered spirituality to be the only way for him to "deal with depression", and his understanding of spirituality focuses on the individual, and it has a therapeutic function, in dealing with depression and offering self-reflection. Steven said that participating in the workshops helped him to open his spiritual channel, and he mention Gaia an important source of spiritual inspiration. The Gaia hypothesis has deepened his former scientific understanding of nature, and he describes a trajectory towards a more animistic worldview. Hence, spirituality helped him to continue to seek new forms of work, where spiritual perspectives are included. For Steven, the reason for his depression was due to the state of the world, and the fact that despite many years of environmental activism, the crisis was getting worse.

In simple terms, this can be understood as a reflection of how the environmental movement was losing its cause, and that it can be a reason to develop depression. Yet there is something more to it because for Steven this is also a personal crisis. He voices a disappointment about these former friends, which adds to his depression in relation to the state of the world. Steven had to revalue the activist work he had done for decades, and his new interest in spirituality led to a conflict with his old friends who did not understand his new approach to nature and his new engagement in spirituality. Initially he started to question his activist work in the environmental movement, and it had social consequences because he came to question his social relation to friends. Steven says that he felt empty towards those of his old friends who made jokes about his new interest in spirituality. There are disagreements between Steven and his former friends, and although he mentions it briefly it is clear that it has been a disappointment for him to lose his old friends. Steven's story is an

[526] Field notes 2014.

example of the therapeutic importance of spirituality because for Steven it was 'spirituality' that helped him to "deal with depression", not his friends. However, this therapy is not transcendental but rather immanent, because the spirituality he turned to is mostly inspired by Gaia spirituality. What Steven describes as opening his spiritual channel is a channel to something this-worldly rather that other-worldly.

Stevens's story is not only a revaluation of the traditional activist work that he had done for decades, and the ambition to find new ways of working. The point of negotiation concerns spirituality as well as ecological awareness, ecological crisis, but in the midst of it there is a very personal and emotional core. The philosopher Timothy Morton characterises ecological awareness as tragic melancholy and negativity, and the coexistence with a host of entities that surround and penetrate us; therefore, ecological awareness is a loop where we become aware of ourselves as a species.[527] I say that ecological awareness goes deeper because it is not simply an awareness of the outside world; it calls for a new self-awareness, asking what it means to be part of the human species, and it sets your personal life in the era of the Anthropocene. Therefore, ecological awareness does not only loop back, the outside world is not a passive outside; it looks *back,* not only to humanity, as an abstract species, but to all of us as an individual and a person. It asks: Who am I in all of this? It is a form of ecological self-awareness.

A distinctive feature of these stories is that they often include a personal experience, and many describe a deeply emotional and painful process in realising the state of the world. What I found in these conversations is that the realisation of climate or ecological crisis is part of a process, it is not an instantaneous shift of mind, although specific events, or moments, may have a deep symbolic meaning, and form an incentive to turn to spirituality. Turning to spirituality is not to be mistaken for a religious revelation, momentary a paradigmatically a mind-shift. Turning to spirituality forms a trajectory which can be described as an interplay between moments, i.e., moments of distinctive events, and the whole which has the character of an ongoing process. Hence, what I am interested in is both the psychology *behind* the realisation, but also *what comes after*, in coping with this realisation, and whether the person implements this realisation and change in his/her new practices. This is often a process of many small steps, it takes time, it is a complex chain of events and I continuously describe this in the forthcoming chapters. Participating in various workshops, which I describe as reflective practices, is part of this process, and I will give examples of these throughout this thesis. Spirituality plays a distinctive role in coping with this realisation, and this is what I refer to as the therapeutic importance of spirituality.

[527] Morton 2016.

3.2.4 The Environmental Movement, Science and the Role of Engagement

Steven's story illustrates something else; he describes himself as "a long-time environmental activist", who in recent times found that spirituality became necessary in his life. While his understanding of nature always has been based on science, lately he had reconsidered this and therefore something must be said about the meaning of science in this context.

The ecological crisis and climate change are phenomena defined in scientific discourse, and the realisation of the reality of this crisis depends to a large extent on scientific reports. In asking why people turn to spirituality in relation to the ecological crisis we have to ask what motivates them but reading these reports does not only provoke people to take action but may also generate feelings of hopelessness or be a reason to give up. Many participants express a dissatisfaction with the scientific discourse since science cannot tell the story of climate change. Science offers reports and data that give evidence for the reality of climate change, or loss of biodiversity, but to tell a story means to address what it means to live under these conditions. Stories are formative, they help us to orientate and relate to a changing reality, they offer a frame that states certain values and where the existential dimension is present. The phenomenon of climate change is, in one sense, dependent on the reports that have addressed the problem in scientific terms, based on quantitative data and measurements. Still, for many participants that I have been in conversation with, the realisation of the reality of climate change and ecological crisis is more than an intellectual understanding of a scientific phenomenon, it is rather a very personal and emotional process of coming to terms with a new reality and finding ways to cope with it. Whilst science has had an important role in offering a scientific foundation and evidence for climate change, there is a general sense that at the present stage this is something that is well known among my informants. Thus, at this stage it is not further facts that are required.

After participating in a workshop where the scientific foundation for climate change was outlined, I took part of a conversation where some participants expressed a dissatisfaction with this kind of environmental discourse because of the one-sided focus on the hard facts of science, and the frequent use of hockey-stick models based on quantitative data illustrating statistics on carbon dioxide emission in the atmosphere, rising temperatures, or reports on the reality of climate change. One participant expressed it as follows: "We need to get out of that science babble/bubble". In spoken words this has a double meaning as "babble/bubble" are almost the same word. Babble refers to the way of talking or the scientific discourse, while bubble refers to the worldview, a way of thinking, like being stuck in a mindset. This wish to get out of the science babble/bubble, however, should not be mistaken for a refutation of science; it is more correct to say that it concerns the role of scientific facts and arguments in coming to terms with climate change. Many informants refer to this as a phase that is passé, and something new ought to replace

the one-sided scientific reports since we already know that climate change is for real. Instead, many refer to how they came to realise climate change through the everyday experiences of lay knowledge; the changes that they observe in nature, shifting patterns in temperature, seasonal shifts, blossoming, the movements among animals or the disappearance of certain species. There are also experiences of extreme weather; in this they refer to local changes and personal observations, as well as global media reports, and all this comes together in a growing feeling that something is wrong. Many voice their feelings and emotions, or compassion for the larger-than-human world, the suffering of dying species, or the Earth. Some voices express a more general feeling that "there is so much pain in the world" or feelings that are "unsettling", but others give more direct expression of grief and sorrow about the current conditions; I shall come back to these voices, but first I have to conclude this discussion of the role of science.

A further feature that many participants address is that the focus on science in environmental discourse, particularly in relation to climate change, is seen as an *obstacle* to engagement, especially for those who do not have a background in science.[528] One participant expresses this as "Environmentalism has hidden behind science". The problem with the scientific discourse is that it fails to appeal to their engagement, because it doesn't address what they consider to be the urgent issues: it concerns numbers rather than values. The discussion is seen as too focused on technology, and out of touch with real life. They do not need yet another scientific report because it repeats what is already well known, that climate change is for real. There are many reasons why this discourse is so unsatisfying. Firstly, what I find to be a central feature here is that the scientific discourse is generally based on the narrow definition of anthropogenic climate change: it focuses on emissions of greenhouse gases, it offers technological solutions, and excludes the social dimension as well as the larger-than-human world. Among those turning to dark green spirituality, climate change or climate crisis are seen as an umbrella term, which covers what Lucy Sargisson refers to as "multiple and interwoven problems".[529] Secondly, an obstacle with the scientific discourse is that it is a disenchanted discourse, based on rationalisation, calculation and technology, and it pays little or no attention to values, nor can it tell a story that offers meaning, or mediate an ethos of ecological concern. Thirdly, I found it crucial that what might be seen as a critique of science is primarily a critique of *the environmental movement's relation to science*. Therefore, it is more correct to say that it is a critique of the environmental movement itself, because the environmental movement has become too dependent on science to put any strength behind their critique of the environmental crisis and has lost the ability to put forward a positive vision.

[528] Field notes 2013, 2014.

[529] Sargisson 2012:116.

The liaison between environmentalism and science has been emphasised in the discourse on climate change. Yet it is an ambivalent relation, while it strengthens the case for the environmental movement, because being based on science it offers credibility to the cause, it simultaneously creates problems when it comes to communicating its message to the public. The environmental scholar Mark Dowie notes: "It is difficult for laymen to assess the veracity of environmental scientists."[530] Defining environmental problems as scientific delegates the work of finding the solutions to experts rather than activists, or laypersons. The environmental historian Joachim Radkau writes that the process of setting environmentalism on a scientific basis creates hierarchies, with laypeople at the very bottom, even though the original impulse and initiative came from them.[531] Radkau continues:

> The knowledge of laypeople is devalued, even if it is at least as useful to the practice of environmental protection as the knowledge of experts. When experts talk about threshold values, the layperson can hardly participate, even though these values are in the final analysis negotiated rather than deduced in laboratory experiments.[532]

A scientific discourse that is conducted by experts and difficult for laypersons to access is of course an obstacle to engagement. Among those I have been in conversation with, this estrangement from environmental organisations is, however, not to be mistaken for being indifferent, or for lacking ecological concern; instead, many take this dissatisfaction as an incentive to find a new approach. They want to find new ways to work for change as an alternative to the scientific discourse and producing art and focusing on everyday life are some of the suggestions. As seen above, the discomfort with the scientific discourse on climate change that many express is a stimulus to turn to spirituality, as spirituality offers an alternative with a new set of new narratives and practices. While the realisation of climate change "may come differently to each of us",[533] forming an ecological awareness, it likewise comes in many forms; it is not equal to the realisation of changing climate due to global warming. For some, there might be the loss of biodiversity, the lack of social justice or the loss of place, animal rights, to mention just some examples. From the stories that I have heard, such as Steve's, I found that forming an ecological awareness is more of a continuous process than an instantaneous change of mind or worldview. The process in not just a cognitive, intellectual epistemological process where the output is the understanding the facts of climate

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[530] Dowie 1995:39 In environmental debates voices on both sides resort to scientism as arbiters and experts Ultimately the great controversies, whether it concerns climate change, GMOs, toxic pollution, global warming, risk assessment, or biodiversity, will be settled by science and scientists, according to Dowie.

[531] Radkau 2008:276.

[532] Radkau 2008:276.

[533] Field notes 2014.

change, the output is rather the initiation of a process of adjusting to the new understanding of the world and changing one's personal life accordingly. Hence, the realisation of the state of the world is set within a personal and existential story, and what is distinctive in these stories is that they often include an emotional experience, and even a painful process. This concerns a psychology coming to terms with the reality, but also what comes after, whether and how the person implements this realisation and actually changes his/her everyday practices or engages in some form of activism.

3.2.5 How to Work for Change?

Whilst some actively refer to their engagement as activist work or to themselves as activists, there are those who do not want to call themselves activists at all. Qian is a young woman who presents herself as "a tree hugger". Qian does not see herself an activist; 'Activism' for her includes some kind of confrontation, and she exemplifies with being a tree hugger-activist, in the sense that you climb up in the trees to protect the forest from being cut down. She is a tree hugger in a way that seeks to avoid confrontation; her aim is a "softer approach."[534] Part of the work she does is to offer workshops that she calls "Finding the Tree that is Calling You" (this workshop will be discussed in relation to practices). The interesting theme for my research, as part of the discipline of history of religion, is that leaving traditional forms of activism often coordinate with a move towards spirituality. Qian's "softer approach" relates to trees spiritually. Steven was "a long-time environmental activist"[535] who had turn to spirituality because it was "the only way I have been able to deal with depression." Steven considers 'spirituality' as a form of self-reflection, and it taught him to "live with uncertainty" and "get out of the unreal bubble." For Steven it was Gaia that offered him a new spiritual perspective on life.

Among those who identify themselves as 'activists', or refer to their work as 'activism', they often do this with a prefix that describes more precisely what kind of activism they engage in. This might be done as a modification of the meaning of the term in order to be more precise about what they mean when they talk about activism. Miguel introduces himself as a "permaculture activist", and tells how he is engaged in permaculture, as a researcher as well as in practice. Another example is Kea-Lee, a young Australian woman, who says that she does not want to be "a frontline activist"; she rather wants to call herself "a supportive activist". When she was engaged in activism, working for endangered species, she reacted against what she calls "the myth of interconnectedness" among activists. Kea-Lee describes this myth as the idea that if we only realise that we are all interconnected, then everything will be all right, as if all problems mysteriously would vanish. Kea-Lee

[534] Field notes 2013.

[535] Field notes 2014.

expresses a vague feeling, that she does not fit into a movement that seems to be too keen on creating consensus and doesn't want any self-criticism. Andrew is another voice who shares Kea-Lee's experience of working in an organisation.

Andrew is in his early twenties, and he strikes you as a witty young man who has a way with words that makes people laugh and think twice at the same time. Andrew told of his experience of activist work during a coffee break. Andrew said that he has worked in an NGO (non-governmental organisation) for some time, but he came to disagree with the ways of working in that organisation. "They said that we are an NGO, but it turned out to be an NPO (non-profit organisation) not an NGO." There were disagreements between Andrew and the organisation he was part of. The organisation did not want to include money in their work, and this was the core of the disagreement because Andrew claimed that "there is much more you can do if you allow money to be part of the work". In Andrew's organisation the majority did not want to have anything to do with money. There was a fundamental question here, on the role of money in social change, which caused Andrew to leave. During his work in the organisation, he experienced another point of conflict which concerned emotions and spirituality. Andrew says that he feels uncomfortable with "the kind of spirituality that always emphasises 'peace'", as many persons in this organisation did. Andrew feels that he could not understand this kind of spirituality as peace, since he felt a lot of anger over how things are. He says that for some the focus on peace makes certain feelings such as anger troublesome, something you do not talk about.

> I feel a lot of anger, there are a lot of things that make me angry. You need to be angry *in a good way* to change things. Anger is a kind of restlessness; I am eager to change things.[536]

Andrew describes his anger in relation to how things are, but he also distinguishes between anger and "being angry in a good way" which is not only a reaction, or simply aggression or outraged anger, but something that can lead to change, and it is directly linked to work for change. Andrew sees "being angry in a good way", as something that can be useful, which may feed the engagement in a constructive way.[537]

While Steven, Kea-Lee, and Andrew bear witness to strains and conflicts in their relations to organisations, they nonetheless find new ways of working after leaving these organisations. William is another voice here. William is getting on for fifty, and he offers a record of various social movements as he looks back at his life.[538]

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[536] Field notes 2013

[537] Anger is one of the emotions on the emotional spectrum, and it is an emotion that has received attention in activist discourse, for example Martin Luther King's approach to non-violence emphasised non-anger. Anger has also received scholarly attention, for example the philosopher Marta Nussbaum places "anger at the heart of revolutionary transformation". Nussbaum 2016.

[538] Fieldnotes 2014.

His parents and his grandparents were politically active in the labour movement, and it was here his own engagement first emerged in a political youth organisation, in the mid-80s, as a teenager. In the early 1990s he first engaged in the peace movement, and he was a conscientious objector. During his time in these movements, he first came into contact with the non-violence tradition, which still is an important source of inspiration for him. In the mid-90s his engagement turned towards green issues and for some years he was active in a local environmental group working on local economy (the LETS economy). By the turn of the millennium, William was active in the alter-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum movement where he took part in arranging local social forums, and at the same time he was involved in projects on media criticism (he was then working as a journalist). A few years later he turned towards spirituality, initially in the form of yoga, meditation and kirtan, and he then also became a vegetarian. At the time when we met he was active in a local group in his neighbourhood, working with allotments and various ways of creating community and social resilience among those living in the neighbourhood. During the last decade he has turned to nature in the form of daily walks and holiday trips. In nature he often finds phenomena of light and sound that put him in a state of meditation on tiny details; it is a state he says is "like listening to music".

What is the attraction of spirituality? William says that for him, spirituality is primarily a deeper criticism against the organisation of societies. William sees nothing strange in turning to spirituality after many years of political activism, but his ex-girlfriend was much surprised. William considers peace and green issues to be a substantial part of spirituality. He tells how he feels affiliated to the non-violent tradition of Mahatma Gandhi and the Buddhist ethics of non-killing, and he has been equally inspired by the alternative spiritualities of the counterculture of the 1960s, the hippie movement and the Beatles, but recently he has been attracted to British folklore, particularly after visiting Britain. Why has his engagement shifted so much? William says that:

> Different questions have been in focus in various periods. It is not just because of my shifting interests; it rather concerns changes in society. Spirituality offers a cultural criticism and a critique of civilization. A spiritual perspective offers a real alternative.

Thus, according to William his engagement has shifted. He does not see this as an ideological shift in his life, rather that he has followed a central question in that particular time, that is, peace issues in the late 1980s and early 1990s, green issues in the mid-1990s, and the alter-globalisation movement around the millennium. William has been engaged in various movements, and he turns to spirituality, not because he has given up his engagement; it is rather a question of his engagement taking a new shape, and he finds spirituality to be a substantive part of this. His trajectory ranges three decades back, to his late teens, and he refers to various social movements, the peace movement, the green movement and the alter-globalisation

movement. William's approach is less emotional than others; instead, he emphasises "spirituality as a cultural criticism" and "a real alternative". What is distinctive in William's story is the role of *counterculture* for approaching spirituality. William's story, both of his formative years and his current engagement, is an example of how the eco-occulture, that is the counterculture of social movements, is distinctive in mediating spiritual values in a form that is accessible to those who are not so familiar with traditional religion.

William as well as Steven both have their long-time engagement of working in social movements, and in the last decade, they have turned to new spirituality and new forms of engagement. Steven, along with Kea-Lee and Andrew, tell how they have revalued their activist work and how they have left organisations or ways of working that no longer feel right for them. However, this is not to be seen as of giving up; it is rather that they are moving towards new ways of working. Although this retreat may be temporary, and there might be a possible return to traditional activist work, the voices above tend to see it as a phase of their life, but that they now want to find new ways of working for the future. No one says that they no longer want to do anything at all, or that they have given up their ideals of an ecological future, although they admit the difficulties they face. What might be described as a failure of the cause, the fact that the environmental crisis is accelerating despite decades of activist work and environmental campaigning, is just one reason that people give up activism. Some of those I have been speaking to refer to this as the reason for revaluing activism; for others, it is reasons such as the fact that they do not feel at home in a particular organisation. Sometimes it is internal conflicts that could be both ideological and personal that are the reason for leaving an organisation, or group. Being part of an organisation is perhaps distinctive for activists, but it would be a mistake to see not being a part of an organisation as a sign of inactivity or indifference; instead, it needs to be asked what they do instead. Rather than looking for engagement in various social movements or green organisation it is ecological awareness that is at the centre here. Engagement and awareness are distinct and should not be confused.

The people that I have been speaking to refer to a trajectory from being part of some green organisation, even deeply engaged, to a reaching a stage when it no longer feels right and they leave the organisation, sometimes to find another organisation, while others conclude that they prefer to work outside any organisation. It should be noted that, although I focus on activists who discuss the shortcomings of activism, or their emotions in relation to environmental degradation and climate change, these are persons who have been, and still are, ecologically aware and concerned. Hence, what is described as giving up activism is giving up traditional forms of activism but being guided by an ambition to find new and alternative ways of working for social change, and these ways of working are not necessarily recognised as activism at all in the traditional sense. The crucial examples are of course spiritual practices (for example Steven's participation in a workshop made him feel that it opened his spiritual channel). Therefore, to give up

ineffective ways of working for social change is not to become inactive or less engaged but to turn to effective ways of working for change. In this thesis, the negotiation of ecological awareness and spirituality is in focus. Let us now turn to emotional aspects of ecological awareness.

3.3 Dark Green Spirituality and the Emotional Aspects of Ecological Awareness

In discussing dark green spirituality in relation to the emotional aspects of ecological awareness, much attention is paid to grief, sorrow and feelings of loss in relation to ecological degradation and climate change. In one sense, spirituality may offer consolation in grief as a therapeutic practice, but that is not like saying this will pass, everything will be okay, but rather that spirituality offers language, symbols, values and a community where these emotions can be framed within a narrative that works as a point of departure for a new understanding. This generates further questions such as: How do activists cope with these emotions? How can these emotions be transformed to a deeper and more personal engagement?

3.3.1 Torn by that Unsettling Feeling

Kim is a young woman in her early twenties, she is an exchange student from South Korea who first came to Britain to study at university. When I met her, she had a cold, she had a blanket over her shoulder and held a cup of hot herbal tea in her hands to keep warm. Kim looked both vulnerable and determined at the same time. In our conversation, Kim expresses her feelings and worries about the state of the world. She describes herself as a "student taking time off from studies". She says that for some time she has felt that her studies at the university have lost their meaning. She feels more and more unsettled with how things are in the world, with environmental issues and climate change, and she questions why she should get a university degree at all; how could a university degree help the way things were going with the Earth? Still, she really wanted to do something to make a difference:

> I have this unsettling feeling, because there is so much pain in the world, and I really want to do something. I feel such real concern for the Earth, and it is like I'm being torn between that unsettling feeling and the fire inside me.[539]

This "fire inside" she describes as "a real concern for the Earth".[540] Kim tells how people around her have shown her such concern for her having a cold, bringing her

[539] Field notes 2013.

[540] Field notes 2013.

hot tea and a warm blanket, and she says that she wants to take care of the Earth in the same way as those who care for her. Hence, Kim expresses a strong engagement for the earth, but what is equally important is that she questions what she is doing in *her everyday life*. Kim doubts the meaning of her studies, because she doubts that they can help with the state of the Earth. She is in a momentum in her life where she wants to find a better way of working. For Kim the pain she feels is a source of a deeply felt engagement, but the problem is that, at this point, she does not know how to work in a practical way to contribute to change, or where to go next.[541] She expresses ambivalent feelings that range from "the unsettling feelings" and "the fire inside" which she sums up as a "real concern for the Earth." Kim expresses both her deeply felt worries for the state of the world, and her eagerness to do something, and she describe it in terms of "being torn" almost like a physical pain. At the same time, she finds a model for caring for the earth in those who cared for her, because at this course the people have shown such concern for her because she had a cold. Kim's emotional state is paralleled by her physical state, it made her doubly vulnerable, but she also said that she was touched by how everybody had cared for her and asked how she was.

Emotions give rise to psychosomatic reactions; fear may trigger physical responses such as a racing heartbeat, in sorrow your body may feel cold, being glad and happy makes your body relaxed. I consider emotions below, but first I want to comment upon a distinctive feature in Kim's story. The Earth is central in Kim's account, but not just as the object for her concern, because the pain and the wounds of earth are felt in her personal body; this is something more than psychosomatic responses, it is rather an *identification between the personal body and the Earth*. However, there is a paradox here, as this identification seems to be central for engagement, yet the identification with the Earth gives rise to the pain in her own body as being in a state of grief. These emotions make it hard to know what to do, or even do anything because Kim finds herself torn by these feelings. Scholars who discuss emotions in relation to engagement offer various answers to the question of what gives rise to inactivity or action. The political journalist Sasha Lilley[542] considers emotions like fear in relation to alarming reports and how these may give rise to the fear of a catastrophe or collapse. Lilley sees a risk that these feelings trigger passivity rather than engagement, because "fear can hinder, rather than help, its attempts to halt the disaster." [543] Sarah M. Pike concludes in her study of young activists in their path to become activists,[544] that emotions play an important role in

[541] Field notes 2013.

[542] Lilley in "The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth" (2012), notes that the term 'catastrophism' comes from science, as a theory of abrupt geological change over time, in contrast to uniformitarianism, but it has also been deployed politically.

[543] Lilley 2012:2.

[544] Pike 2017:2. Pike has studied the paths that young activists find themselves following, in tree-sits and road blocks to protect old-growth forests and endangered bird species, or breaking into fur farms at night to release hundreds of minks from cages. These young people join loosely

shaping their commitments.[545] I agree with Pike on the role of emotions, but I want to consider *the range of emotions* here. There is love for other-than-human species, compassion for their suffering, anger about the impact of the contemporary human lifestyles on the lives of non-human species, and grief over the degradation of ecosystems. This reminds us again about the complexity of feelings that are part of the field, but also how the individuals describe their emotions, not just as an inner state but in relational terms and as part of the larger-than-human world, in this case, Kim who relates to the Earth.

Environmental discourses offer many similar testimonies of painful emotions in relation to environmental degradation, and the reason why these are a frequent theme is not just to bear witness to the state of the world, but rather to ponder on the question, how is it possible to work with these emotions to find a new engagement? The philosopher J. Baird Callicott recalls his feelings walking along a polluted river as he "experienced a palpable pain" and he sensed how "the river was a part of me".[546] The emotions in relation to a polluted river or the state of the world are not just a personal anxiety, or expressions of an inner feeling; quite the contrary, they are related to particular places (the river), and the experience of witnessing the actual changes, the impact of climate change and environmental degradation that is going on there. Even if compassion is part of the picture here, this is not the only thing. In research, compassion has long been defined as alleviating another's pain, but the thing Callicott illustrates is an understanding of the individual body, not as set apart from, but in a most intimate way being part of the larger-than-human world. For Callicott the pain was palpable as he senses that the river is part of him. For Kim, the pain is not exclusively her individual pain; it is part of or a reflection of the pain of the Earth. Thus, emotions are not just an expression of an inner individual state, rather a reflection of being part of something larger.

3.3.2 Emotional Aspects and Place – a Strong Spiritual Connection to this Place

Kathy and I came to speak to each other while we walked back to college after a story-telling workshop in the forest. We were both foreigners in Britain and came to talk about the names of the herbs, flowers and trees we passed, and we also talked about how much being in the forest meant to both of us. Kathy came to Britain to

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organised, leaderless groups like Earth First! and the animal liberation front, coming to protest from contexts as different as significant childhood experience in nature and the hardcore punk rock music scene.

[545] Pike 2017:4.

[546] Callicott writes: "I experienced a palpable pain. It was not distinctively in any of my extremities, nor was it like a headache or nausea. Still, it was very real. I had no plans to swim in the river, no need to drink from it, no intention of buying real estate on its shores. My narrowly personal interests were not affected, *and yet, somehow, I was personally injured. It occurred to me then, in a flash of self-discovery, that river was part of me*." As quoted in Partridge 2005: 60 italics added.

visit some relatives because it is the land of her ancestors, and during this journey she visited Schumacher, and Devon. Kathy and I come from opposite sides of the Earth, she is from Australia, and I am from Sweden, but when we spoke of environmental degradation in relation to the place and nations where we live we soon discovered that there were two things we shared: deforestation and the threat of mining companies. Kathy told me how much the landscape where she lives meant to her. At this place, she had created a retreat centre on her small farm, where she invites people to come for a spiritual retreat, it allows them to simply be in nature, to find time to heal themselves, and to take some time and work with their art projects. She really feels a "strong spiritual connection to this place", and she considers herself happy to live there. She also told me that the place was under threat; the forest was threatened by deforestation from timber companies, mining companies set out to prospect for mineral findings, and if these companies go ahead with their plans for open-cast mining, it would devastate the place completely. She feared the power of these companies, and this is important to note; to Kathy it was not nature that was scary or uncanny, it was the destructive powers of an economy that sees the landscape as nothing but resources for exploitation. Still, Kathy had a strong faith in the people who had come together to protect their land.

> I am convinced; the people who are living there will never let this happen. They will protest to protect their land. They will never let this happen. The companies will never win.[547]

Despite her conviction, that the people would protest and protect their land, she admits the constant anxiety she felt knowing what might happen to the landscape where she lived, the landscape that she loved. What would happen if they failed to protect it? Would it even be possible to remain there at all? What Kathy and the people living in that area considered as their land was not their property in legal terms; they were rather an example of what Rob Nixon refer to as people whose relationship to the land is historically deep but legally informal.[548] This might have the consequence of people being driven from their land, but what I discuss here is how people react in emotional terms when the place they love and where they live is threatened by being ruined due to environmental degradation. Kathy's story illustrates that the loss of place is also the loss of a safe place, and I have found this to be an emergent theme in my field; the feeling that there are no safe places, instead safety is to be created in social resilience. She tells of her small retreat centre, her expression of having a strong spiritual connection to the place, and her fear of the timber and mining companies, who set out to exploit the area and thus ruin it. Her trust and safety is that the neighbours will protect their land. As Kathy expresses a strong spiritual connection to this place, she likewise bears witness to strong

[547] Field notes 2014.

[548] Nixon 2011:151.

emotions in relation to the threat that the place is under. I will discuss these *emotional* aspects of the threat of environmental degradation and climate change and relate it to the concept of wild enchantments.

Kathy expresses a strong spiritual connection to the place she loves, and at the same time she struggles with the emotional responses to the threat of the destruction of the land where she lives. She has both an emotional and spiritual relationship with this place, and her hope is that the people in that area will prevent it from happen. For her, the visit to Schumacher College, and participating in the workshops offered there, was one way of coming to terms with her feelings about the threat of the destruction of the place where she lived. The visit to Schumacher was not a replacement for the struggle; instead, her hope was that it would strengthen her in the forthcoming work of protecting the land. The experience of loss of place, just like the presence of climate change, includes a range of feelings and emotions, transforming the feelings one holds towards a place. In one sense it can be described as the loss of *safe places:* it gives rise to an awareness of possible future losses; the actual threat of it affects the experience of places that are yet unaffected. The question that emerges here is how these experiences affect how we relate to landscapes and places. Kathy had not yet lost the place she felt connected to, but the next story tells us what could come after as it concerns the loss of a beloved forest.

3.3.3 The Loss of Place – Learning to Live with Uncertainty

Mark worked as an activist for years, but when I met him, he wanted to devote his efforts to writing on environmental issues. Mark had a long trajectory that took him to the point where he wanted to dedicate his activist life to writing. So, how did he end up there? Mark shared his experience of working as an activist trying to protect an endangered forest from being destroyed by a timber company in a circle that was discussing activism and the loss of hope. Sadly, the struggle ended in failure and Mark had to witness how the forest he loved was devastated. Mark experienced the loss of a forest that he had struggled to save, and the intense grief that followed.[549]

> As the timber companies arrived and started to cut down the trees I just freaked out and tried to crash the machines. Well, that did not stop them from going ahead. It was necessary to find other methods to work. [550]

Mark works hard as an activist, and he started a project that tried to create a fund to buy parts of the forest in order to save it. Mark sees this form of activism as "bargaining on a large scale", but he and the other activist did not succeed in their effort, and despite their work they could not save the forest. Mark describes his sorrow because they failed to save the trees from being cut down:

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[549] Field notes 2014.

[550] Field notes 2014.

> The loss of that forest left me in a state of grief that lasted more than a year: what I experienced was the loss of control. Since then, I have been trying to learn to live with uncertainty.[551]

What Mark experienced is a double loss; it is the loss of the activist struggle to protect the forest, and it is the loss of the forest, a place that Mark had a strong emotional bond to. As the timber companies started to cut down the trees, Mark describes how he "freaked out", and in retrospect he sees his reaction as "the loss of control". Mark's story is an account of a loss of place. Nixon's term displacement refers to such cases, and Casey refers to the emotions in relation to the loss of place as "place-panic". This is the feeling when a place does not exist anymore, and there is really nowhere to go; that is, when there are no safe places. I will discuss this theme of loss of place later, however, here I focus on Mark's reflections on his work as an activist, and his effort to find new ways of working after the defeat, and the loss of the forest, that is, his ambition to write about his experience of the lost forest. After the double loss, Mark found himself in a state of grief that lasted a year. One thing that he sees as important was reading an article in *Rolling Stone*, "It's the end of the world and he feels fine". The article was an interview with Paul Kingsnorth, one of the authors of *Uncivilisation*: *The Dark Mountain Manifesto*. When he googled for more information, he found a course at Schumacher College and applied for it. Hence, for Mark taking a course on Schumacher College is one way of finding new perspectives. Mark's ambition for the future is to turn his activism towards writing, because he wants to find ways to express his experiences, and he wants to be part of a conversation where he can talk about his feelings as well. Mark's account sums up a chain of events, a process that lasted more than two years, and that includes a range of emotions, and stages; initially "freak out", "experience of loss" or "learning to live with uncertainty", and he forms the ambition for the future, to dedicate himself to writing, to express his experience of loss as well as his feelings. Sorrow and grief may make us numb, and telling the story is a way of breaking the spell. As seen in Mark's account, as a former environmental activist he finds writing to be a way forward because writing offers a tool to come to terms with a new reality. For Mark, the end of the struggle to protect the forest, and the consequent loss of this forest, is not the end of his engagement. Instead, his environmental engagement takes a new form and continues now with other means than before. He turns to writing because he needs to recapitulate his experience of loss and to come to terms with his grief.

Mark's account is yet another example of the importance of counterculture and social movements, in what I refer to as eco-occulture. For him, reading the articles where he found out about *Uncivilisation − The Dark Mountain Manifesto* became the inspiration for a new direction. He gained a new ambition to find an artistic expression and write about his experience of losing the wood. Furthermore, writing

[551] Field notes 2014.

illustrates the convergence between narrative and practice; writing concerns the creation of new stories, that is, narratives, but writing is also a practice, and it is also related to the telling of stories. Mark's story extends from the initial phase, that is, the forest he wanted to protect, to the emotional strain he experienced in relation to loss of place, and how he found a new strategy and a new ambition to write about his experience. Mark turns to writing because he wants to tell his personal story of struggle and loss, but more so, he wants to tell the story of the lost forest. Mark's story of the loss of a forest is a personal experience, it has affected his life trajectory but in one sense, it is not unique, as the loss of place is a common experience today. Mark's story illustrates how working with art may be something that helps to come to terms with experiences, but also how writing can make a difference and therefore can be part of activist repertoire of what to do. Further, telling your story, means the creation of a narrative, and it may lead further to finding your expression through art and it is a vital part of both the reflective and the utopian practice.

3.3.4 Emotions and Losses

The loss of place is a theme that is found in both Kathy's and Mark's stories. Places under threat, are often the prelude to wounded places, as well as the loss of place. Kathy's relation to the place is transformed because of the threat of ecological devastation, even though nothing has been done yet. Her account tells something about living with the threat and fear of losing a loved place, living with worries and wounds. Mark's story tell how the place which was important for him in his life was devastated. The loss of place is a consequence of environmental degradation, but the loss of place also refers to places which may not be seen as environmental degradation at first sight. For example, a small meadow where you used to play when you were a child, that has been replaced by a motorway, or places that are lost because houses have been built there, such as a green field that is turned into a shopping centre. Such places of building construction are usually considered as parts of the development of societies.[552] Nonetheless, these places are wounded places and they often become unrecognisable; if you go there, you cannot find the familiar landmarks and will feel lost. These places are heavily remodelled, they become unrecognisable; the forest is replaced with clear-cuts, and open-cast mining creates a landscape that can be likened to a moonscape, a completely dead landscape. These places become void of life and meaning, they become rural non-places.[553] The sociologist Saskia Sassen introduces the term 'dead land, dead

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[552] Field notes. See also Kingsnorth *Real England – The Battle against the Bland* (2009). Mark Boyle *Drinking Molotov Cocktails with Gandhi* (2015).

[553] Augé 1995. Non-place is Marc Augé's term for generic places, such as bus depots, train stations and airports which, however elaborate and grandiose, do not confer a feeling of place. In direct contrast to places, which we tend to think of as being relational, historical, and concerned with identity, non-places are designed and intended for the frictionless passage of a nameless and faceless multitude. Augé discusses non-places in urban settings, but I think the term can be useful

water', referring to land that has been exploited by pesticides to the extent that it is no longer possible to heal them.[554] In environmental discourse, testimony from such sites of loss is a frequent motif. The environmental activist Trebbe Johnson has focused very much on wounded places, that is, places that have be subject to environmental damage, and she asks how it is possible to find healing in these places.[555] These might have been places we once loved, and she claims that these places have played a role in forming who we are and what we know of the world, and the love, the relationship is still there even though the place is damaged or even destroyed.[556] To reflect on love and the loss and to form a new relation to these wounded places, what I describe as working with wonder and wounds, is central in the cultivation of wild enchantments. To give testimony of your personal experience is a distinctive feature in the work of wonder and wounds, and these witnesses are found in my material as well as in a wider context of environmental discourse.

In this way the American environmentalist Derrick Jensen witnesses the devastating changes, and he writes "I am intimately acquainted with the landscape of loss and have grown accustomed to carrying the daily weight of despair."[557] "The landscape of loss" and the loss of place is a central theme in environmental discourse: in the writings and witnesses of activists, but also from a theoretical perspective. Rob Nixon's 'displacement' refers to a situation where people are forced to leave their land because of privatisation of land and large-scale projects, such as dam building or mining, displacement also comes in a subtler form, that is, "displacement without moving". Nixon proposes a more radical notion of displacement,

> …one that, instead of referring solely to the movement of people from their places of belonging, refers rather to the loss of the land and resources beneath them, a loss that leaves communities stranded in a place stripped of the very characteristics that made it inhabitable.

Nixon's term 'slow violence' refers to the range of the damage done in relation to future generations – those who are yet unborn. However, Kathy's story illustrates

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to denote places created by the industrial exploitation of natural resources. In one sense these places are rural non-places, they become places void of meaning.

[554] Saskia Sassen (2014) introduces the term "dead land, dead water" because she thinks that climate change is too pretty a term are to designate what is happening.

[555] Trebbe Johnson's website, see https://trebbejohnson.com/ accessed 2021-09-13

[556] Whittaker, Richard (2012) "Radical Joy for Hard Times – A Conversation with Trebbe Johnson" *Parabola Magazine,* Summer 2012.

[557] Jensen 2006:3. Jensen writes: "As a longtime grassroots environmental activist, and as a creature living in the thrashing endgame of civilization, I am intimately acquainted with the landscape of loss, and have grown accustomed to carrying the daily weight of despair. I have walked clearcuts that wrap around mountains, drop into valleys, then climb ridges to fragment watershed after watershed, and I've sat silent near empty streams that two generations ago were "lashed into whiteness" by uncountable salmon coming home to spawn and die."

something else: the place she loves is no longer a safe place, and it shows us that the emotional strain really starts *before the devastation takes place*. In Kathy's and Mark stories, a trajectory reaches from worries to wounds. There is a double sense of loss here: in relation to the loss of the place, but also the loss of power. Although the inhabitants at the place remain on the site, the place itself is transformed in a way where it becomes unrecognisable, and the interests of external and economic powers (not of the inhabitants themselves) govern the transformation.[558]

The theme of the loss of place is central in many of the stories I heard, and these have forced me to ask *how to relate the 'loss of place' with the notion of 'places with the power to enchant'.* Lost places may still be distinctive in people's lives; in the gap between the mesmerising sense of enchantment and the depth of losses something emerges that cannot be neglected. My conception of wild enchantment, which I describe as a *working with wonder and wounds*, addresses this gap. In environmental discourse, it is often the love of place, and the feeling of wonder and reverence that is the foundation of an ethical relation to place, and it is the incentive to a will to preserve and protect the place. However, the question that emerges here is: can there still be some sense of wonder in relation to lost places or is the loss of place also the end of some sense of wonder? In the *Cambridge Dictionary* 'enchantment' is defined as "a feeling of great pleasure and attraction, especially because something is very beautiful".[559] This may be a simple definition, but it reduces enchantment to some form of aesthetic admiration, it may be towards a beautiful landscape or a work of art. [560] As discussed in chapter 1, I use the concept 'wild enchantments', which not only addresses the sense of wonder, but also include the darker sides, such as emotions in relation to ecological crisis, environmental degradation or climate change. I will dedicate the next chapter to a discussion of some workshops/practices where the purpose can be to reconnect to nature, or to heal the broken relation, and I describe these in terms of cultivating wild enchantment. In this I follow Bennett's view of *enchantment as an encounter*, or even an "a surprising encounter, and a meeting with something unexpected,"[561] and, consequently, if I elaborate this, disenchantment, would be a kind of separation, a state where these encounters are no longer possible. Thus, in simple terms the aim of the practices I study is to reconnect or heal the relation, not just to place, but also

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[558] Nixon 2011:162 Nixon discusses the global south where these often led to forced removals of inhabitants. "When refugees are severed from environments that have provided ancestral sustenance, they find themselves stranded not just in place but in time as well. Their improvised lives in makeshift camps are lives of temporal impoverishment. […] For if forced removal involves agonizing adjustments to bleak accommodation, unfamiliar ecologies, and typically barren, hostile terrain, it involves the additional challenge posed by temporal violence: how to survive in truncated, severed present, torn by involuntary displacement from the numinous fabric that had woven extended meaning from time-in-place. "

[559] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/enchantment accessed 15 January 2021.

[560] For a discussion of enchantment and art see further Bennett. It is notable how landscapes are seen as works of art in relation to the English park.

[561] Bennett 2001:5.

to the larger-than-human world, which I will discuss in the next chapter. In the following section, I present some further stories of personal and spiritual change.

3.4 What Brought you here? Personal Change, Spiritual Change and Social Change

The realisation of climate change or the emergency of the ecological crisis may be the point of departure for change on a personal level, and for many this includes a spiritual change. The changes brought by the realisation of the reality of climate change/ecological crisis are not to be seen as a sudden change of mind, rather as the starting point for a long process of change, and a visit to Schumacher College in Devon may be an important halt on the road to change. Schumacher College is a place where people from various countries come together and the question "What brought you here?" is often part of a conversation between participants. It is, of course, a good opening line for conversation if you want to get to know someone, but it is also a good question from an analytical perspective because it sheds light upon what happened *before* the visit to Devon. In my conversations with participants, I have found several examples of these, and I refer to these stories as narratives of personal change.

3.4.1 Narratives of personal changes

Personal change focuses on the individual, or on individuals, but it does not rule out the fact that the person is a part of society as well as of a given historical context. One example of how the social and historical context is part of these stories is Maria, a thirty-year-old Spanish woman. Maria explicitly refers to the current situation in Spain, the economic crisis with unemployment and economic hardship that strikes particularly hard against the young. Maria says that while she is lucky to have a job, the crisis is nonetheless very much a part of her life because things are always uncertain, and she worries a lot about the future. Maria came to visit Schumacher for a short course, and she said the reason why she had come to Schumacher is her "spiritual growth".

> I am glad to be on a short course because of the intensity of it. To be on a longer course would probably be too much for me, and I do not think I could take that. Not right now anyway. After the course I want to go back home to absorb and reflect.

Maria refers to what happened both before and after. What brought Maria to visit Schumacher was her experience of the economic crisis, but also a desire for "spiritual growth". After ending the five-day course, she wanted to go back home

"to absorb and reflect", but she also hoped that maybe she would come back later for some other short courses. Maria's story, and the references to the economic crisis in Spain, led us back to the understanding of climate change, as layers of crises where the economic crisis is part of the picture. Maria's account, in relation to the aftermath of the economic crisis in Spain in 2008, invites us to reflect on her account in a more general perspective, and to consider the historical and social context. Like Maria, those who have shared their stories here at Schumacher College are all aged around thirty, and they belong to the first generation who became adults in the shadow of climate change. They are a generation that has to face the age of ecocide; they are part of the generation that Ed Howker and Shiv Malik refer to as the jilted generation, born 1979–1994.[562] Howker and Malik characterise this as the first generation of the post-war period who have to grow up with completely new expectations and have to face lower life expectancy than their parents. Howker and Malik do not mention climate change, which can be added to the list. I think it will be good to keep this in mind while reading the stories here.

Pierre is a Frenchman in his mid-thirties who describes Schumacher College as "a harbour in a violent world" and "a place where you can talk about everything".[563] Pierre's story illustrates how personal change and spiritual change converge. What he calls his "spiritual journey" started some years ago with a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. At the time when he first decided to take that pilgrimage, his family showed some concern for him, and questioned what he was doing.

> At first, they looked at me with a lot of suspicion, as no one in my family, or my friends, had made that kind of pilgrimage before. They wondered if I had lost my mind, but now I think they have come to realise that I know what I am doing.

Pierre describes a process where his family and friends initially looked with suspicion at the new direction his life had taken. Eventually they had come to accept, as they realise that he knows what he is doing. He says that "I have to unlearn", because he has found that things he had taken for granted were not true anymore. Now he describes himself as an engineer in the process of creating a completely new career, and he has moved to the countryside and is presently building a house with his own hands. Several things are worth noticing in Pierre's story. Pierre describes the transformation he is going through as a "spiritual journey", and this spiritual journey started with a pilgrimage, and he describes how he has to "unlearn", to give up things that he no longer can trust to be true. His friends and family questioned what he was doing. Still, the process in which Pierre found himself is not only an inner change, because his life has clearly taken a new direction in very concrete ways; not just the visit to Schumacher, he describes himself as being in the process of creating a whole new career, building a house for himself in

[562] Howker and Malik 2013.

[563] Field notes 2013.

the countryside. Pierre's story tells of a change, proceeding from a pilgrimage, as the initiation of a chain of events, that eventually has led to concrete work, the building of the house, and all this is part of the spiritual journey. Pierre does not refer to any form of activism at all. He has radically changed his personal life, and it could be described as adjusting his life to ecological principles or greening his own personal life. I think the most adequate term to refer to this change is in terms of 'transition'.

There is one further thing to note in this story, Pierre's friend and family viewed his new interest in spirituality with a great deal of suspicion, and this is yet another illustration of the first follower theme. This was seen in Steven's story previously, where Steven's friends were questioning his interest in spirituality and made mockery of him speaking to stones and trees. Both these voices tell how their turn to spirituality meant that they were questioned by their family and friends. What convinced Pierre's family was that they realised that he knew what he was doing. Thus, it is worth returning to this since this story illustrates how personal change may lead to a lot of questioning from people in your close circle. While these stories bear witness to the questioning and scepticism from friends and family, the following story offers a different perspective, as Martin admits his own initial hesitation about 'spirituality'. Martin is a thirty-year-old British man who tells of his reaction when he first heard of Schumacher College.

> I heard about this weird place, and I thought it was a little bit hippieish, not really me, but I took a course. Since then, I have gone deeper into spirituality. I have done the Earth Pilgrim course, which is much more hippieish.[564]

Despite his initial hesitation about the "hippieish" aspect, Martin has visited the school several times, and has "gone deeper into spirituality". Martin's story describes a process where spirituality is part of the changes in his life. Presently Martin lives in a middle-sized English town, but he hopes to move to the countryside. His ambition is to find a farmer to work with, so he can learn agricultural work the hard way.[565] Nevertheless, finding a farmer to work with might be difficult, as he wants to learn ecological agriculture. Martin's story ranges from initial hesitation and leads to an ambition for a concrete change of life: to become an ecological farmer, to live in the countryside. These features of everyday life, work and where to live are parts of the process which he describes as going "deeper into spirituality". Just like the stories of Steve or Maria before, spirituality is part of a life-changing process. (I will discuss everyday life and work in the next chapter on practices, but for now I follow Martin's thread and go "deeper into spirituality" because it is spirituality that is the main interest here.)

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[564] Field notes 2013.

[565] Field notes 2013.

Something that has been distinctive in my conversations with these persons is that whether you chat with someone or are in a deeper conversation, spiritual issues are often part of the conversations, because people talk and reflect about spirituality spontaneously. Spirituality is close to their everyday life, and it is of real concern to them. That conversations on spirituality occur spontaneously can also be seen as the milieu being open towards spiritual matters. This has been an advantage in my research. In designing the study, I had to ask myself: How can you talk with people about spirituality? Direct questions might seem like an obvious answer, but my approach has been that as the subject emerges in conversation, then it will be in the context where the informant finds it relevant. Therefore, I have chosen an approach where the subject emerges in conversations, as it often did. As spirituality is part of their lives, it is a part of conversations, and as conversations occur in various circumstances, sometimes quite unexpectedly, so do conversations about spirituality.

John is another voice who shared his reflection on spirituality during a walk in the garden one summer evening. John says that he believes that it is necessary to root yourself in a spiritual tradition. He emphasises in *one* spiritual tradition, and he personally has found Native American spirituality to be the tradition of his choice. He considers the choice of tradition to be important because he has often seen among his friends that they shift interest, and switch between traditions quite often. They go in for yoga for a while, and then they dedicate themselves to something else, and John mentions raw food or Zen Buddhism. John says that he believes that if you are going deeper into spirituality, and this is true of any spiritual tradition,

> You will always come to a point when you face resistance. At that point, it is easy to think that, well, this is not the right thing for me. This do not work; I will try something else. If you do not root yourself in one tradition, you get nowhere.[566]

John says that you have to pass these dark points because they will appear in any tradition you choose and "you simply have to get by them, to get deeper into spirituality." For John it is the Native American spirituality that has been the tradition that he has chosen to follow. While John is one of the few who has been explicit about following and holding on to one particular tradition, the features he shares with the others is that spirituality has to lead you further. It is only if you "root yourself in one tradition" that you will get somewhere. A further example of this is Amitraj, a physician who in a conversation said, "Spirituality does not come by itself",[567] and in this he wanted to reject the idea of spirituality as nothing but an inner experience. For him spirituality concerned practices as well as community, and particularly the Jain tradition and *Ahimsa* meant a great deal, but he also emphasised the value of spiritual teachers.

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[566] Field notes 2014.

[567] Field notes 2013.

A characteristic of these accounts is that 'spirituality' is set in relation to their own life rather than to spiritual teachings; they are explorers rather than adherers. Many of those I have spoken to want to avoid defining their views in relation to any definitive religious or spiritual tradition, although some refer to various traditions, for example Buddhism, and non-violence, indigenous traditions, Native American spirituality, Gaia spirituality, Paganism, Druidry, Celtic spirituality, Christian traditions, the Quakers or the Anglican Church, as being important in their life. Others stress the importance of individual public figures such as Satish Kumar, Vandana Shiva, Peter Owen Jones, Joanna Macy or Matthew Fox, just to mention a few, that have been important to them as a source of inspiration. While some refer to a specific tradition or public figure as the main source, they mostly prefer to be open for inspiration from various traditions, even if there is one particular favourite. Hence, while the sources of spiritual inspiration vary as well as the approach to tradition or teachers, what they have in common is that spirituality is not a static state but a spiritual process.

3.4.2 A Spiritual Process

From the accounts a pattern emerges where spirituality is part of a process of personal and social change. The voices describe 'spirituality' in various terms, indicating something being in a momentum, such as being on "a spiritual journey", expressing their need for "spiritual growth", or they characterise spirituality as a way of "dealing with depression". What I found to be central in here is that *spirituality* is described as a fluid or *a dynamic process* rather than a fixed inner state of mind or an identity. The stories that have been presented here all illustrate the same pattern. For example, John concludes: "If you do not root yourself in one tradition you'll get nowhere." Pierre, who set out on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, described this as the starting point for his "spiritual *journey*". Maria describes how she came to Schumacher for "spiritual *growth*". Steven, who described himself as a long-time environmental activist, said that for him "spirituality is about self-reflection." In these examples, spirituality is a process which is intimately related to the process of change related to ecological awareness. As we have seen, Maria, Pierre and Martin, have made considerable changes in their lives. Therefore, the spiritual change is accomplished with practical efforts to change their life, and their personal change is coordinated with social change. This was also seen previously, in the accounts of Steven, Kathy and Mark.

During my work I came to ask: do people feel that they are a part of an environmental or ecological movement? It seems that many described being *a part of a transformation* rather than being a part of a movement, as a form of organisation. Therefore, being a part of a movement, according to organisational criteria of membership, cannot be a condition for being a part of the social change. Thus, how movements relate to social change is far more complex. Furthermore, the focus on personal change is an incentive to transform your own life according to

certain *values*. Therefore, being engaged does not only mean joining an organisation or a movement in order to work for change. Rather, being engaged concerns how the change of society begins from your own personal life. I found two distinctive features in this understanding of social change: (i) personal change concerns setting an example – both ethical and practical – to show that it is possible to live differently from what mainstream capitalism consumerism suggests, and (ii) that everyday practices have actual consequences that lead to social change. Maybe this can be summed up in the slogan: let the walk be our talk or walk your talk. In the next, story we will again meet Janine, who reflects on how she came to find her part in change.

3.4.3 Hope is to Plant a Tree…

"Hope is to plant a tree in whose shadow you never will sit; however, I have come to understand that my part is to prepare the soil."[568] This quotation is from a conversation on how to face the challenges of living in times of climate change, where one participant, Janine (whom the reader already met as she told the story of the pious man) shared her thoughts. "Hope is to plant a tree in whose shadow you never will sit" can be seen as a modified version from similar quotations attributed to Rabindranath Tagore or Martin Luther King Jr.[569] Here Janine not only repeats it: she elaborates on it and adds a personal comment on what she has come to understand about her own part. The metaphor of hope and trees does not just concern those who dedicate their time to planting trees in a concrete sense, but more so that hope is a central matter for the green movement. The metaphor of planting trees indicates that hope in some sense has to do with long-term thinking, long-term expectations, and long-term change. Indeed, to grow a tree takes time, and a human being who plants a tree will not live to see it grow old as trees grow far much older than human beings. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* 'hope' is defined as "to cherish a desire with anticipation", more archaic trust, and "to hope" for something is "to expect with confidence." Hope can be summed up as an emotional state that is future directed, but it reaches beyond the personal self, and the personal benefit or well-being.

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[568] Field notes 2014.

[569] These quotations are often found on the internet, and they are frequently shared in social media such as Facebook. For example, this quotation from Rabindranath Tagore. "The one who plants trees, knowing that he will never sit in their shade, has at least started to understand the meaning of life." The following is attributed to Martin Luther King Jr.: "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree". The important thing here is not to question whether these quotations are genuine, but rather how they are used in the context I study. There is a similar Greek proverb: "Societies grows great when old men plant trees in whose shadow they shall never sit. https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2017/08/26/a-society-grows-great-when-old-men-plant-trees-in-whose-shade-they-know-they-shall-never-sit-an-ancient-greek-proverb/comment-page-1/ accessed 14 October 2021.

When Janine said, "Hope is to plant a tree in which shadow you never will sit. I have come to understand that my part is to prepare the soil",[570] she added her own reflection to the modified quotation. Preparing the soil, the work that she come to understand as being her part, is the work that has to be done *before* planting the tree. Although Janine admits: "That that is not really how I wish it to be; it is not according to my preferences."[571] Her reflections illustrate that the work that has to be done in our time is considered the initial step towards a transformation. Another aphorism I found written on a wall has a similar ring to it: "Live as in the Early Days of a Better World".[572] The metaphor of hope as planting a tree implies a long-term perspective as it takes time to grow trees. Still, there is a both personal and moral issue here that is increasingly urgent in relation to climate change and that is: how do you relate to those who will inhabit the Earth when you are dead? The ethical questions of moral obligations towards future generations – including all living creatures – is central in the philosophical discussion on environmental ethics.[573] Janine's reflection can be shortened and rewritten as "Hope is […] to prepare the soil" and in a sense, life starts with soil – it is one of the fundaments of life. Ecological discourse may include various reflections, but it also concerns practical issues, such as growing food or planting trees. Therefore, the proverb illustrates not only that hope is central, but more so, that soil is fundamental to our lives, and this is distinctive in Earth-based spirituality, or dark green spirituality.

As we have seen, the dictionary defined 'hope' as 'to cherish a desire with anticipation", and hope is not only future-directed, in the anticipation that something good will happen. There is a psychology of hope and that is illustrated in a conversation I had with a Miguel, after attending a public talk by the Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva, in Totnes Civic Hall.[574] Miguel's personal reflection after listening to Shiva's speech was that:

> I always had that activist flame in me, and for some time I have felt it weakened, but after listening to Vandana *it's on fire!* Every subject she speaks, she speaks from lived experience. Every word rings true to me.[575]

The metaphor of an "activist flame" is a powerful expression of conviction and engagement, but he admits he has "felt it weakened ". Listening to the talk, however, changed his feelings. Miguel says, "what Vandana managed to do was *to give me hope*", but he nevertheless asks, "what can I do to make it last?" Great speakers can have the sparkling influence that Max Weber describes as charisma, sometimes

[570] Field notes 2014.

[571] Field notes 2014.

[572] Field notes 2014.

[573] See for example Barry 2017, Bird Rose 2011, and Lovejoy 2017.

[574] Field notes 2013.

[575] Field notes 2013.

likened to a kind a magic. This has always been a mobilising force in social movements and listening to a talk may awaken the "activist flame" and feed the hope. Still, Miguel's reflection illustrates that hope may easily vanish into a state of hopelessness. It is easy to lose hope.

The scholar of religion Lisa Sideris notes that hope is often emphasised in a spiritual ecological discourse, but less visible in secular discourse.[576] I think it is vital to emphasise the role of hope, because climate change is a topic that tends to evoke too many possible scenarios of catastrophes or apocalypses to come. Not to deny that this is part of the picture, the purpose of this thesis is not to paint future scenarios of climate change, but to offer an image of how people try to understand and/or cope with it, as seen in Miguel's reflection: "I always had that activist flame in me" but he had for some time "felt it weakened". After listening to Vandana Shiva's speech he felt it to be "*on fire!*"[577] he nevertheless asks, "what can I do to make it last?" For Miguel, who works with permaculture, the activism has both the actual work of tending his permaculture garden, but also promoting permaculture in various ways. If we look at individuals in the trajectory of an activist life this may include periods of doubts, or lost hope; they may also change their ways of working and this may include engagement in various new social movements. In general, hope and social movements concern the momentum of the social movement, but looking at individuals it rather concerns the mobility between social movements and other ways of working.

Janine and Miguel are just two of the persons that I have met during my fieldwork, and I had the privilege to listen to and to converse with many engaged persons who shared their hopes, their experiences and visions, but also their anxiety and fears with me. These kinds of conversations about questions that are often viewed as deep and urgent are sometimes spontaneous, but may also be in organised form, in various kinds of workshops. These reflections and the stories told are personal stories that relate to the historical context that is the general story of climate change.

This can be pictured as a bricolage, which illustrates both the complexity and the personal approach (and this approach is of course recognisable from many modern forms of religion and new spiritualities, such as New Age). The purpose of this bricolage is not to construct a new set of doctrine, it is rather an ongoing process that can be reconstructed along the path. This openness towards various spiritual traditions is not to be mistaken for a shallow interest or lack of engagement regarding these matters, rather an approach where uncertainty, or the tentative aspects of finding things out, and letting it take time, is allowed to be a part of spiritual reflection, rather than firm belief or dogmas, and this is sometimes referred to as to "avoiding guruism". To say something general is not to deny that there are exceptions, and this illustrates the heterogeneity of the field.

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[576] Bauman et al. 2011. For discussion in hope in secular social movement see Johnson 2013, who draws from Gramsci. A classic approach *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch 1986.

[577] Field notes 2013.

The openness towards various sources of inspiration is not exceptional for this material, Christopher Partridge[578] sees it in the alternative spiritual milieu of eco-enchantment in the contemporary Western world. According to Partridge it concerns the variety of ways in which an increasing number of people are discovering and articulating spiritual meaning in their lives, and the transmission of new ways of believing in societies in which the old ways are inhibited and declining. Alternative spiritualities do not require their adherents to sit in pews and believe in systematic theologies, neither are these new ways of believing allied to the state or located in large buildings next to the village green. Perhaps this is why this form of spirituality becomes significant in the lives of people,[579] because it is possible to form a personal bond and relate more directly to your own personal situation.

3.5 Conclusions

Part of the aim of this thesis is to explore what motivates people to turn to spirituality. I have found the core of the motivation to emerge in the contrast between the scientific basis for climate change, ecological crisis and ecocide. Although science gives evidence for the reality of climate change and the ecological crisis, at the same time is seen as insufficient for conveying a meaningful narrative. Therefore, the dissatisfaction with a disenchanted scientific discourse is part of this motivation, because it is the incentive to turn towards what Bennett refers to as an alter-tale.[580] Despite the trust in science that many express that at this state, there is no need for further reports to act. The dissatisfaction with scientific discourse concerns its inability to offer meaning, and this is not to be mistaken for a refutation of science. A further reason concerns the understanding of climate change because the scientific definition of anthropogenic climate change focuses on emissions of greenhouse gasses, suggests technological solutions, and excludes the social dimension as well as the larger-than-human world. Among those turning to dark green spirituality, climate change or climate crisis are seen as an umbrella term, which covers what Sargisson refers to as multiple and interwoven problems.[581] Secondly, the scientific discourse is a part of a disenchanted discourse – or a disenchanted tale if we prefer Bennett's term – based on rationalisation, calculation and technology, which pays no attention to values. The current crisis is often seen as a spiritual crisis, a crisis of values where the emotional, existential and ethical values must be acknowledged. Thirdly, the critique of science is primarily a critique of *the environmental movement's relation to science*, because the environmental movement is far too dependent on science and has lost the ability to put forward a positive vision.

[578] Partridge 2005:1.

[579] Partridge 2005:1.

[580] Bennett 2001.

[581] Sargisson 2012:116.

Despite the general agreement on the reality and emergency of climate change and ecological crisis, awareness of climate change is more than a cognitive understanding of scientific facts, it is a very personal experience of coming to terms with the state of the world and coping with it. These personal aspects come to the fore in the conversations where the personal life stories coordinate with the general story of the contemporary development of climate change and ecological crisis. Emotions are a distinctive feature in these stories; losses, sorrow, depression and uncertainty are part of their accounts. Thus, both *wonder and wounds* are motivations to turn to spirituality. Such personal experiences are a deeply emotional and painful process in realising the state of the world. Their personal experiences have been formative for their understanding of the crisis. What I found in these conversations is how the realisation of climate or ecological crisis is part of a process and a point of departure for changes in their personal trajectory. This is a process of many small steps; it is an incentive for continuous change. The incentive for personal change is a reason why it becomes existential because many revalue their former way of life and strive to find a new way of life and a new engagement. Several voices tell of revaluing the traditional activist work, and the ambition to find alternative ways of working. Art becomes a vital part of this, as many find in art forms of expressions that mediate both the deep and the dark, which I refer to as eco-occulture. Hence, *eco-occulture is the counterculture of the Anthropocene, and it is a distinctive bridge between the environmental movement and dark green spirituality.*

In the personal stories that I have cited, the voices set their own lives in relation to the contemporary challenges. These stories tell how this has spurred them to personal change, which for many has been an incentive to turn to spirituality but also to change their lives towards an ecological way of life that often includes moving to the countryside, making a transition towards a spiritual and social resilience. To tell their personal stories is also to bear witness to the changes taking place in our time, but it also shows the power of stories. Stories are "the key fabric by which we construct the world individually and collectively" according to Jones and Jones. Stories offer the ability

> to creatively capture the complex ecology of the unfolded (history and unfolding world). To capture this complexity requires some effort of *imaginational groundwork*. It requires relating the individual to a global scale, the present to deep time.[582]

Stories set the personal life in "the networks we are in ecologically are extraordinarily opaque, complex, long and entangled."[583] Many of the voices who have told their story in this chapter are part of what Howker and Malik refer to as

[582] Jones and Jones 2017:157.

[583] Jones and Jones 2017:157.

the jilted generation, many in the formative years of their lives between 20 and 35. For them turning to spirituality is seen as part of their life trajectory: (i) Spirituality is part of the process of facing climate change and living with losses, it gives rise to insights which are both emotional and painful. (ii) Spirituality plays a distinctive role in coping with this new reality, and this is what I refer to as the therapeutic value of spirituality. (iii) Spirituality offers a framework of symbols and meaning for constructing a new narrative, or an alter-tale, as well as skills and practices to create community. (iv) Spirituality expresses values such as community and compassion which very much converge with social resilience. (v) Spirituality is seen as distinctive in the process of implementing change and a new life according to ecological principles. Hence, what I characterise as dark green spirituality draws from the spirituality of life (Heelas), the alternative spiritualities as being socially significant (Partridge) and is characterised by ecocentric views and is politically engaged (Taylor and Gottlieb). Therefore, spirituality has a distinctive role in negotiating ecological awareness.

To express this in a slogan, ecological awareness is deep; it is not only an awareness of something outer, but also a personal insight, with a very emotional and existential core. Many of the accounts show how ecological awareness goes deeper because it calls for a new self-awareness, asking what it means to be part of the species human, and it sets your personal life in the era of the Anthropocene. Ecological awareness loops back, according to Morton but I would rather say that the world *looks back,* not only to humanity, as an abstract species, but to each of us, as an individual and a person. Ecological awareness oscillates between emotions of sorrow and loss, and love and compassion. Living in times of extreme loss of biodiversity makes the darker moods distinctive: the love for other-than-human species, compassion for their suffering, anger about the impact of the contemporary human lifestyles on the lives of other species, and grief over the degradation of ecosystems. As Jones and Jones note, to become self-aware in terms of an ecological self is "to put oneself in a very ethical and emotionally challenging position".[584] Hence, ecological self-awareness takes the depth even further. The theme of the loss of place is central in many of the stories I heard, and these narratives of loss not only address the sense of wonder, but also include the darker sides, and emotions in relation to ecological crisis, environmental degradation or climate change. Ecological awareness is set in the complexity of the interconnected ecological reality that must be subject to constant adjustments. Being ecologically aware means living with a constant challenge of being human in time of an accelerating human-caused catastrophe – the challenges it gives rise to range between the emotional, existential and the ethical dimensions.

[584] Jones and Jones 2017:157

Chapter 4 Reflective and Utopian Practices

In exploring the practices that are created in response to the challenges of living in the Anthropocene, I will give accounts of various practices which are organised in workshops. As seen in previous chapters, a central question was: how can we cope with the current challenges? Throughout my fieldwork I have participated in a number of workshops where people had the ambition to contribute to an understanding of these challenges. In this chapter, I give examples of what I refer to as reflective practices.

4.1 Reflective Practices

Reflective practices are not only the practice of reflection, but practices that in various ways works to stimulate, encourage or enable reflection. This may be done by creating a space for conversations or performing practices such as education, sharing circles, or other form of workshops for example walks or meditations. Such reflective practices may be sharing circles that explore alternative forms of communication, or various spiritual practices such as meditation or silence. In a theoretical perspective I relate to Lucy Sargisson's conception 'utopian practices'. First, I present a number of workshops in the form of sharing circles. Next, two workshops that took place in nature, in the forest outside Schumacher College. I will then discuss a walk along the coastline towards Dartmouth, and a meditation practice that took place overlooking the Atlantic. Finally, I relate to practices of work and everyday life.

4.1.1 Creating Alternative Spaces

This chapter is dedicated to reflective practices, and just as the previous chapter referred to the need for new stories, the need of deeper reflection is often expressed by the participants. One such voice is Benjamin. He has passed the age of 40, and he has worked for some years in the Transition movement and been active in a local transition group, but he came to feel that something was missing in this work. In his

view many people who are engaged in green matters are "doers", they are often not really interested in discussions or deeper questions. The matters they tend to engage in are practical, hands-on matters, such as "where can I get locally grown food, how can I work with local farmers and support their work by buying their groceries?". He says that the conversations he has had, even with close friends, often ended up in discussions that resulted in pro-and-con argumentation which too often seeks resort in presupposed positions. For a long time, he had felt weary of these discussions, and he longs for something different.

> The kind of conversation I want to be part of would be like putting an object in the middle of a table and letting everyone tell the others what they see from their perspective. If we all can come together and look at things from different perspectives, we can come up with a different, more complex picture.[585]

The communication that Benjamin wants to be part of would allow participants to see things from many perspectives, and to give different views. Benjamin emphasises the value of creating a space where you can talk about everything, and he considers the course at Schumacher to be an example of this. In his vision of the kind of conversations he wants to take part in, everyone can contribute their perspective, there would be no priority of particular ways of seeing. Benjamin describes this as "being midwives to new ideas". Benjamin voices both dissatisfaction and a positive example. He has a critical approach, but at the same time he proposes a vision of an alternative form of communication. Furthermore, Benjamin contrasts two different forms of communication: the argumentation of pros and cons, in contrast to being midwives to new ideas. Benjamin expresses the need to talk about the deeper issues, but he also bears witness to the difficulties of finding ways, or spaces, for such discussions. There are several questions that follows such as: How can we talk about these issues and include everyone? Where do we find the space to talk about these issues?

4.1.2 Forming Circles of Silence and Sharing

Reflective practices are performed in various workshops, and sharing circles, that is, conversations in a circle among participants, are a common feature. Having participated in many such circles, my description will be a summary rather than an account of one specific occasion. I draw from several circles as part of various workshops to serve as an introduction to this practice. Forming a circle can be done in various way, indoors as well as in nature. Sitting together in a circle does not give precedence to anyone as the participants face each other and can see each other's faces. The person who is sharing can address all the participants in the circle equally. Sharing is based on reciprocity and there is an intimate relation between sharing,

[585] Field notes 2014.

and the sense of community. Sharing is an interplay between listening and speaking, and participants shift their roles as they take it in turns around. Sharing is done together, there is an exchange of experiences and reflections. Sharing is often described as a gift that you give and receive. To listen and to speak are equally important in the circle. Therefore, these practices are a form of co-creation, as the participants together adjust and decide how to perform the practices according to the preferences on that particular occasion. The facilitator invites the group to participate, but there may also be smaller groups where the participants organise the circle themselves.

The Silent Circle is a practice that comes in many versions, but the distinctive feature is that participants form a circle and that they will be silent for a while before starting conversation, a session, a workshop, or simply before class. There is a moment of silence both at the beginning and at the end of the circle. The silence may last a few minutes, it may be longer like a short meditation, according to the need on that particular occasion. Thus, silence works to open or close the circle, and this is done to tune in to the moment, to each other and the place. Lucy Sargisson refers to this practice as "attunement", a term she found in her study of the Findhorn community in Scotland.[586] Attunement means to tuning into the place, the people and the mood of the moment. At one workshop the facilitator presented *The Silent Circle* as a practice that he/she first had come in contact within the Quaker tradition. Quaker meetings could take the form that the community sat together, in silence, for up to one hour (children would be allowed to take part for 15 minutes and then leave the room because most kids do not like to sit still for a longer time). When the hour of silence had passed, anyone who felt that they wanted to speak could speak freely about whatever was on his/her heart. The other participants would listen without interrupting, and when the speaker had done his/her sharing, someone else would follow, or if no one wanted to share, there would be silence again. However, at this workshop, the silence was modified to last only a few minutes, and this was also the common procedure in the workshops I participated in. The circles started with a few minutes (a maximum five) of silence, before the circle was open for communication.

4.1.3 Take Your Question to the Fields and the Forest

The workshop I call *Take Your Question to the Fields and the Forest* was dedicated to exploring the questions: "What I can do?" and "How I can contribute to change?" The workshop consisted of three parts, first a sharing circle, secondly, the task was to formulate a question to share in relation to the given theme, and thirdly, a silent walk in the fields and forest. At the beginning of this circle the chairs in the room were rearranged for the purpose, and the chairs were coordinated with the number of participants, leaving no empty chairs in the circle, where there were

[586] Sargisson 2012:134.

approximately 20 participants. In this workshop a theme was chosen which concerned the question, how to contribute to change? The purpose of these circles is to allow everyone to elaborate their ideas freely. As the circle opened with a few minutes' silence before the sharing, it allowed everyone to think through the question before the sharing started. At this workshop task for the participants was to formulate the questions that were most urgent to themselves. The sharing circle was the initial part of the process, and then everyone was given a piece of paper to write down their question. Again, this was done in silence. At the end of the workshop participants shared their questions as the papers were pinned to the wall and everyone could read each other's questions, as a form of sharing which was done in silence, because no one was to comment on each other's questions. Hence, the primary aim was not to give answers at this stage, but to put words on the innermost feelings and ideas that the participants carry.

In this workshop everyone was given a paper to write down a question and these notes were put up on the board, where they remained for the rest of the course, so it was possible for me to return and take some notes. Many of these questions can be seen as spiritual questions, such as "The earth gives so much healing and love, how can I be part of that?" Or "How can I find hope?" "Do we need words for the change or is action all we need?" There is an intimate link between reflection and spirituality; some practices are recognisable as spiritual practices, such as forming a circle, sharing, being silent or the silent walk, and in their reflections, many tell how they turn to spirituality, and stress the importance of spirituality, both in their own personal life and in healing the earth. The final part of the workshop was a silent walk, which it was possible to do together or in a group or individually. As the facilitator closed the workshop she encouraged everyone "to be in silence and to take the question with you, out there, to the fields and the forest."[587] That the workshop ended in a silent walk emphasises that answers may not come directly, or rather, finding answers may be complicated and take time, and everyone has to find their own answers. This personal approach helps participants to find a personal engagement to work from, and it is based in asking basic questions, such as; "What can I do?" or "How can I contribute, given my skills, my questions, the place where I am?"

The workshop *Take Your Question to the Field and the Forest* shows that reflective practice may consist of various features; it may include bodily modes and movement, speech and the telling of stories, as well as silence. Sharing circles are created as an alternative to discussion based on argumentation, sometimes described as ping-ponging. The creation of alternative practices is done in various workshops. I use the term 'reflective practices' adding the prefix 'reflective' to 'practices' in order to make the term more precise. Reflection is social and contextual, and differs from contemplation, where individuals withdraw from life to find true knowledge in a Descartian sense. It should be noted that the aim of these conversations is open-

[587] Field notes 2013.

ended, the objective is not to come up with a decision or consensus. It is the dialogic that fosters reflection rather than dialectics. 'Dialogic' is a word coined by the Russian literature critic Mikhail Bakhtin to name a discussion which does not resolve itself by finding common ground. In the sociologist Richard Sennett's words:

> Though no shared agreements may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of another.[588]

The dialogic resonates with the sociologist Emanuel Castell's notion of the communicative process of social movement, and I considers the practices that I describe here to be examples of such a communicative process. But Castell also emphasises that social movements form their ideology in this communicative process. I found in my field that it is often repeated that at this stage questions are more important than answers, and workshops such as *Take Your Question to the Field and the Forest* have as an explicit aim to reflect on and to formulate these questions. The need to address the questions that concern the deeper predicament of our culture is in focus here, rather than ideological doctrines that deliver firm answers. The workshop encourages everyone to take the question to the fields and the forest, and this indicates the site of knowledge, where knowledge is to be found. Questions of the kind stated before – how to find hope, whether we need for words or action, or how to be part of the earth's healing and love – are spiritual questions that the individual has to find their personal answers; "What can I do?" or "How can I contribute, given my skills, my questions, the place where I am?" are question that include a practical dimension of trying out and finding your way. Therefore, the instruction at the end of the workshop "to be in silence and take the question to the field and the forest" indicates that these are personal questions, they concern everyone's personal engagement, and they are based on emotional, existential and ethical aspects. And to *be in silence* is different from simply being silent (as when someone asks you to shut up for a moment) because being in silence is a conscious choice of being in the moment and giving space for something new emerge.

The aim of these practices is to find ways to talk about the deeper questions, such as what can we expect of living in times of climate change? How can humans live in respect and coexistence with other species? There is a focus on questions rather than answers, and this is perhaps a sign of the time, the feeling of living in uncertain times, or "the early days". To realise the reality of climate change is to admit that we do not really know what it would be like to live with the ongoing consequences of increasing temperatures or loss of biodiversity.

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[588] Sennett 2013:19. The classic conversation models differ between dialectical and dialogical conversations. Dialectics is the verbal play of opposites which gradually build up to a synthesis. Dialectics starts in Aristotle's observation in *Politics* that "though we may use the same words, we cannot say that we are speaking of the same things".

What is at the core here is a negotiation of ecological awareness, and I avoid describing this as *becoming* ecologically aware, because 'becoming aware' might mislead us to see this as a simple step towards awareness. Timothy Morton distinguishes ecological awareness from the rationalist notion of knowledge of an outer world, instead eco-gnosis has the form of a loop, it is a "hermeneutical knowingness"[589] which is more like a form of attunement which is "necessarily weird".[590] As Morton sets out in a philosophical perspective, he aims to dig deep in the "layers of attunement to ecological reality more accurate that what is habitual in the media, in the academy and in society at large."[591] He compares this with the not yet known, the first step of attunement has to be to formulate and pose questions, even questions that may seem "weird". Despite Morton's philosophical approach, and I think this relevant in relation to the workshops I have studied. In the process of negotiating ecological awareness, questions are more urgent than asking for direct answers, because at this stage there are no fixed answers at hand. The effort to formulate questions is a tentative process, far from offering definitive statements, and while it may have its point of departure in dissolution, this is not the end of the process. Questions are central in any knowledge process; however, reflection differs from knowledge that starts with ignorance and ends with certainty. The reflective process starts with ignorance, perhaps confusion or dissolution (or emotional aspects, such as grief) and the outcome may even be uncertainty. In other words, reflection is both emotional and existential, and it concerns coming to terms with living in times of climate change as an environmental, cultural and political phenomenon that reshapes the way we think about ourselves, our societies and the place of humanity on Earth,[592] and it might lead to 'the deep' question, of which values we pose at the core of the ecological ethos. To sum up, there are two aspects converging here: (i) how climate change, or any form of environmental degradation, can be a personal and painful reality, and that it is forcing us to face really difficult questions, and (ii) the ambition to find ways to reflect on and communicate these questions. These two aspects, the painful reality of the ecological crisis and the ambition to reflect and communicate this, converge in the negotiation of ecological awareness.

4.1.3 Being in Silence – Skills and Spirituality

Silence was a distinctive part of *Take Your Question to the Field and the Forest*. The workshop opens with silence and ends in the instruction "to be in silence and take the question to the field and the forest". Being in silence is a distinctive feature

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589 Morton 2015:2.

590 Morton 2015:2.

591 Morton 2015:2.

592 Hulme 2009: xxviii.

not only of this workshop; as will be seen further on, it is part of many of the reflective practices that I explore. It should be noted: in these practices being in silence is not seen as the counterpart to communication, rather it is a communicational skill that needs practice to perform with refinement. The simple model of communication is to bring out the message; one party sends a message, the other receives it. Speech and language are the dominant media here. This model of communication establishes a hierarchal power relation between speaker and listener. In simple terms, to be talking *to* someone differs from talking *with* someone; talking to someone is a one-way relation, talking with is a reciprocal relation. In this thesis, it is talking-with communication that is of interest, and it requires distinctive social skills. Communication requires skills, and Sennett notes that usually when we talk about these skills, the focus is on making a clear presentation, and to present what we think or feel.[593]

> Skills are indeed required to do so, but these are declarative in character. Listening well requires a different set of skills, those of closely attending to and interpreting what others say before responding, making sense of their gestures and silences as well as declarations.[594]

Sennett proposes a different set of skills, and one of the skills required for communication is to listen but listening is not only relevant for the receptive part of the communication. The various forms of silence which are part of the reflective work can also be described as spiritual practices, for example the role of silence in meditation is a recognisable spiritual practice. Such spiritual practices are important here because they offer models for coping and working with emotions and existential and ethical matters. The value of spirituality is not that spirituality in a magical sense makes all the hardships disappear, but that one can handle and cope with the challenges.

"Silence is where we learn to listen" one participant said, and to allow silence to be a part of conversation means that the dichotomy between speech and silence is rejected. *The value of silence* is a central feature here, and it is worth emphasising that silence is not the opposite of communication, rather a vital part of communication, or even a precondition for communication. Silence *and* listening are a vital part of these circles. Listening is, as Sennett notes, a skill that is distinctive for musicians, and silence is part of every piece of music. The role of silence as communication is worth some further reflection, especially 'being in silence' as a distinctive spiritual practice. Silence is a part of rituals; it is an element of meditation and retreats in various faith traditions that often include periods of silence of various duration. The novelist Sara Maitland writes in *The Book of Silence* that communication for most of us, most of the time means talk. "'Communication'

[593] Sennett 2013:14.

[594] Sennett 2013:14.

(which always means talk) is the *sine qua non* of 'good relationships'."[595] The value of silence might be summed up in the words of the avant-garde musician Captain Beefheart "May the Baby Jesus shut your mouth and open your mind." Indeed, silence can be mind-bending, and the art of listening is fundamental to any real communication, or deeper understanding. Listening goes beyond the demands of sheer good conversational manners. The political scientist Andrew Dobson puts listening at the heart of green politics, as the politics of listening. Dobson claims that listening attentively to one another is part and parcel of what it is to deliberate together.[596] I will continue to discuss silence and listening in relation to sacred places (Wistman's Wood) in chapter 5.

4.2 Practices and Place – Working with the Woods and the Larger-than-Human World

In the following section I introduce two workshops which take place in nature, I call the first *The Difference between Comfort and Shelter*, and the second is *Finding the Tree who is Calling You*, which is a title that the facilitator gave the workshop. What is characteristic here is that both take place in nature, or more precisely, in the forest. The first is a sharing circle where the discussion of living in times of climate change takes place outdoors and where the weather can be said to contribute to the design of the workshop. The second, *Finding the Tree who is Calling You*, is a more playful workshop, which works to elaborate ways of relating to the larger-than-human world, and more precisely to trees.

4.2.1 The Difference Between Comfort and Shelter

The first of these workshops is *The Difference Between Comfort and Shelter* and I first give an account of it and then discuss and analyse it in relation to place and the context of the contemporary environmental discourse. It was a day in June, and the sun disappeared behind the clouds from time to time.[597] We had gathered in the forest to participate in a workshop and to have a conversation on the challenges of climate change. The wind was hard and was shaking the trees above us, and those who did not bring an extra sweater regretted it after a while, as it was quite a chilly day. As the group formed a circle, no one could neglect the change of weather: the sun had disappeared, the wind blew even harder, the temperature was falling, and soon small drops of rain began to fall. Still, the workshop continued for a while, but

[595] Maitland 2009:3.

[596] Dobson 2014:3.

[597] Field notes 2014.

as the rain intensified, we decided to seek protection in a small shelter not far from the place where we had gathered. The shelter was a simple roof, there were no walls, and it was quite small; we had to get close to make space for everyone under the roof, and it took several rearrangements before everyone could come in. Many were wet from the rain and not dressed for the occasion, and they were shivering with cold by now. Someone with a practical sense suggested we should make a fire in the fireplace in the midst of the shelter. To make a fire we needed wood and two persons volunteered to go out and find some. When they came back under the roof of the shelter their clothes were soaking wet, but a warming fire was soon lit in the midst of the circle, and outside the rain was pouring down by now. As there was tea prepared by the facilitators for the workshop break, we were soon able to have a warming cup of tea and some biscuits.

Sitting safe in the shelter, the conversation that had been interrupted soon began again, but somehow everything had changed now. The easy-going-summer-day conditions at the beginning of the workshop were gone. We all recognised the strange coincidence that we, in the middle of a conversation on climate change, had to seek shelter from the heavy rain. Someone made a joke about it: “It is like the weather gods want to say something”, as if they wanted to participate in the conversation, and give us a lesson on what were to expect in times of climate change. Jokes are never “just jokes”. Indeed, it seemed like a new participant had been invited into the circle. Call it the weather gods. The change of scene brought with it a turn in the conversation; if it had been a group of engaged people before, eager to participate in discussion, we were now a group, sitting really close together in a shelter, where we need to find space for each other, trying to keep warm, grateful for the small shelter that gave us protection, the fire, tea and biscuits. We were stuck in the shelter until the heavy rain would stop. Indeed, the working of the weather gods was beyond our control. The point of departure for our conversation had changed from simply trying to imagine possible futures to an experience of how the rapidly weather conditions could change, and how vulnerable humans were in encountering nature. One participant said.

> In our culture we have forgotten the difference between shelter and comfort. We have got used to finding comfort, but what we really need is shelter.[598]

The difference between shelter and comfort was an adequate distinction for our situation, and the person who spoke called our present situation “mildly uncomfortable”. This difference between comfort and shelter is one way of expressing the changes that are expected to follow with climate change and the increasing pressure on the earth’s resources. The difference between comfort and shelter can be understood in relation to nature: Comfort means being safe *from* nature, whilst shelter is to be found *in* nature. Although the challenges that were part

[598] Field notes 2014.

of this workshop were mild compared to the experiences that people have to face living through hurricanes, forest fires and flooding, the point is how improvisations, cooperation and adjusting to new conditions became a distinctive part of the workshop.

This workshop is a further example of a reflective practice, and it illustrates the importance of *place* in relation to these practices. Initially the workshop was *spontaneously moved* from the seminar room indoors to the forest outside the college, and later the group had to seek protection from the rain in the shelter. Something happened in the change of place, because it also meant a change of conditions: the conversation took a different direction when the group sat around the fire in a shelter than if it had taken place in the comfort of the classroom. The change of weather and place transformed the workshop from a simple conversation to a practical task of finding shelter from the rain. A further feature to note here is the context of environmental discourse, because despite the direct experience of shifting weather conditions, and the mentioning of the weather gods, the conversation was very much influenced by contemporary discourse on the consequences of climate change and the changes it will have for the way we live. The conversation among the participants offered many reflections and these can be summed up as "the end of things taken for granted",[599] and the importance of learning to live with uncertainty.

Uncertainty was discussed in negotiating ecological awareness previously, and uncertainty is an epistemological concept, as seen in the not-knowing-yet of ecognosis. But uncertainty includes an existential dimension and what it means to live with uncertainty, which is part of reflections on how to live in changing times. In the workshop the conversation concerned more concrete matters such as what changes of society are to be expected, for example in relation to economy. One participant referred to Vinay Gupta, an environmental activist, according to whom "Collapse means we have to live under the same conditions as the people that grow our coffee".[600] To picture these expected changes in terms of "the end" or as a "collapse" is part of the context of an environmental discourse where the industrial civilisation is questioned. This context of environmental discourse is rooted in radical environmentalism and collapse or peak theories that portray the societal changes in relation to climate change as being in a decline and headed towards a collapse. Names that are often mentioned as an inspiration or references are the American intellectual historian and peak theorist John Michael Greer (aka the Archdruid) as well as Derek Jensen. It would, however, be misleading to simply see

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[599] Field notes 2014.

[600] Field notes 2014. The participant referred this quotation to Vinay Gupta, founder of the Institute for Collapsonomics, see further http://collapsonomics.org / accessed 27 November 2015. Collapsonomics is the study of economic and state systems at the edge of their normal social and economic function, including preventative measures to avoid destructive feedback loops and vicious cycles. The Institute for Collapsonomics is a consulting practice based on the scientific and historical understanding of collapse conditions, and responses to them.

participants as followers of some sort of radical environmentalism, because their attitude to these ideas varies; some see these thinkers as sources of inspiration, while others have a more critical stance, hence there is range of attitudes from agreement to disagreement. Yet, to discuss these ideas or read these books is part of a reflective work where individual participants can develop their own path. The participants that I have been in conversation with are not just well informed on scientific reports on climate change (as discussed in previous chapters) but are likewise generally well informed on debates on environmental matters; they are familiar with the ideas, work and writings of public persons, they read books and articles and websites and other media resources. Participants often share articles, books, internet resources, and give each other tips on titles or other interesting stuff to read. In this aspect, it is an intellectual milieu, and an ongoing discussion that is part of the social interaction of everyday life, and in this way, participants constantly seek new knowledge (and sometimes disagree and reject it), and this concerns both theoretical and practical knowledge. In this workshop the discussion took a new direction as a result of the shifting weather conditions and the need to seek shelter from the rain. This meant a change of place and conditions, but it likewise changed the conversation about the changes to come as they suddenly became real. Therefore, this workshop illustrates how the negotiation of ecological awareness is an ongoing process of adjusting to changing conditions. Ecological awareness is related both to the practical effort and to the intellectual context of environmental discourse.

The workshops I discuss in this section take place in nature. It may be in a forest, like the workshop just discussed. Although they take place in nature, nature is not simply a stage or décor, in a passive sense. On the contrary, the interactions of the participants of this workshop concern how they interact with nature; the wind that gets colder, the rain falling, the fire that offers some warmth to the group gathered in the small shelter, the movements of clouds and the wind in the branches. Taken together, this contributes to the workshop, not only in adding something to the experience, but more so, the workshop was remodelled as a response to these conditions, and it transformed the conversation, inviting other voices into the conversation as “the weather gods wanted to say something”. Indeed, looking at trees torn by the wind, seeking shelter from the rain, just like sitting close with each other by the fireside in conversation may be seen as an archaic human experience, and it may challenge our notion of being modern man, just as much as Latour’s anthropology. The change of conversation that occurred as a consequence, in interaction with, or perhaps in conversation with “the weather gods”, illustrates Bennett’s notion of how resisting the story of the disenchantment[601] can enhance enchantment, and how the negotiations of ecological awareness may go hand in hand with cultivating enchantment. I discuss this further in the next workshop *Finding the Tree that is Calling You*, which likewise takes place in the forest, and where trees play a special role.

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[601] Bennett 2001:4

4.2.3 Finding the Tree that is Calling You

Finding the Tree that is Calling You is a workshop which was offered by a young Chinese woman Qian who presents herself as "a tree hugger". Qian says that she is aiming for a gentler form of tree-hugging, because she is not after confrontation in direct action which aims at protecting trees from being cut down. Qian has chosen to work with trees in this way because she thinks that we need to learn to "grow like trees, not like skyscrapers".[602] The workshop *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* took place in the redwood forest outside Dartington, and the College, and on this occasion there were six persons participating (myself included, not counting Qian who was leading the workshop).[603] At the beginning the group was split into pairs, so that there were three pairs, and each pair worked together. The workshop opened with a silent circle as the participants stood in a circle for a few minutes' attunement, but silence was kept during the whole session. Then each pair would take a scarf, and one of the persons in the pair had to cover his/her eyes and the other had to take the blinded companion by the hand and lead him/her to a tree. This tree was supposed to be a tree that in some way could be seen as symbolising this person. The blindfolded person would touch and feel the tree but would not take off the scarf to see it. After some minutes, the person was led back to the starting point and the couple changed positions. Now the person that first led the other would be blindfolded and led to a tree.

When each person in the pair had been given a tree, the next step was to try to find it again, now without the blindfold. The person that led you to the tree would not show you which of the trees it was. The only conversation allowed is to ask if this is the right tree. When the person finds the tree, maybe because he/she remembers how the trunk felt or identified some other marks that made it recognisable, the pair changes again, and the second one will try to find his/her tree. When everyone had found their tree, the whole group walked together to each of the given trees, and the one who gave the tree tells why this particular tree was given to this particular person. The workshop was closed with a circle where everyone gave a short reflection on his or her experiences of the practice (the practice of circles has been discussed in the previous chapter). Again, there is of course no model for how this practice is to be experienced by the participants, but six different stories. I will come back to this later, but first I discuss how these workshops are created. Qian, who led this workshop, had designed it according to her ambition to work in a "softer approach". I describe it as a rather playful workshop, and it can be seen to consist of two parts. First, the group splits into pairs, and the people in the pair alternate to lead and be led to their personal tree, the tree that is calling you. In the second part the group reunites in the closing circle, and everyone can share their views. The initial part of finding the trees can be seen as innovative, but the closing

[602] Field notes 2013.

[603] Among the seven participants in the workshop, three had experience of direct action in various forms.

of the session in the sharing circle is a common practice that features in many versions in various workshops (as I have already given some examples of).

Among the comments in the closing circle of this workshop, it was the playfulness that many appreciated, it was "really a lot of fun".[604] Play is a practice that includes both joy and sorrow; play is where children, as well as adults, may work with emotions, experimentations as well as enchantments. Playfulness is not to be mistaken for being the opposite of serious.[605] Richard Jenkins notes that many enchantments "are rooted in a desire or playfulness, however one might define either of those apparently human impulses."[606] From my own experience of participation, I would describe *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* as an experiment in how we relate to each other, to trees, and the larger-than-human world, with all our senses, and the instrument to relate to this is our body. Being blindfolded and led through a forest by a person, and holding on to someone's hand, means that you must trust that person, because walking in a forest, where the ground may be slippery and irregular (not like a plain floor) which is not easy to tread, being blindfolded. This means that you must depend on your guide to find your way. In order to find the tree again you need to listen to your intuition, your ability to orientate yourself, and recall the sensory input and the particular marks on the tree you were given: How did the trunk feel to your fingertips as you touched it? How did it smell? How did it sound as the wind was passing through the leaves and branches? Could you guess what kind of tree it was just from this information? Was it a redwood tree, or an oak tree?

This led to further question such as: what senses guide us in our encounters with the world? The workshop explores our sensory receptivity and stimulates reflection on how we relate to our reality; what senses do we listen to, or perhaps fail to listen to, or forget that we have? In the sharing circle that closed this workshop, several voices noted how difficult it was to orientate yourself, being blindfolded, and how much we relied on seeing things in our approach to the world. Sight, the visual sense, is a dominant sensory input, and therefore being blindfolded forces you to listen to other senses. It means *a shift of sensibility*, and it includes senses and abilities that we forgot that we had and exploring these is a vital part of coming to know the wild mind. The wild mind is beyond the rationalistic observation that distances you from the world; thus, the wild mind means listening to what the eco-psychologist Dave Abram calls the spell of the sensuous.[607] The wild mind interacts and participates in a most intimate manner, and it is an invitation to an encounter, which according to Bennettis in the heart of enchantment.[608] Such enchanting encounters are something

[604] Field notes 2013.

[605] Droogers 2004.

[606] Jenkins, R. 2000:18.

[607] Abram 1997.

[608] Bennett 2001:4.

unexpected that "hits us",[609] but as Bennett notes, it can also be fostered through deliberate strategies. Thus, fostering enchantment, through deliberate strategies, is something that can be done in workshops such as *Finding the Tree that is Calling You*, and it is in line with what I refer to as cultivating enchantment.

4.2.5 Trees Representing the Larger-than-Human World

Louis, one participant in this workshop, told how being blindfolded and led to a tree made him sense the tree differently. Usually, he would look *up* at the trees, to the branches and leaves, looking up to the sky above, but as he was touching the trunk, and was unable to see, he suddenly could feel the whole tree, the parts hidden underground. How "the roots of the trees reached as deep in the ground as the branches into the sky". Louis says he realised that he had "only known half the tree before" that is, the part "visible above ground". As he explored the tree with his fingertips and hands, holding the trunk, he sensed that "it was alive and growing" and how firmly it was rooted in the ground. He sums up: "Trees are living beings as we are." In encountering the tree, he sensed its earthliness, he sensed what it meant to be rooted. For Louis using other senses than vision, meant a new perception. Being blindfolded he no longer looked *up at the sky*, to the leaves and the branches, instead he was feeling the roots of the tree *going deep into the ground*.

The experience of a *new* sense *of place,* transcending the place as an area, or simply the surface *on* the ground resonates with Tim Ingold's phenomenological approach, as Ingold draws a distinction between the Globe and the sphere.[610] We see the earth as a globe, living on the surface, but really, we are living inside the sphere, according to Ingold. The shift of perception that Louis describes can be seen as a shift from a globe-surface (where the part underneath the surface is hidden) to a sphere where the inside includes the whole tree. For Louis, being blindfolded meant that he could sense the otherwise invisible parts of the tree, the roots hidden in the ground underneath our feet, and it is, in a rather concrete way, a deep experience, going "deep" underground. Louis' account is an *encounter* with the whole tree, which made him realise that he previously had known only half of the tree, the part "visible above ground". What is happening here can be described as an altered sense of place, transcending the common ground, and exploring the invisible, the things unseen by everyday senses. In a way it was an experience of turning the world upside down.

Despite the playful approach in *Finding the Tree that is Calling You*, which has a ring of a fairytale festivity, it is significant that the practices in this workshop are very much in tune with modern scientific and philosophical conceptions of trees. The plant scholar Peter Wohlleben has found how trees are able to communicate

[609] Bennett 2001:4.

[610] Ingold 2000.

through their roots in the wood-wide-web, and the philosopher Martin Hall argues against the zoocentrism that has prevailed in Western intellectual history.[611] Hall argues that plants should be consider as persons.

These new results from plant science and philosophy are compatible with the mythic and folkloric understanding of trees and plants, and together these constitute a modern form of tree lore that I discuss further on. I think it is justified to say that there is an animistic approach to trees in this workshop. In this workshop trees are not simply objects to be protected, they are rather companions, able to offer consultation and wisdom. The title of the workshop – *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* – tells us that it is the trees who are calling us, and that we can find the one that calls us if we learn to listen with other senses than those which dominate our everyday way of sensing and seeing things. This aims beyond the rationalistic mindset of Western intellectual tradition. Although the workshop takes place in the forest, it differs from the environmental activist work of protecting forests when bulldozers and tree-cutters want to get their work done or participating in tree planting projects. The workshop elaborates ways of relating to the trees, which *invite trees,* representing the larger-than-human world, and enable the exploration of a new relationship and new form of engagement. In trying out new ways of sensing and experiencing the world where the human and the larger-than-human world interact, this workshop concerns negotiating ecological awareness which very much has the character of trying out, and experimenting with senses, bodies and play.

4.3. Working with Geological and Global Perspectives

In this section I give an account of two workshops, *The Deep Time Walk* and *The Earth Meditation*, both practices which took place along the coast in the Devonian landscape. Just like the workshops previously discussed (*The Difference Between Comfort and Shelter* and *Finding the Tree that is Calling You*), these are practices where the place and the landscape play a vital role in the design and the performance of the workshop, but they also include perspectives from the geological range of deep time, and the global perspectives on Earth, and these are workshops that pay attention to the body and body-as-place.

[611] Wohlleben 2016 Wohlleben's book *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate* became a bestseller, and it has received much attention in the media. Hall 2011.

4.3.1 The Deep Time Walk

Devon means deep,[612] and it makes sense to anyone who sees the rolling downs of the Devonian landscape, which is characterised by high hills and deep valleys, but in the context of the green movement the topography of the deep landscape becomes far more multifaceted. The etymology of Devon is the Celtic word *dubnos* meaning 'deep'. Deep ecology is an ideological and inspirational bedrock for the ecological movement, and of course, any mention of deep has a ring of this, reminding of the philosophy of Arne Næss. 'Deep' also figures in deep time, which is a further important source of inspiration here. As noted previously, 'deep' is a word with positive connotation, frequently used as a positive attribute; for example, in deep questioning, deep feeling, deep connection, and deep time is a further example. When I discuss "deep time" it is related to various reflective practices and workshops, and *The Deep Time Walk* is an example of this. Before introducing the walk, I present the concept of 'deep time', which is rooted in challenges to the biblical narrative. The Scottish geologist James Hutton (1726–1797) observed deep stratigraphy clearly exposed in the strata of Scottish sea-cliffs, and he concluded that the Earth was 4.5 billion years old, much older than Bishop James Ussher's proposal that it had been created in 4004 BC. Hutton introduced the perspective of geological time, and two centuries later, John McPhee modified it to deep time in 1981.[613] This is a scientific challenge to the Christian creation narrative, but deep time also resonates with indigenous cosmologies such as Dreamtime. Deep time reaches back in a long-term geological perspective and illustrates that "the span of humanity within this long-term history of earth is relatively short."[614] Deep time is in contrast to clock time, the short and human-centred perspective of modern man. After this clarification of deep time, I will set off on a deep time walk, a walk through the landscape that illustrates the intersection between long-term geological and relatively short historical processes of humanity.

In one sense, *The Deep Time Walk* concerns how stories relate to places and landscapes, and it shares this feature with other practices that will be discussed further on. In this walk, the story told is the geo-history of the landscape that goes far back in the deep time span of evolution, beyond the clock time of modern history to the vastness of geological eras. *The Deep Time Walk* extends the larger-than-human world, which is not only restricted to animals and plants, but also includes biological lifeforms such bacteria or fungi. This walk was created by Stephan Harding who is a teacher at Schumacher College and head of the holistic science

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[612] Field notes 2013. The name Devon derives from the Proto-Celtic word *dubnos* meaning deep (in Welsh *Dyfnaint*, Breton *Devnent* and Cornish *Dewnens*). The Dumnonii were the inhabitants of the south-west peninsula of Britain first known at the time of the Roman conquest and referring to the "deep valley dwellers". In Old English it was known as *Defenascire*, and from this comes the Latin name *Devonia*. (From www.wikipedia).

[613] McPhee 1981.

[614] Fredengren 2016.

program.[615] I give a short introduction to the deep time walk, which took place along the coastline in the footsteps of the Gaia theory. The walk proceeds along the pathway by the high coastline, close to the sea, ending in Dartmouth. The walk stretches three miles, and every step measures a half a million years in the geological time span. This walk turns the emergence of life on earth, which is often seen as an abstract process, into a very concrete story. During *The Deep Time Walk*, there are several stops and a short talk, or narrative, is given by Hardin, and this illustrates that it can be hard to distinguish between storytelling and tutorial lectures. Hardin creates a narrative of evolution, the ancient sea, the intimate life of bacteria as the origin of life, the fungus as one of the first life forms on land, and finally of the history of mankind, in a new time perspective where mankind indeed is a very small part of the whole. At the final point in Dartmouth a ruler is placed on the ground, and this covers the history of humankind. The last two hundred years, referred to as the modern world or the industrial civilisation, are two millimetres, and compared to the length of the walk that started with the big bang this sets modern civilisation in a time perspective. The actual walk reaches across the geological space of time and the evolution of life on Earth.

After the walk, some of the participants shared their reflections. Sue expressed how *The Deep Time Walk* made her realise that the process of evolution "took place here". The walk made her feel part of the evolution that actually took place at the coastline in Devon, and that the rocks, the sea, and landscape – as well as herself – were part of this still ongoing process. Sue says that the walk made her sense how her body was carrying memories from once being part of the life forms in the ancient sea where life first emerged. Sue said that after the walk her body felt a little bit tired, and this gave her an intense feeling that she had been part of a very long journey. The sense of shifting perspectives is also part of the final part of the walk, Sue said:

> The finale in Dartmouth when he places a ruler on the ground. That was like, wow! You know, after that long walk, you felt that how small a part it really was. What a small part our history is, compared to the long walk. The last two hundred years is only two millimetres!

These accounts from *The Deep Time Walk* concern the new ways of thinking about the relationships with the material world, and other species, it can be said to boil down to the question of how we should think about our relationship to other species and landscapes when we share so much of our lives, even our very cells and selves, with them. Some of these reflections on this practice were formulated in more spiritual terms; for example one, of the participants said the walk helped to "open a spiritual channel", which he/she had long felt was broken, and the walk made

[615] See also Harding 2009.

him/her “connect to Gaia”.[616] Yet another participant summed up the walk with one word, “Wholeness”. These reactions to *The Deep Time Walk* are yet other examples of enchanting encounters, but the term ‘deep time enchantment’ is even more precise here. ‘Deep time enchantment ‘refers to how such encounters can create energising, enchanting effects, what Christina Fredengren describes as “near-religious or spiritual experiences – both in the past and the present.”[617] Dipesh Chakrabarty[618] stresses the need to question the barriers between histories of geological deep time, natural history and that of the human in order to understand both our situatedness and our responsibilities in the contemporary world with its climate and environmental problems. I find *The Deep Time Walk* to be a practice that share this ambition, as it turns the theoretical discussion of questioning the barriers between human and natural histories of geological deep time, into a practice where otherwise abstract matters become a lived experience.

4.3.2 The Earth Meditation

In this section I present a meditation practice *The Earth Meditation*, that was part of the Deep Time Walk. This workshop turns the emergence of life on earth, which often is seen as a somewhat abstract process, into a very concrete story. I come back to this later on, but here I primarily focus on the relation between the earth and the body. The actual walk illustrates the space-time of the evolution of life. *The Deep Time Walk* includes a longer stop at the place that would mark the point where the planet Earth first emerged, and at this place there is a meditative practice where the participants lie down on the ground, with their head to the north and feet to the south, and arms reaching out so that the body stretches in the four cardinal directions.[619] In this Harding gives a guided meditation in which participants are asked to feel their body and how they are lying on the Earth. In the next steep of the meditation participants are asked to imagine how their body reaches out, and how lines stretch to in the four cardinal points, reaching across the continents and the Atlantic. From the head a line reaches up through Britain and Scotland as far as the Arctic. I would say that this resonates with the medieval model of the micro-macro cosmic man well-known from Leonardo da Vinci’s famous illustration, however, if Leonardo’s version places man at the centre of the world, it is in this sense a human-centred image, the Deep Time meditation rather poses the individual in relation to the world, and humans in relation to the larger-than-human world. After the meditation there is a short sharing circle where the group gathers and if someone wants to share their

[616] Fieldnotes 2013.

[617] Fredengren 2016.

[618] Chakrabarty 2009:213–20.

[619] Field notes 2013, 2014.

experience or simply say something, it is possible to do so before the walk continues. This is a common practice for closing a circle or a meditation.

After the walk, I had a conversation with Kimberly, who said that the meditation really gave her a deep experience of being a part of the Earth, in a very physical sense. Kimberly says that maybe it was because the meditation took place in field close to the high coast, and she felt some fear of heights, that "the feeling of being held by the Earth was so strong, almost physical". She says that while she had that feeling of the whole earth and how she was a part of the Earth, she intensely sensed being bodily connected to Mother Earth. She says that she realises that although this feeling was new to her, the Earth had always known it.

> The Earth has always known that I am a part of it. It was me who was the problem; I was the one I who had not understood this before. But Mother Earth had always known that I was a part of her. A part of her body. Because the Earth is so much older and wiser.[620]

Thus, the wisdom of Mother Earth is ancient and Kimberly's insight of being part of Mother Earth is almost like a recollection. There is an identification between the personal body and the body of Mother Earth in Kimberly's account. The identification and intimate relation between the Earth and the individual body is seen in the shared bodily memory. In a sense, it comes with saying that what we describe as Gaian Mother Earth spirituality often identifies the earth with the body of Mother Earth, and Hulme finds the planet as a body to be one of three "master metaphors" in reports on climate change (the other two are the planet as a machine, and the planet as a patient).[621] However, as seen in *The Earth Mediation*, there is a further identification than the one between body of Mother Earth and the earth or the planet Earth, and that is the one between the individual's personal body and the body of Mother Earth. Kimberly's account sheds light on this identification between the individual's body and the body of the Earth or Mother Earth. The body and the Earth, which she refers to as Mother Earth, is central here, but so is the actual place where the meditation was performed.

4.3.3 Bodies-as-Places

The Deep Time Walk and *The Deep Time Meditation* took place in Devon, just outside Dartmouth, close to the high coast facing the Atlantic Sea. It is a specific place: it is located by the walk, and by the site where the meditation took place, and more so, by the individual bodies of the participants. But it also extends this site as being part of the Earth, as the body-and-Earth relation is drawn out in the lines reaching out to the south and north, east and west, as an extension of the limbs,

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[620] Field notes 2013.

[621] Hulme 2014:18.

extending to embrace the whole Earth. What specific place is this? Is it the site on the south-west coast of England, or is it the Earth? This raises the question, what counts as a place? It can be everything between a certain part of my house, or the entire planet Earth. 'Place' just like 'space', is a geographical concept, but they are not synonyms. Place entails spatial location, entails a spatial container of some sort. The eco-critic Lawrence Buell emphasises that in theorising about place "confronting its fragility" is necessary.[622] He claims that we have the capacity to imagine earth holistically and modernisation has shrunk the planet to the point that it is starting to seem possible to think of "global culture" or "global citizenship".[623] In times of globalisation, the far places on the other side of the globe are within reach by flight, although the Earth does not appear to us as it was seen on the famous *Earthrise* picture: as a distant blue marble, a planet in the vast space, or a globe. True, the astronaut saw it like that as he took the photo, but the most of us will never have this experience. How can anyone experience the Earth as a place?

For Kimberly, the meditation gave her a sense of being part of the Earth, sensing how she was held by Mother Earth, and the sensation of being held by the Earth was so strong, almost physical. She describes the physical experience of lying on the grass, with limbs stretched out, and imagining how they reach out in the cardinal directions. For Kimberly the experience of being held was intensified by her fear of heights. What Kimberly pictures is not *a vision* of the whole earth, like a transcendental or dream-like experience, *seeing* the planet at a distance; it is a physical and bodily experience, which is both emotional and sensual. Her sensual experience of being held is related to the actual place where she was lying on the grass, close to the high coastline. To analyse this, it is useful to return to the concepts of body and place. The post-modern understanding of place and bodies, following Buell, proposes an understanding of place-making as a culturally inflected process in which nature and culture must be seen as mutual rather than separate domains.[624] Edward Casey the leading American phenomenologist of place, introduces the concept of "bodies-as-places".[625] Rather than approaching place in the traditional sense, seeing place as place-attachment, the focus is on situatedness and social contextualisation. Thus, questions of physical embeddedness are closely related to "bodies-as-places" rather than emplacement within the physical environment,[626] and here Casey's bodies-as-places help us to get beyond the contested notion of 'environment' that rests upon the nature/culture distinction.[627] In Kimberly's account the body-as-place forms a node of her body's localisation, and her

[622] Buell 2005:62.

[623] Buell 2005:68.

[624] Buell 2005:67.

[625] Casey 1997:323 and Casey 1997:285–330.

[626] Casey 1997:323 and Casey 1997:285–330.

[627] The critical discussion of the term 'environment' stresses the problem of seeing the environment as something outside and separated from us.

psychosomatic modes, the fear of the high coast and the sense of being held by Mother Earth.

4.3.4 Earth and Body

So far I have discussed the physical living body in relation to place and to Earth, but the body is also used metaphorically, as noted by Hulme; the planet as a body is one of the master metaphors in climate change discourse (besides the machine and the patient).[628] The theologian Sallie McFague contrasts the body with the machine,[629] and what she sees in scholarly discussion today is that the "body" is reemerging across many fields of study as a basic metaphor for interpretation and action.

> The metaphor of body – *not just the human body but all bodies* (all matter) – is a radically egalitarian measure of the good life: if claims that all deserve the basics (food, habitat, clean air and water, and so forth).[630]

Living bodies are not exclusively human bodies and the relation to the larger-than-human world is central. The Earth as body may be contrasted with the machine, but there is a third master metaphor in climate change discourse, according to Hulme, and that is the metaphor of the planet as a patient, and this indicates the emergency of the state of the world, and it draws attention the need for healing in our relation to the planet. In one sense, to experience the whole Earth is beyond our possible perception, because it is beyond our scale. We are simply too small. So, how can we have the kind of encounter with the earth that can lead to enchantment? I find the concept of place-as-bodies to be helpful as it is a sensorial relation, and it can overcome the difficulties with the conception of the Earth as a planet, that even in times of globalisation is beyond reach for our immediate perception or encounter. The emic vocabulary of *being held by Mother Earth* voices an encounter where the earth as the body of Mother Earth is an effort to bridge the gap. From a theoretical perspective, the encounter with the Earth becomes more intelligible in terms of 'places-as-bodies', especially as bodies are not restricted to human bodies. Hence, the Earth can be metaphorically pictured as a nest for the larger-than-human world. The larger-than-human world can be represented in various life forms. Conclusively, the workshop *Earth Meditation* illustrates the relation between the body, body-as-place and the Earth, and how the Earth represents the larger-than-human world, and it is similar to *Finding the Tree that is Calling You,* where trees and the forest have this role of representing the larger-than-human world.

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[628] Hulme 2014:18.

[629] For examples of the machine as a metaphor see Boyle 2015.

[630] McFague 2014:227. Italics added.

4.4 Practices − Everyday Life and Work

In this section I will add some further examples of practices; here it is the practices of everyday life and work that will be in focus. These differ from the practices that are performed in various workshops, because they are part of everyday life. The persons in these accounts tell of their everyday life, the first story relating to the place where we live, which is part of our everyday life.

4.4.1 Places with the Power to Enchant

Going to the countryside in various forms is a theme of this thesis. Aanya is a woman living in central London, with a busy career, she could be described as a young urban professional with an ecological consciousness working with international aid projects and fundraising.[631] For her, the journey to Devon took her from a cosmopolitan city to the English countryside and Schumacher College. In her work she often travels globally, and she can be described as a living a cosmopolitan life, moving between continents. Travel has always been a part of her life: Anaya's parents came to the UK as immigrants, and her mother was then four months pregnant with her, so she travelled even before she was born. At present Aanya is living in an apartment in London. She admits that living in central London in the midst of a metropolis gives rise to a lot of stress and discomfort sometimes, but what makes it bearable is that her apartment looks over Hyde Park. The Park is visible from her windows (she has a view over the trees, and as her flat is on the third floor she can see straight into the branches and the greenery) and this is something that she values a lot. As she says, "Without those trees I would never manage to live in London at all." She goes for occasional walks in the park, but what she appreciates is not just the closeness to the park, but also that the view from her window, overlooking the park, which gives her tranquillity and turns her apartment to a place where she can come to rest and settle. She has found a place where she can feel at home in the world, and because of the view from her window facing the trees she can connect with the changing seasons. In a long-term perspective, Anaya's ambition is to leave London and settle in the countryside, but for now, the flat overlooking Hyde Park is her home. Anaya emphasises that without those trees she would not manage to live in London, and that is certainly a strong statement; these trees have a great value for her. The park offers a green space in an urban context; in her case the trees in the park outside her windows and the view of the trees turns her rooms into a place where she can connect to nature, in contrast to the stress of modern city life; thus, the trees help her to cope. Rather than looking at the trees through the window, the trees offer a window through which she can see further than the urban environment and see the shifting colours in the seasons of the year.

[631] Field notes 2014.

This window metaphor should not be taken to indicate a form of transcendentalism, looking beyond the reality of everyday life; on the contrary, the feeling that Anaya emphasises is being at home.

Hyde Park is in central London. This place is significant in Anaya's life, it is a source of relaxation and contemplation in a stressful life, a place to come home to, but more so, it is a site that has a transformative power. Jane Bennett tells the story of a contemporary world sprinkled with natural and cultural sites that has the power to "enchant".[632] Can the park near Anaya's house in central London be such a site with the power to enchant? According to Bennett, places that hold the power to enchant can be both cultural and natural sites. A park in central London is a special place; it is in one sense a cultural site, the trees are planted, and the park is carefully created and designed, and it can be compared to, for example, a church, which is a creation of architects, stoneworkers and various craftsmen. Nonetheless, it is a place that represents 'nature', and at the same time it is a natural site that consists of grass and trees. The Park is a haven of biodiversity, a created area for human leisure activities, and it is a hybrid place that challenges our notions, a place that refutes the nature/culture distinction and exemplifies what Haraway calls natureculture. In short, places with the power to enchant can be described as magical places, they may be marginal places, and they are hybrid places because they challenge the simple notion of nature/culture. They have the power to evoke and to speak to us, and in this sense, they are personal places, that is, places that an individual has a strong personal relation to, for example in their everyday life, such as Anaya's London park. These places can also be seen as places that enable encounters or where encounters take place.

4.4.2 Being Grounded

One way to study lived religion or religion as everyday practices is to look at work, because most of us spend most of our time, our everyday life, working to support themselves. In my study work can be seen as a practice. Patricia is a young woman who told me how she had been working in an orchard for a period, during the seasonal work of harvesting, but this job turned out to be different from the jobs she had done before.[633] At first, it was just a job, and she did not have any ambition for it apart from supporting herself for a period, as it was seasonal work. She had no intention to work in agriculture; it was rather a coincidence that led her to this employment. Nonetheless, this work became a mark of change in her life, because the work in the orchard made her alter her habits compared to her previous days. Working in the orchard meant that she found herself in a different environment, it meant being outdoors, working in the open air, and being on the move all day.

[632] Bennett 2001:3.

[633] Field notes 2014.

During the days she could feel the weather and sense the soil, smell the apples, be in touch with the seasonal shifts, and while she worked there, she realised that she loved working out in the fields. Patricia says: "I never felt so healthy in all my life" and she tells how the great change was that it made her "feel grounded".[634] From then on, Patricia's ambition has been to find a job like that, and "to stay out of computer life".[635] Patricia's experience of the orchard gave her a new aim to change her life in relation to her work and everyday life. Her experience of working outdoors in the orchard is contrasted to the "computer life" she wants to avoid from now on. The work at the orchard has inspired, and initiated, change in her life. She bears witness to the positive evaluation of the sensory experiences of fresh air, the smell of the soil or the apples, but also a psychosomatic bodily experience of being on the move all day; she refers to her improved personal health, how the work made her "feel grounded", which is a psychological value, but it also includes a spiritual vocabulary in her account. Being 'grounded' is an expression with spiritual connotations, being or feeling 'grounded', is frequently found in the vocabulary of alternative spiritualities. Although it is an expression with many nuances, 'being grounded' is desirable. I relate it to the connection between human, the personal body, and the Earth, or the place. Being grounded is a good thing, and conversely the feeling of not being grounded is often considered a problem.

One example from literature is the Canadian environmental activist Heather Menzies, who describes her experience of being at a dead end as an activist: "I *wasn't grounded* in real life, real people's bodies or the lived social environment."[636] After speaking to a First Nation woman who shared their spiritual ways, Menzies understood that the connection to the ancestors and their land mattered to her as well. In returning to Scotland and the place where her ancestors had lived several hundred years ago, she found the way to ground herself. She wanted to

> walk the land where my ancestral roots lay buried, not to learn details about my genealogy so much as to *ground myself* down in the gaps where other paths and ways of being in the world had been abandoned and left to die. These ways might whisper to me, I thought, maybe even speak to my troubled world.[637]

When Menzies found herself at a dead end, it was the spiritual way of the First Nation woman that inspired her to find her way to ground herself. In this discourse 'grounded', is a word with positive connotations, just like 'deep'. These words are part of a spiritual vocabulary, and not unique in this material, but the relation between being grounded and the ground is characteristic of Earth-based

[634] Field notes 2014.

[635] Field notes 2014.

[636] Menzies 2014:11.

[637] Menzies,2014:11 italics added.

spirituality.[638] The historian of religion Åsa Trulsson found in her study of the women in the Goddess movement that 'being grounded' is one of the most frequently used words, and one of these women said, "for me being grounded […] also comes from the ground".[639] Trulsson concludes that "being grounded",

> albeit meaning different things to different women, is a bodily state that is perceived through somatic modes of attention brought about by the ability to perceive the body as a body in relation to other objects.[640]

Given the flexibility of the use of the expression of 'being grounded' it cannot be taken for granted that the women in Trulsson's study and those in mine are using 'being grounded' in exactly the same manner, nevertheless, to some extent they overlap. It is easy to agree with Trulsson who notes that these terms are extremely hard to define in terms of their actual semantic content.[641] There are, according to Trulsson, two aspects to be considered in these expressions. Firstly, these terms become salient in an intersubjective sharing about the means and ends of spirituality. They acquire a taken-for-granted quality that does not need explicit formulations and definitions. They become authorised as denotations of spirituality and spiritual experience, not by some external authority or code but by the interactional usage within the group. By invoking the concepts, the speaker is not only expressing certain things but equally legitimises these things as spiritual. Being grounded, as Trulsson notes, "marks these things as spiritual". [642] In addition, I found, being grounded gives expression to the relation to the earth which is central in *Earth-based* spirituality. Donna Haraway ask how is *the becoming with* a practice of *becoming worldly*?[643] Haraway's answer is that "we learn to be worldly from grappling with, rather than generalizing from, the ordinary".[644] What Haraway calls 'becoming worldly' is something that comes from the mud rather than the sky, and resonates with the feeling of being grounded, which came from the ground, and which made Patricia feel healthier than ever as she had been working outdoors all day. She described her experience of feeling grounded as *something that grew out* of the work in the orchard. Thus, to be grounded do not come by itself in the form of a sudden revelation, but it emerges as part of practices and cultivation as part of everyday life.

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[638] I prefer the term Earth-based spirituality to immanence here, because the terms 'immanence' and 'transcendence' relate to the traditional discussion of religion within the study of religions.

[639] Trulsson 2010:345. In Trulsson's study 'being grounded' comes together with 'connection', 'flow', 'presence'.

[640] Trulsson 2010:345.

[641] Trulsson 2010:345.

[642] Trulsson 2010:345.

[643] Haraway 2008:3.

[644] Haraway 2008:3.

4.4.3 Work as Everyday Life

Patricia's work in the orchard draws our attention to the role of work as part of everyday life, and she is not the only example. Many I spoke to have expressed their ambition to work with agriculture or food production in one form or another, while others aim for craftmanship. A story involving craftmanship is that of Annie, who works as a potter, and who sees her craft working with clay as a powerful tool for relating to earth and soil and the place where she lives. Annie is in her mid-thirties and living in Devon, and for several years she had worked in a local pottery producing things that would pass as handcrafted products, which actually were made simply for tourists. She felt dissatisfied with the job, and after a day's work she felt weary. So recently she had set up her own studio. She wanted to produce handcrafted pottery with a deeper meaning, and she also wanted to be part of the whole process of production. Therefore, she now runs her own workshop, and works with local clay that she takes from a nearby place, with permission from the landowner. In this she is able to be part of the whole process of production, from the very beginning: she digs up the clay herself, takes it to her studio to craft the pottery, and finally sell it to her customers. Being part of the whole process from clay to the finished pottery relates her to the place: working with this clay, with her hands, knowing that it was part of the soil and the land, was for her a way of being a part of the landscape, and the Earth. Annie said that holding the clay in her hand she can feel the Earth. She also told how those who buy her pottery express their appreciation for the fact that these objects were made of local material. This feedback was important for her because she wanted to communicate this relation to the earth, which her work as a potter was a part of. Even though she says that she finds it hard to really put words on how she felt in working in this way, she nonetheless testified to how deeply she felt for it. The deeper meaning for her is not only the artistic quality of the products but how the clay is related to the land, and this sets the pottery in an ecological framework as well.

Apart from the skill of the craft that is required to transform the clay into useful and beautiful things we use in our everyday life, such as mugs or jugs, for Annie the process of producing pottery starts with digging the clay at the local site where she has been allowed by the landowner to gather it, but the clay is the product of biological and geological processes that predate the present, and this sets her work as a potter in relation to deep time perspectives. Clay is originally organic material that through the process of decay for vast period of time has transformed to clay, and this brings in the deep time perspective. To consider clay as something that once was organic material transforms the pottery from simple dead matter; in this, it not only an example of Haraway's natureculture, but there is something more evocative in Annie's story, and in the things she finds hard to express. The philosopher and artist-engraver Barry Cottrell offers a theoretical perspective in exploring what he refers to as the participatory primal mind. The act of engraving can ignite the imagination as "a kind of active meditation", which Cottrell describes as a

reenchantment of consciousness.[645] There is a vast but unexamined element of social and organisational life that is simply not amenable to calculation, science and rationality, and artistic craftmanship are one of these. The things that are evocative but had to express may find their expression in ways of examining where enchantment is a form of exploration.

Annie's story can be summed up as enchantment with clay and craftmanship. For Annie the local clay made her connect to the place or to the Earth, and a further story of how the local is important for the sense of connecting to the Earth is Harriet. Harriet, an elderly woman living outside Totnes, dedicates her work to growing beans in her garden. She has only a small piece of land, yet these beans are special because they are a local sort of beans. Harriet says that these beans were commonly grown when she was a child, particularly during the Second World War when there was something of a renaissance for these old beans, but nowadays these beans have become quite rare and hard to find. Harriet really advocates these beans because they are particularly suitable to grow in the kind of soil and climate that is found in the local area where they have been grown for a very long time. Therefore, in growing these beans she is preserving them, and what she is doing can be described as a form of seed saving. She is glad to see an increasing interest in these beans, and there have been many who got their first seeds from her. Thus, growing, saving and sharing beans has become her mission and she admits that this might seem like a small thing to do, but she concludes: "We all have to contribute with our bits and pieces."[646] For Harriet these beans are more than food, they are cultivated in a double sense; they grow in her garden, and she saves and shares them with the community she is part of. The context is significant here; Harriet lives in relation to the transition town of Totnes, which is part of the local community work, and this is also the case with Annie who worked with local clay to produce pottery. A further small example worth mentioning here is Shane, who was a guitarist and who had a guitar made by a local instrument crafter who works with local wood. Shane said that the music he made on that guitar resonated with the woods and the landscape as a kind of magic. Guitars, like pottery and beans, are all part of our everyday life, as is being a musician, a farmer or a crafter. Everyday life brings small scale and a local perspective. Set in an ecological context, these practices form an implementation of ecological awareness. The materialities and practice of everyday work may be a way to form an intimate relation to place.

To conclude, the stories of Patricia, Ann, Harriet and Shane draw attention to the materialities we use in everyday life, they talk about apples, clay and pottery, beans and guitars, and how they are related to various practices which all illustrate how we produce things 'from nature', but they also serve as examples of intimate

645 Cottrell resonates with Suddaby, Ganzin and Minkus who describe the resurgence of craft modes of production, and the aesthetics, myth and other aspects of human reflexivity as speaking to the positive potential of re-enchantment. Suddaby, Ganzin and Minkus 2017:286.

646 Field notes 2013.

interactions with natureculture. These people tell in various words how they feel a connection to the earth in the work they do. Their relation to earth is constructed in the practices they perform as part of the hybrid ecology. Their stories demonstrate how the materialities and practices of everyday life are part of natureculture in various ways. They also illustrate that formations of ecological awareness may be part of practical work and help to create a deep sense of coexistence.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusions

As seen in the previous chapter, for many the attraction towards spirituality is part of a movement between activism and spirituality, and as shown in this chapter it is a field where new practices are elaborated, and new ways of working emerge. The focus here is on these new ways of working, and the various forms they take. What is particularly interesting from my perspective is how new narratives and practices are created and constructed. Some explicitly refer to the challenges of climate change, such as *Take your Question to the Trees and Forest*, or the *Difference between Shelter and Comfort*. In *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* trees are seen as participants, and the workshops offer an encounter with the larger-than-human world, while *The Earth Mediation* or *The Deep Time Walk* relate to the Anthropocene in its global and deep time perspectives. Most of the workshops that I have described here take place in nature, therefore I have paid attention to place, and I have analysed the participants' accounts in term of bodies-as-place, and in doing so my ambition is to mediate a sense of the landscape where this study is set. To look at place and bodies also sheds light on the this-worldly or earthly aspects of dark green spirituality. From the accounts of various workshops, I conclude that despite the differences there are some distinctive features to note. These workshops: (i) invite participants to take part in the co-creation of alternative spaces, (ii) they offer encounters with the larger-than-human world, and (iii) they enable explorations of shifting sensibilities. Although these features are distinctive, they take various forms, they are found to various extents, and may not be a part of every workshop. I found that these features form a distinctive pattern of in these reflective practices. Together these reflective practices work both in the exploration and in the negotiation of ecological awareness, and the cultivation of wild enchantment.

What I refer to as *reflective practices* means that *spiritual practices become part of the workshops*, for example in experimenting with alternative ways of relating to the larger-than-human world. In some sense this means that *reflection is spiritual* because there is a strong convergence. Reflection concerns values, and many of these are considered as spiritual values. While 'reflective practices' is an umbrella term, used to refer to all these workshops, it is notable that these often include meditative and spiritual practices, and these are often hard to separate because in most cases they overlap. Silence, for example, is a spiritual practice that enables

reflection, and mediative walks, which may be called pilgrim walks, likewise stimulate reflection, for example in relation to the landscape where they take place. A workshop might consist of a set of practices like a sharing circle, it may include meditation and moments of silence which equally can be described as spiritual practices. I will not go as far as to claim that reflective practices are equivalent to spiritual practices; it is more accurate to say that reflective practices often (though in various ways) include spiritual practices. There are three distinctive characteristics here: (i) reflective practices include sharing circles or in other ways invite conversations on spiritual matters; (ii) reflective practices are often inspired by certain spiritual traditions; and (iii) reflective practices are performed in a non-confessional manner (participants are not necessarily followers of a particular tradition), yet various spiritual sources of inspiration nonetheless contribute to the creation and performance of these practices.

In simple terms, a practice is a way of doing things and the practices people perform must make sense to them. Practices have to make sense in a social context; practices make up people's horizon of intelligibility.[647] However, what is distinctive in reflective practices is that people consciously try to reach beyond their horizon; to explore, try out, do things differently and to find alternative ways of doing things. As we have seen, playfulness is part of this exploration of alternatives. This is the core of Lucy Sargisson 'utopian practices' which she describes as experiments. The utopian function that Sargisson points to concerns: (i) profound creativity, (ii) the creation of new conceptual and real spaces, and (iii) the imagination of alternatives. I say that these utopian functions are present in the reflective practices I have studied. The experimentation with utopian practices occurs at many levels, such as social structure, the relationship with each other and the larger-than-human world, as well as "economic, ethical and spiritual forms of activity, behavior and expectations".[648]

Sargisson further stresses the heuristic function of utopias: they allow participants to explore alternatives and the relation between imagination and practice emphasises the feature of trying out. Hence, the reflective practices I have described are creative experiments which work to encourage and enable reflection. From my perspective, the workshops can be described as utopian practices. For example, the workshop *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* is an experimenting practice where both humans and trees are considered to participate and interact. Although it might be considered playful and experimenting, it encourages reflection, as seen in the closing circles where participants share their views. *Finding the Tree that is Calling You, The Deep Time Walk* and *The Earth Meditation* are examples of how workshops elaborate ways to explore how we interact with the larger-than-human world and to form a sense of community, within the group of participants, including the larger-than-human world. Therefore, the utopianism here concerns the need for

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[647] Schatzki 1996 and 2002.

[648] Sargisson 2012:132.

deeper reflection and communication between the humans, but also enables encounters with the larger-than-human world, an experimentation with and exploration of *a less human-centred world.* These workshops not only concern questioning how we interact with each other and the larger-than-human world, they really mean practising and participating in an experiment with alternative forms of interaction. Many of these reflective practices work to form a sense of community, sitting in a circle, sharing, holding hands and so on, and therefore cultivating community is central here. Community is cultivated within the group of participants and the sense of community includes the larger-than-human world; therefore, they also cultivate wild enchantment.

To conclude, in my perspective utopian practices *spell out the practical dimension of the existential and political questions of how we can live and do things differently and create alternative spaces.* Matthew Hall notes that small and seemingly insignificant acts that work as a symbolic reversal of the hierarchies which have placed plants 'beneath' human beings allow us to embody non-hierarchical relationships with the natural world.[649] Such small acts make way for the larger pragmatism needed to properly decentralise our relationship with the natural world. Repeated altruistic involvement with non-humans builds up a relationship of care and responsibility, according to Hall.[650] One way of doing this is to seek a partnership with the larger-than-human world that is less hierarchical, less human-centred and forming a more egalitarian relationship with a multitude of non-human beings and things with which we coexist.

[649] Hall 2011:387–388

[650] Hall 2011:387

Chapter 5 Places with the Power to Enchant – Dartmoor

One of the questions I explore is the relevance of place in relation to narrative and practice, and a specific place is the focus of interest: Dartmoor. I have visited Dartmoor and participated in various practices which relate to the landscape, and where the history of Dartmoor plays a significant role and affects the participants' conception of the place. To present the (hi)story of a place, at the very site, is a practice that relates to both narrative and place. Apart from the performance of these practices, the story of Dartmoor is communicated in various forms of media, text, pictures and movies, and it is part of the public debate. Various organisations contribute to the construction of Dartmoor: The Moor Care Campaign, tourist organisations, the National Heritage, or archaeologists and novelists, artists and folklorists. Not least of all Dartmoor's reputation as one of the most haunted places in England attracts much attention to the place, but the moor also draws ramblers, adventures as well as birdwatchers and nature lovers.

This chapter explores Dartmoor as a place in relation to narrative and practice. I will offer accounts of workshops and voices from visitors and participants. The construction of the Dartmoorian landscape will be set in a historical and contemporary context. I pay attention to the performance of a story – the telling of the history of a certain place at the place. In this perspective, the place forms a node between narrative and practice.

5.1. Reflective Practices and Place – Dartmoor

The need to pose deeper questions is emphasised among participants and public voices, as seen in the previous chapters. Reflective practices create an alternative space and work to stimulate deeper questioning. Reflective practices are characterised by creativity and may take many forms. One distinctive feature in these practices are visits to places that in various ways encourage reflection. These are often wounded or marginal places, such as Dartmoor in Devon. In this thesis, Dartmoor is central. Dartmoor is located within reach of Schumacher College, and it is frequently visited as the place works as an educational example of how humans affect their environment. As seen previously, education at Schumacher College is

not restricted to the classroom, and Dartmoor is a place for frequent excursions.[651] Walks in the landscape are organised as part of the courses and the education. The moor is a place for learning *in* nature, and a place for leaning *from* nature. Apart from the beautiful moorland, pictured in tourist guides, the place has a long history and Dartmoor has its own story to tell.[652] Thus, a visit to Dartmoor is more than a rambling expedition, or a healthy outdoor exercise, it is an example of the reflective practices I study. Dartmoor is a place that forms a node where narrative and practice come together. Next, I will offer a short historical introduction to the place.

5.1.1 Dartmoor and the Collapsing Bronze Age Civilisation

Dartmoor is a characteristic open moorland which has been subject to archaeological investigations. Excavations have made Dartmoor famous for the Bronze Age landscape that has survived,653 where ceremonial sites such as stone circles and graves are visible throughout the landscape, as well as reminiscences of the settlements' typical round houses, and a large number of field boundaries, now known as reaves. Although, with craggy tors standing out in the landscape. It became a National Park[654] in the mid-twentieth century and today visitors are allowed to wander the area freely. The history of Dartmoor goes considerably further back in time than the establishment of the national park.[655] Dartmoor's history goes back to the late Palaeolithic and Neolithic age, and the Bronze Age (dates *c*. 2500 BC to 800 BC[656]). Reminiscences of ancient settlers are found in the landscape the remains give evidence of historical settlements; the most lasting effect of the Bronze Age settlers is their imprint on the landscape. Today Dartmoor is an open moorland, but once it was covered by a deep forest of oak trees. Only a small area – named Wistman's Wood close to the river Dart – is left of the woods that used to cover the area. While Dartmoor now is a sparsely populated area, it was the

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[651] Field notes 2013, 2014.

[652] Dartmoor is also the setting for the documentary *Earth Pilgrim – A Spiritual Journey into the Landscape of Dartmoor* as part of BBC's Natural World series where Satish Kumar talks about his view of life and nature.

[653] Pryor 2012:96–97 Dartmoor is famous for its Bronze Age reaves that run across the fields.

[654] http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk accessed 10 November 2021 Dartmoor was designated as a nationally important landscape in October 1951 and became a National Park (under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act from 1949). The Park has a mission to secure for the public good the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of Dartmoor, its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. Dartmoor National Park Authority has a special purpose, and the local authority has two statutory purposes: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Dartmoor, and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. In carrying out this work they are also required to meet the socio-economic duties and to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

[655] On Dartmoor see Simmons 2001:344–34.

[656] Adkins, Adkins and Leitch 2008:64.

home for settlers already in the Neolithic age,[657] but Dartmoor was abandoned in the late Bronze Age, for reasons which are still partly a riddle. Given its history, Dartmoor is the site of a lost Bronze Age civilisation, and, therefore, a visit to Dartmoor is a visit to a place where some apocalyptical collapse has already taken place.

The archaeologist Michael Parker Pearson describes Dartmoor as an "area that was intensively settled and exploited".[658] The ancient history is partly a mystery, and although archaeological surveys have found evidence of a well-planned Bronze Age society, by 1200 BC most settlement and fields had been deserted. This gives rise to several questions.

> Why had people left? Did they destroy what little fertility there was in the soil? Did the climate become cooler and cause the harvest to fail? Was there some catastrophe in the more fertile lowlands which enabled people to move down from these marginal uplands? Were the upland communities physically moved out and resettled, like the Scottish crofters out of the nineteenth century?[659]

Why the settlers abandoned Dartmoor is a riddle, and archaeologists have different views on the cause of this sudden disappearance of settlement.[660] Changing climate is one hypothesis: the benevolent climate that had lasted throughout the Bronze Age was replaced at the end of the era with lower temperatures and increasing amounts of rain which made living conditions in the open landscape impossible. The open landscape gave no shelter from the hard rain and wind, and the bare soil became muddy waters. The place was no longer a good place to be. Given its history, Dartmoor is a suitable place for reflections on man's relation to the environment; the moor offers an illustration of human interference with nature. The lost forest of Dartmoor tells how environmental degradation in the form of deforestation is an ancient phenomenon, and the disappearance of the Bronze Age settles makes Dartmoor the home of a lost Bronze Age civilisation. Taken together this resonates with the theme of the collapsing civilisation that is central in contemporary environmental discourse, and it illustrates how place (Dartmoor and its history) and context (the contemporary environmental discourse where the theme of collapsing civilisation is set) are important variables in the analysis.

Today the open field offers wide perspectives in all direction. Overlooking the landscape it is hard to image in that the moor was once was a place covered with woods.[661] All that is left of the woodland nowadays is a small area close to the river

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[657] Dartmoor National Park Authority: Life and Death on Bronze Age Dartmoor illustrated talk http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WESqW16QTc8 and *Bronze Age Dartmoor – The Life of Marghwen* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDHYmJE9TOE accessed 10 November 2021

[658] Parker Pearson 2005:90.

[659] Parker Pearson 2005:90.

[660] Parker Pearson 2005:90.

[661] Field notes 2013.

Dart, named Wistman's Wood.[662] Nowadays Dartmoor offers breathtaking views of the open landscape, the shifting shades of light and weather conditions, constantly in transformation, every day in all seasons, yet in a long-term perspective it is a place marked by human presence and interference. Dartmoor is lost woodland and a heavily transformed landscape; it is an example of how humans remould their landscapes according to their preferences in their use of nature. In perspective, a visit to Dartmoor is a visit to a lost forest. Dartmoor is a site of environmental degradation; therefore, it is a suitable place to visit to reflect on these matters.

5.1.2 Shifting Baselines and Negotiating Baselines

In one of my visits to Dartmoor I participated in a walk that was led by Satish Kumar. On this walk, the history of Dartmoor was presented at the point of departure, as we all gathered after the bus ride, before setting out for the walk across the moor. This visit to Dartmoor is an example of reflective practices, and how the telling of the history of the place *at the actual place* plays a vital role. To look at a landscape in a historical perspective beyond the present encourages reflection on how humans have remoulded the landscape. Initially it is hard to imagine that this beautiful landscape is a place marked by human presence and that it once looked very different. Dartmoor is the scene of a lost forest; hence, a visit to Dartmoor is a visit to a lost forest. To visit something that is lost may seem like a paradox, but it illustrates what I refer to as 'negotiating baselines'.[663] Negotiating baselines addresses how bringing back the memories of how it used to be creates an awareness of the transformation of the landscape, and of the environmental degradation that has taken place.

The story, the history of Dartmoor, was presented to those who participated in the walk and a question to ask was: how does the awareness of Dartmoor's history affect the perception of the place? To tell the story of how it used to be is, in one sense, to bring back memories of how it used to be. Conversely, the concept of 'shifting baseline' addresses how the loss of memories of how a place used to be will make us blind to the ecological degradation that takes place.[664] This loss of memories works between generations and may range over time. The current conditions are seen as natural, and given this, Dartmoor seems to be a landscape untouched by human hands. If we cannot remember how things were before the environmental degradation took place, then we will be blind to the changes that have taken place.

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[662] I will return to Wistman's Wood later, but for now, I will focus on Dartmoor.

[663] Milner-Gulland, E.J. 2009:93. The term is frequently used in ecological discourse, see for example Boyle, Monbiot.

[664] Papworth, Rist, and Milner-Gulland, 2009. Shifting of baselines takes place on two levels: on a personal level, but also on a long-term level over generations. The form of shifting baselines that is relevant in relation to Dartmoor is the second form, the long-term shifting baseline, that is, the shifting baselines that involve a loss of memory between generations.

This is a form of amnesia.[665] Contemporary visitors who wander on Dartmoor today see a far-reaching landscape of moorland where the settles from the early Bronze Age, if they were able to revisit Dartmoor, would have seen a devastated landscape where their beloved forest were all gone. They would have experienced what I referred to as the loss of place, for them it would have been a personal loss.[666] They would hardly recognise the place that once was their home. For them, their woods and landscape would be devastated. They would have experienced a situation similar to the displacement that Rob Nixon depicts.[667] To become aware of the history of the place makes it possible for visitors to see the place through the eyes of a historical settler of Dartmoor, and to become aware of how humans have remoulded the landscape.

Today Dartmoor seems like a reminiscence of an ancient mythic landscape. For someone unaware of the historical background, Dartmoor may seem like a landscape untouched by human hands, and this addresses the question of whether humans are aware of the environmental degradation that takes place in the landscape. Memories of how it used to may be lost, particularly when it concerns a long timespan as on Dartmoor, reaching back to late Bronze Age. Shifting baselines mean the loss of memories and how the consequences of the environmental degradation that takes place becomes invisible and unnoticed. My perspective extrapolates the notion of 'shifting baseline', in that the telling of the story works inversely; it brings back the memories, it restores the knowledge of how it used to be and, consequently, makes the environmental degradation that has taken place visible. Therefore, what is going on in the telling of the history of a place like Dartmoor is a *negotiation of baselines*. Negotiating baselines relates to (i) the effects of environmental degradation on places, and (ii) forming an understanding of how humans have remoulded the landscape in creating a domesticated agricultural landscape, recognisable as the pastoral countryside and the green and pleasant land. This concerns the historical record, as well as the contemporary context. To tell the history of how it once was, as is part of the excursion to Dartmoor, is an act of bringing back memories and rediscovering the lost knowledge of the previous conditions. The point is, however, not only to form an understanding of how it used to be, different from how it is today, but to *understand the processes* that have occurred. Consequently, negotiating baselines works to create an awareness of the long-term processes that take place in the landscape and the role of human activity in this transformation of landscapes. Negotiating baselines, in a sense, awakens the awareness of the forest that once was, and makes a record of the losses. In addition, it addresses the question of how humans affect their environment, and what role their way of living, the social organisation of society, plays in the process.

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[665] Papworth, Rist, and Milner-Gulland, E.J 2009:93.

[666] I discussed such examples of personal losses of place in chapter 3.

[667] Nixon 2011.

5.1.3 The Collapse of Civilisations

I have given an account of the history of Dartmoor which was presented at the start of the walk, and this elucidates how the telling of the history of the place is a practice that encourages reflection. Given its history of a lost Bronze Age civilisation, Dartmoor works as an example of collapsing societies, or collapsing civilisations, and therefore it is a suitable place to visit as part of eco-education. Dartmoor brings complex historical patterns to life: it invites participants to reflect on the long-term consequences of environmental degradation, and how our societies are dependent on nature to maintain their livelihood. The story of Dartmoor resonates with the theme of the collapse of civilisation, which is part of environmental discourse, and which has been presented previously. At the start of the rambling expedition the leader Satish Kumar told us about the ancient history of Dartmoor. After approximately two miles' walk, there was a break, and during this break the participants were sitting in the grass on the ground, and Kumar held a *Satsang*, a Sanskrit term referring to a tutorial talk. The topic was the difference between civilisations and culture, a theme that elaborates the history of Dartmoor as the site of a lost civilisation. This talk is set within a context of environmental discourse and the theme of collapsing civilisations. In the *Satsang* Kumar elaborates on this theme in the connection between civilisation and cities, and I will here give a brief summary. Kumar describes the distinction between 'civilisation' and 'culture':

> 'Citizen' means 'of the cities' and, thus, 'to be civilised' means 'to come from the cities.[668] 'Culture' comes from 'cultivate' which means 'to grow'. Cities are built, but a culture is something that grows. Not every culture is a civilisation.[669]

Whilst every civilisation is a culture, not every culture is a civilisation; hence, culture is more fundamental to human life than civilisation. Consequently, the collapse of civilisation is not the end of culture. The point made is not primarily the conceptual relation between the terms, rather the question is how we create societies, choose to live together and create social organisation. Culture is here suggested as a model for society, as a more organic form of social organisation. Kumar sees it as central in civilisation that it is a city-based culture. The word 'civilisation' is related to 'civic' meaning citizen, so civilisations are always city-based culture, and Kumar is not alone in this understanding of civilisations, as city-culture. The ancient Greek civilisation was centred on the Athenian city-state. The root of the Latin word 'civilised' is a derivation of the word 'civil'. 'Civil' means "of or pertaining to citizens". Therefore, the view of civilisation presented here is not unique, on the contrary, as seen in the contextualisation chapter the relation between civilisation and climate has prevailed in Western intellectual history, and it is set within a

[668] Jensen 2006.

[669] Field notes 2013.

contemporary environmental discourse.[670] Next, I will consider the contemporary context.

History gives examples of several lost civilisations, and researchers from various disciplines have asked what causes civilisations to collapse. The geologist Jared Diamond claims that civilisations collapse when they put too much pressure on their environment, which makes the ecological system collapse, and this leads to a social and economic collapse.[671] The theme of collapsing civilisations is part of an environmental discourse on climate change, and *Uncivilisation: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* is one example of this.[672] As the title suggests, the manifesto calls for Uncivilisation, and when it was published in 2009 the debate in public media concerned whether the industrial civilisation would collapse as a consequence of climate change. [673] The theme of civilisation forms a narrative which I refer to as *the end of civilisation*; is not only a critique of a contested notion because it addresses questions of social organisation and of ecological concern. It addresses the question, how we can avoid ruining the ecological basis for the existence of our societies, and the rest of the planet? In relation to the talk at Dartmoor, the collapsing civilisation theme is present in the landscape, therefore, th*e narrative* of the end of civilisation is part of the practice, and as this short lecture took place in Dartmoor, it relates to place, i.e., Dartmoor. Although Dartmoor is a historical site it illustrates a contemporary environmental discourse on climate change where the theme of collapsing civilisation is central.

Dartmoor is in one sense a site of a lost Bonze Age civilisation, in another sense, Dartmoor is as a place *beyond* civilisation. Throughout Western history, civilisation has stood out in contrast to wilderness, conceptually, but also historically in the Western colonisation of the world that were seen as the taming of the wilderness as part of the colonial project of spreading civilisation. Areas that were unaffected by the influence of civilisation stood out as wilderness. Although Dartmoor illustrates the theme of collapsing civilisations, and the narrative of the end of civilisation, Dartmoor is nonetheless referred to as one of the few remaining areas of wilderness in Britain. This double character attached to Dartmoor is an intriguing feature, and it shows the complexity of the place. I found that although civilisation is a theme in Western intellectual history, there is a particular British context to note. As the sociologist Nobert Elias notes, there are national characters of the concept of civilisation.[674] Therefore, if Britain is seen as being the heart of Western civilisation,

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[670] See for example Jensen 2006.

[671] Diamond 2011.

[672] *Uncivilisation; The Dark Mountain Manifesto* was discussed in the chapter 2.

[673] See chapter 2 for discussion.

[674] The sociologist Norbert Elias writes “But ‘civilization’ does not mean the same thing to different Western nations. Above all, there is a great difference between the English and French use of the word, on the one hand, and the German use of it, on the other.” 1939:6 The British (and French) notion concerns more the pride in the nation, and the German more of the shaping of the character of humans.

then it must be asked in what sense is Dartmoor a place *beyond* civilisation. The following voice from one of those I have been in conversation with sheds some light on this issue. Jane was born in Devon, and after spending much of her professional life in Germany, she has in recent years returned to Devon to live in Exeter. After living abroad for decades, she says that she came to look at the landscape with fresh eyes, she says that it is no surprise that the Transition movement has its origin in the region.

> When I came back, I realised that everything I need is within reach here. This place is unique, Devon is different from England. You know, the Romans stopped at Exeter. Devon is Celtic.[675]

When Jane says "the Romans stopped at Exeter", it is crucial in explaining what so special about Devon. Jane wants to describe Devon as a special place, it is meant in a positive sense, not just different from urban Britain, but to picture Devon as Celtic singles it out as a place beyond civilisation – a wild place. Devon is beyond civilisation in the sense that was never colonised by the Romans. Actually "the Romans stopped at Exeter" refers to the Roman colonisation of ancient Britannia in the first century AD. Again, this brings in a historical perspective. Indeed, historical records confirm that the Roman troops made a halt in Exeter, although in recent years archaeological finds from the Romans have been discovered beyond Exeter, and further to the west. Nevertheless, the west counties (Devon, Cornwall and Wales) have a reputation of being somewhat wild, and beyond civilisation. This is a vital feature of their local identities. Dartmoor is frequently depicted as one of the few remaining areas of wilderness in Britain. Wilderness is a much-contested notion today, it is an object of desire and longing, but increasing attention is also paid to the question of whether there are any areas we can call wilderness left.

5.2 Dartmoor – Wilderness in an Increasingly Human-centred World

5.2.1 The Loss of Wilderness

"Where can I go to find some wilderness?" One of the persons that I met during my visits to Dartmoor who was most eager to find wilderness was Paul.[676] The visit to the Devonian countryside and Dartmoor was not to his satisfaction, however; it did not fulfil his expectation of the wilderness he longed for. He wanted deep forests, he wanted to settle down and grow wheat, a somewhat contradictory desire perhaps.

[675] Field notes 2014.

[676] Field notes 2014.

Paul has a very clear conception of what he is looking for, and the visit to Dartmoor was perhaps a disappointment, as it did not correspond to his mental image of the place he longed for. Paul's longing for the wilderness stands out, but he is not unique in the sense that he wanted to leave modern city life and settle down somewhere else.[677]

Paul certainly longed for the wilderness, he spoke with passion about it, and the fact that he was living in the Netherlands, one of the most densely populated and built-up nations of Europe, might explain his eagerness. His longing to find some wilderness proves, not only for him, but more generally, how highly wilderness is valued, not despite being hard to find, but *because* it is hard to find. What Paul expressed is his personal desire for wilderness, and this includes a range of emotional states such as sadness, even anger or desperation, in relation to the fact that that wilderness is difficult to find in central Europe. This theme can be labelled the loss of wilderness, it addresses the fact that areas that can be seen as wilderness are increasingly hard to find. The loss of wilderness is not just the transformation of areas by human activity, *it also indicates an increasingly human-centred world*. Next, I will ponder on the question of why Dartmoor fails to fulfil our conception of a wilderness.

5.2.2 Rewilding Dartmoor – the Pastoral Wilderness

Dartmoor is National Park and an area set apart for the protection of nature, and one might think that this makes Dartmoor a place freed from environmental disputes, but this is not the case. The role of national parks has been subject to much criticism from proponents of rewilding. Dartmoor is the site of a lost forest that disappeared in the late Bronze Age, and it is reasonable to ask why the woods have not reappeared in all the time that has passed since the trees were cut down, approximately three millennia ago. Part of the enigma is that Dartmoor have been used as grazing land throughout the centuries, and this has kept the land open.[678] In an article in *The Guardian*, "Scorched Earth Conservation",[679] George Monbiot criticises the practice of swaling, that is, the burning of grassland that is done in order to keep it as an open landscape and pasture. The National Park Authority performs the swaling in their care of Dartmoor and it creates the characteristic moorland we see today. The Dartmoor authority justifies the practice as "the age-old art of swaling" and claims that it is necessary because fewer grazing animals

[677] As seen in chapter 3, I have been speaking to many persons who in various ways share his ambition to change their lives and move to the countryside. I this chapter, I will investigate the conceptions of these places, such as 'the wilderness' or 'the countryside' that feed the attraction behind this urban to rural movement.

[678] Atkins 2015:64 The use of Dartmoor as grazing land was introduced in the twelfth century by the Cistercian monks at Buckfast Abbey.

[679] Monbiot, George (2016) "Scorched Earth Conservation" *The Guardian* 14 January 2016.

have been released in the highland commons over recent years. Monbiot argues that the practice is far from environmentally friendly, and it contradicts the Sandford Principle (which is supposed to govern the management of national parks), which states that: "when there is a conflict between conservation and other uses, conservation should take priority."[680] What Monbiot objects to is that the swaling aims to preserve Dartmoor as *grazing land*, and this prevents it from going back to its wild state. Thus, "too much weight is given to sheep farming, and too little to wildlife." [681] Monbiot continues:

> An entirely treeless landscape, maintained this way by a savage regime of burning and grazing over many years, becomes "overgrown" the moment it starts to recover. The beginning of successional processes ("extra growth of plants such as gorse and bracken") is regarded as a threat. We all know what happens next. Scrub grows and then, God help us, trees. Wildlife is returning quick, fetch the matches!

Monbiot's critique of the management is an appeal for rewilding, for wildlife and a less man-made world. Dartmoor illustrates how modern national parks are a human creation, it is nature managed to look like a moorland wilderness, but it actually creates a pastoral wilderness. The historical record tells us that sheep herding was introduced in 1147, by the monks of Buckfast Abbey.[682] Even though the solitary location attracted the monks as they built their monastery on Dartmoor, the solitude was not a reason for idleness. The monks initiated wool production on the moor.[683] Indeed, today any visitor on Dartmoor can see how parts of Dartmoor are used as grazing land, for sheep, cattle and the semi-wild ponies of Dartmoor. These animals are domesticated rather than wild, and their presence will challenge the sense of going into the wilderness. The sheep have their owners' colour code sprayed on their backs. In my perspective, Dartmoor, and the swaling of the landscape, is based on an ambition to keep it in a state that is recognisable as an English moor; the moorland is distinctive in English cultural identity. Keeping Dartmoor as a grazing land illustrates the power of the pastoral landscape, as a model for the British countryside that even shapes the wilderness. The pastoral landscape is cultivated and domesticated; it is a creation of human hand, to fulfil the aesthetic notion of how 'civilised' nature ought to look, not to go back to its wild state. Further, the swaling of the Dartmoorian landscape may be a proof of how the power of the Lockean notion of nature left for itself is a sort of misuse of God's nature.

Monbiot's perspective is based on the idea of rewilding, and his critique of the conservationist policies of Dartmoor illustrates the schism between what we might

[680] Monbiot 2016.

[681] Monbiot 2016.

[682] Atkins 2015:63.

[683] Atkins 2015:64. The historical references to Dartmoor as grazing land first appear in 1340 and the historical references show how Buckfast Abbey produced a quantity wool of ten sacks per year, the wool of about 2,500 sheep.

refer to as an older generation's environmental work, dedicated to conservation projects, and the new ideas of rewilding. The ambition to rewild is to form a less human-centred world, drawing attention to how humans shape their environment in remoulding landscapes, creating an increasingly man-made landscape – not only in the urban realm, but increasingly everywhere. Despite the differences between conservationists and rewilding, they share an attraction to wilderness. The conception of the wilderness that stands out as a place that should be set apart for special reasons is based the *sacramental value of wilderness*. Monbiot, as a contemporary environmentalist, shares these values with the conservationists of the early twentieth century but they can be traced further back to the monks at Buckfast Abbey, and establishment of their religious house in the twelfth century.

5.2.3 The Sacramental Values of Wilderness and the Enchantment of Rewilding

The sacramental value of wilderness is a historical construct that has been elaborated over the centuries.[684] Throughout cultural history we find expressions of this original state of happiness and harmony in mythologies – the Garden of Eden in *Genesis* is one example – but these are not to be mistaken for historical sources that give evidence of an actual past reality. Historians and archaeologists have made us all aware of how our views of the past are tempered by attitudes and dispositions of the present, and these views say more about us than ever they can about the people who came before us. The idea of an original or ancient state of harmony with nature is not an exception, it is part of the utopian sentiments that accompanied romanticism in the early nineteenth century, and they were brought further into the conservationism in the early twentieth century. To save or protect wilderness was the aim of conservation projects based on the ambition to create safe havens or sanctuaries, and that these are described in terms of 'sanctuaries' or 'safe heavens' indicates their religious/spiritual connotation. Although these sanctuaries were places set apart for wildlife, at the same time wilderness was a place where humans could seek retreat, a place beyond the ills of modern life or civilisation.

[684] The protection of wilderness was a major ambition for conservationists, and still today for modern environmentalists 'wilderness' has positive connotations as a place unaffected by the ills of modern society and as nature in its pure and unpolluted form. Wilderness is a place set apart, and it is the object of longing for a return to a lost natural state, it may be in the Judaeo-Christian form of the Garden of Eden, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idyllisation of 'the noble savage'. Although assumptions of wilderness as 'natural' or 'pure nature' should immediately alert the critical enquirer. A closer inspection will show that these are culturally specific and historically contingent. The belief rests upon an implicit philosophical assumption: that there is some universal or essential state of harmony with nature, and that humans due to some misbehaviour or accident were forced to become culture-creatures instead. Hence, culture and nature are in conflict, and this is the source of the dichotomisation that has predominated in Western intellectual history.

A reason why wilderness holds this benevolent power is that it is seen as a place of sacramental values. Gerrard writes:

> Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out a promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth, a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity founded on an attitude of reverence and humility.[685]

The realisation of the "authentic relation of humanity and the earth" or "an attitude of reverence" is dependent on wilderness, and this is more than simply a conceptual relation, it is a platform for a project where man needs to actually go out in the wilderness to fully realise or reach the benefit of it. For conservationists the idea of wilderness is a construction that is used for mobilisation in the protection of particular habitats and species, however, for humans it is a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city.[686] Although rewilding is a critique of conservationism, it nevertheless retains many ideas from conservationism about how a return to the wild may cure man from the strains of modern life, and it also brings in the sacramental values, although it may be in different terms, such as enchantment and wonder. What I found, however, is that today the sacramental values of Dartmoor are primarily *not* conceptualised or viewed as an area of wilderness, but as an *ancient landscape.*

5.2.4 Dartmoor – the Ancient Landscape

In my conversations with the participants in the walk on Dartmoor, I found that some referred to Dartmoor not primarily as a place of wilderness, but as an ancient or even timeless landscape, and some described it as visiting a very old place, "a place beyond time".[687] One voice even compared it to "going back in time". Clearly, visiting Dartmoor is more than a roaming expedition, this feeling of being beyond time is not simply being untouched by time, in the sense we would expect if we talked about the wilderness untouched by human interference. On the contrary, it is precisely that the place is very old, and reminiscences of prehistoric sites marking the presence of humans in the landscape that makes it attractive. Landscape in this sense offers time travel. Archaeologists have taken an interest in 'time travels' as an "embodied experience and social practice in the present that brings back to life a past or future reality".[688] I ask what these descriptions of the ancient Dartmoor stands for.

The fact that the landscape has been through many phases means that there are stories to tell. To walk the moor is to be in an ancient landscape, and for some this

[685] Garrard 2012:66.

[686] Garrard 2012:66.

[687] Field notes 2013.

[688] Holtorf 2017:1.

is an experience like walking back in time, into a conception of time where this ancient time is forever present.[689] There is a paradox in the midst of this: The narrative of Dartmoor as a wilderness is called into question by its long history of human presence. On the other hand, in the narrative of Dartmoor as an ancient landscape, this long history gives Dartmoor a specific value for those visiting. What they appreciate is the sense of the past being present, which can be described as a kind of archaic quality which also renders it an ambience of a *spiritual place*. This draws attention to questions of the relation between time and landscapes. I found that this sense of vast swathes of time passing is a feature that gives Dartmoor the quality of a spiritual place. Time in this long historical perspective (what historians may refer to as *la longue durée*) gives visitors a suitable backdrop and an opportunity to reflect upon "deep" questions of existential, ecological or spiritual matters. Tim Ingold expresses this quite poetically as landscape being "pregnant with the past".[690] The archaeologist Christina Fredengren addresses what people experience in relation to an ancient landscape, as 'deep time with enchantment', which it is "near-religious or spiritual experiences – both in the past and the present".[691] Deep time enchantment may emerge in encounters with archaeological objects and sites, and I relate it here to the ancient landscape of Dartmoor.

5.2.5 Dartmoor a Time Capsule

The sacramental values are based on Dartmoor as an ancient landscape, but it is necessary to take the analysis further from *what* you value and instead ask *why* you value it. To answer this, I will proceed from my field notes in visiting Dartmoor, but I will also include in the discussion material from media that concerns Dartmoor, such as tourist information, or the National Heritage, or public debate in journals. According to the romantic notion of wilderness, as we have seen, the wilderness that was to be preserved was regarded as untouched by human interference, and this often-concerned areas located in remote places, almost beyond reach in times before modern means of transport. In a historical perspective, places that nowadays are marginal can very well have been central in ancient time. One of the great changes in the nineteenth century was undoubtedly the construction of the network of railways that cut through the landscape. The railways became a symbol of modernity, and it was a means of transportation that made distant or 'wild' areas of the land more accessible for people living outside that area. In the late 1940s, and the 1950s the British Transport commission produced several documentary films where the railways and landscapes are portrayed, and Dartmoor is one of those places. The documentary pictures the railways as the entry of the modernity, and the

[689] Field notes 2013.

[690] Ingold 2000:189.

[691] Fredengren 2016:484.

modern world's encounter with the old world.[692] The voice-over introduces Dartmoor in the following manner.

> Our land is very old. We have lost its origins. Our fields grow neat, our hands grow smooth, forgetting their rough and hard beginning. But on Dartmoor the spirit of our island seems to heave itself out of the bracken and we find in the weathered rocks its strong and enduring character.[693]

Dartmoor's "weathered rocks" are not only very old; they stand in sharp contrast to the fields and hands that are neat and smooth. Dartmoor is a place where the forgotten, the "rough and hard beginning", the old landscape and the lost origin are still to be found; a place of an "enduring character". Thus, Dartmoor is very much a time capsule, set apart, freed from the world. A more recent example, with a similar ring to it, is the archaeologist Neil Oliver in the BBC documentary on ancient British history *Face of Britain.* When Oliver visits Dartmoor on a grey and rainy day he asks how modern man can understand the wilderness that existed in prehistoric time.

> Living as most of us do in cities and towns it is hard to appreciate how empty prehistoric Britain was. So I have come to windswept Dartmoor to get a sense of what it might have looked like. Even today, Dartmoor is one of the least populated areas in the whole country, and on a day like this, it is not hard to understand why. Ten thousand years ago all of Britain was empty like this. They might have been no less than a couple of hundreds of people on this vast moorland.[694]

Oliver pictures Dartmoor as a place where it is possible to get a sense of the prehistoric world, and how "empty" it was 10,000 years ago, that is, how few people there were around. Given its history, Dartmoor has a powerful narrative, and the mythological landscape of Dartmoor is intimately related to its reputation as an ancient landscape. The official tourism organisation's website likewise echoes this, depicting "Dartmoor's unspoilt landscape" as a place where "thick mists that suddenly appear and roll across the moor to the dark, bottomless mires and the craggy granite tors, each lends an air of mystery and magic, all ripe for associated legends and tales."[695] In Dartmoor it is:

> possible to visit many of the places which are connected with the various tales and see them as they were when their events unfolded. From the sacred ritual monuments of prehistoric times to deserted mines of yesteryear all are simply waiting to be

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[692] Young 2010:121.

[693] Young 2010:121.

[694] Transcription by I.B. The BBC documentary *The Face of the Britons* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLV63ip7pdI accessed 9 November 2021. The series *The Face of the Britons* is also available on DVD.

[695] http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/myths-and-legends accessed 16 November 2021.

> explored. So when visiting Dartmoor why not take some time to journey into the past and witness for yourself the many mysterious places of the moor?[696]

The tourist organisation's website offers an evocative image of the place, as "a journey into the past". Of course, their aim is to portray Dartmoor as an attractive place to visit, but my point here is that the stories told of the ancient Dartmoor come in many versions, and these are not exclusive for the visitors from Schumacher. My aim is to look at what is added when these stories are set within an environmental context where it conveys an ecological and spiritual message as well. Local lore, legends and myths are cultural narratives, and they are often intimately related to specific places, playing a vital part in the renegotiation of place and landscape.

5.2.6 The Making of the Moor – The Sacramental Values of Isolation

Dartmoor was abandoned in prehistoric times, and given its historical background, Dartmoor challenges any visitor to question his or her conceptions of wilderness, but more so, to question the effects of human culture in the landscape. The reminiscences of Bronze Age Dartmoor, and the story told, is a kind of lost world theme, like the myth of Atlantis, or of a collapsing civilisation, following examples like the Roman Empire or Easter Island, as discussed in the previous chapter. The solitary position of Dartmoor attracted the Cistercian monks to establish their monastery at Buckfast Abbey in 1147.[697] Distance, withdrawal, being set apart from the mundane world was essential in the construction of the sacramental value of wilderness. This enduring attraction goes far back in history; medieval monasteries had a strong appreciation of the wilderness, and Buckfast Abbey is far from the only example. Simmons finds cartographic historical records how the actual setting aside of space, other than the buildings and their immediate surroundings, is seen to greatest extent in the large land holdings of monasteries, of which the Cistercians are a highly visible example. The geologist Ian G. Simmons write:

> To them sacredness resides in solitude and silence, following the examples of the Desert Fathers. Thus, they were glad to receive gifts of wild spaces, as with the vills that were described as *wasta,* which were presumable mostly moor, woodlands and scrubs. Where their gifts were not quite silent enough, then people were moved out to make a kind of *cordon sanitaire* in which only the abbey and its buildings and the granges might persist.[698]

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[696] http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/myths-and-legends accessed 16 November 2021.

[697] Atkins 2015:63.

[698] Simmons 2001:114–115. One example of monasteries set in wild areas is Lindisfarne, on Holy Island in Northumberland: a place for sacred silence and solitude. Yet Lindisfarne also housed an agricultural community both in the earliest phase and as an outpost for the priory of Durham.

The monasteries' taste for wilderness was based on the sacramental values; the monks considered the isolated location as a resort, a place set apart. Centuries later, during the Napoleonic Wars, in 1809, the solitary quality of the moor made Dartmoor a perfect location for Her Majesty's Prison at Princetown, Dartmoor. The eco-writer William Atkins visited Princetown during his journey exploring the English wilderness, and he describes the gloomy character of the prison and the misty moor: he compares the mist to a sheet nailed over prison window, which sometimes lasts for days. "Then it withdraws, like a mirror wiped clean, and the hard world returns."[699] Prisons and monasteries may seem to be disparate institutions, but, as Harvey notes, "wild nature has been positively valued as a means, a tool for re-creating humans as better people".[700] This reformative power of the wilderness is a deeply rooted romanticism in Britain, where the countryside is equated with rest, recreation and virtue. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century and following the development of the railway network, people have taken breaks from cites to "find purity and nobility in the countryside".[701] In the mountains and uplands people have sought encounters with the transcendence or "the sublime", and they go there to experience awe and ennoblement. In this context Dartmoor is a place to withdraw to.

In addition, the moors of Britain have a status as representing a landscape that is nationally characteristic; the moors are distinctive as the *British* wilderness. This is not exclusive for Dartmoor, but for moorlands in general. In Britain, moorlands rather than deep forests are the emblematic image of national wilderness. Therefore, when Atkins makes a journey into the English wilderness, he visits the moors.[702]

> The Moors did not, at first, impress on me a human history. They were timeless – that was the nature of their tranquillity. The silted millpond and the choked watercress beds were not haunted ruins – you weren't conscious of any abiding ghosts. Any physical remnants were just inconsequential worryings of the Moors' prehistoric surface. It was only when I returned, as an adult, that I realised that, for instance, the moor had remained wet partly because the headwaters of the Hamble had been dammed, generations ago, to power the grain mill that still stood next to the road; and the wood had been prevented from smothering the open moor by managed grazing.[703]

As a child Atkins saw the moors as "timeless" and freed from human history. The moors were a natural state of tranquillity, there were no "abiding ghosts" until he returned years later and could see that the moor had actually been remoulded by human activity through the centuries. Atkin's describes two ways of seeing the moor: his childhood view, taking it for granted that the moor is natural, and his

[699] Atkins 2015.

[700] Harvey 2012:268.

[701] Harvey 2012:268.

[702] Atkins 2015.

[703] Atkins 2015:2.

returning as an adult knowing that the moor is largely man-made. Simultaneously, this new perception seems to awaken the abiding ghosts. There seems to be something distinctively darker lingering on the moor.

5.3 Dartmoor – a Space for Encounters with the Larger-than-Human world

5.3.1 The Misty Moor – Getting Trapped on the Moor

As we set out in sunshine, adventure was afoot. Dartmoor was welcoming. A warm summer day, with a mild breeze that gave the promise of a fine walk on the moor.[704] Initially, as we set out for the walk on the moor, the sky was all blue, and faraway on the moor the wild ponies of Dartmoor grazed the land. It was truly a perfect day for a walk, yet, after walking some miles, we saw clouds were gathering above the distant silhouette of the tors. The sun was disappearing behind the clouds, and soon we could feel small drops of rain falling. The sky was no longer blue, the clouds having turned it as grey as the stones. The clouds that drifted in our direction were now dark and heavy, and the rain intensified as we continued the walk uphill. Soon we could see over the hills how the mist was moving towards us, approaching us like a white veil; it moved rapidly, as if it had a life of its own. The distant hills were no longer visible. The world faded in a ghostlike manner as the mist wrapped itself around us. The moor had changed character by now; we could hear someone whisper the old stories of those who had been lost in the moor. The wind that came sweeping over the moor was cold and hard, it made you shiver. It made you feel small and vulnerable.

The moor is a trickster, never to be ruled and always eager to play tricks on human expectations, as when it becomes the misty moor. We found ourselves trapped in a small place a few metres in diameter. The rest of the world had become invisible, and even those in the group who were more distant had become strange shadows or completely invisible, hidden in the mist. The various shades of green and blue that had painted the landscape as we set out were replaced with an achromatic white-grey nuance, as if the world had lost its colours. Being in thick mist is as if the clouds have suddenly descended. As if the ground and the sky had come together. The eye of the mist is a place of a gigantic stillness. You feel wrapped into it as if you cannot move, almost as if you forget how to breathe. As the world changes its character, something happens to you as well. In a strange sense it calms you, and it teaches you that all you can really do is to wait. Neither the mist nor the moor is at your command. When the mist has finished its dance, it carries on, and just as sudden as

[704] Field notes 2013.

it appeared, it slowly vanishes. The mist as it slips away is like the withdrawal of some being. With a great sense of relief, we could see a slow change of scenery as the mist scattered, and the wind chased it further away like a herd of cattle. The rain finally ceased. Slowly the clouds that had held the blue sky in its prison released the sunshine. Soon, in less than an hour, the moor was almost as it was when we set out, sunshine again, a lovely day in June. The air felt crisp after the rain, the small drops and pools of rainwater gave a shimmering surface to the place. Again, the moor appeared from its benevolent side. The green and blue were back.

After a safe return from the walk, we gathered at a local pub, and part of the conversation around our table concerned the beauty of the moor, but soon the discussion brought up how capricious the moor was, how quickly the weather had shifted, and how unpredictable the moor was. In the conversation, Linda said,

> You should not walk the moor without a compass, because the weather might change so suddenly. The mist might appear so suddenly, and you will be totally lost in it, and you will be unable to find your way home. *You can get trapped out there!*[705]

Linda's anxiety in relation to the moor and its sudden change illustrates how many-faceted human relations to nature are. It should be noted that none of us carried a compass. Linda's account is far from the simple admiration of the beauty of the moor, but her anxiety is not representative of everyone in the group. Others considered the capricious side of the moor to be far more attractive; they saw it as a challenge, the ragged "wild" character of the landscape being a vital part of the attraction of Dartmoor. There is, of course no neutral description of Dartmoor. It is notable that these descriptions share the image of Dartmoor as a capricious and wild place, while their emotional response to this differs.

The anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that a place owes its character to the experience it affords to those who spend time there. Their senses, the sights, sounds and smells and the kind of activities in which inhabitants engage, all come together to "constitute its specific ambience".[706] Ingold claims that the ambience, the character and atmosphere of a place depend on the "relational context of people's engagement with the world", and "that each place draws its unique significance"[707] He criticises both the naturalistic view of the landscape as a neutral, external backdrop for human activity, and the culturalist view that sees the landscape as a symbolic ordering of space, and he argues that the relation between humans and landscape is through involvement rather than inscription. On the walk, Dartmoor showed its double-faced character. The ambivalence concerns the visitors as well, because you may very well see yourself as part of nature, and then, when confronting the elements, fear the strength of nature if you were to be lost on the

[705] Field notes 2013.

[706] Ingold 1993:152.

[707] Ingold 1993:152.

moor. Dartmoor gives rise to experiences of pleasure and beauty, as well as fear and anxiety. The sense of wonder goes hand in hand with a sense of vulnerability. I describe this as an ambiguity where enchantment comes with the eerie. Linda's account expresses the ambivalence, the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone. One example of this is Penny Billington who offers an introduction to Druidry.[708] Her book *Walking the Green Path* contributes a pagan perspective; to simply think that "nature is wonderful" will soon be seen as naïve if you, for example, spend a night on the moors without the proper clothing and equipment.[709] Billington sums up the lesson to learn from this:

> Never forget the respect due to the strength and power of the elements, all of which can nurture or kill you. We are generally protected from their force, but news coverage of global natural disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfire, and tornados – brings home their awesome devastating power. A simple walk in the country if we are ill-prepared will soon show us our own vulnerability in the natural world. [710]

These experiences of vulnerability might be small incidents, like the one in my account of the walk on Dartmoor but will be more fearful in relation to climate change with extreme weather and its devastating consequences. These challenges will force us to encounter our own vulnerability. Apart from the practical implications of managing these experiences, there is a whole range of emotions at play here. The archaeologist Eddie Procter notes that although various disciplines offer their perspectives on landscapes, something that is often absent in the picture, and that is "a feel for the range of emotions that being out in a landscape triggers."[711] For Linda, the emotion was the fear of being trapped on the moor.

In Dartmoor there is vulnerability in relation to the unpredictability of the weather conditions on the moor. This sense of vulnerability may seem odd to the wild ponies or other animals living in the area who are used to handling such circumstances. These emotions are of course far from the simple aesthetic appreciation for the beauty of the pastoral landscape that the countryside might offer. When it comes to the wild, I say, it is rather ambivalence that is striking in what Procter refers to as "a range of emotions". Ambivalence has both positive and negative connotations; it is in one sense beyond good and evil, but that is not to say that it is equal to nihilism or beyond ethics. Nor are feelings such as fright or being vulnerable to be seen as

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[708] Penny Billington is related to *Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids (OBOD)* For information see https://druidry.org accessed 16 November 2021. Her book *The Path of Druidry: Walking the Ancient Green Way* was published in 2011, Llewellyn Publications, Woodbury, Minn.

[709] Billington 2011: xxi.

[710] Billington 2011:73

[711] Archaeologist Eddie Procter's website *Landscapeism* http://landscapism.blogspot.se/2015/02/towards-new-landscape-aesthetic.html accessed 16 November 2021.

simply a negative experience. Rather a range of emotions that the anyone being out in a landscape are exposed to.

Many of those I spoke to give examples of a willingness to expose themselves to the elements in various ways, for example, staying outdoors at night, swimming in cold water, avoiding taking shelter in rain, walking barefoot on hard ground, and so on. These are considered as vital experiences of being part of nature in an intimate sense. These sensuous experiences may not be so pleasant at first, but something that you eventually get used to, and even come to like. One young woman tells of her lesson from swimming; at first, it is cold, but after a while it is comfortable, then you must stay in the water until the second time you feel cold. These accounts differ from Linda's anxiety, rather finding the tempting elements of nature to be attractive. Indeed, they find that such experiences are part of being alive.

5.3.2 Windswept Dartmoor

Sheila is yet another voice who tells of her experience of Dartmoor. For Sheila Dartmoor contrasts with the countryside. While she joyfully expressed her admiration for the British countryside, her experience of Dartmoor was completely different. She said, "It's like you're not in England anymore, the moor is frightful, it frightens me…". But why so frightful? What is it about this place that triggers such responses? Sheila answers, "Because it seems so barren, so empty, and there is nowhere to hide." The moor is an open landscape, moors are notoriously pictured as "windswept", and many feel uncomfortable with being exposed to such environment. In psychoanalysis the frightful feeling triggered by being out in an open area is referred to as 'agoraphobia', the fear of open spaces. The term refers to an urban environment, that is, the fear of the open agora and squares, where people may feel unprotected, unsafe, even get into a state of panic if they have to cross over them, and thus they tend to avoid them. The feeling of agoraphobia in relation to an open landscape is of course more overwhelming, and the vast landscape can make you feel small and vulnerable. Huge expanses, for example the sea or a moor, bring out that feeling. How we experience landscapes differs widely, because others see such open landscape as overwhelming and appreciate them. They rather feel a sense of freedom and enjoy the vistas that reach to the horizon.

In philosophy 'the sublime' refers to how we experience, for example, a landscape, and the sublime is only a form of aesthetic admiration of beauty. This may be a matter of scale; it is the grandiosity of mountains that make us admire the landscape and experience them as sublime. Such landscapes set man in perspective as a small part of the world. The philosopher Edmund Burke cited in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1775) greatness of dimensions as a quality approaching his definition of the sublime, and he lists "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite ideas of pain and danger. 'Privation', 'vastness' and 'infinity' were similarly capable of exciting ideas, according to Burke's influential thesis. The magnitude of a moor is different from a

mountain or a canyon, because it is chiefly lateral, and Burke claims that "a hundred yards of even ground will never work such an effect as a tower a hundred yards high".[712] Of course, one can disagree with Burke on this, particularly in overlooking places like moorlands that reach towards the horizon and beyond. William Cronon calls this the doctrine of the sublime (which originated at the end of the eighteenth century), and it refers to the sense of the wildness of a landscape where the supernatural lies just beneath the surface.[713] As Cronon explores the supernatural beneath the surface, he stumbles on the same ambiguity.

> Wilderness was like a double-edged sword: a place for both temptation and mystic revelations. These two possibilities have been present in wilderness even in premodern days when it was a place charged with spiritual danger and moral temptation.[714]

A place charged with spiritual danger and moral temptation seems to be referring to something other than Bennett's places with the power to enchant, because for Bennett, fear cannot be part of part of enchantment. Still, this is exactly how Sheila describes her experience of Dartmoor, as frightful. Her account of visiting Dartmoor is more in tune with Macfarlane's notion of the eeriness of the English landscape, and with this we enter a much darker landscape.

5.3.3 The Darkness of Dartmoor

In Sheila's account she saw the open moorland as frightening, but for her there was something else that affected her experience of Dartmoor a great deal, and that concerns Dartmoor's reputation as a dark and haunted place. Sheila refers to *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, where Dartmoor is haunted by a ghostly black dog, and the novel is based on a local legend. Sheila's heart seems to be with the dog, which she called "that poor mistreated creature". Nonetheless, the notion of haunted Dartmoor is part of popular culture, not only Conan Doyle's novel, Dartmoor is known as one of the most haunted places in Britain, there is a vast literature and other media on the subject,[715] and the legends and folklore contribute to the attraction of the place − a mythological landscape haunted by its past and present.[716] The local historian Anthony Beard sums up the advice of the

[712] Burke quoted in Atkins 2015: xviii.

[713] Cronon 1995:3.

[714] Cronon 1995:3.

[715] The amount of material here is indeed large. See for example https://www.chasingmidnight.com/haunted-dartmoor accessed 19 September 2021. Anyone can google for haunted Dartmoor and the result will give a hint of the interest of the matter among local historians, and an audience devoted to popular culture.

[716] Hynes 2014

locals living close to Dartmoor: "You cannot compete with the moor. You have to respect it."[717] Indeed, local lore might give the same advice about being cautious of the moor in another vocabulary. The folklorist Jennifer Westwood refers to a recording from 1832 that describes the habits of the pisgies or pixies, the West Country fairies, the most notorious of which was 'pixy-leading'.[718] The stories tell of many who have been sent forth to lead poor travellers astray, to deceive them with those false lights called Will-o'-the-wisp, or to lead them a fine dance when trudging home through woods and waters, through bogs and quagmires. I will come back to the folklore of Dartmoor, but my first approach the darkness of Dartmoor is more concrete, because Dartmoor is one of the few places, in Britain but more so in Europe, where it is possible to experience real darkness.[719]

The darkness of the moor is part of the picture if you want to understand what kind of place Dartmoor is and the attraction of the place. True darkness has become rare in modern world. Light pollution is on the list of various forms of pollution that follow in the footsteps of human modern life. Light pollution refers to the artificial light – from the nightlife of the lit-up cities – that is spread and reflected on the night sky. The phenomenon is given a scientific measurement in the Bortle dark-sky classification, with a scale graded from 9 to 1, where 1 is the darkest.[720] Light pollution causes problems for many animals, as well as vegetation, as their natural cycles are disturbed by constant light. Light pollution is a global phenomenon that reaches beyond the planetary scale because it causes a phenomenon known as nightglow. Seen from space, the Earth is literally lit up by the cities' night light. The consequence is not only visible to outsiders; from Earth the city light is reflected in the night sky. As the sky gets brighter the stars become invisible, which among other things causes trouble for migrating birds who navigate by the stars at night. A person standing on the top of Empire State Building would only be able to see 1 per cent of the stars that were visible to Galileo's naked eye four hundred years ago.[721] The phenomenon can be called the loss of darkness, but as seen, darkness is not the only thing that is gone. So is the starry night sky.

What is it that we experience in darkness? The local historian Beard[722] and his family live in Widecombe, a small medieval village located in Dartmoor National Park. Widecombe Valley is located over 200 miles from the light pollution of

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[717] *Afraid of the Dark,* documentary, history channel. Transcription by I.B.

[718] Westwood 1987:19

[719] *Afraid of the Dark,* documentary, history channel.

[720] The Bortle Dark-Sky Scale measures how dark the sky is. It ranges from light pollution, graded 9, to true darkness, graded 1. Places that score 1 are rare today. Among the few remaining places of true darkness in the modern world are the Australian outback or the Peruvian Mountains. The bright New York City sky is a class 9.

[721] *Afraid of the Dark*, documentary, history channel.

[722] *Afraid of the Dark,* documentary, history channel.

London, and these conditions make the area extremely dark at night. It is a unique place as it earns a class 3 on the Bortle Dark-Sky Classification. According to Beard the area has changed little since his family moved here in the fifteenth century. For Beard “Dartmoor is truly an area of outstanding mystery” and the reason is that;

> We do not get any light filtration from the cites out here. We can still get a really extreme darkness. […] it is the darkness that creates the atmosphere and it creates the frightening aspects of being out on the moors.[723]

These frightening aspects of being on the moor resonate with Sheila’s feeling, but of course this was a daytime walk, although some of those on the walk explicitly expressed a wish to visit Dartmoor in moonlight (and I come back to this further on). The loss of darkness is a consequence of modern city life and its 24-hour electric light. Darkness has become rare, it indicates distance from the industrial civilisation, and it is intimately related to the wild. In this perspective, dark places such as Dartmoor, in a very concrete way, are places freed from human interference.[724] Hence, darkness is an indication of places that is, if not untouched by modern civilisation, are less under its spell, and the night is undeniably a less human-centred world. I say that darkness in this context becomes a modern-day criterion, not for wilderness, but for “the wild” or “a wild place”. Dartmoor can be seen as a dark place in more than one sense; how come such a place attracts visitors? Would it not be sensible to avoid such a place? Again, we stumble on the complexity of Dartmoor, because the fact is that Dartmoor attracts a large number of visitors.

5.3.4 The Overuse of Dartmoor

As seen previously, many organisations and agents who encourage people to visit Dartmoor also contribute to the reproduction of the narrative of Dartmoor as an ancient land and a mysterious place of legends and myths. The large number of visitors is evidence that they have been successful. The large visitor numbers are not only positive. A sad sign of Dartmoor’s attractiveness is the overuse of the park. National parks like Dartmoor are designated for their outstanding natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and the opportunity they offer for enjoyment to visitors. Ever since Dartmoor became a National Park in 1951, its popularity has increased. The dark side of this popularity is that, due to the number of human feet that wander the moor, the place suffers from soil erosion because of overuse.[725] The Moor Care Campaign gives a list of advice to visitors on how to behave in order to reduce their

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[723]*Afraid of the Dark*, documentary, history channe,l transcription by I.B.

[724]*Afraid of the Dark*, documentary, history channel.

[725] http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/visiting/vi-caringfordartmoor accessed 28 September 2016.

impact on the moor and to avoid contributing to this process. On the website they write:

> In many places it looks wild and rugged but in reality, such areas are extremely fragile. Every year, more and more choose to visit and explore Dartmoor, which puts ever-increasing pressure upon the landscape.[726]

Hence, Dartmoor may appear to be "wild and rugged" but in reality the landscape is "extremely fragile", and it is under "ever-increasing pressure".[727] Therefore, visitors are advised to keep to the paths, and avoid climbing over stiles and rocks, to use gates and to avoid peak holidays, and of course, to bring their litter back home. This form of overuse of land by ramblers and wanderers has been an issue throughout the post-war period and the "leisure explosion".[728] The fact that Dartmoor is under threat of overuse makes it an area that is part of the environmental struggle. Again, this makes it more interesting, not less.

The issue of overuse of Dartmoor illustrates the paradoxical intention behind the creation of national parks as areas of conservation. The reason that the problem of overuse arises is that Dartmoor attracts visitors in great numbers, which indicates Dartmoor's status as an example of British wilderness and the gravity it has for those looking for wilderness. The problem of overuse at Dartmoor is similar to the situation that the folklorist Jennifer Westwood notes in relation to sacred sites, where visitors *en masse* physically damage sites. Minor ancient monuments and small-scale landscape features, such as holy wells and wayside crosses and tombs, cannot sustain the annual descent of even moderate numbers of people.[729] Visitors who come to pay their respects and who want to preserve the site contribute to the damage of the place, Westwood concludes. The paradox of the overused wilderness

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[726] http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/visiting/vi-caringfordartmoor accessed 28 September 2016. "Erosion and general 'overuse', particularly at peak holiday periods, can damage the very fabric of the moor, its plants, its wildlife and its archaeology. Furthermore, it can impact upon the people who live and work within the National Park boundary. The Moor Care Campaign explains how we can all help to conserve and protect Dartmoor whilst enjoying its unique environment not just for our benefit but also for future generations."

[727] http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/visiting/vi-caringfordartmoor accessed 28 September 2016. The Moor Care Campaign gives advice on its website on "caring for Dartmoor in a few easy steps", that everyone should follow, such as: "The creation of multiple tracks not only spoils Dartmoor's beautiful landscape but also damages precious vegetation and natural habitats."

[728] Simmons writes that the "leisure explosion" has led to conflicts between landowners and wanderers. Farmers complain that walkers leave gates open and trample crops, and that the sheer number of people using the land for recreation has in some cases has exceeded the carrying capacity of public footpaths. The National Trust and county councils have spent a great deal of money establishing public footpaths, often in relation to National Parks, while some environmentalists consider these footpaths to be ecological damage as they lead to soil erosion. Simmons, I. G 2001:300–301. The Dartmoor Authority had to spend £400,000 between 1997 and 2000 in combating recreation-caused soil erosion under the slogan "More Care, Less Wear" http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/visiting/vi-caringfordartmoor accessed 28 September 2016.

[729] Westwood 1987: xi.

seems to be looping into a further paradox because this overuse also gives further reason to question, not just Dartmoor as one of the few remaining wild places in Britain, or our own conception of wilderness, but more so, the access to, or 'ownership' of Dartmoor. Part of the attraction of Dartmoor is its status as a last resort of British wilderness, but I want to shed some light on a further aspect.

The fact that Dartmoor has the status of a national park makes it accessible for anyone to visit or wander in. National parks are among the last areas of common land that is found. This is a distinctive feature in a country where access to the countryside is restricted by landowners' signs saying, "Trespassers will be prosecuted" or "No trespassing". The matter of landowning conditions and the role of landownership and access to land cannot be left out of any discussion of the English landscape.[730] Hence, the problem of overuse of Dartmoor is not that Dartmoor is accessible to anyone; it is rather that much of rest of the British countryside is not.[731] Today wild areas are often under the protection of conservation projects, and they are *de facto* under a great deal of human influence. Dartmoor is no exception. The overuse of Dartmoor, and the consequent soil erosion, is one example of how human activity has negative effects on the landscape, despite their good intention to visit Dartmoor, which might be guided by their love of nature or "wilderness". Soil erosion is a well-known phenomenon in open landscapes; however, Dartmoor has not always been an open landscape, it is the place of a lost forest, it is a mythological landscape, and it is in the intersection between contemporary environmental issues and the mythological landscape that Dartmoor as a wild place – and even a dark place – emerges.

5.3.5 The Raven that Circled above Us

Marta spoke to me of her experience of visiting Dartmoor, and she told a story of an unusual encounter that occurred during an excursion when the group from

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[730] Recently attention have been given to how British children "not connect to nature" and the paradox is that the urban kids, who have access to green spaces, such as a park can play in nature more easily than children living in a countryside shaped by enclosure. Vaughan, Adam (2013) "Four our of five UK children 'not connect to nature'" T*he Guardian*, Wednesday 16 October 2013.

[731] Access to the British countryside has been a long struggle over the freedom to roam, or the right to roam. The writer and journalist John Bainbridge has a blog dedicated to campaigning for the Right to Roam across the British Countryside. Bainbridge is the author of *The Complete Trespasser: Journeys into the Heart of Forbidden Britain*, which gives a historical perspective on trespassing, and *Rambling: The Beginner's Bible*, with good advice for beginners in the art of trespassing. Bainbridge is a dedicated campaigner for access to the countryside in the Ramblers Association. Between 1996 and 2005 he was the chief executive of the Dartmoor Preservation Association, and he was a founder committee member of the Two Moors Way Association. He presents himself as "an inveterate trespasser" who believes that "the land is our common inheritance and that the people of Britain should have the right to walk responsibly in their own country."

Schumacher College had been wandering on the moor.[732] It was a clear and crisp day in February. While the group on the moor were standing gathered in a circle listening to Stephan Harding, who was leading the expedition, something happened that caught the group's attention. Suddenly a raven had appeared in the sky above them. The raven, which seemed to have appeared from nowhere in the open landscape, circled above the group of people, going around and around above them, in what she describes as "making a perfect circle". They all fell silent and looked up at the sky, at the bird circling above them. For some minutes everyone in the group was silently watching the raven, and simultaneously the raven was watching the strange horde of creatures beneath it on the moor, and then suddenly, the bird broke the circle, turned and flew away towards the horizon, disappearing in the distance. Marta tells how the appearance of the raven made the participants in the group realise that it was not just the group looking at nature or the landscape, but that "nature is looking at us". The raven circling over the group was observing them curiously and seemed to wonder what kind of creatures they were, and what they were doing.[733] The encounter with the raven turned the gaze to the other, and it made Marta and the rest of the group aware that they were not just visiting Dartmoor, but more so they were visitors and guests on the moor.

Marta's account of "The Raven that Circled above Us" portrays Dartmoor, not as a place suitable for an excursion in order to look at nature, or to study it, rather as a place for encounters with the larger-than-human world, here represented by the raven. What happened in the encounter on the moor is not simply that Marta and the rest of the group revalued the animal, and suddenly came to see the Raven as an agent. Instead, they turned their attention to themselves, the strange herd of humans on the moor. From the perspective of the larger-than-human world, represented by the raven, Marta and the group realised that they were guests on the moor. It is an example of the ecological awareness that loops back to question the human self-conception, but the encounter with the raven can also be seen from a spiritual perspective. It is notable that the bird is a raven, which is an important animal in Celtic mythology, but modern zoological research has also demonstrated how ravens are incredibly intelligent birds. Ravens are charismatic animals, but they are also a part of a modern-day lore that draws equally from pagan mythology and folklore and modern animal studies. A further animal that is often admired for its intelligent capacities is part of the next encounter.

5.3.6 In the Eye of the Fox

In the account of the raven that circled above us it was the gaze of the raven that was looking at the humans. In a similar way, Joe told of his encounter with a young

[732] Field notes 2013.

[733] Field notes 2013.

fox. One early morning he was sitting on his doorstep with his morning coffee when he sensed how someone was observing him closely, and as he looked up, he saw a fox pup.[734] The little fox looked carefully at him and for some minutes their gaze met in reciprocal recognition. It was as if time stood still, before the little fox ran back in the bushes to its mother and siblings. Joe said, "I wonder if he knew that he had just seen the most dangerous animal in the world." There is a question lingering in Joe's meeting with the fox: How can we face ourselves as representing "the most dangerous animals in this world?" How can we see ourselves as ethical persons and still be part of a species that causes so much trouble? This is a question that is central in ecological philosophy, but it is equally real for many of those I have been in conversation with. Others I have talked to express deep sorrow for how humans treat animals throughout the world. Himari is a young Japanese woman who has moved from Nagasaki to one of the southern islands to escape the busy city life, but in the region where she now lives, dog meat is part of the local diet, and this is something she finds difficult to cope with. The suffering and mistreatment of these dogs is "heart-breaking" and unbearable to witness. Along similar lines, Sarah Pike concludes from her study that for many activists, caring arises from encounters with an objective reality of suffering and devastation that they experience in the world, after an encounter with a mink in a cage or what is left of a mountain after its top has been removed to get at the coal inside. These encounters play a part in moving them towards action.[735]

In my conversations with participants many also refer to more positive experiences such as how animals can serve as guides in this effort. Animals are important to them, both in their everyday lives and because they offer emotional and spiritual guidance. These experiences are sometimes chance encounters with wild animals in nature, as with the raven or the fox above, but also animal companions or "pets", such as dogs, cats, rabbits or rats (just to mention a few), that are part of their everyday lives may represent 'the wild' and the larger-than-human world. Despite being domesticated, these animal companions are admired and loved because of their 'wild' instincts such as their capacity for intuition, compassion, playfulness and courage. Many describe a spiritual bond with animals, because of their capacity for love and compassion, but also that they have felt how animals have offered guidance and true friendship to them in times when they needed advice. One consequence of these close and deep relations to animals is of course that many do not eat meat, or dairy products. Vegetarianism or veganism is the choice of the majority of participants, and it has increasingly become the norm in society[736] because of animal rights issues and ethical concerns in relation to the larger-than-human world, but also in relation to climate change and industrial meat production. Thus, animals are seen as more sensing creatures, they know something that humans

[734] Field notes 2014.

[735] Pike 2017:6.

[736] Turner 2013:226-227.

have forgot, they still know their wild mind and their wild origin. Therefore, we must learn from them, and animals may offer guidance or work as models for human behaviour. Animals are often seen as messengers, they mediate an awareness from the larger-than-human world to humans, who often lack this perspective. Donna Haraway has devoted much attention to the question of what happens when species meet, when they look at each other.[737]

> [W]e are in a knot of species coshaping one another in layers of reciprocating complexity all the way down. Response and respect are possible only in these knots, with actual animals and people *looking back at each other*, sticky with all their muddled histories.[738]

When species meet, the appreciation of complexity is invited. The question how we can we see ourselves as ethical persons and still be part of a species that causes so much trouble is central in ecological philosophy, and therefore encounters with animals, based in non-hierarchical relations and companionship with these, becomes a core value here. [739]

5.4 The Mythological Landscape of Dartmoor

5.4.1 The Lore of Dartmoor

On Dartmoor it is "possible to visit many of the places which are connected with the various tales and see them as they were when the events unfolded." [740] Dartmoor is a "journey into the past", and there are "many mysterious places on the moor"[741] The tourist website offers an evocative image of the place and the local legends, communicating an image of the mythological landscape. The stories told of the lore of Dartmoor come in many versions, and I will offer accounts of storytelling workshops at Dartmoor.

5.4.2 Storytelling in the Anthropocene - Local Lore and Legends

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[737] Haraway 2008.

[738] Haraway 2008:42.

[739] For discussion on ethics and animals see Singer (1975) 2000 and Waldau 2017.

[740] Visit Dartmoor: The Heart of Devon http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/explore-dartmoor/myths-and-legends accessed 10 November 2021.

[741] Visit Dartmoor: The Heart of Devon http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/explore-dartmoor/myths-and-legends accessed 10 November 2021.

Storytelling is an example of the telling of legends and local lore, and during my visits in the field I have participated in a number of workshops. The performance of storytelling, or simply "the telling", can take various forms and take place in various locations. In some cases, the storyteller stands before the group as in giving a talk to an audience, or the teller might be standing in centre of the group sitting in a circle. Sometimes the group is gathered around a fire, or at an ancient stone circle, or in the forest. The telling of the story can be accompanied by drumming that emphasises the dramatic parts of the story, and the drum can be seen as an inspiration from beat poetry reading as well as a shamanic practices where the drumming guides the shaman's journey between worlds. Storytelling is a multifaceted practice that can be adjusted to the particular need in a certain setting, for example, in one sense, tutorial lectures can be seen as storytelling as well as more artistic performances. Graham Harvey's study of eco-pagans distinguishes between environmental educators and shamanic practitioners as two distinct roles,[742] but I can say that in the various forms of tellings and workshops that I have participated in I have seen examples where the teller may well have both these roles, and ecological education may mediate a spiritual perspective as part of the education.

Throughout this thesis I have returned to Dartmoor, and storytelling is yet another example of the reflective, utopian and spiritual practices I study, and it illustrates that the boundary between these can sometimes be hard to draw. My focus here is on how the telling of the story is performed in relation to, or at, the actual site where the story is said to have taken place. I have discussed this relation between the telling of a story and place in the cases of Dartmoor and Wistman's Wood, and I will not repeat this, but rather add a further example, and hopefully some further insights. In the following I will discuss a storytelling workshop led by Martin Shaw, which took place at the prehistoric circle of standing stones named The Nine Maidens, on Dartmoor.[743] The Nine Maidens is dated to the Bronze Age and despite its name it consists of sixteen standing stones, but the circle is incomplete.[744] According to local lore the nine maidens were nine teenage girls caught dancing on the Sabbath, and they were turned to stones as a punishment. This story tells the origin of the name of the place, and it is of course of Christian date; the maiden's wrongs are related to the Christian command to keep the Sabbath, and the view of dancing as somewhat sinful behaviour. This is far from the only legend related to the place,[745] and this

[742] Harvey 2012.

[743] The Nine Maidens are also known as The Seventeen Brothers or simply The Nine Stones. See further: The Legendary Dartmoor: Exploring the many aspects of Dartmoor. https://www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk accessed 10 November 2021.

[744] *Moorland View Cottage: Dartmoor's best prehistoric sites* https://www.moorlandviewcottage.co.uk/devon/dartmoor-prehistoric-sites accessed 10 November 2021.

[745] *Legendary Dartmoor: Exploring the many aspects of Dartmoor.* https://www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk accessed 10 November 2021.

was not the story told at the telling I participated in. This workshop started with a walk towards the stone circle, and as the group gathered in the circle and the storyteller stood in its centre and moved around while he was telling the tale. The story that was told is based on a local legend that explains how the circle of stones came into being. I will here tell the story as I remember it. I call it "Magic Half Done", and its opening line is the evocative "Once upon a time…" and so the story goes.

> Once upon a time there was a man living in a small cabin in the area. One dark and rainy night he heard a knock on his door, he hesitated whether he would open or not, but so he did and outside stood a stranger. As the stranger needed shelter for the night the man offered him to enter and stay for the night. In the morning, as the night guest was about the leave, he offered a gift for the hospitality, and the man told of a certain sacred spring which had magical powers. The man said that if you dip your sword in this well, it will so powerful that you will be invincible.
>
> When the night guest had left the man was quite excited about this secret knowledge; what could he not do if he was invincible? The man got the idea that he would use this knowledge of magic in order to steal livestock, in that he will be the richest livestock owner in the area. The man rode to the spring and dipped his sword in the water, but as he held it down in the water, the water started to boil, and the shadow of an old man rose from the water. The man was terrified, he immediately withdrew and took his sword from the water. The shadow of the man disappeared; the water in the well was still again. This incident did not give the man any reason for second thoughts. He rode off to steal the sheep, but the shepherd discovered him, and as he drew his sword to defend himself, it was only half the size it had been before. As if this was not enough; the shepherd cast a spell and the man turned into stone, together with the eight sheep he had gathered, and together they formed the circle of the nine stones.[746]

This is unmistakeably a tale with mythic features; and despite being told in full daylight the teller succeeded in creating an eerie ambience. The story has all the properties that set it in ancient time: the dark nights, a sword and the magic. The main character is not really a hero, but a far more complex figure. He is kind in offering shelter to his night guest, but he foolishly chooses to use the secret knowledge of magic simply to steal sheep in order to become the richest man in the whole of Dartmoor, and he lacks the courage – or wisdom – to go ahead with the work of magic. From an analytic perspective, there are three things to emphasise: (i) the story reflects Dartmoor's long history as grazing land for sheep and cattle, which is a controversial matter today, as we have seen previously; (ii) the story tells how the stones came into being, as the stones are the bodies of the thief and the sheep he had gathered. From an ecological perspective this concerns the transformation of life forms, which in geological perspective ranges over vast times.

[746] Field notes 2014.

This is a narrative of how both man and animals can turn to stone, by the trick of magic but also through geological metamorphosis. Hence, there are matters of ecological concern in this story, as well as spiritual because (iii) the story takes place in an enchanted world, a world where magic is alive.

In simple terms it is a story that holds a warning about how to handle magic properly, and it gives a warning against magic half done. The man was given the secret knowledge of magic by the stranger as thanks for his hospitality. He was told to keep his sword in the water in order to make it powerful, but he withdrew in the midst of the process and instead he lost his power. Thus, it is a moral saying that if you deal in magic, you should treat it with respect and have the courage to go through with it. Furthermore, the story raises the question of what purpose you choose to use magic for. The story is an expression of an enchanted world where the workings of magic are part of the process. As is evident, the story can be analysed from several perspectives, although my purpose is not to analyse the story as a text, in terms of its meaning, but to look at storytelling as a practice.

The historian and anthropologist Marcel Détienne has examined ancient Greek stories, stressing that stories are practices.[747] In this perspective, stories are not objects of knowledge or objects to be known. Tales, stories, poems, and treaties are already practices. They say exactly what they do and constitute an act which they intend to mean. There is no need for a gloss to know what they express, or to wonder what they are the metaphor of. The story does not express a practice, it does not limit itself to telling about a movement. In Détienne's words, "It *makes* it."[748] In simple terms stories that cease to be told cease to exist. Myths and legends seem to have a remarkable ability to survive, albeit by transformation. Contemporary storytelling is a practice that can be described as secondary orality,[749] it is an oral culture which differs from old or traditional notions of oral tradition because it depends on literacy and text as well. This is seen in the case of the storyteller Martin Shaw, who is also the author of a number of books. I will not dwell on the difference between text and telling, instead I will ponder on the relation between stories and place.

5.4.3 Dartmoor the Shape-shifter – Places Long to Speak

The story told at the storytelling session at the Nine Maidens is deep seated in the Dartmoorian landscape: it is the place where this story takes place, and the place where the story was told. The story reflects the history of sheep grazing on Dartmoor, but it also draws the temporal perspective further into deep time. The narrative depicts a metamorphosis, as the bodies of the thief and the stolen sheep

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[747] de Certeau 1984:80.

[748] de Certeau 1984:80.

[749] Ong 1971.

turned to stones. The metamorphosis is not only due to magic, from an ecological perspective the story of how man and animals turns to stone, concerns the transformation of lifeforms, which in geological perspective range over vast times. Shaw figures as a storyteller in this account, but he is likewise a scholar of English literature and a mythologist who has written several books which offer further perspectives here. Shaw looks at the contemporary landscape in a time perspective. “Dartmoor, so seemingly permanent, is a shape-shifter, just like the stories are”.[750] The stories of Dartmoor are inseparable from the history of Dartmoor.

> It has been cultivated, abandoned, mined, regenerated, feared, shorn bald of its tree crest. From a human eye it has been both cramped and lonely, fertile and barren. It carries a word-hoard of story, is a vascular intermingling of animal intelligence. It is its own wild consciousness, its own fluid mythology, whatever shape a particular millennium places upon it. These are just contemporary bumps along the way, little snippets of click time pecking at its great, eternal trumps.[751]

Dartmoor is set in a deep time perspective as Shaw contrasts the ‘click time’ with the ‘eternal trumps’, or the present with the long-time perspective ranging over millennia. The “human eye” is in contrast to “animal intelligence”. Dartmoor is a place in its own terms, it “carries a word-hoard of stories” and “its own wild consciousness”. This storytelling workshop shares a common feature with the walk to Wistman’s Wood, where the legend of the druid in the wood that gave its name to the place is told at the actual site where it happened. Again, the workshop takes place, and the story is told *at the actual site* where it takes place. This telling of stories in relation to the actual site is, in Ingold’s words, a way of “being intimate with places”. What is emphasised in storytelling is how places are sources of stories.[752] Shaw notes:

> Some stories that are rooted primarily in the imagination and others that are geographically specific, that are about a certain place, a certain tree, a certain stretch of water.[753]

The telling of such story at this “certain place”, by the very tree or stretch of water, is the power of storytelling. Stories are not only related to or referring to places;

[750] Shaw 2014:62–63.

[751] Shaw 2014:62–63.

[752] Legends, myth and local lore are sources of inspiration, but it is not an antiquarian approach where these are seen as static stories to be retold again and again. The interest in places is a feature that can be found in classic landscape or nature writing, which offers reflection on certain places. This form of storytelling shares the approach of the new eerie of the English landscape, which Macfarlane considers as a feature not just in literature but in various forms of contemporary artwork.

[753] Field notes 2013.

stories take place. Places are nests for stories, and this is part of the secret behind their power to enchant.

5.4.4 Embodied Stories – Voice and Listening

These are not just stories related to place, these are also embodied stories. In this context storytelling is more than an opportunity to listen to a good story told by a professional artist, it is a method to work with the urgent matter of our time in a personal and artistic way. Storytelling, in the form that I have studied, does not make the listeners into a passive audience, but invites them as interactive participants. The practice encourages the listeners to actively reflect on the story told, and to contribute their thoughts. This can be done in questions from the teller to the listeners, and before the telling the storyteller might ask the listeners to note "which part of the story spoke to you". Afterwards, those who want to may share their part and tell why this particular part spoke to them. Again, the practice of sharing is part of the workshop, and we have seen many examples of this. As each of the listeners tell their part, it becomes clear that the story told had a varied reception among the participants; the story is never just *one* story as each listener in this sense had their own version. The storytelling workshop offers several questions to bring up, for example: What does this say about where you are right now in your life, in the world? The aim is to offer inspiration for continuous working with these stories. In this sense, the storytelling session is not the whole story, because it continues in the mind and life of the listeners. According to Shaw the role of listening to stories and myths is to connect the story to their own life, and to nature.[754]

> The idea is that at the end of the week the participants on the programme go back to whatever country or town they come from, or village, to find similar areas and similar stories to investigate.[755]

Thus, the storytelling workshop encourages participants to explore and find stories in their lives, such as the local stories where they live, and this is worth noting as the participants at Schumacher come from various parts of the world. Although the storytelling session encourages everyone to go back and explore the stories that they find in the place where they live, the purpose is not that everyone should be a storyteller, but every person (and this is not exclusive for human persons) is a carrier of stories.[756] The stories we carry are memories of our own and memories of places. These stories are important material to reflect upon to understand places and life at a particular time in history. Consequently, storytelling workshops are not passive listening to stories told. In this sense it is the starting point that brings up the

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[754] Field notes 2013.

[755] Field notes 2013.

[756] Field notes 2013, 2014.

question: How can we work with these stories? How can we live with them in order to know not only the stories but ourselves and the world? Apart from the actual telling performance, there may be other workshops with the purpose of encouraging participants to continue the reflective work with the stories. This may include various artworks such as poetry, music or paintings.

5.4.5 Stories Told in the Dark

Storytelling, and workshops in storytelling or in relation to storytelling, is a method of working with stories; to reflect on the role of stories. In one such conversation, Mary told us about a childhood experience that had a deep impact on her. One dark autumn night there was a power failure, and all the electric lamps went out, along with the television. The whole town became dark as in ancient times. Mary has a vivid memory of how the family, together with some neighbours who came to their house, were sitting together in the darkness with a few candles burning. She remembered this event as an archetypical or even life-changing moment which she describes as a “profound spiritual experience” because she felt a tranquillity and a strong sense of community that arose in the dark. Despite the darkness that surrounded her family, and the whole village where they lived, she felt safe and happy. She remembers listening to the voices of the adults, who had spoken silently around the candles, and their voices sounded different from the everyday or daylight conversation that they usually had. They sounded sincere; they started to tell old stories she never heard before. She listened to these old stories, looked at the flickering of candlelight and the shadows on the wall, and eventually she fell asleep. She says that sitting together in this way – a circle of friends in the darkness – helps us to formulate our thoughts, and to listen more deeply. It is the stories told in the dark we need today.

Darkness, and the stories told in the dark, is central in Mary’s account. As we have seen, it was due to a power failure that the persons came together, the cause that made the occasion something out of the ordinary. Sitting together in darkness, with a few candles burning, transformed the voices and the stories told, which Mary describes as a “profoundly spiritual experience”. It was profound in the sense that she as a child experienced something extraordinary, a kind of community, tranquillity and being safe in the midst of the dark night. It was deep in the sense that it shaped her, and it has remained a vivid memory for her. It is also deep in the sense that it exemplifies a practice, a group of people sitting together in the dark, in honest conversation and storytelling, that seems to be a basic feature of human life and community. Mary considers the stories told in the dark (which is not to be mistaken for dark stories that dwell on sorrow) to be necessary in our time. Mary’s account can be seen as a version of storytelling, not as a performance, but as part of community. The practice of telling, sharing and listening to stories is part of everyday life but the darkness transformed the voices and stories, according to Mary. Darkness is a pre-eminent feature of human life experience and a fundamental

aspect of human history.[757] It is intimately connected to people in the past. Throughout human evolution, our experience of the seasons and everyday changes of daylight and darkness made everyone familiar with dark landscapes. Even in times at a closer historical distance, such as premodern Europe, darkness was more of a condition of life than a choice, as contemporary city dwellers might consider it to be.[758] I have previously discussed Dartmoor as one of the few dark places in Europe and the spiritual value of darkness. In Mary's account the darkness during the power failure was transformed by the sphere of light, the few burning candles. It offered an alternative realm and transformed the voices and stories told. For her it was a profound spiritual experience, and it illustrates the value of light and darkness, as well as stories and community.

Darkness was likewise central in a telling session that took place in the forest one warm summer evening, which lasted between dusk and darkness. We gathered around the fire, sitting in a circle, and the teller was initially sitting in the circle. As the story got more dramatic, the telling was accompanied with drumming that intensified the dramaturgy, and the teller moved and stood up in the middle of the circle. The story told at this session was a modified version of an old story, and the characters were not only the old woman of the wood, but also the foolish man and the Devil himself. There is an archaic quality in stories that take place in historical times, for example, people ride horses rather than bikes or cars. Despite this, much of the challenges they face are recognisable throughout time. After this session William shared his experience. William said that what made an impression on him was the setting of the performance, the circle around a fire in the forest, rather than the story itself. In fact, if he had simply been reading the story it would probably not have caught his interest. For him it was how the story was told, the performance, the dramatisation, and the choice of place, sitting around the fire, seeing the smoke rising, blowing in the wind and listening to the sound of the night in the forest.[759] William has a background in theatre and drama, and therefore this kind of interactive performance resonates strongly with him. The way the place amplified the story allowed everyone to be part of the performance, the audience, and the scenery. In a theatre this would require a creative set design, but in this setting, everything was already present. William found that sitting around a fire and being part of the storytelling resonated with something inside him which he describes as "an ancient human experience". Therefore, to be part of this is like an echo of "an original scenery of human life and culture". William's reflection is that storytelling is more than listening to a story, it is being part of a place. When you listen to stories from places you know, sitting around the fire, where the smoke is rising upwards or occasionally blows in your direction and you can smell the smoke and the fire, the story becomes very much present in that place, as if it took place for there for the

[757] Down and Hensey 2016:9.

[758] Ekrich 2006.

[759] Field notes 2014.

very first time. At the same time, William sees the telling by the fire as an ancient original scenery of human culture.

Stories told in the dark is a theme in both Mary's and William's accounts. Darkness, the candles and the fire, the sense of simultaneously being present and being part of an ancient, original human experience is a proof of the riddling power of storytelling.

5.4.6 Indeed, Indeed, Indeed… or Staying with the Trouble

"Indeed, indeed, indeed…" These three words indicate a point in the story where things seem to be on the edge, where everything is up to the test, and the storyteller repeats the word "indeed" in order to emphasise and dramatise. The threefold "indeed" indicates a point in the chain of events, and in the narrative, where the character has to face a challenge and make a choice, or to face the consequences of the choice made. It may indicate troubles that are inescapable, but it is, in Shaw's words, what "the Irish calls 'the right kind of trouble'".[760] Troubles may be a unescapable feature of life, and Donna Haraway suggests that "staying with the trouble" is a way to come to terms with it.[761] The conversations that are part of the storytelling workshops are conducted in order to stay with the trouble, to get a deeper understanding of the story, but more so, to understand stories in a personal, social and cultural perspective. A further feature is to encourage meta-reflection on the role and power of stories. What stories are told? What stories are never heard today? Shaw elaborates his view of what stories we need today, and why old myths have a relevance today.

> I think if you ask me why stories at this point of time, why is it important, why is it relevant, why is it that a story from four thousand years ago can be telling you something about the life you are living today, I would say: in some respects, not much is changed. If you actually look at history, it has continually looked like we have approached the end of our times, to be fair it never had been quite like this, but chaos is always near the doors of the kingdom. And so, we have this backlog of stories to embolden us, to give us courage in difficult times. No story worth its salt doesn't have these moments of grief and losses in it. But stories give us a kind of dignity that statistics never will, you know, you can have all the facts in the world but when the story comes into the room, love comes into the room, and a real revelation of the heart is possible.[762]

Shaw contrasts stories and love, with facts and statistics, and as seen in the previous chapter, many argue that science and scientific reports on climate change and the sixth extinction are unable to offer a story, to address deeper and existential

[760] Field notes 2013.

[761] Haraway 2016.

[762] Transcription by I.B. from a recording that was made accessible to participants on the course.

questions. It is the "stories gathered from wild places"[763] that can offer the kind of relationship needed.

> Certain myths, certain stories, are bridge to the muscled thoughts of the living world. These thoughts we could call the pagan imagination. Pagan from Latin - country dweller. When I write the pagan imagination, it is to illustrate the earthly spaciousness that really grounds a human: not a remote island to oneself, but charmed, invested, lover of place. [764]

Shaw depicts mythology as a "backlog of stories to embolden us" and "to give us courage in difficult times", however, the stories that help in difficult times are not the simple ones that come with a happy ending; it is the stories that take place on the edge that resonate with living in the Anthropocene. The wild places that offer these stories my very well be haunted places.

5.5. Dartmoor the Wild

5.5.1 Dartmoor and Wistman's Wood

In June 2013 I participated in the Earth Pilgrim Course at Schumacher College, and took part in a roaming expedition on Dartmoor, led by Satish Kumar.[765] This walk was described as a pilgrimage, and the 'shrine' of the walk is Wistman's Wood, a place that was sacred to the druids. During the walk the history of the place was presented, but I will give a short introduction to the site. The evocative name Wistman's Wood means "the Wise man's forest", and the wise man is the ancient druid priest. The storyline of this narrative is quite simple: Wistman's Wood was once a sacred place to the druids who used to go there to communicate with their deities. That the wood was considered sacred and related to the druids was the reason why it was left untouched while the trees on the rest of Dartmoor were cut down. The people in the valley considered the wood as a place set apart, it was sacred, worthy of respect. The local lore tells that it is a haunted place, which is a good reason not to go there.[766] Wistman's Wood is both sacred and haunted, and it bears witness to an ambivalence. As noted above; the etymology of Wistman's

[763] Shaw, M 2014: xvii.

[764] Shaw, M 2014: xvii.

[765] Kumar is one of the initiators and creators of Schumacher College, editor of *Resurgence & Ecologist*. He is a well-known public figure in Britain, representing the peace and ecological movement, and author of number of books and See Kumar 1992; 2013.

[766] Field notes 2013.

Wood is part of the narrative: Wistman's Wood means "the wise man's forest", and the wise man is the druid.

What is central here is that the narrative communicates an ecological ethos: it states that the reason that Wistman's Wood was left untouched, while the forest on the rest of the moor was exploited, was that it was considered a sacred place for the druids.[767] Whether the wood *de facto* was sacred to the druids or not is not the point here, it is the use of the narrative in a modern context that is of interest.[768] Although Wistman's Wood is presented as sacred to the druids on the walk on Dartmoor, this is not to imply that the participants collectively are followers of Druidry. Wistman's Wood undeniably has some attraction to them; the evidence is that they found it worth visiting. My concern is to ask how references to the druid's wood are used, to communicate an environmental ethos. The focus is not on the meaning of the narrative but how it is used.[769] In my view, one use of the narrative is when it was told at the visit to the wood where it works as a tutorial example of how *a spiritual relation to places, and to the larger-than-human world, works as a protection from exploitation.* Druidry is set as an example of a spirituality that has a respectful approach to place and the larger-than-human world, and particularly so to trees and forests.

5.5.2 Approaching Wistman's Wood

The legend of Wistman's Wood was presented as part of the walk on Dartmoor, and I have discussed the use of the narrative, but it is necessary to look at the walk as a practice. For the sake of analysis, the walk on Dartmoor can be separated into distinctive parts. It starts as an ordinary walk, and after one hour there is a first stop for a short break, to rest your feet and drink some water. When the walk continuous towards the Wistman's Wood a meditative part follows, when participants are instructed to "be present at this place", and the instruction is, if you talk to each other, talk about what you see and sense while you walk. After almost one hour's walk Wistman's Wood is seen ahead as it stands out as a green forest-island in the open moor. Just outside the wood on the hillside, by the river, the group takes a break, and the story of Wistman's Wood, that once was a sacred place for the druids, is told. Before continuing I will linger on the meaning of "being present at this place".

When it begins, the walk on Dartmoor outwardly looks like an ordinary ramble across the moorland. The walk is approximately seven miles, and from the starting point to the wood maybe three miles. After the first stop for a short rest, as the walk continues towards Wistman's Wood, a *meditative walk* follows, when the

[767] Field notes 2013.

[768] The use of history is a perspective that studies how people create and construct meaning (narratives and practices) in relation to history, and historical events. See Aronsson 2004.

[769] In this, I follow Carrette and King 2005.

participants are instructed to focus on being present at this place, and conversations are restricted: if you do talk to each other, talk about this place. What do you see and sense while you walk? What I found distinctive is that being present in meditation on place, is not defined as 'a moment in time', but as 'movement and place', or as 'momentum of time space'. It is an embodied experience of place and body. The meditative walk leads towards Wistman's Wood where the group takes a break, and the story of Dartmoor as a lost wood, and Wistman's Wood, the grove that once was a sacred place, is told. I have already outlined the simple storyline but for the sake of clarity it is worth repeating: Wistman's Wood was once a sacred place to the druids who used to go there to communicate with their deities. As the wood was seen as sacred and related to the druids it was left untouched while the trees on rest of Dartmoor were cut down. The people in the valley considered the wood as a as a place set apart, being sacred, deserving respect. The local lore pictures it as a haunted place, which is a good reason not to go there.[770]

What is happening here is that the story is told at the place, and it is worth noting, because the instruction of the meditative part was exactly to talk about *this place*. The telling of the story of Dartmoor and of Wistman's Wood, just by the wood, at the site where everyone is present at that point, continues the meditative practice of being present. To enter the wood, furthering the dramaturgy, for those who prefer the walk continues into the wood, but while being in the wood *silence* has to be observed.[771] Consequently, the pilgrim walk towards Wistman's Wood follows a dramaturgy where the parts of the walk, and the practices performed, form a successive and conscious movement of approaching the place. This conscious approach helps to creates a sense of 'sacredness' and it emphasises the narrative of Wistman's Wood as a place with the power to enchant. The meditative walk is therefore a spiritual practice that forms a way to cultivate enchantment.

5.5.3 The Embodied Experience of Place

Those who visit Wistman's Wood on a sunny day in June would find it a mesmerising place, but at some other time of the year or time of day they would find that it has a very different character. Think of a dark night in November, a pale moon is shining, dark clouds are torn by the wind, and as they cover the moon, the moor is left in total darkness. Think of the cold night that makes you shiver and think of the sound of the howling wind, and maybe the cry of an owl is heard somewhere far away. As noted, Dartmoor is one of the few places in Britain where

[770] Field notes 2013.

[771] Schumacher College is a secular education institution, in the sense that it is non-confessional, it does not give priority to any religion but allows different spiritual expressions to take part. It is secular in that everyone can choose to participate in the spiritual practices if they want, and if they prefer not to they do not have to. The fact that the walk stops outside Wistman's Wood is notable in this perspective.

it is still possible to experience true darkness, that is, a place untouched by light pollution from modern city lights. My impression of the place, like that of other participants, is shaped by the conditions that prevailed when we visited. So, let us once again think of a sunny day in June. The moss on the stones is a deep green carpet that covers the ground, the greenery of the trees flickers in the soft wind, the interplay between light and shadow is painting a chiaroscuro that seems to bring magic to the place. The running water in the river can be heard in the background. Birds were singing, but on this occasion, there was also some other music because one participant had brought a flute and sat playing on a stone, and of course the music of the solitary flute, and the timeless song that was played, emphasised the scenery of ancient grove, a place the druids visited to communicate with their deities. The sensuous experience of listening plays a vital role in the embodied experience of a place, and the flute played is part of the soundscape that helps to create the ambience at the place. I will discuss listening and soundscapes further on, but for now I will continue my account of what the visitors did at the place.

Among those that entered the wood on this occasion there was variation in what they did in the woods, and practices were performed according to each person's habitus in relation to that particular field. While some meditated in lotus position, some strolled alone, someone else climbed a tree. Hence, among those who entered the wood there is no fixed set of practices that decides what you can do and cannot do – as long as you do not go to excesses, it might be added, and do something that would disturb others. Nevertheless, there is a shared attitude to the place, and that is that you should be respectful, which can be done in various ways. Maintaining the silence is the common feature here. It must be mentioned, however, that not everyone in the group entered the wood. Some set out for a solitary stroll on the moor, some preferred to lie in the grass and take a lunch nap, or simply to sit in the sun just outside the wood, chatting with fellow participants. The account illustrates the experimenting approach that characterises many of the practices where spontaneous improvisations and experiments may give rise to new practices. Furthermore, these experiments are sometimes evaluated by participants, as in this case where many participants expressed their gratitude to the woman who had been playing music. As we have seen, there is no general set of practices, movements or body poses that those who enter the wood are entitled to perform. Each person can do what they prefer, but the postures performed are within the frame of paying respect to the wood and observing the silence. There is, as Trulsson notes in her study, no unmediated encounter between persons and their environment that produces univocal experience, rather the affordances are appropriated in relation to a person's habitus.[772] Performing practices are always body-in-practice, and this includes the participants' interactions and interpretations of both practices and narratives, and this becomes even more obvious if the practice includes silence. Thus, the body-as-place forms a node of 'being present' in a landscape. Bodies, as

[772] Trulsson 2010:155.

well as landscapes, are, as Casey contends, always already culturally, socially and historically related, it depends on the individual's personal experiences and representations how they experience the place. Neither the human body nor the landscape are naturally given. Places that precipitate out of the body-landscape interplay are "cultural entities" from the start, and this is particularly clear if we discuss a place like Wistman's Wood that has such a rich flora of stories attached to it. Places, like bodies and landscapes, are something that we experience, and experience here stays true to the etymological origin of "trying out" or "making a trial out of".[773] In this sense, it can be said that visiting a place means trying it out or making a trial out of it. Hence, we cannot really know in advance the effect the landscape will have on us.

5.5.4 Thin Places – Places with the Power to Enchant

Entering Wistman's Wood was done in silence, and, for obvious reasons, I was not able to talk to anybody during the time in the forest, but afterwards it was possible to have some conversations about it. Sarah compares being in Wistman's Wood to being in a little nest on the open moor. She describes it as being in a house where the wood offered shadow and protection from sunlight, the open landscape and the wind. She reflects on how the oaks have grown knotty from their harsh environment, standing in the wind in Dartmoor, and how the trees seem to be leaning together, finding strength in each other. Sarah describes Wistman's Wood in a spiritual vocabulary as a 'thin place', and as a place with "old and earthy energies", but on this occasion she felt that it was difficult to go deeper into this mood as there were so many people around during this visit, and it did not last so long. Therefore, she hopes to return some other time, to fully tune in to the place. Although this may be presented as a spiritual practice, there is an ambivalence in Sarah's account of the visit. Sarah tells that she found it difficult to tune in to the place, because of the number of people around and the visit was too short. Nonetheless Sarah recognises the wood as a place of spiritual significance, as a "thin place". The term 'thin places' that Sarah uses is an expression in Celtic spirituality, including early Christianity and Celtic cult, referring to places where the veil between the world and the otherworld is thin. The etymology of 'thin place' is the Celtic/Gaelic *caol áit*, which is pronounced 'kweel awtch'. It is worth noting that Sarah chooses this word from Celtic spirituality to describe Wistman's Wood, which is presented as a sacred place to the ancient druids. Celtic spirituality draws on both Paganism and early Celtic Christianity. Within modern-day Celtic spirituality, thin places are special places in nature. This is one example of the use of the term from a website which sheds light on the conception:

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[773] Casey 2009:30.

> Ancient Celts held the view, and latter-day ones, and others, still hold the view, that there exist places, times and events where the separation between here and the Other, that veil, that threshold to the spiritual realm, is unusually 'thin' and can be touched, encountered, felt, experienced. They called them 'thin places, and they still exist today, and you can experience them.[774]

A thin place is a place where we are aware of the closeness of the Other. These are more likely to be places in nature, such as stones, groves or certain trees, rather than churches or buildings, but there are thin places in urban areas as well. There is a creative feature of thin places; these are places to find and discover on your own terms, and there are no fixed rules for what to do there. Thin places may be particularly important at a special time of year, when the veil between the worlds is thin. 'Thin places' is an emic term in this study. A thin place cannot simply be seen as a sacred place; perhaps it is more correct to describe it as a liminal place or, in Bennett's vocabulary, as a place with the power to enchant. As we have seen, Harvey introduces the 'Greenwood' to refer to these places, particularly in a Pagan context, and all these contribute to the understanding of these kind of places. In my perspective these terms do not exclude each other they rather resonate with a more complex image and conception of place and to refer to this I prefer the term 'wild place'.

5.5.5 A Solitary Flute in the Wood – Ecomusicology and Enchantment

Several participants commented the flute music. They testified to how much they had appreciated the flute music, and they showed their appreciation to the woman who played the music. Many emphasise how the music resonated with the place, as one described the flute music played as "just perfect in that place", and many expressed their gratitude to the flutist because the music had added much to their experience of the place. The music added a sense of magic to the place. The playing of the flute was done spontaneously by this participant, it was not planned by the organisers, but the music nevertheless became a vital part of the experience for those who participated on this occasion and drew attention how music and sounds are part of the perception of places.

Eco-musicology is the study of the relation between music and ecology. The eco-musicologian Mark Pedelty suggests that in order to study music ecologically it is necessary to consider connections between sound, people and place.[775] Music is not separate from its context, and "music helps define who we are and mediates our

[774] Tadgh Talks: Exploring encounters of the liminal kind: Mo drui, mac De "Experiencing 'Thin places' As The Ancients Did" https://tadhgtalks.me/2020/06/17/experiencing-thin-places-as-the-ancients-did/ accessed 16 November 2021.

[775] Pedelty 2012:10.

imagination of place".[776] The flute music fitted into the place as it "mediates our imagination" of Wistman's Wood as a fairytale forest or a pagan place where the ancient druids worshiped their deities. Various musical genres may mediate different imaginations of place, and folk music is often seen as rural music, while rock is predominantly viewed as urban. Acoustic music, particularly string and wind instruments, such as flutes, are considered more ecological sounds. Songs and music are not exclusively humans making sounds, because this also include the sounds of the wild, and the soundscape. The soundscape is more than the music; it is also the birds, the soft wind in the trees, or the murmuring water in the river passing by. The solitary flute in the wood, the tune played, did not drown out the other sounds of the place; it formed an ensemble with the various voices of the larger-than-human world. There is an intimate relation between songs and enchantment, and as Bennett notes, the etymology of 'enchantment' is to en-chante, the French *chante*.

5.5.6 The River and the Tor

One of the characteristics of Dartmoor is the craggy tors that stand out in the landscape. The tors are natural formation of granite rock, yet they look like rocky hillforts overlooking the moor. As the light fades, they become strange silhouettes, looking like ruins of lost castles. Standing on top offers a panoramic view of the landscape. The tors occupy a significant place in the local lore as they are said to be the source of the River Dart. The river starts as two branches, East and West Dart, which come together at Dartmeet. The river leaves the moor at Buckfastleigh, runs towards Totnes, before reaching the south coast and Dartmouth by the sea, where it finally flows into the Atlantic. The river name Dart is presumed to be Brythonic Celtic meaning 'river where oak trees grow', because the banks of the lower Dart are covered with ancient woods of native oak. Thus, the river Dart is 'the river where oak trees grow, the Dart that has given its name to Dartmoor, which is the moor by the river where the oak trees grow. Following the River Dart back to its source will lead us to Dartmoor's craggy tors. Springs of water are places with significance, as a life-giving resource and as a powerful symbol of life, fertility and purity. This is an example of how natural formations such as rocks, the source of a river, a place with water, are part of local lore and legend. The following is somewhat different from my previous accounts of a number of workshops practices because it was not a planned workshop. It emerged spontaneously among four participants on a walk, and one of them was me. I would say that this was a special moment for all four of us, and indeed I felt some hesitation about including it in the thesis, but as I decided to do so I have saved it for the last account.

During a walk on Dartmoor, the pathways lead us uphill towards one of the tors. As we all passed the top of one of these, one of the participants and I noted a strange

[776] Pedelty 2012:12.

shape in the flat surface on one of the rocks at the top of the tors. It was an oval shape, almost half a metre diagonally at the broadest part, two-inch-deep, and since it had been raining just before, it was filled with water. The water was crystal clear and was reflecting the light like a mirror. We were fascinated; what was it? Was it a natural formation, created by geological processes, or was it an artefact, man-made by hands that had cut the shape in the hard rock? The shape was a perfect oval and it looked as if it had been cut into the rock with a special purpose. The fact that it was filled with water made us guess that this was what it was meant for: to gather rainwater, because the oval shape looked like a spring. This little pool reminded of the legend of the tors as the source of the River Dart. Was this a reminiscence from the old Bronze Age settlers? Perhaps a site of some cultic relevance for the ancient Celts? Yet another participant stopped and asked what we were looking at, and when we showed her what we had found she spontaneously said: “Wow, this is the kind of place where you should perform a ritual”. We all agreed. We were intrigued by the place; the other participants in the walk continued, some stopped and asked what we were looking at, some stayed for a short glance, some lingered for a while, said some words of appreciation, but soon set off again so as not to be left behind. Another woman joined us, and so there were four of us who lingered at the place while the rest of the group walked on ahead, leaving us behind. What was it that made us linger?

Indeed, the place was a point of gravity. The water that had gathered in the formation was glittering in the sunshine, the rainwater was crystal clear, but it was not only the beauty of it all that spoke to us. There seemed to be a story of what once happened here, a story that was now silence. The water gathered in a little pool perhaps knew, but for us the unanswered question of whether it was natural formation in the rock, or an artefact was indeed enigmatic. One of us said, “The water is so clear that you can drink it.” Then, without any words, one of us knelt and took some drops of water in his hands and drank, and without any comment on what he had done, and we all followed his example, one by one, while we remained in silence. When the last one of us was to drink she lay flat on the ground and let her lips touch the water as she drank. When we all had taken a drink, we stood for a while silent around the water. It was one of those moments when time stood still, though it may not have lasted more than a minute. The silence was broken as the first person to drink asked the woman why she had lain flat on the ground to drink, not drinking from her hand like the rest of us. She said that while she saw us drinking, she came to think of an Indian spiritual story that tells that how to touch a soul, because the soul is sensitive like water.

> Some souls are like a lake surrounded by reeds, you have to bend away the reeds very carefully to be able to reach the water, that is, to touch their soul. Yet other souls are like the water that has been gathered in the footprint of a buffalo after the rain. These have to be treated very carefully, and with great care. The only way to drink this water is to lie down flat on the ground and let your lips drink the water without letting your hands touch it.

This brief story illustrates that stories can vary in length, but the strength of the story does not depend on the format. It also illustrates that we all carry stories, and occasionally we tell them to others who in turn tell them to others, as the woman gave us the story on this occasion. I have just passed it on to my readers. When she told the story it became a closing point for our spontaneous circle. By now the rest of the group were quite distant from us and we continued the walk a long way behind them. We said that we hoped to return to the place again. Preferably in moonlight.

Unlike the various practices that I have discussed previously, the practices in this account, which I call "The Water of the Tor" were not planned, but emerged spontaneously in relation to the place, as a shared initiative by the four participants. "The Water of the Tor" can be analysed as yet another example of Bennett's notion of places with the power to enchant. Bennett develops her notion of places with the power to enchant, in contrast to the sense of wonder that implies a design, and Bennett makes clear that the enchanting places she interprets as quasi-pagan do not imply this design, that is, the hands of a God creating the world.[777] In this example, the point is of course not whether this is an intelligent design in the sense that it makes reference to a God. Bennett introduces the notion 'quasi pagan' as part of her philosophical analysis, but in my material, in relation to prehistoric Dartmoor, and particularly in relation to this site, the notion of quasi pagan become more concrete, because it relates to the pagan prehistory, and a possible pagan site of cultic relevance. However, there is not only the site, but more so the cavity filled with water and the enigma as to whether it is a natural formation or man-made, and Bennett states that "Nature enchants, but so do artifacts. Man-made complexities also can provoke wonder, surprise, and disorientation."[778]Artefacts may range from ancient stonework to computers, but the status of this cavity was not known, which gave it its enigmatic ambience. For the sake of clarity, my perspective focuses on how this possible artefact is used here and now, my work is not to figure out the historical use. The question whether the cavity in the rock *de facto* is an artefact or not is left aside here, because the thing that is clear in the use in the contemporary setting is that it is rather its indefinite character – its ambiguity and riddling power – that renders it a place of spiritual significance. It is this riddling power that I will discuss next.

5.5.7 Riddling Power − Creativity and Imagination

Part of the fascination that made us linger concerned the question of whether it was a natural formation, made through geological processes, or if it was an artefact, made by human hands that had cut this shape in the rock. Because of its shape, a perfect oval, it looked as if it had been cut into the rock with a special purpose. The

[777] Bennett 2001:12.

[778] Bennett 2001:108.

pool of water that gathered in it after the rain was perhaps a clue to the underlying intention. The water that had gathered in the cavity in the rock reflected the sunlight like a mirror. The legend of the tors as the spring of the river, which had previously been presented as the group passed the River Dart, gave the water a special presence at the site, in a mythic sense. One of the participants immediately recognised the site as "the kind of place where you should perform a ritual". I have been careful in my use of ritual, since I have found that it is problematic in many ways, but in this account, 'ritual' is an emic term. As we saw, her comment and the remark about the purity of the water were followed by a third participant's initiative to drink the water, and after him the others followed, one by one, while remaining in silence.

My account of "The Water of the Tor" calls for some methodological reflection, because the participant who said that "The water is so clear that you can drink it" was actually myself. Therefore, this shows how, in going into the field, you occasionally do something more than simply participate. At certain moments you will become a participant, forgetting your scholarly pursuit, which means that you are a part of your own study. I have felt some hesitation about including this account in my thesis. For methodological reasons, it can be said that I was the one who initiated it. I was the first to draw attention to the little pool. A more personal reason to hesitate is that it was a special occasion for all of us. Nevertheless, I found that sharing this can contribute to the understanding of how such 'spontaneous ritualisation' comes about. I think that the four of us who were part of this circle were persons who are used to being part of similar practices, and therefore we all have the kind of skills and sensibility that allow us to improvise and co-create practices that are suitable for a particular place and occasion. There are some distinctive and recognisable features, such as silence, that are part of this practice, but also the drinking of the water. After my comment, "The water is so clear that you can drink it" another participant, without any words, knelt and took some water in his hands and drank. None of the others commented on what he had done, silence was natural, as a sign of respect. One after one, we all followed his example, while we remained in silence. When the last one of us was to drink, she lay flat on the ground and let her lips touch the water as she drank. When we all had been tasted the water, we stood and remained silent for a while around it. We formed a circle. When the person asked the woman why she drank lying flat on the ground, not from her hand like the rest of us, it was a simple and curious question, not intended to criticise what she had done. That the woman told a little story in her answer is a further illustration of how stories are often used as illustrations of spiritual matters, and it also shows that participants are used to telling and retelling, and listening to stories, that is, sharing stories with each other. It exemplifies how stories come to life in relation to place and practice. In this example the place had an appearance – or a power to enchant – that attracted the attention of the four persons. However, the riddling power is not only a gravity of place, but the ability of those who gather here to recognise the place as "ancient". This recognition is dependent on the imagination and creativity. It was imagination that brought the cavity to life as something

enigmatic and led us to spontaneously create and perform a practice that gave expression of the sense of place and the encounter with deep time.

5.6. Conclusions

In simple terms, a visit to Dartmoor can be described as a rambling expedition, but it is an example of a reflective practice where the telling of the history of the place is central. In this the telling of the history of a certain place, *at the actual place*, is significant. There are three ways of working in this practice: (i) it creates an awareness of the place (the transformative processes in the remoulding of the landscape); (ii) it creates a presence at the actual place (which is often related to meditative, contemplative or spiritual practices); and (iii) it relates to a long-term perspective (in the deep time of ancient history and geological and perspectives). In this chapter I have discussed the reflective practices and the importance of place in relation to Dartmoor. Given its history Dartmoor can illustrate the narrative of the end of civilisation, as well as the contested notion of wilderness. Dartmoor makes the tutorial questions visible in the landscape, not just what is seen as wilderness or what fails to fulfil our expectations.

Further, these reflective practices aim to create an awareness of how landscapes are shaped by human activities and historical processes. Dartmoor constitutes an example of how human interference remoulds the landscape. Dartmoor's ancient history makes it a place of a lost forest, and a lost civilisation. In this sense, Dartmoor cannot be presented as a place untouched by human interference, but conversely, the historical background of Dartmoor, with its Bronze Age settlers, and its lost woodland, gives evidence for human presence and interference throughout the centuries.[779]A general feature here is that the history of Dartmoor is presented, and the telling of the story is an invitation to reflect on ecological and historical processes, and in this sense it is part of an environmental education.

'Shifting baselines' refers to the forgetfulness that makes people blind to landscapes, and consequently the recognition of how it once was forms a recognition of the loss of place. Places may be transformed to such an extent that they are unrecognisable, and this was discussed in relation to Dartmoor, where the now open moorland once was a forest that was cut down in the late Bronze Age. The practice of telling the story of a place at the site makes the shifting baselines tangible and therefore it forms a negotiation of baselines. The restoration of memories of lost landscapes makes people see the changes that have taken place. In elaborating my

[779] Of course, Cronon's argument has gained influence in environmental discourse since it was published in 1995, and it is worth noting that Cronon writes primarily from an American perspective, and the difference between the relation to, and conception of, wilderness in America and Britain has to be taken into consideration. In America the conception of the wilderness as 'the frontier', has been influential, even outside the American context.

notion of negotiating baselines, I distinguish between two forms of negotiating baseline: (i) in relation to place, which is done according to the reading of the landscape, and (ii) in relation to time, that is in deep time perspectives. Part of the challenge of the Anthropocene is to face the task of thinking on temporal and spatial scales that are unfamiliar, even monstrously gigantic. I found that the task of finding ways to be able to think on these temporal and spatial scales is central in many of the workshops I have participated in.

In this chapter, I have presented Dartmoor as a wild place. I found three senses in which Dartmoor is depicted as a wild place. In the accounts presented, many have ambivalent feelings about Dartmoor and therefore I call the first (i) *the ambience and ambivalence of Dartmoor*. I have discussed the emotional responses to being out in the moor: the fear of being trapped on the moor in the mist, or the frightfulness of the vast open space, and I have paid attention to the range of emotions that being out in a landscape can trigger. In this I have paid attention to a complex of feelings that not only include being vulnerable, feeling lost, fearing open spaces, but also, for some people, the challenging sense that being out in the landscape makes them feel alive and part of the wild mind. These accounts cannot easily be described in terms of enchantment if we follow Bennett's notion of bliss and wonder. Dartmoor may be a place with the power to enchant, but the place give rise to experiences of pleasure and beauty, as well as fear and anxiety. These senses of wonder go hand in hand with a sense of vulnerability, and these are very much part of (ii) *the darkness of Dartmoor*. Dartmoor as a dark and wild place resonates with a premodern notion of wilderness, as a space for encounters, but in the contemporary context these are seen as ambivalent rather than just purely "evil" or dangerous. The eerie, the uncanny, is evocative and very much part of the riddling power of the place and its stories. Places owe their ambience to those who spend time there, as Ingold notes, but these are not exclusively humans. The larger-than-human world includes animals, flora and fauna as well as the ghosts and shadows, of which some are ancient hauntings, some are the animated ghosts of the Anthropocene. Dartmoor as a wild place is set at intersection of the mythological landscape and the landscape of contemporary environmental matters. Dartmoor as a wild place is in simple terms related to the wildlife, and Dartmoor is, to some extent, a less human-centred world. Part of this is conception is Dartmoor as a place beyond civilisation. The historical record of the lost Bronze Age civilisation makes it an example of the narrative of the end of civilisation, and the contemporary darkness of Dartmoor marks it as a place less under the spell of modern civilisation. Dartmoor is as a space for encounters with the larger-than-human world. These encounters are important in the rewilding of the human mind.

A further feature of Dartmoor as a wild place is (iii) *Dartmoor as the ancient land*. I have discussed the ancient landscape, both in relation to the sacral values of the landscape, which is part of the cultural historical context, and also set in a deep time perspective informed by modern ecological ethics. What I refer to as the negotiation of baselines proceeds from the notion 'shifting baselines' (how the lost

memories of past conditions make us blind to the damage done) to discuss the role of visiting these landscapes. I found that deep time perspectives of landscape and deep time encounters can inform ecological ethics because they are like a mirror of the forgetfulness of the shifting baselines. In relation to time and landscapes, to call back the memories and the act of remembering becomes an act of relating to places, it means becoming aware of the historical processes, and becoming aware of how human beings remould the landscape. Therefore, the ancient landscape has become a replacement for a lost wilderness as a place that attracts people with a spiritual as well as an ecological interest. The importance of these landscapes, which Ingold describes as "pregnant with the past", is that they help us to think on a different time scale, that is, in a deep time perspective that ranges beyond human history, into geological eras such the Anthropocene. To be able to reach out into the gap of time, to think and sense these timescales, is a vital part of the rewilding of the human mind and the exploration of the wild mind.

6. Analysis, Theoretical Discussion and Prospects for Further Research

In this chapter I relate directly to the research questions to present my answers to them and proceed in the analysis to discuss enchantment and the wild. I will formulate my conception of wild enchantment in relation to the theoretical discourse, and I hope to contribute some insight into the fields. Finally, I will outline some prospects for further research. Initially I will offer some bullet points to sum up my answers to my research questions, but I will elaborate on my answers throughout this chapter.

6.1 Recapitulating the Queries

My first question is: What motivates people to turn to spirituality as an answer to the challenges of climate change and ecological crisis? This is of course a complex matter. What seems to be important is that (i) spirituality offers frames for narratives and practices which enable reflections concerning these challenges, and ways of working to explore the emotional, existential and ethical dimension, and that (ii) spirituality is intimately related to change, at the personal and societal level.

My second question is. What are the points of negotiation in the intersection between green movement and spirituality? I will discuss three points of negotiation: negotiating spirituality, negotiating ecological self-awareness and the wild mind, and negotiating baselines. (i) Negotiating spirituality concerns how spirituality relates to the scientific notion of climate change, and a dissatisfaction with the disenchanted tale of scientific reports, in contrast to the enchanted alter-tale. (ii) Negotiating self-ecological awareness, relates to how the realisation of the state of the world also means understanding the role of humanity in relation to the ecological crisis. Therefore, ecological awareness is no longer an external matter of protecting nature but to questioning human self-conceptions. This new ecological self-understanding is a key to the rewilding of the human mind – or the wild mind. (iii) Negotiating baselines refers to practices that serve to read the landscape, often in the form of telling the history of the landscape at the actual place. These practices work to restore the lost memories of how it once was and relate to deep time perspectives.

My third question is: What is the relation between narrative, practice and place? I found that (i) places form a node in linking narratives and practices. Narratives are related to practices, they are stories to be told rather than texts to be read, stories are part of reflective practices such as sharing circles or storytelling. Place is distinctive in these workshops, which take place in nature, and which work to create a deeper meaning and a sense of place. Therefore, (ii) narrative, practice and place together offer ways to cultivate wild enchantments. In a catchier formulation I describe this as *working with wonder and wounds.*

6.2 Motivations − Turning to Spirituality

Through my many encounters with people who have shared their experiences of how spirituality became distinctive in their lives in relation to the ecological crisis, I have found answers to the questions: What is the attraction of spirituality? What motivates people to turn to spirituality? A central motivation seems to be that spirituality offers a framework, a language, symbols and values that make it possible to address the uncertainty and challenges lying ahead. This is not to say that spirituality makes the difficulties disappear; instead, they are set within a context, and they become part of a narrative which offers hope and models for action, and that addresses the emotional, existential and ethical dimension of living in times of crisis.

6.2.1 The role of Spirituality in Coping with Crisis

A challenge that is often expressed is the need of stories that are able to address the situation. Creating these new stories may start from myths and legends as well as modern stories. Rather than a grand narrative, there is a multitude of narratives, and it is perhaps better to refer to these as deep narratives. These deep narratives may have various themes, one of which I call "turning to spirituality". These are personal stories that highlight how individuals came to a state in their lives where they found that spirituality could offer them something they felt they need. Realising the reality of climate change and the ecological crisis is, in one sense, dependent on scientific facts. Nonetheless, many express that science alone cannot tell the story of our time, because science cannot address or answer the many emotional, existential or ethical questions that arise in relation to the current crisis. Science offers quantitative facts, calculations, science offers a rational, disenchanted discourse, and this can be contrasted to the alter-tale, the enchanted narrative that is equally part of modernity.

Firstly, spiritually offers frameworks for narratives and practices which enable reflection on these questions, and ways of working to explore them. This tentative approach is distinct from religious traditions that offer dogmatic religious answers. The issues that arise in relation to climate change are considered deeper, and may

be emotional, such as "How to cope with grief?", existential, such as "Are humans different from other living creatures?", and ethical, such as "How to live without damaging other living creatures and the planet?" Other questions concern more practical challenges. Dark green spirituality is a this-worldly or earth-based spirituality which emphasises the relation to the larger-than-human world, in narratives, as well as in practices and places. Secondly, spirituality is intimately related to change, at the personal and societal level. Hence, in this material, 'spirituality' is seen as a process, not as a state of being, or an identity. Nor is it referred to as a sudden religious conversion, rather as a *continuous* process. Many have shared their story of how spirituality became necessary in their lives, and in their stories a pattern has emerged that sheds light on the motivation behind this turn.

A further feature is that many people who do not want to enter into an established religious community prefer the kind of practices and workshops that have been presented in this thesis. Spirituality is here created in alternative spaces, in ongoing experiments that allow participants to try out their own approach. In these workshops narrative, practice and places are distinctive, and in real cases almost inseparable. What is also distinctive is how the individual participant's body forms a node representing place-as-bodies, and how the telling of the personal story coordinates with reflections on the state of the world.

Given the reality of the ecological and climate crisis, many voice an experience of living in times of crisis. Turning to spirituality has a central role in *coping with this new reality*. This is not to say that coping means consultation or that it is simply therapeutic. The present is seen as a deep crisis and an increasing sense of uncertainty is repeatedly expressed. Living in times of crisis means that much is up for trail, it is the end of all things taken for granted, and this gives rise to many questions, some of which concern our fundamental values. Therefore, this leads to existential worries and spirituality gives the individual energy to cope with uncertainty. *A spiritual approach to climate change and ecological crisis emphasises that it is necessary to understand the depth of the crisis*, to ponder on the profound challenges that lie ahead. It is a crisis that indicates that the fundamental values − or the lack of values − that govern the current development are at fault. This goes together with a conviction that technological solutions are not enough. This is not to say that no practical (or technological) efforts are needed to handle these devastating events. The parable of *The Pious Man* illustrates the importance of both the practical efforts of trying to save and care for your neighbour and create community. Cultivating community is a central value which very much converges with social resilience. Climate change and ecological crisis are therefore an indication of a deep crisis, and it is *a spiritual crisis*. At the root of this spiritual crisis is the insight that humans are the cause of both climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Spirituality in the Anthropocene

How can spirituality fill the needs of people's experience in facing the Anthropocene? The theologian Sigurd Bergmann considers the question of the role of religion in relation to environmental crisis.[780] I would like to reformulate Bergmann's insights in terms of spirituality, as follows: Spirituality cultivates in humans important skills needed to make oneself feel at home, and spiritual perception, practices, emotions and beliefs are closely interwoven with the environment in which they emerge. Bergmann offers a non-essentialist understanding of religion/spirituality, which recognises that these emerge in a specific environment, and a specific historical context. Although our existential needs may be perennial, our contemporary predicament offers exceptional challenges. Bergmann pinpoints "our existential need for a spiritual homecoming",[781] and the crucial query, how we can make ourselves at home in a world of anthropogenic environmental change, presents an immense ethical challenge to both emotional and existential needs. Bergmann sheds light on the existential dilemma, making ourselves at home on a planet we are devastating. Transcendentalism, the escape to some otherworldly heaven, offers no way out of the dilemma, the Earth is our home. This challenges not only our existence together with other species, but, inescapably, the human self-image, as we need to move beyond our individuality and became part of a species that is devastating the planet. Together with a conviction that technological solutions are not enough, this is an incentive to start pondering on the daily as well as the deep questions. The daily choices and habits of everyday life are interwoven with deeper ethical issues. This is a further aspect of how the emotional, existential and ethical dimension motivates many to turn to spirituality.

What I found to be a core in the conception of spirituality in my field is the value of compassion and community. It is distinctive that (i) community and compassion are cultivated in practices, and (ii) community and compassion are not restricted to humans but include the larger-than-human world. It is in the community that it is possible to find safety, or rather: safety is *created* in the community, and by the community, that is, the participants in the community. In creating this safety there are concrete questions to deal with, for example, which skills will be needed to adjust to an ecological life? There are *practical skills* such as growing food, carpentry, or craftsmanship and artistic skills. *Social skills* are helpful in creating community as well as *spiritual skills*, for example, being able to practise healing, to offer workshops that help people relate to and communicate with the larger-than-human world, and telling and creating stories, or making other works of art, is also

[780] Bergmann 2014: 3 Bergmann's formulation is "Religions cultivate in humans important skills needed to 'make oneself at home'. They help believers situate themselves in the world and in places inhabited by the divine, and their overall purpose seems to be 'to make a home for humans'. Religious perceptions, practices, emotions and beliefs are closely interwoven with the environment in which they emerge."

[781] Bergmann 2014:20.

central here. I found that there is a correspondence between the emphasis on community and creating safety in the community, and the specific skills required here can be termed social resilience.[782] Together these form a process of change, to cope, adapt and transform, but it is central from my perspective that spirituality also offers practice that help to develop these skills, and this is done in the practices and through the cooperation of the community. Therefore, it is more correct to call it a form of spiritual social resilience.

In this heavy emphasis on community, it becomes a value, even a core value, and, in some sense, this is an idealisation of community. While the question of how this value is implemented, for example, in eco-communities, falls outside my study, I must ask *why* community becomes a core value in this spiritual discourse. I see two reasons for this, and they both include spiritual considerations. First, the value of community becomes an alternative to the scientific and disenchanted discourse that excludes values and the suggested technological solutions to the crisis. The emphasis on *the value* of community makes it an alter-tale (i.e., an enchanted discourse that addresses values) and the emphasis on community brings in the social dimension of the ecological crisis. The second reason I found is that the core value of community sets dark green spirituality in contrast to so-called New Age spiritualities and traditional religion or religious institutions. New Age spiritualities emphasise the individual self and self-realisation. This contrast to New Age spiritualities resonates with Partridge, who claims that alternative spiritualities and eco-enchantment are not New Age spirituality.[783] The contrast to the traditional form of religion or religious institutions is that the creation of community takes place outside institutions, as more of a self-organising grass-roots community.

For many, turning to spirituality is part of a trajectory where they revalue their former activist work which leads to an effort to find new ways of working. The majority have personal experience of working as activists in various ways. Many have been engaged in activism where they have been dedicated to campaigning and tried to get their message across to political leaders. However, there are others who say that, in a sense, they have given up these ways of working and that they want to find new approaches. This effort to find new ways of working include a new interest in spirituality, and therefore, this ambition is part of the motivation of turning to spirituality. However, what I refer to as turning to spirituality is not a religious revelation, an instantaneous shift of mind, or a Kuhnian paradigm shift. The process of turning to spirituality parallels the process of realising the state of the ecological crisis, and together these form a trajectory that has the character of an ongoing or continuing process. This is due to the fact that (i) the ecological crisis is not static

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[782] Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013 Social resilience includes three social capacities: coping capacities, adaptive capacities and transforming capacities. These capacities form a trajectory of coping with and overcoming adversities; learning from past experience and adjusting to future challenges in everyday life and crafting sets of institutions that foster individual welfare and sustainable societal robustness for future crises.

[783] Partridge 2005:10.

(the average temperature continues to rise, the loss of biodiversity is increasing, and so on), and (ii) that the realisation for the individual person not only means coming to terms with, but more so, living with it, and adjusting one's life accordingly. Hence, what is central here is not primarily the psychology behind the realisation, but how they cope with this realisation, what comes after, and how the person implements this realisation and changes to new practices.

This is a process of adjustment to a new reality, consisting of many small steps, and it takes time; it is a complex chain of events. Hence, the realisation leads further to what comes after, to whether and how the person implements this realisation and change in his/her everyday practices, in activism or other ways of working for change. Participating in the various workshops, which I describe as reflective practices, is part of this process. The process is ongoing and needs to be updated continuously. I found that neither spirituality nor ecological awareness is considered as a worldview, determined by a fixed set of ideas or ideology, but rather a continuous process as it is constantly necessary to adjust to new changes. The process is more than an epistemological cognitive, intellectual process where the output is an understanding of the facts of climate change, the output is rather the initiation of a process of change. Keck and Sakdapolrak describe this as a process of coping, adapting and transforming which leads to social resilience,[784] and it can be summed up as adjusting to the new understanding of the world and changing your personal life accordingly.

Hence, the realisation of the state of the world is set within a personal story, and (i) these stories often include a painful emotional experience, and (ii) they are set within a historical narrative of our own time. Just as the man I meet on the train, from London to Totnes, told his life story in relation to the Second World War, those I have been in conversation with, Janine, Steven, Maria, and Pierre (to mention just some of them) tell their life stories in relation to the contemporary crisis. These two dimensions are intimately related as the emotional experiences lead further to an existential process of questioning, what it means to live in times of climate change, or in the Anthropocene. The existential dimension concerns questions such as man as a species and our role in relation to climate change and in relation to the larger-than-human world, and these insights lead to the ethical dimension with questions of how to live and asking for guidance in what to do. These concerns are often present in conversations, in circles, or in workshops and in reflective practices.

Spirituality and Emotions

Among those I been in conversation with, the emotional responses are very much in the forefront. This is seen in the accounts of Steven, Kim, Pierre, Kathy and Mark, to mention just a few of them. These emotions may range from fear and uncertainty to challenging adventures and hope: nonetheless, a consequence of climate change is that there seems to be an increasing sense of living in exceptional times, or at the

[784] Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013.

edge of times. In discussing dark green spirituality in relation to the emotional aspects of ecological awareness, much attention is paid to grief, sorrow and feeling of loss in relation to ecological degradation and climate change. Although spirituality may offer consolation in grief as a therapeutic practice, that is not like saying that this will pass, everything will be okay. Rather spirituality offers a language, symbols, values, practices and a community where these emotions can be framed within a narrative that works as the point of departure for a new understanding. Scholars who discuss emotions in relation to engagement give various answers to whether they give rise to action or passivity. The political journalist Sasha Lilley[785] considers fear in relation to alarming reports and how these give rise to the frightening prospect of a catastrophe or collapse. Lilley sees a risk that these feelings trigger passivity rather than engagement, because "fear can hinder, rather than help, its attempts to halt the disaster."[786] The paradox that Lilley uncovers is that while the rhetoric of catastrophism may aim to *encourage* change, radicalisation, and mobilisation, it triggers fear and passivity rather than political and social engagement. I think the relation between fear and passivity, or fear and radicalisation, is far more complex than this. The anthropologist Sarah M. Pike concludes in her study of young activists in their path to become activists, that emotions play an important role in shaping their commitments.[787] I have seen in my study how many relate their feelings to the Earth, rather than to personal problems. It is not that they are sad, but their sadness is a deep-felt compassion with the sufferings of the dying species or what is summed up as "The Earth". Therefore, emotions are central, but I also want to consider *the range of emotions* here. There is the both the feeling of love for other-than-human species, compassion for their suffering, anger about the impact of contemporary human lifestyles on the lives of non-human species, and grief over the degradation of ecosystems. This reminds us again about the complexity of feelings that is part of the field.

In a relational account, emotions are not only an expression of an inner individual state, but a reflection of something larger. Therefore, it is necessary to consider emotions in the analysis, and how emotional responses to environmental crisis expand the individual self. To consider emotions in relation to ecological crisis I will pay some attention to the theoretical understanding of emotions. The sociologists of religion, Ole Riis and Linda Woodhead offer a relational account of emotions, which rejects the widespread misconception that feelings are private, interior states, and they stress the importance, not only of social relations, but also of relations with material objects, cultural symbols and environmental settings. Riis and Woodhead set emotions in a field of force that attracts or repels and leads to harmonies, tensions, or eruptions. In this analogy, social life is a force field of

[785] Lilley 2012 The term 'catastrophism' comes from science, as a theory of abrupt geological change over time, in contrast to uniformitarianism, but it has also been employed politically.

[786] Lilley 2012:2.

[787] Pike 2017:2-4.

emotional energies. Emotions are not confined to the brain of the individual agent but are integral to the flux of social and symbolic life. As we negotiate through the world, so we range through different emotional fields, shaping and being shaped by them in the process. My point here, given this relational understanding of emotions, is that there is nothing forcing us to assume that emotion must lead to passivity, or turning away from reality. This becomes even clearer in discussing emotions in social movements, where I believe it is necessary to be more precise about what feelings, or emotional expressions, you are talking about. Grief, sorrow, and sadness have received a lot of attention here, but the emotional field ranges from emotions such as joy or happiness, love and reverence for nature, which are easy to deal with, on the one hand, to the darker feeling such sorrow, grief, fear, and anger on the other hand. These darker feelings are harder to deal with, and the question is: How to cope with these emotions?

The sociologist Manuel Castells sets emotions at the centre of social movements; in his perspective social movements are emotional movements – they are networks of outrage and hope.[788] Castells stresses that social movements consist of individuals – that is, individual*s* in the plural, and therefore, to be able to look at the emotional levels of social movements we should look at the individuals, in our case Kim, Steven, Mark or Kathy, to mention just some of them. Yet Castells stresses that it is individual*s* in the plural, and the emotional activations of individuals must connect to other individuals.[789] To confide your feelings to other people, or to share your experiences as Kim did, is one example of this. Kim gave testimony of her emotions and her concern for the Earth. The Earth may be a global or general approach to the state of the world, but others relate to distinctive places, such as Kathy and Mark who have both experienced the loss of place. A communication process is required to relate one individual's experience to another individual's experience. This communication process is more than an emotional process, where individuals share similar experiences and give empathetic support to each other; the aim of the process is to transform emotions, such as anger and fear, into hope. The sharing circles and conversations that I have been part of, when individuals told their personal stories, for example Janine and Margaret, are examples of this communication process that Castells describes. In my perspective, the communication process not only works to express or reflect on emotions, from grief or fear to hope, or even joy, reverence and love, but more so, to transform them to a deeper engagement.

What I found to be distinctive in my material is that this process of communication often is parallel to, or even part, of a spiritual process. Sharing circles are an example of a practice where participants tell their story, or share stories, and this is valuable in the creation of the new stories. Darkness, and the stories told in the dark, is central in Mary's childhood memory of a power failure, when the neighbours came together and sat together in the dark, with only a few

[788] Castells 2012.

[789] Castells 2012.

candles burning. The darkness transformed the voices and the stories told, and Mary describes this as a "profoundly spiritual experience". Mary considered the stories told in the dark (which is not to be mistaken for dark stories that dwell in sorrow) as something needed in our time. Darkness is a pre-eminent feature of the human life experience and a fundamental aspect of human history.[790] The night offered an alternative reign for voices and stories told, and it illustrates the value of stories and community. I relate Castells' communication process, which in my study refers to the sharing or telling of stories, to Haraway's storytelling in the Anthropocene *that allows us to stray with the trouble and to make kin.* These are the stories that push the hybridity between the individual and the movement, the troubles, towards making kin, thus challenging the separation between nature and the social, or nature and culture.

6.3 Points of Negotiation at the Intersection between the Green Movement and Spirituality

In this section I will relate to the second question: What are the points of negotiation at the intersection between green movement and spirituality? I will discuss three points of negotiation: negotiating spirituality, negotiating ecological self-awareness and the wild mind, and negotiating baselines. In answering the second question and presenting three points of negotiation I will focus on how these negotiations are constructed, or in simple terms how they are done, rather than simply present them as fixed categories.

6.3.1 Negotiating Spirituality – Spiritual Crisis and Spiritual Change

What I refer to as turning to spirituality seems to overlap the negotiation of spirituality but turning to spirituality is more of a personal trajectory, and the negotiation of spirituality concerns a more a structural level. In simple terms the negotiation of spirituality concerns how spirituality relates to the scientific notion of climate change, and the dissatisfaction with the disenchanted tale of scientific reports, in contrast to the enchanted alter-tale. The negotiation of spirituality is a social construction of a spirituality according to some preferences. This is seen in the practices and various workshops where the model for spirituality emphasises the ideals of compassion and community. The aim of many of the practices that are to be found in this field, such as the sharing circles, is to create community, to encourage reflection on the value of community and to practise the skills needed to create community, and among these are important spiritual skills, such as facilitating

[790] Down and Hensey 2016:9.

certain spiritual practices. The negotiation of spirituality is set within a given historical context, where climate change and the ecological crisis forms a major challenge. What is central here is the convergence between the spiritual value of community or creating community and the ecological value of social resilience. From a general perspective, this focus on community or social resilience is not restricted to humans but implies the larger-than-human world, and therefore it extrapolates the space for social relations, beyond the strict range of human relations to include the larger-than-human world. In the accounts, I have discussed spirituality as part of a process of personal and social change, but I want to proceed in the analysis here. Many describe 'spirituality' in various terms, indicating being in a momentum, such as being on "a spiritual journey", expressing their need for "spiritual growth", or characterise spirituality as a way of "dealing with depression". It is notable that no one describes themselves in terms of "being spiritual" or "believing in spirituality". What I found to be central here is that *spirituality is described as a process* rather than an inner state of mind or an identity. When Christopher Partridge depicts the alternative spiritualities in the holistic milieu, he compares spirituality to a "path" and a "journey".[791] These are of course recognisable religious metaphors, but I found that this indicates a more open-ended approach to spirituality.

> But many who are treading the spiritual path are committed to the journey and to making the right decisions. And some such decisions are politically and socially significant, in that, for example, many within the holistic milieu are utopian about the kind of society they want and thus radical in their views about the changes need to be made.[792]

Although Partridge likens spirituality to a "path" and a "journey", it is not an abstract movement, because it also concerns "making the right decisions",[793] and these decisions are not just made for the sake of the individual's salvation but because these decisions are socially significant. Partridge concludes that the alternative spirituality and the holistic milieu are both a socially significant and a "constantly evolving religio-cultural milieu".[794] Hence, the personal is emblematic of a spiritual discourse that stresses the transformation of the self and ponders on the question of what I as a person can do. I will elaborate on this in the next section.

From a general perspective, this sets spirituality in relation to the environmental movement. During my work I came to ask: do people feel that they are a part of an environmental or ecological movement? What many of those I have been in conversation with describe is *being part of a transformation*, rather than part of a

[791] Partridge 2005:10.

[792] Partridge 2005:10.

[793] Partridge 2005:10.

[794] Partridge 2005:2.

movement, as a form of organisation. Therefore, being a part of a movement, according to organisational criteria of membership, is not a condition for being a part of the social change. A central feature is the focus on personal change, transforming one's own life according to one's values. It is often referred to as *being in transition*. Therefore, engagement is not dependent on religious and political organisation or a movement, because working for change in society can be done in various ways. The main concern is how the change of society can be part of – or proceed from – your own personal life. Everyday life involves a number of decisions which have ethical implications, and these are, in Partridge's words, "not just made because of the individual's salvation but decisions that are socially significant".[795] I found that there are two features in this. First, personal change concerns setting an example – both ethical and practical – that shows that it is actually possible to live differently than mainstream capitalism consumerism suggests, and second, everyday practices have consequences that lead to social change. Maybe the best expression of this is the slogan: let the walk be our talk.

Here the negotiating of spirituality converges with the turn to spirituality, as it may indicate an initial step, as an incentive for both personal and social change. Spiritual change forms a bridge between personal and social change. As seen in previous chapters, these persons' stories of turning to spirituality view spirituality as part of their process of change. Similarly, Heelas encapsulates the intimate relation between spirituality and life in the suggestive formula Spiritual=Life=Spirituality=Life,[796] which almost depicts an oscillation between life and spiritual/spirituality, which offers a non-static image of the emergence of new forms. Thus, spirituality is an immanent spirituality, a this-worldly spirituality of life. The focus on "the personal" pays attention to everyday life and it leads to change and transition, because it is in everyday life that many ethical decisions are made. Hence our everyday lives are intimately related to the larger-than-human world, for example, the things we are surrounded by are created from natural resources such as the wood in the table is part of a tree that once stood in a forest. Therefore, everyday life and the larger-than-human world are profoundly connected.

Disenchantment and Dissatisfaction

The relation between religion and science is a central theme in the study of religion and while this is not a general perspective in this thesis, it needs to be addressed here. The phenomenon of climate change is based on scientific reports, which address the problem in scientific terms, based on quantitative data and measurements. Nevertheless, many express a dissatisfaction with the scientific discourse since science cannot tell the story of climate change; numbers or hockey stick models of increasing temperatures cannot offer a picture of the challenges of

[795] Partridge 2005:10.

[796] Heelas 2005:414.

life in the Anthropocene. This dissatisfaction with the scientific discourse on climate change is undeniably part of the motivation to turn to spirituality: although science can offer explanations and evidence for the reality of climate change, science cannot alone offer answers to the challenges ahead. This should not be mistaken for a rejection of science; on the contrary, the point is that the scientific view needs to be complemented with other stories and perspectives. Therefore, the more positive motivation to turn to spirituality is that a spiritual discourse offers a framework, a language, symbols and values that make it possible to address the uncertainty and challenges lying ahead. This is not to say that spirituality makes the difficulties disappear. Instead, they are set within a context, and they become part of a narrative which offer hope and models for action, and that addresses the emotional, existential and ethical dimension of living in times of crisis

The focus on science in environmental discourse, particularly in relation to climate change, becomes an *obstacle* to engagement, especially for those who do not have a background in science.[797] The scientific discourse fails to appeal to engagement, because it has a narrow focus on technology; it concerns numbers rather than values, it does not address what are considered to be the urgent issues, and it is thought to be out of touch with real life. The liaison between environmentalism and science is emphasised in the discourse on climate change but it is an ambivalent liaison; science offers credibility to the cause; it simultaneously creates problems in communicating the message to the public. The environmental scholar Mark Dowie notes: "It is difficult for laymen to assess the veracity of environmental scientists."[798] Defining environmental problem as scientific delegates the work of finding the solutions to experts rather than activists or laypersons. The environmental historian Joachim Radkau claims that the process of setting environmentalism on a scientific base creates hierarchies, with laypeople at the very bottom, even though the original impulse and initiative came from them.[799] I want to stress that this dissatisfaction with science should not be mistaken for a distrust in science; the point is that at this state there is no need for further reports to prove that that climate change is real. I see three reasons why this discourse is so unsatisfactory. Firstly, the scientific discourse is generally based on the narrow definition of anthropogenic climate change: it focuses on emissions of greenhouse gases, it offers technological solutions, and tend to exclude the social dimension as well as the larger-than-human world aspects. Among those turning to spirituality,

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[797] Field notes 2013, 2014.

[798] Dowie 1995:39. In environmental debates voices on both sides resort to scientism as the arbiter and expert. Ultimately the great controversies, whether it concerns climate change, GMOs, toxic pollution, global warming, risk assessment and biodiversity will be settled by science and scientists, according to Dowie.

[799] Radkau 2008:276. Radkau writes "The knowledge of laypeople is devalued, even if it is at least as useful to the practice of environmental protection as the knowledge of experts. When experts talk shop about threshold values, the layperson can hardly participate, even though these values are in the final analysis negotiated rather than deduced in laboratory experiments."

climate change or climate crisis is seen as an umbrella term, which the crisis is seen as a layers of crises, which resonates with Sargisson's notion of "multiple and interwoven problems".[800] Secondly, an obstacle with the scientific discourse is that it is a disenchanted discourse, based on rationalisation, calculation and technology, and it pays little or no attention to values, nor can it tell a story that offers meaning, or mediates an ethos of ecological concern. What they ask for is a narrative that can address what it is like to live in the Anthropocene, and how there can be an alternative. Thirdly, what I found to be central here is that this critique of science is primarily a critique of *the environmental movement's relation to science*, therefore it is actually a critique of the environmental movement itself and the way it repeats the scientific narrative rather than creating an alter-tale. The answers and the alter-tale are instead found in the reflective practices that I study, and in the creation of art.

The Metaphors of Disenchantment; the Iron Cage and the Tameable World

Science has played a crucial role in defining 'climate change' in drawing attention to it in public and mediating an awareness of the reality of climate change. Those I have been in conversation with do not question the role of science in defining climate change. There is a general interest in green science, such as ecological research with holistic perspectives, such as Gaia theory, and rewilding. Therefore, it would be unfair to point to a conflict with science among the dark green spirituality that is studied here. What can be said is that there is a dissatisfaction with the scientific discourse and vocabulary, but from an analytical perspective this concerns a dissatisfaction with disenchantment, because science is set within a rationalist frame. Disenchantment meant that values are pushed into the background, and what Nicholas Gane refers to as "the loss of values"[801] became distinctive in forming the grid to set up the iron cage of rationalisation. Richard Jenkin takes this metaphor further and describes disenchantment as a tameable world, and an increasingly human-centred world.[802] Both these metaphors – the iron cage and the tameable world – illustrate the increasing dissatisfaction with rationalistic science. Dissatisfaction is, however, not synonymous with distrust. The dissatisfaction with the scientific discourse that many express of can be summed up in two points: first, the scientific discourse cannot tell a meaningful story on climate change, and secondly, the scientific discourse cannot address the emotional, existential, or ethical issues of living in times of climate change. This dissatisfaction implies a critique of how the scientific discourse becomes the definitive voice, but this comes together with an alternative that emphasises the need to address the urgent questions, and to create an enchanted alter-tale, a narrative that can "tell the story", and offer meaning to the adherents. The key to possible future enchantments

[800] Sargisson 2012:116.

[801] Gane 2002.

[802] Jenkins, R 2000:12.

is to invoke opposing forces that may be an incentive to refill the world with meaning.[803] This new story does not contradict the scientific discourse; it rather contrasts it as it extrapolates it to the social sphere of lived experience. In this call for a new story, or rather new stories, there is an openness towards spiritual perspectives, which is expressed as an openness towards mythology, local legends or pagan traditions, as sources of inspiration for these new stories (the story of the pious man is a clear example that illustrate this). Therefore, spirituality has a crucial role in the creation of a narrative that offers meaning and which can express enchantment and spiritual values in relation to ethical, existential and emotional questions.

Science's view of climate change is set within a disenchanted frame, and given the understanding of disenchantment, as the loss of meaning and values, or an increasingly human-centred world, it is easy to understand why such a narrative becomes void of meaning, and why many consider it unfulfilling as it is unable to address the deeper predicament of living in times of climate change and ecological crisis. Here the scientific discourse must be complemented with a spiritual discourse, or to refer to Bennett; the tale of disenchantment has to be accomplished with an alter-tale of enchantment.[804] As we have seen, these stories are complementary rather than in conflict. This enchanted alter-tale includes art and artistic expression, as seen for example in storytelling; the performance of telling, often of old legends and myths, can address some of the existential challenges of life in troubled times. Myths and legends have the quality of bringing in the charismatic magic and the spiritual dimension. There is a quest for deep stories that can refill the world with meaning and address the predicament of our times. The environmental historian Linda Nash emphasises that the present needs stories that show how particular human aspirations are grounded in and achieved through finite material worlds, and how people continue to engage in diverse ways with the Earth.[805] Nash stresses the need to push the insights of hybridity, and I take her challenge to my case where the two tales of disenchantment and enchantment converge in a hybrid narrative of the Anthropocene.

The narratives of the Anthropocene allow magic – and enchantment – to occupy a place. This should not be mistaken for stories with a happy ending; as Donna Haraway notes, these stories allow us to stay with the trouble, and to make kin with the larger-than-human world. These stories offer a frame that gives voice and meaning to difficulties, challenges as well as hope. Storytelling is the performance of stories which bring a sense of magic to life, although it should be made clear that stories that offer magic and enchantment can offer models for coping with uncertainty, as well as hope and consolation. The stories of the Anthropocene which tell how to cope with this new reality may very well be old stories, such as myths

[803] Lee 2010:190.

[804] Bennett 2011.

[805] Nash 2013:135.

and folklore and ancient places like Dartmoor, and the haunted landscape of the moorland contributes much inspiration here. In short: the hybridity brings together scientific reports which give evidence for the reality of climate change, with the creation of new stories with a spiritual perspective that move towards mythology, local legends or pagan traditions, as sources of inspiration. Therefore, spirituality has a crucial role in these deep stories, not only to express enchantment, magic and spiritual values, but also in linking the emotional, the existential and the ethical.

6.2.2 Negotiating Ecological Self-Awareness and the Wild Mind

In simple terms, negotiating ecological self-awareness and the wild mind relates to how the realisation of the state of the world also means understanding the role of humanity in relation to the ecological crisis. Therefore, ecological awareness is no longer an external matter of protecting nature but of questioning human self-conceptions. This new ecological self-understanding is central in the rewilding of the human mind – or the wild mind. To elaborate on this discussion, I will first discuss (i) ecological self-awareness and realising the state of the world, and (ii) the hybrid intimacy of ecological self-awareness and (iii) the wild mind.

Ecological Self-awareness – Realising the State of the World

In the accounts that I have heard, awareness taken part realizing of climate change is more than an intellectual comprehension of a certain situation, or a cognitive understanding of scientific facts. It is a personal experience of coming to terms with the state of the world. How this realisation comes to individual persons varies, and it forms a trajectory in a personal story of turning to spirituality, but this is not seen as a personal crisis as it concerns a *general* sense of crisis. This crisis is considered to consist of multiple layers. It is a deeper crisis than anthropogenic climate change suggests because it is viewed as a spiritual crisis that is part of Western culture. A deeper crisis is, however, not the same as a crisis without a cure. It is deeper in the sense that it concerns our fundamental values and there is no quick fix of technological solutions available. In regarding climate change as layers of crises, it is set alongside the loss of biodiversity, or animal rights, the lack of global and social justice, or facing environmental degradation. In all its many forms the crisis is global and local. Given this, it is a deeply personal experience where the question “What can I do?” is central. For many the realisation of the state of the world initiates a process of questioning “things taken for granted”, and this concerns many aspects of life, societal as well as personal. For some this has led to re-evaluating the choice of studies, career, changing daily eating habits, for example, turning to vegan/vegetarian food, or other life-changing decisions such as moving to the countryside. Others tell of experiences of participating in workshops where they had profound experiences that offered them insights to help them reorientate in the world (such as *The Deep Time Walk* or *The Earth Mediation* or *Finding the Tree that is*

Calling You). Encounters with animals, in the wild, or the encounter with the suffering of animals due to the way humans treat them, also play a vital role in the forming of an ecological awareness.

This kind of awareness is not simply a cognitive insight. It is not simply a matter of becoming ecologically aware, it is a matter of *being ecologically aware*, as a continuing process of re-evaluation and reflection. There is a distinctive difference between ecological awareness and what can be called green concern. From the perspective of green concern, the ecological crisis is something external, something part of nature. Although humans are the cause of ecological crisis, the individual person can act ethically in relation to nature, for example, in protecting a site from degradation. Ecological self-awareness is different because it is not simply an awareness of the outside world; the outside world is not a passive other, there be protected or exploited. Ecological awareness is not simply the knowledge of an outer world, it is an ecological self-awareness because it is a *self-awareness of myself as a being that is part of the ecological world*. Following Morton, ecological awareness is a loop in which "we become aware of ourselves as a species"[806] which is a "task far more difficult than it superficially appears".[807] In this loop we do not only pose questions, but we are also equally questioned because our role in the ecological crisis is impossible to ignore.[808]

The human's privilege to be the investigator of the world is challenged since our role in the ecological crisis is impossible to turn away from. Ecological awareness, in Morton's understanding, is accompanied by the realisation of humanity as a hyperobject.[809] Indeed, being part of this hyperobject (the human species) pushes the conception of being an individual person, and it may mislead us to see humanity as red in tooth and claw. Rather, the wild mind is an accomplice with an ethic of ecocide, ecological self-awareness, and a radical coexistence in making kin. Although this is something that each individual has to face, the individual 'self' is not set apart, but reciprocally related in the ecological coexistence. Thus, this

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[806] Morton 2016:160.

[807] Morton 2016:160.

[808] Morton 2016:5. The rationalist notion of knowledge maintains the separation of the knower and the known (the subject and object of knowledge) and focus on answers, facts and results. The eco-gnosis that Morton suggests is a co-existence between knower and the known. "Ecognosis is like knowing, but more like letting be known. It is something like coexisting. It is like becoming accustomed to something strange, yet it is also becoming accustomed to strangeness that does not become less strange through acclimation. Ecognosis is like a knowing that knows itself." This goes beyond a one-directional awareness of the outside world or an outside-other. Humans are no longer those who poses questions; we are also equally questioned as a knower or a species. This confronts our self-understanding as much as our notion of 'understanding'. In the words of Morton, humans are no longer the knower, the subject in an objectified world.

[809] Morton 2013:6. Morton describes "the time of hyperobjects" as a "a time of hypocrisy" and it has a sinister ring to it. He describes how humanity becomes a hyperobject – just like other phenomena – such as global warming – which has the potential to bring about the end of the world.

concerns ecological *self*-awareness, and it sets us in what I refer to as a position of *hybrid intimacy with the larger-than-human world*, and it takes ecological self-awareness towards the wild mind.

The Hybrid Intimacy of Ecological Self-awareness

In the midst of this the great challenge is: *how can humans, despite being the cause of the crisis, contribute to change towards an ecologically viable future?* Being ecologically self-aware is being part of a process, it is not simply becoming aware, once and for all, rather a continuous deepening of the awareness which is related to the process of change. Ecological self-awareness ought to guide the actions taken by the individual, and it sets us in an intimate relationship to the world. The world we suppose we are saving is not simply the outer world. We (humans) are part of the ecosystem in a world of reciprocal relatedness. We are intimately part of the world that needs to be saved, but at the same time, part of a species that has caused the ecological crisis. Hence, ecological self-awareness sets us in a relation of *hybrid intimacy* with the world. Being intimately related sets us side by side with living creatures among others, but still as the cause of the crisis that threatens both the existence of other species, and the human species that stands out as separate. This calls for a new human self-awareness, asking what it means to be an individual and part of the human species, and it sets your personal life in the era of the Anthropocene. Owain Jones and Katherine Jones note that this awareness is "to put oneself in a very ethical and emotionally challenging position"[810] The emotional aspects of being ecologically self-aware range from emotions of sorrow and loss to the love and compassion but living in times of extreme loss of biodiversity makes the darker moods distinctive. Wild enchantments come with love for other-than-human species, compassion for their suffering, anger about the impact of contemporary human lifestyles on the lives of non-human species, and grief over the degradation of ecosystems. As seen in many of the stories presented in earlier chapters, these narratives of loss go beyond the sense of wonder, because they include the darker sides. The anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose notes: love in times of extinction calls forth an other set of questions, can we love a place and still be dangerous to it?[811] Love is complex and full of problems as well as possibilities.

Emotions in relation to ecological crisis, environmental degradation or climate change is set in the complexity of the interconnected ecological reality that must be subject to constant adjustment and it means living in constant negotiation of what ecological self-awareness really is. This is a continuous reflection in the double work of forming an understanding and coming to terms with coexistence in the Anthropocene. It means being aware of losses and considering fragility and

[810] Jones and Jones 2017:157.

[811] Bird Rose 2011:2.

finitude.[812] The loop is existential; it leads beyond epistemology. One of the consequences is the acceptance of uncertainty. Learning to live with uncertainty is often repeated in my material. For example, Mark, who experienced the loss of a loved forest, said that he needed to learn to live with uncertainty, but his is not the only voice. Uncertainty is not to be mistaken for disengagement or distance. Uncertainty can be said to be a tentative approach to the world, being prepared to adjust to changes. Uncertainty mirrors the loss of stability that characterises the Anthropocene, and what the historian Brian Fagan refers to as "the increasing thresholds of vulnerability".[813] Deborah Bird Rose call this ecological existentialism, and it pulls together to major shifts. The end of certainty and the end of atomism:" From certainty the shift is to uncertainty. From atomism the shift is to connectivity".[814] The existential dimension concerns coming to terms with living in times that reshape the way we think about ourselves, our societies and humanity's place on Earth.

The Wild Mind and Making Kin

Negotiating ecological self-awareness revolves around the fact that we are part of the world in crisis, and at the same time part of a species that has caused the ecological crisis. However, being part of human species causing the crisis does not rule out that individual persons want to be part of the alternative and strive for change. My study offers many examples of this. This is an ambivalent position that it may seem sad to end up in. Is there a way out? It is rather like being trapped in the iron cage of rationality and disenchantment. Is the key within reach? Nonetheless, choosing the iron cage as the metaphor for disenchantment suggests that the key must, in some sense, be spiritual. The workshops in this study offer encounters with the larger-than-human world and shifting sensibilities that aim to bridge this dilemma. It sets the individual human person in relation to humanity but also to the larger-than-human world. In this there is a distinctive feature of *identification with the larger-than-human world*. To recapitulate: In *The Earth Meditation* Kimberly experienced how she was held by and how she was part of Mother Earth, and in *The Deep Time Walk* Sue realised that her body held memories of the ancient sea, where life on earth emerged. In *Finding the Tree that is Calling You* Louis felt that he sensed trees through other senses, and he could experience trees as never before and got to know them fully. As Sargisson's notion of utopian practice suggests, the feature of experimenting and trying out is distinctive here, and along similar lines, Jones and Jones refer to an "experimental mixing" in relation to

[812] Morton 2016:6. Morton writes "The loop from being means that we live in a universe of finitude and fragility […] It means that the politics of coexistence is always contingent, brittle, and flawed, so that in thinking of the interdependence at least one being must be missing. The ecognosis jigsaw is newer complete."

[813] Fagan 2004: xv.

[814] Bird Rose 201:2.

forming and negotiating an ecological self-awareness. These are experimentations where the personal body is central in the experience of formations of body-as-place. Hence, to take part in such "experimental mixing"[815] goes beyond the private or public of politics, and "flows of power and responsibilities stream between the body and body politics"[816] It is, as Jones and Jones conclude, "to put oneself in a very ethical and emotionally challenging position".[817]

The shifting sensibilities and the encounters with the larger-than-human world may awake abilities such as imagination, intuition or lost memories, something that modern man and the rationalist mindset forgot, and this plays a vital role in exploring the rewilding of the human mind. The eco-psychologist Bill Plotkin introduced the term 'the wild mind', in contrast to the Western psychoanalytic tradition of individual therapy.[818] He suggests that a re-visioning of ourselves, not as separate from Nature, and rewilding our techniques and methods in order to know the wild mind. The wild mind explores the world through the cultivation of wholeness and aims to "revitalise our enchanted and endangered world",[819] according to Plotkin. This is a holistic approach to the self in contrast to the rationalistic approach that distances us from the world; Thus, the wild mind involves listening deeply to the senses and sensibilities, it enables interaction and participation in a most intimate manner, and it is an invitation to an encounter, which according to Bennett is at the heart of enchantment. Such encounters with the larger-than-human world are distinctive for the wild mind, because in encountering the larger-than- human-world humanity may gain a more realistic notion of the size and role of mankind. The world is larger than the human world. The proportions should be shared accordingly.

The rewilding of the human mind aims at an intimacy beyond this ambivalence of being human in the age of the Anthropocene. The wild mind suggests a coexistence of making kin. Making kin is, in the words of Haraway, "a practice of companions" where humans enter their hybrid state. Sarah Pike calls this *taking sides with the wild*, and it goes beyond constructing an opposition between the environmental destructive practices of civilisation and the redemptive promise of "the wild". Pike concludes that creating community with the wild holds out "the possibility of a different kind of social understanding in which other species are foremost in our concern both because they are inextricably linked with the lives of humans and because they have intrinsic value".[820] To conclude, the wild mind is far from radical rage, rather it refers to the explorations of human hybridity, to the practices of kin-making and an exploration of the basis for an ethic of coexistence.

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[815] Jones and Jones 2017:147.

[816] Jones and Jones 2017:157.

[817] Jones and Jones 2017:157.

[818] Plotkin 2013.

[819] Plotkin 2013:2.

[820] Pike 2017:231.

The workshops I have participated in and studied offer methods to explore and experiment with alternative ways of being in relation to the larger-than-human world. I refer to these as utopian practices because they offer ways to explore what Sargisson calls “subterranean but immanent” topic of man and nature. Rewilding takes modern environmentalism into a new millennium. It embraces the critical assumption that modern man’s understanding of his relation to nature is fallible, but stresses that the human self-understanding is at fault as well. Hence, to reflect upon this misconception is a fundamental concern. It concerns not the self-understanding of individuals but man as a species, and more so, as modern man. Modern man sees him/herself as distinct from nature, and this anthropocentric position is given legitimacy by Judeo-Christian religion, as the crown of creation, or by biology, as the species at the peak of evolution. This concerns the human self-understanding of man as a species distinct from other species, a position that is referred to as exceptionalism. Ecological self-awareness suggests a human self-understanding, beyond this iron cage of rationality, not as a creature in relation to nature, but as a creature of coexistence among others in an ecosystem. Rewilding does not suggest that humans should go back to nature. Instead, the realisation of the wild mind is set within a culture of wildness.

6.2.3 Negotiating Baselines

My third point of negotiation is the negotiation of baselines. Negotiating baselines refers to practices that work to read the landscape, often in the form of telling the history of the landscape, to restore the lost memories of how it once was and relate to deep time perspectives. In my view, there are many insights to gain from bringing together deep time perspectives and shifting baselines, because (i) the ‘shifting baselines’ address this forgetfulness of how it used to be, as the present condition is seen as ‘natural’, and (ii) the experiences of deep time perspectives may form an incentive to remember landscapes, and this plays a vital role in the project of *bringing back the memories of past states*. Hence, by restoring these memories it becomes possible to see the landscape as it once was, to reach beyond the shifting baselines, or to negotiate the baseline, gives rise to an awareness of the transformations that have taken place in the landscape. I call this *negotiating baseline,* which takes place in many of the workshops I have participated in on Dartmoor.

Dartmoorian Memories

Dartmoor is a place that I have returned to throughout this thesis. In the accounts of various workshops, the telling of the history of the place is central, whether in the form of tutorial talks, referring to the historical record of the landscape, or in storytelling workshops where the legends and mythologies mediate a historical framework. Ancient history in Dartmoor goes back 5000 years. The traces of

prehistoric Dartmoor are seen in the landscape, in the reminiscences of Bronze Age settlers, and megalithic monuments such as the Nine Maidens. This ancient history eliminates any interpretation of Dartmoor according to the romantic notion of wilderness (as places untouched by human interference), but it opens the door to something far more interesting, such as deep time perspectives. One of the questions that Christina Fredengren poses, and which is relevant here, is: How can deep time encounters play a role in the development of environmental ethics and in issues of intergenerational care.[821] In order to answer this, and as part of my analysis, I bring together two notions, deep time and shifting baselines, and introduce my notion of 'negotiating baselines'. Deep time perspectives contribute to the ecological discourse as they reach beyond short-sighed perspectives that often make people blind to how humans remould and affect the land. In my perspective, there is insights to gain in bringing together Deep time perspective and shifting baselines, because experiences of deep time *bring back the memories of past states*, this forms a negotiation of baselines, thus mediating an awareness of the transformations that have taken place in the landscape.

As memories are central, something needs to be said about the role of memory in this context. As we have seen, the concept of shifting baselines refers to how people are unable to see the environmental degradation that is taking places, and it assumes a coordination between the memories of places and the recognition of changes in the landscape. Memories come in two forms, personal memories of how it once was, on the one hand, and memories that are mediated between generations, on the other. The loss of these forms of memories has the consequence that people are unaware of how it once was, they cannot see beyond the present. A person living today who is ignorant of what the landscape looked like a hundred years ago might assume that the current condition forms the baseline, it is seen as natural state. The concept of 'shifting baselines' identifies a blindness towards environmental degradation, and Nathalie Corbett aims at a similar problem as she points out the paradox that people no longer see nature in places that are predominantly urban areas, such as parking lots in cities. If these places are no longer seen as part of nature, then the environmental degradation that has taken place there becomes unrecognisable. They become blind, unseen and unrecognised as part of nature. A parking lot outside a shopping centre is not considered to be part of nature, trees that grow in urban spaces are not seen with the same eyes as their 'wild' cousins in the countryside, because modern urban dwellers fail to see these places as a former meadow or forest. They cannot recall – or imagine – the place as it once was. The loss of memories is a forgetfulness that will make us both blind and dumb. For the American counterculture philosopher of the 1960s, Herbert Marcuse, 'forgetting' was a form of reification. Yet Marcuse took this forgetfulness a step further as he saw the act of remembering as central in "the struggle for changing the world". In the words of Marcuse: "all reification is a forgetting." "Art fights reification by making the

[821] Fredengren 2016:484.

petrified world speak, sing, perhaps dance."[822] Hence, to bring back memories is to fight reification, to make the world speak, sing and dance, and applied to the blindness of shifting baselines, bringing back lost memories would enable a recognition of the changes that have taken place in the landscape. Therefore, negotiating baselines refers to the restoration of those lost memories, and consequently how this may awake an awareness of the effects of human in landscapes. This restoration of memories is not to simply looking back, or to dwell in nostalgia. Kate Soper defends a progressive avant-garde nostalgia as a romantic remembering and mourning of what is irretrievable, but one directed toward an emancipatory future.[823] It reflects on past in ways which highlights what we are deprived of in the present and stimulate desire for a better future.

Eco-critic Axel Goodbody notes that memory studies appear to be concerned with politics rather than nature, with time rather than place, but it shares with ecocriticism a central concern with place and belonging.[824] This perspective is shared by Tim Ingold who ties memories to landscapes, and he claims that to perceive a landscape is to carry out an act of remembrance. Thus, without the memoires we will not only be blind to the environmental degradation that has taken place, but more so blind to the actual landscape. Remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal mental image stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment.[825] Therefore, if the loss of memories makes us blind to environmental degradation, then, consequently, to remember how it once was offering a way of seeing and dealing with environmental degradation. The archaeologist Francis Pryor suggests that we need to learn to do a reading of the landscape that makes it possible to understand why, for example, a city, a road, a cathedral or an ancient monument like Stonehenge was placed in a certain landscape – or why a place like Dartmoor was abandoned and turned into a "wilderness" or a national park. The narrative of Dartmoor brings together archaeological reports and historical records, as well as local lore and myths, and all contribute to picturing the memories of the landscape, and this plays a vital part in the negotiation of the landscape.

The practices that I have presented relate the abstract time scale to concrete places, and this is essential in bringing back the memories. Dartmoor forms a case for my conception of negotiating baselines. The reading of the landscape is part of the telling of the history of the landscape. Thus, the telling of the history of Dartmoor, at the actual place, encourages reflection on ecological and historical processes (it is in this sense part of an environmental education, which I will discuss further on). In understanding the importance of the history of the place, I relate to

[822] Marcuse 1978:72–73.

[823] Soper 2011.

[824] Goodbody 2011.

[825] Ingold 2000:189.

the notion of shifting baselines, which is central in environmental discourse.[826] To tell the story of how it used to be is, in one sense, to restore the lost knowledge, to bring back memories of how it used to be. *The concept of negotiating baselines addresses how the knowledge of how a place used to be will make us aware of the ecological degradation that has taken place.* The baseline is the current condition, which is not to be seen a natural but as contingent. Therefore, imagination is important to because it is necessary to make an image of the place beyond the present. In imagination, which may be stimulated by a storyteller that tells the story of the place, in listening to such a telling, it becomes possible to see the place through the eyes of a historical settler on Dartmoor.

My perspective extrapolates the notion of shifting baselines, in that the telling of the story works inversely; *it brings back the memories*, restores the knowledge of how it used to be and makes the environmental degradation that has taken place visible. What is going on in telling the history of a place like Dartmoor is a *negotiation of baselines*. Negotiating baselines is relevant not only in relation to the effects of environmental degradation on wounded places, but more so for how humans remould the landscape in creating a domesticated agricultural landscape, recognisable as the pastoral countryside, the green and pleasant land. Hence, the telling of the history of the place, which is part of the excursions to Dartmoor, is an act of bringing back lost memories and rediscovering this lost knowledge of previous conditions. However, the point is not simply to understand how it used to be, different from how it is today, but to *understand the processes* that have been at play here. *Negotiating baselines works to create an awareness of these long-term processes that have taken place in the landscape and the role of human activity in the transformation of the landscape.* Negotiating baselines also works to arouse an awareness of the forest that once was there and make a record of the losses. Moreover, it includes the question, not only of how humans affect their environment but more so, how their way of living, the social organisations of society, is part of the process.

In suggesting an answer to Fredengren's question of how deep time encounters can play a role in the development of environmental ethics and issues of intergenerational care,[827] I bring together deep time perspectives with shifting baselines, in negotiation of baselines. I found that deep time perspectives of time and landscape can inform ecological ethics because they are contrary to the amnesia and short-sightedness that makes us blind to the damage done. In relation to time and landscapes, the act of remembering, and the act of relating to places and seeing them in relation to the historical processes is to become aware of how human beings throughout history have remoulded the landscape in various ways. *Negotiating*

[826] Shifting baselines (Papworth, S.K. Rist, J. and Milner-Gulland, E.J.) addresses the loss of memories and the consequence that the environmental degradation taking place becomes unnoticed.

[827] Fredengren 2016:484.

baselines means looking at landscape from an ecological, geological and historical perspective, through the eyes of other creatures and through the long span of deep time. In those perspectives Morton's loop of ecological awareness may bounce back to ourselves. In asking how humans in the past remodelled and transformed the landscape, the gaze loops back to the present and asks how we today contribute to the changes in the landscape. This informs ethical considerations that are valuable. However, I found something more enigmatic emerging here, that is relevant to me as a historian of religion to explore because I think that the negotiation of baselines can be taken further to help explore the spiritual landscape, or the sacramental values of the landscape, and therefore I will dig deeper into these sediments.

Visiting a Lost Landscape through Readings and Riddles

To look at a landscape in a deep time perspective beyond the present encourages reflection on processes that have lasted for centuries, even millennia. In a historical perspective Dartmoor is the place of a lost forest; hence, a visit to Dartmoor is a visit to a lost forest. To visit something lost may seem like a paradox, but this turns out to be more enigmatic. Telling the story brings back memories, it counteracts amnesia.[828] Visitors who wander on Dartmoor today see a far-reaching moorland. A Bronze Age settler, if one were to revisit Dartmoor, would see a devastated landscape where the forest was gone.[829] An encounter with an ancient settler is of course a thought experiment; we may imagine such an encounter, and this imagination is riddling, even ghostly. Memories are not only personal memories that recollect past personal experiences. Memories can be collective, passed on between generations as part of culture, they can be mediated in stories, mythologies, heritage and art. However, in a deep time perspective the memories are far older and go beyond even the intergenerational perspective, as deep time goes back to the geological timescape that predates humanity. Deep time memories are not simply human memories. So, the question is how can deep time memories become accessible for us?

Part of the answer is that landscapes may mediate deep time memories, and this expresses how the past and the future come together. For Ingold to perceive a landscape is to carry out an act of remembrance. Memories are not simply internal images, stored in the mind, but, in Ingold's poetic formulation, landscapes are "pregnant with the past",[830] and remembering can occur when engaging perceptually with an environment. Being pregnant with the past indicates their transformative character, being pregnant is to be expecting to give birth, but 'pregnant' may also

[828] Thus, shifting baselines takes place on two levels: on a personal level, but also on a long-term level over generations. The form of shifting baselines that is relevant to Dartmoor is the second one, the long-term shifting baseline, that is, the shifting baselines that involve a loss of memory between generations.

[829] They would have experienced what I referred to as the loss of place. For them it would have been a personal loss, a situation like the displacement that Rob Nixon pictures (Nixon 2011).

[830] Ingold 2000:189.

mean significant. Ingold focuses on ‘temporality’ as a key term. Temporality is not chronology nor history, but chronology orders historical events and activities according to a timeline.[831] The landscape visualises complex historical patterns, and it invites participants to reflect on the long-term consequences of environmental degradation, and how humans modify their environment. The environmental historian Marsha Weisiger states that this kind of reading of a landscape involves ”seeing, recognising and interpreting […] the natural and cultural phases”[832] of the land. The reading of a landscape is like an archaeologist who undertakes an investigation that strips the layer of the soil to dig deeper in history, but baselines are not found in such an approach. The approach of reading the landscape offers tools for “detecting hidden human presence in what otherwise seem like ‘natural’ landscapes.”[833] Weisiger writes:

> Because landscapes are culturally and historically produced, you must be attuned to the different types of features you might encounter in a particular place. […] One might think of the land as a palimpsest. Remnants of past developments form layers, one atop the other, or side-by-side. If we were archaeologists, we might have dug down the strata to develop history of the *longue durée*. But it is also possible to examine the surface and see the layers of history over time.[834]

Memories and imagination may relate time to actual places, such as the ancient landscape, and in one sense makes it possible to, so to speak, go back in time – as a time travel. Archaeologists see ‘time travel’ as referring to the experimental dimension of understanding and engaging with the past. Time travel is “an embodied experience and a social practice in the present that brings to life a past or future reality”.[835] Casey argues for a third dimension of places, beyond time and space, and that is culture, which affords them a deep historicity.

> Place as we experience it is not altogether natural. If it were, it could not play the animating, decisive role it plays in our collective lives. Place, already cultural as experienced, insinuates itself into a collectivity, altering as well as constituting that collectivity. Place becomes social because it is already cultural. It is also, and for the same reason, historical. It is by the mediation of culture that places gain historical depth. We might even say that culture is the third dimension of places, affording them

[831] Ingold 2000:194. Alyda

[832] Weisiger 2017:33. The phrase “reading the landscape” was coined by the geographer C. Hansson (1922).

[833] Weisiger 2017:34.

[834] Weisiger 2017:34.

[835] Holtorf 2017:1.

a deep historicity, a *longue durée*, which would lack if they were entirely natural in constitution.[836]

Casey notes that it is through the "mediation of culture that places gain historical depth", and I have related this culture to legends and myths, and what I refer to as eco-occulture. Many of the practices I have presented in this thesis offers explorations of deep time perspectives. Visiting Dartmoor, and the reflective practices performed there, helps to form a sense of deep time. The telling of the history of a certain place, *at the actual place*, is significant because (i) it creates an awareness of the place (the transformative processes in the remoulding of the landscape), and (ii) it creates a presence at the actual place (often related to meditative, contemplative or spiritual practices), and (iii) it relates to a long-term perspective and deep time in ancient history and geology. Hence, encounters with deep time may contribute to forming a sense of our place within geological deep time. This sense opens the door to something distinctively dark and eerie. In the practice of telling the history of a place at the site, the landscape becomes part of the scenery and amplifies the narrative. A skilled and artistic teller may evoke the fantasy of the audience. Storyteller Martin Shaw refers to this as the "Pagan imagination". The power of imagination is distinctive here to bring to life a lost world. In this way landscapes, so to speak, come to life. This can be seen as an example of their power to enchant (Bennett) or their riddling power (Fredengren). But what exactly is this strange 'power' they possess? 'Power' here is not divine power nor the transcendental power of God, rather the enchanting power of deep time.

Amnesia of the Anthropocene

Amnesia is the loss of memories. The amnesia of baselines addresses whether humans are aware of the environmental degradation that has taken place in the landscape over a time span beyond their reach. Memories are not only a record of past events, but also reach back in time. Memories range over a time span where past events can be accounted for. *What I refer to as the amnesia of the Anthropocene is a loss of the ability the experience the time span beyond the modern realm*. It is, in simple terms, to be stuck in the present, and the present is very narrow. Unexpected encounters may be the crack where the light comes in, or perhaps where the dark comes in. Encounters with ecological ghosts and shadows – such as a lost forest or lost species – are encounter with deep time in the form of something long gone that has an indeterminable presence in the landscape. This presence is evocative and unsettling, it is equally enigmatic as it opens barriers in time. To picture these encounters with losses as ghosts and shadows makes them even harder to grasp, but it also renders them a riddling power that emphasises their appearance, so they become animated. I refer to this as a *paradoxical animism of the*

[836] Casey 2009:31–32.

Anthropocene. This hybrid presence/absence is very much the riddling power of the Anthropocene; the paradoxical presence of loss, the absence that is both evocative and unsettling and that calls for attention, and enigmatic encounters through barriers in time. These ecological ghosts and shadows offer encounters with deep time in the form of something long gone that has an undeterminable presence in the landscape, such encounters are accompliced with sensations of the eerie, or the enigmatic. The paradoxical animism of the Anthropocene oscillates with the larger-than-human world, it is a complex world that is alive and animated. This is a complexity that places human existence in a proportional perspective, as a very small part or a something distinctively larger, and its hybrid appearance denies the simple categories of life and death, present and absent, light and darkness.

Enchantments of Deep Time

As seen above, deep time is central in the negotiation of baselines. Being able to reach beyond time spans is something that Fredengren's 'deep time enchantment' and 'riddling power' can address, and it also contributes to my conception of wild enchantment.[837] First, the deep time perspective helps to draw the lines of the long-term perspectives that cover the climatological and environmental changes in geological and ancient times. Dartmoor illustrates the relevance of these time scales in environmental ethics as the damage done thousands of years ago is still visible in the landscape. Secondly, deep time enchantment and "riddling power" render it a ghostly air which is in tune with the darker side of enchantment, which is present in relation to wounded places and the eeriness of the English landscape. This riddling power resonates with Bennett's notion of places with the power to enchant, and similarly this riddling power may give rise to enchantment. The riddle that is given does not necessarily come with a definitive answer. As Fredengren notes, it is "hard to grasp our place within this geological deep time."[838] Despite being hard to grasp, it is not completely beyond reach, and 'deep time enchantment' can help to form a sense of our place within geological deep time. The philosopher Roy Scranton considers the philosophical challenges: "Geological time scales, civilizational collapse and species extinction give rise to profound problems",[839] and even to think these time scales seems to "boggle the imagination".[840] The philosopher Timothy Morton emphasises the role of mythology in coming to terms with things that are ungraspable by our senses or by our quotidian experience. The Anthropocene is, in one sense, beyond human reach as "We live on more timescales than we can

[837] Fredengren 2016:491. The expression "riddling power" is originally from the Irish poet Seamus Heaney.

[838] Fredengren 2016:482.

[839] Scranton 2015:20.

[840] Scranton 2015:20.

grasp.[841] So, if deep time perspectives are hard to grasp the question is: how can these deep time perspectives become reachable?

A further voice is Dipesh Chakrabarty,[842] who stresses the need to question the barriers of geological deep time, natural history and of the human in order to understand both our situatedness and our responsibilities in contemporary world with its climate and environmental problems. The Anthropocene has major implications for how to study and comprehend history, according to Chakrabarty. There is a pressing need to get beyond these barriers, to find a bridge. I want to stress that this deep historicity or deep time enchantment is not simply an approach to the ancient landscape as a historical interest in times long gone. The question is rather how the present can be grasped as part of a long historical and geological process. This process does not only reach back, it sets the present in a context, and it also reaches into the future. Therefore, deep time is a challenge to the linear conception of time. The depth of deep time is not only behind, it is equally the time to come.

Timelines from Futures Past – a Non-linear Conception of Time

There is a Gordian knot here, as the deep time perspective goes beyond our relatively short human history. Therefore, to think deep time means to leave the perspective of modern man. To understand modern man, it is necessary to understand the species *Homo sapiens*[843] and sometimes to go further, beyond our own species, and listen to places and the voices of the larger-than-human world. This is how deep time is both emotional and existential, and how Deep time is a further an aspect of the deep as in deep questioning, deep experience. To grasp these long-term processes will make us aware of how humans have transformed themselves – their way of living and culture – as part of the process and continue to do so. It begs the question what traces and memories we leave to the future. As Fredengren notes:

> This is a mixed heritage (often unlabelled) that is the result of material interferences that change the textures of times, that territorialize futures to come, that shape the spaces and cartographies within which future (multispecies) generations can manoeuvre.[844]

This is not simply predict the future, or to think of times to come. It is to form a temporal awareness. The deep time approach is based on a non-linear conception of time. Linear time, the one-directional time renders the past to something like dead time. The relational approach suggests a non-linear conception of time as well as

[841] Morton 2016.

[842] Chakrabarty 2009:213–20.

[843] For discussion on the history of Homo Sapiens see Harrari 2015.

[844] Fredengren 2019:58.

enduring relations, which had power across time. Deep time perspectives turn the perspective from the future directed conception of time that is found in the bedrock of evolution, and the myth progress. However, the change of perspective is not to look back instead of looking forward, rather, to widens up, the narrow conception of the present, so that the present reaches beyond the moment in time and space, by inviting to a more evocative mood.

Barry Cottrell refers the participatory primal mind,[845] which is an awareness of timelessness is a state of original participation of the world, and a rejection of the myth of non-participation of the world. This is a "radical transformation of consciousness" and a radical change in a person's mode which has practical effects. Cottrell describes this as a re-enchantment of consciousness.[846] Ancient artworks may appear strikingly modern to a contemporary observer, and Cottrell suggests that we must actively resist the construction of rigid boundaries that set the ancient apart from the modern as an ontologically distinct 'other'.[847] This draws the relation between enchantment and time; time as timelessness seem to resonate well with deep time in its ability evoke the power to enchant. In my study the openness towards deep time perspectives comes with a critical stance towards modern man and his clock-time. Lynn White considered the linear conception of time as one of the causes of the ecological crisis of the West. Linear time is part of the Christian conception of time, and therefore White's critique is directed against Christianity and its contribution to the anthropocentric worldview. The linear conception of time is far from the only alternative. Circular time, following the cycle of the years and seasons, is often seen as older, and more in tune with ecology as it follows the changing seasons, and is found in the celebrations of pagan calendars. Today sciences offer alternative time such as conceptions in quantum time, stressing a holistic perspective rather than the one-direction timeline. Manuel Castells write:

> This holistic notion of integration between humans and nature […] does not refer to a naive worshipping of pristine natural landscapes […]. To merge ourselves with our cosmical self we need to first to change the notion of time, to feel "glacial time" run through our lives,[848]

The questioning the linear conception of time leads further to questioning conceptions of modern man as the creature at the pinnacle of evolution. Deep time

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[845] Cottrell 2017:405. Cottrell sets this original participation in relation to engraving as he explores the seemingly timeless awareness of the primal mind and its healing return to modern consciousness. "The experience of timelessness […] may often be had through the deep, rhythmical, meditative creative immersion in the substances of Earth."

[846] Cottrell 2017:405. Cottrell has studied ancient premodern artwork in stone in consideration of mind in deep time, which he describes as a timeless awakening of the primal mind, and "a sacramental consciousness". Cottrell sees this transformation of consciousness as a metania, "a complete change of mind, facilitated by remembrance of original participation."

[847] Cottrell 2017:402.

[848] Castells 1997.

perspectives challenge the conception of linear time which relies on the idea of progress. Deep times turns the tide. Dartmoor offers a time perspective, reaching through several millennia, and it covers a transformation from a deep forest to the contemporary open moorland. The ancient landscape illustrates deep time,[849] the intersection between long-term geological and relatively short historical processes, the *longue durée* that looks only at human history. The shift between the geological epochs the Holocene and the Anthropocene emphasises the deep time perspectives, and it stands out in contrast to the recognisable, and human-centred, historical timeline. The experience of the vast time span is central in several of the accounts, for example, in *the Deep Time Walk* along the coast in Devon. The deep time perspective approaches history through millennia and include the geological processes, thus reaching beyond the historical perspectives. The walk measures time by counting the footsteps, where every step is half a million years. The modern history of industrial civilisation, the clock-time measured by the ruler, is just two millimetres, which is contrasted to the geological space of time. Deep time is part of the landscape, in each footstep, and the workings of the continuing processes of evolution, and thus the geological deep time is present in the world. This deep time perspective can therefore help towards a less human-centred world.

6.3 Narrative, Practice and Place – Cultivating Wild Enchantments

In this section I will answer my third question. As I conclude from the many workshops I have studied, I suggest that the relation between narrative, practice and place is that these are interrelated and that in many cases are hard to tell apart. In workshops they merge into a unity. I analyse what is going on in these workshops as cultivating wild enchantment. I will discuss my notion of wild enchantments, which aims to take enchantment beyond the simple sense of wonder and relate it to the wounds that come with living in times of ecological crisis. I describe this as working with wonder and wounds, and finally, I will pay attention to the wild, and the contrast between the narrative of The End of Civilisation and rewilding, the wild and the spiritual and utopian vision of a less human-centred world.

[849] Fredengren 2016:484 The concept of 'deep 'deep time' is rooted in challenges to the biblical narrative, as we saw in Chapter 4, with. James Hutton's observed deep stratigraphy evident in the d in strata of Scottish sea-cliffs, and he concluded that the Earth was 4.5 billions years old, much older than Bishop James Ussher's proposal that it had been not created in 4004 BC.

6.3.1 Cultivating Wild Enchantments

In this thesis I have offered examples of the relation between narrative, practice and place in the reflective and utopian practices I have studied. These practices are a method for cultivating community and wild enchantment, and it should be noted that the ways that community and enchantments are cultivated often converge. Reflective practices aim to encourage reflection, and this can be done in various ways. The term utopian practices deepen our understanding of how these workshops experiment with alternative ways of being in relation to the larger-than-human world. Participants in circles work to create an alternative space where it is possible to have deeper conversations, to share experiences, and to pose new questions. The focus here is not only on communication as the work of words, but also as silence and listening. I describe these reflective practices as utopian practices because they move away from doom and apocalypse and try to indicate a way forward.[850] In utopian practices it is possible to hold up "a world for examination and find it wanting",[851] and to analyse "the here and now and identify the core problem therein."[852]

Hence, in all this we find what Sargisson refers to as the "subterranean but immanent topic of human attitudes towards nature."[853] Rather than focusing on what is wrong with the predominant ways of dealing with nature, the question is primarily how to explore the alternatives. The utopian quality of these workshops resonated beyond the situation where they were performed. Sargisson claims that an ecologically viable society does not just assume a far-reaching awareness of environmental issues, but also "a completely different attitude towards nature".[854] This insight – and the challenge it presents – echoes throughout green political thought. The workshops in this study are experiments and elaborations of a new attitude towards nature, or as I prefer, the larger-than-human world, and I consider wild enchantments to be part of this new attitude.

I describe place as a node between narrative and practice and I take place as the point of departure in approaching enchantment. Bennett's notion of places with the power to enchant becomes central in my approach. Furthermore, the notion offers an interesting twist to Kim Knott's advice to study religion in secular spaces. The intriguing question is: how can places with the power to enchant be combined with secular spaces? A place with the power to enchant is not synonymous with a religious site such as a church or a sanctuary. Places with the power to enchant are much more personal and complex sites, not simple places of a certain beauty or religious distinction. To describe Dartmoor as a place with the power to enchant

[850] Sargisson 2012:116.

[851] Sargisson 2012:127.

[852] Sargisson 2012:127.

[853] Sargisson 2012:116.

[854] Sargisson 2012:117.

would be intelligible because it is a notion that encompasses the multifaceted landscape (as constructed in various media and practices), and because it relates the experiences of those who visit it.

Enchantment is an etic term, not an emic term in my material. No one has described their experience in terms of being enchanted, although their accounts give examples of various moods that I relate to enchantment, and this makes the case for me to argue why I use it as the theoretical framework for my thesis. As already stated in the opening chapter, what I find to be the benefit of enchantment is that it addresses man's relation to nature or in Bennett's case a mood in relation to nature. In this thesis I have discussed workshops that are various practices performed to facilitate and encourage reflection, and to offer experiences that constitute an alternative to the disenchanted world of modernity. Although the explicit purpose of these practices may not be to stimulate these moments of enchantment, participants do tell of deep experiences in these workshops which I found reasonable to describe as examples of enchantment. Enchantment is not simple the moments of bliss that happen to you, given by providence perhaps. Cultivating enchantments is, in one sense, the performance and participation in a practice, perhaps as a training of the sensory capacities to be receptive to these moods, but also to process the full range of emotions or to reflect intellectually. In various ways these workshops stimulate, encourage or enable reflection, in creating an alternative space for conversations, in the performance of practices such as sharing circles, in listening more deeply, which may be part of ecological education or spiritual practices.

A further feature is that these workshops take place in an outdoor setting, or in nature, in order to explore how we interact with each other, with nature and the larger-than-human world. These workshops have the character of trying out, finding new ways of doing things, for example, in listen to other senses, and to invite the larger-than-human world to take part in the workshop. They work as points of negotiation in relation to spirituality, nature/culture, knowledge and communication. Workshops bear witness to a large amount of creativity, and despite the differences in design and performance there are common features. Workshops often open with a short attunement,[855] in silence and meditation in order to tune into the place, the participants and the mood of the moment, and they work to make everybody present in the practice they will be part of. These ways of working offer explorations of shifting sensibilities and transformative encounters which are important features in the cultivation of wild enchantment. These workshops are experimentations with an ambition to find alternative ways of experiencing the larger-than-human world and exploring the wild mind. This concerns our being in the world, how we *relate* to each other, and to the other-than-human world, in a relational perspective. Thus, community is not restricted to the human community but includes the larger-than-human world. A further thing to add regarding wild enchantments is how these practices work with healing, as they *offer tools for*

[855] Sargisson 2012:115-116. Sargisson draws on her study of the Findhorn community in Scotland.

bridging the gap between humans and the larger-than-human world. By including holistic perspectives, wild enchantments relate to the full emotional register to give a renewed understanding of the many ways we relate to the larger-than-human world.

Wild Enchantments and Place – Eco-occulture

If we are to identify places that are capable of inspiring love of the world, the task here is to show how this can be related to what I refer to as "wounded places". These may very well be loved places; however, love may include not only intimacy, tenderness and care, but also loss and sorrow. These places can be described as wounded/wonder places, and they give rise to complex feelings – based on the sense of some injustice done – such as feelings of fear or eeriness or uncanniness. These places seem to unsettle us, calling for deeper questions. I have given accounts from many who testify to how they try to cope with environmental degradation or the loss of place, as these experiences give rise to both sorrow and grief. However, sorrow and grief may not be the end of love. Love might transform from the romantic notion (based on admiration or beauty) to a more mature and deeper sense of love.

In dark times, facing anthropogenic climate change and accelerated loss of biodiversity, how can the feelings of wonder and enchantment prevail? The loss of these moods would certainly be a tragedy, but fortunately this is not the state of the world, not yet anyway. Although conceptions of wonder and enchantment do not remain unaffected by the times we are living in, I take the reconciliation between the sense of wonder and enchantment and the darker moods – such as grief over the loss of biodiversity – to be at the core of my work. 'Wild enchantments' is the term I use in relation to my own field, and it is notable that I refer to enchantment*s* in the plural to address the complexity of the term. 'Wild enchantments' cover the full range of the complex mood of enchantment and go beyond the simple notion of enchantment, restricted to emotions such as love and reverence. My point is not to dismiss these moods. The love of nature is a tenet in environmentalism, and environmentalists are often pictured, or even stereotyped, as driven by love and reverence for nature in their struggle to protect it, but this is just half the picture. Environmentalists may work to protect a beloved site, such as a beautiful forest, but all too often they fail to protect it and instead they must witness how timber companies turn it into a clear-cut. These places are ecologically wounded places, and they give rise to feelings of grief and sorrow. In times of climate change, these feelings are not only related to specific places, but more generally, the emotional responses that come with the global threat of climate change and ecocide. Thus, the moods that are in play here range from the "dark" shades of grief and sorrow, to eeriness or uncanniness, and they may also include the "bright" ones, such as love, reverence and the sense of wonder. Therefore, there is a colourful spectrum of moods, and from a theoretical perspective it is necessary to be able to address this.

I distance my approach from framings of enchantment, in terms such as awe, mystery, wonder, bliss, or being spellbound. Following Bennett, enchantment

involves fostering fleeting moments of affective attachment with the aim of experiencing wonder.[856] Bennett admits that uncanny moods and feeling of being disrupted or torn out of one's default sensory-psychic-intellectual disposition may be part of the experience.[857] Fear might one of those extra-ordinary states, but "fear cannot dominate if enchantment is to be".[858] As previously stated, my criticism here is based on my perspective, in relation to climate change and environmental degradation. These darker feelings cannot be neglected or taken lightly; it is necessary to offer some clue as to how it is possible to overcome these states. Feelings that are unsettling, dark or even deep may coexist with love and compassion, and this must be considered to get the full range of the complexity. Emotions often come in clusters rather than well-defined separate instances of feelings. Sorrow may coexist with anger. The question is not how we can get rid of such dark feelings as fear. If these dark feelings are *incompatible* with enchantment, then enchantment cannot help to cure us from them, rather they would be an obstacle to get into an enchanted mood. I found this to be crucial. I conclude that the reflective practices in my study try to offer tools for working with this reconciliation of love and loss, of wonder and wounds, enchantment and the eerie, and the lighter and the darker moods that come with living in times of climate change. I call this a way of working with wonder and wounds.[859]

6.3.2 Wonder and Wounds

The sense of wonder, the love of nature is considered to be the basis for an ethical relation to nature. This is the classical understanding of environmental ethics, shared by environmentalists and eco-theologians. Still, as my study has shown, today many experiences how places they love are devastated and become unrecognisable. Such experiences are deeply emotional, as seen in the stories of Kathy and Mark, who both experienced a loss of place. Others tell of a more general feeling of grief regarding the state of the world. Kim's words, "I'm torn by that unsettling feeling

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[856] Bennett 2001:4.

[857] Bennett 2001:5.

[858] Bennett 2001:5.

[859] Bennett 2001:34. Rather than proceeding from a definition, Bennett asks: what does it mean to be enchanted? How does it feel to be enchanted? In what circumstances does this mood come to us? I have taken these questions into consideration in my own account of "wild enchantment". Bennett sees enchantment as a complex mood, and this complexity will be the focus. Although my main objection is the emphasis on the sense of wonder, it is not to deny that enchantment may include a sense of wonder, but this far from the whole picture. Bennett approaches enchantment with a certain degree of caution, and even warns that enchantment can both charm and disturb. The character of charm may be easy to reconcile with the sense of wonder (or a sense of bliss and being spellbound), but the disturbing counterpart seems to open towards something more unsettling, that resonates with my study. As we have seen, enchantment is a complex mood, and in order to draw attention to this complexity, I will refer to enchantments in the plural. I draw the range of complexity from the sense of wonder to wounds.

and the fire inside", are emblematic. In times of ecological crisis and loss of biodiversity many experiences grief and sorrow and a sense of being wounded. The question I ponder on is what happens to people who face this experience; is it the end of love of nature and the sense of wonder? Given the classic notion love as the basis for environmental ethics that would mean that the ethical basis for environmental ethics is lost as well. However, relating *the sense of wonder and wounds may be transformative* on a personal level and it may offer a new basis for environmental ethics in the Anthropocene. Brian G. Campbell argues that to face the wounds of nature is to face your own vulnerability. We can see "a concern for nature emerging from the *encounter with place*" and it "invites us to see the human other: intimately, face to face, beautiful and vulnerable, a mirror of our own self."[860] Thus, seeing the other opens for a complexity that is "beautiful and vulnerable". I believe that to understand the complexity, it is not enough to pinpoint this or that particular condition or aspect of it, but to consider the experience of living itself. The historian Brian Fagan considers the vulnerability of the modern urban and consumerist lifestyle, living with increasing thresholds of vulnerably. It is not only a vulnerability of the individual, it is the social organisation that is fragile and that make our lives vulnerable.[861]

Andrea Nightingale, professor of classics and comparative literature, proceeds from Francis Bacon's notion of wonder as broken knowledge. This is rooted in the epistemology of science which values certainty and rejects everything that does not live up to the criteria. Nightingale claims that if the scientific approach to nature demotes all forms of understanding that do not achieve certainty, the philosophy of ecology conversely pays attention to *the sense of wonder as a form of understanding the world.* This involves the attempt to apprehend nature (and our place in nature) in bodily and experimental terms – to attain knowledge that will always be partial, broken off. It is based on a completely different economy of attention, one that attends to nature in ecological rather than scientific terms.[862]

> The oscillation between the bodily and the intellectual explorations of nature generates a mode of understanding that "breaks off" in wonder: wonder is the origin of ecological philosophy, but also its (on going) culmination.[863]

Thus, wonder is an "oscillation between the bodily and the intellectual explorations of nature" and this addresses the complexity of the term. At the same time, to picture wonder as a mode of understanding that "breaks off" should not mislead us to think of something other-worldly. Noora Pyyry and Raine Aiava see enchantment as a

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[860] Bauman et al. 2011:206.

[861] Fagan 2004: xv.

[862] Nightingale 2009:16.

[863] Nightingale 2009:16.

fundamental encounter that includes a radical reordering of the world.[864] They set out to scrutinise what they refer to as "the reorganising power of enchantment", and they focus on a vignette of despair, loss, and suffering, and thus it is possible to clarify the circulation of affect involved in the disruption and emergence of the subject. Enchantment is a highly affectual event that uproots the subject, throws it momentarily off balance, outside of time and space, but this is not only a pleasant experience of being inspired by the world, but a sometimes uninvited ontological unfolding of it. Enchantment is both a profound loss of meaning and a sudden gaining of significance. It offers a way to rethink the world, which can come into being through many different affectual states, including those of a 'negative' register, which can be perceived in terms of ambivalence, vulnerability, or even uncanniness or eeriness.

Enchantment and Emotions

Bennett points to a disturbing quality of enchantment, which may come as a sudden or unexpected encounter, that is, one "that hits us".[865] It involves a surprising encounter, a meeting with something you did not expect to be fully prepared to engage. It is both a pleasurable feeling of being charmed by the novel and yet unprocessed encounter, but also "a more *unheimlich* (uncanny) feeling of being disrupted or torn out of one's default sensory-psychic-intellectual disposition."[866] It is "a mood of fullness, plenitude or liveliness, a sense of having had one's nerves or circulation or concentration power turned up or recharged."[867] Bennett mentions fear as one such extraordinary states, although "fear cannot dominate if enchantment is to be".[868] Such moods, fear and uncanniness, seems to be increasingly appearing in relation to sites of environmental degradation.

I pay attention to the emotional responses to the loss of place and responses that come with the global threat of climate change and ecocide, from the dark moods to the bright" moods, such as love, reverence and a sense of wonder, on the other. These emotional attitudes or moods are linked to cultural expressions; as seen how myths and legends become vehicles for such uncanny and riddling moods, and the haunted landscape of the Anthropocene is pictured as ghostly. I use the term 'eco-occulture' when referring to such cultural expressions of these darker emotions. What I describe as working with wonder and wounds may take artistic forms of expression.

[864] Pyyry and Aiava 2020.

[865] Bennett 2001:4 italics added.

[866] Bennett 2001.

[867] Bennett 2001:5.

[868] Bennett 2001:5.

6.3.3 Reflective Practices – Working with Wonder and Wounds

The notion of encounter is central in enchantment, it may be "a momentarily immobilizing encounter"[869] (Bennett), enchantment as a fundamental encounter that includes "a radical reordering of the world[870] (Pyyry and Aiava), or Campbell's "encounter *with place*".[871] If we assume that enchantment involves encounter, disenchantment would be a kind of separation, a state where these encounters are no longer possible, being cut off from the world. What I found is that reflective practices offer tools for bridging this gap, to transform the distance to something within reach. This bridging of the gap is the core of wild enchantments which offer holistic and deep time perspectives. Therefore, what I refer to as to work with wonder and wounds aims to bridge the gap, to heal the broken connection and to cultivate enchantment.

Enchantment can, following Bennett, be "fostered through deliberate strategies", and I relate this to the various reflective practices in my study.[872] In my analysis I suggest that these practices offer ways to experiment with shifting sensibilities, and to be receptive to the sensory modes in relating to the larger-than-human world. These practices offer an exploration of alternative ways of interrelating with the larger-than-human world. Thus, to cultivate wild enchantment is to explore and be receptive to these moods which cover the full range of emotions, and it may be an incentive to reflection and intellectual understanding. Sarah Pike calls this *creating strategies for intimacy and opposition*.[873] Is enchantment to be found somewhere between intimacy and opposition? According to Bennett, "another way to enhance the enchantment effect is to *resist* the story of the disenchantment of modernity".[874] To pay attention to the quality of enchantment as opposition (Pike) and resistance (Bennett) gives a new angle on enchantment, not only as a blissful experience of the individual, but as a part of social change, and it may make it into something more lasting.

Practices of Encounter and Enchantment

Encounter is at the heart of enchantment. Encounter is a relational term; therefore, one has to ask, an encounter with what? Bennett stresses the importance of places with the power to enchant. I see Dartmoor as one such place, but there is more to it because many of these encounters are encounters with "the wild" or the larger-than-human world. This is to enter a less human-centred world, or an invitation to question the human self-conception as a species different from other species. The

[869] Bennett 2001:5.

[870] Pyyry and Aiava 2020.

[871] Bauman et al. 2011.

[872] Bennett 2001:4.

[873] Pike 2017:135.

[874] Bennett 2001:4 italics added.

wild is an alternative realm, the alter-world that is equally real, but not an otherworldly (transcendental) image. Such encounters with the larger-than-human world are central in wild enchantments. The larger-than-human world is characterised by complexity and even hybridity, it is beyond nature in the traditional sense, or place or the landscape. The workshops that I have studied encourage exploration of alternative ways of experiencing the larger-than-human world. I refer to this as a shifting sensibility and it resonates with Bennett's "sensory receptivity to the marvellous specific things" and with Pyyry and Aiava's "reorganising power of enchantment". Enchantment is both a profound loss of meaning and a sudden gaining of significance. To work with wonder and wounds means an uninvited ontological unfolding of both loss and love. I would say that this takes enchantment to deeper level of complexity and towards hybridity.

Cultivating enchantment is, in one sense, performance and participation in a practice, perhaps as a training of the senses to be receptive to these moods, and also to process the full range of emotions or to reflect intellectually. Kim's emblematic and emotionally ambivalent words about being torn by "that unsettling feeling and the fire inside" guide me in this pursuit, because she expresses how emotions comes in clusters. As we have seen, the reflective practices are performed to facilitate and encourage reflections, and to offer an experience that forms an alternative to the disenchanted world. Although the primary purpose of these practices may not be to give rise to moments of bliss, participants do tell of profound experiences in these workshops. Thus, if the moments of bliss are like a gift from providence, to cultivate enchantment is in one sense, the performance and participation in a practice. It is the exploration of capacities or abilities, of sensory modes, to be receptive to these moods, to process the full range of emotions but also to reflect, intellectually.

Consequently, cultivations of wild enchantments relate to the full emotional register and to a renewed understanding of the many ways we relate to the larger-than-human world. Wild enchantment is a this-worldly and relational experience, it emerges in participating in the world, and interaction with the larger-than-human world. Wild enchantments are reciprocal enchantment, and as Jay Griffith notes, reciprocity means that we will not only be enchanted by the land, we can likewise enchant the land, for example by performing various practices. As we have seen, to sing, 'chanter' is part of the etymology of the enchantment. Hence, enchanting moments may be short and deep, they may give rise to lasting impression and may be transformative, which should not be mistaken for some religious revelation of contact with God, the divine, the transcendental, or the otherworldly. I characterise dark green spirituality as this-worldly, which does not mean that it lacks perspective or is narrow-minded. The *this-worldly is part of the larger-than-human world,* and it sets humanity in perspectives that reach beyond, but without leaving the living world behind.

6.3.4 Tales of Enchantment and the Art of the Anthropocene

The power of stories is that they contribute to creating the state that they picture, their rhetorical powers have real effects. Bennett notes: "I fear that another story of a world in crisis might do more to undermine ecological concern that to raise awareness of ecological destruction".[875] In distinguishing between the two tales of modernity, the tale of enchantment and the tale of disenchantment she sets the example for an enchanted alter-tale. Modern history has too often been told as the tale of disenchantment, assuming that the "premodern world gave way to forces of scientific and instrumental rationality".[876] This tale depicts nature and culture as orders no longer capable of inspiring deep attachments, inflecting the self as a creature of loss and thus discourages discernment of the marvellous vitality of bodies human and non-human, natural and artefactual. It should not be denied that a tale has to do with words, and the power of words may be a tool for enchantment. The scholar of literature Robert Macfarlane considers language to be fundamental for the possibility of re-wonderment, for language does not just register experience, it produces it. Words are inseparable from the feelings we create in relation to situations, to others and to places.[877] Macfarlane does not suggest that the answer to the question of how to find this lost language and enchantment is to adopt a literal animism or systematic superstition. The project is to restore these lost words and find a language that can speak of both magic and enchantment, but also something distinctively darker, which Macfarlane describes as a tendency to the new eerie in contemporary artwork.[878] The new eerie is a landscape culture that nourishes a fascination with ideas of unsettlement and displacement. The eeriness emerges in landscape haunted by its past and by ecological shadows that seem to be haunted by ghosts from a future beyond control. The eeriness, the wounds or displacement contrast with the simple sense of wonder. The new stories that here emerge are set within the landscape and arts of the Anthropocene; these stories are told by other voices.

The philosopher Donna Haraway describes the art of the Anthropocene as multispecies storytelling that allows us to make kin with other species. The anthropologists Elaine Gain, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson and Nils Budant address the traces of the more-than-human histories through which ecologies are

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[875] Bennett 2001:91.

[876] Bennett 2001:7.

[877] Macfarlane 2018:25–26. Language carries both formative and informative impulse – the power known to theorists as 'illocutionary' and 'illative'. Macfarlane claims that: "Certain kinds of language can restore a measure of wonder to our relations with nature. Others might offer modest tools for modest place-making. Others still might free objects at least momentarily from their role as standing reserve."

[878] Macfarlane, Robert (2015) "The Eeriness of the English countryside", *The Guardian* 10 April 2015.

made and unmade.[879] The new stories are the stories of the Anthropocene, which are created in various practices, such as storytelling and constructed in relation to place, such as Dartmoor. The practice of storytelling emphasises the role of voice and listening, because in this it is not exclusively human voices that are heard. Haraway's multispecies storytelling is central in the culture of wildness. This concerns the stories told or untold, those whose voices are heard and whose are silenced, and it emphasises the role of listening to a multitude of voices. When listening to a storyteller, it is not only the voice of the teller that is central. Rather, the story voices other voices; those who speak with a different tongue and logic than human language; for the larger-than-human world, for the long-gone ancient world, and even for those to come – the ghosts of yesterday and tomorrow.

Myths are stories that carry the ancient knowledge of the land, and they are material to work with, to bring home. Mythology is a tool in the exploration of the wild consciousness. Mythology and storytelling often inspire people to turn their further interest to Paganism or Druidry. Imagination is central in the creation of stories, and Haivens and Knasnabish refer to the role of *radical imagination*, which is not to be seen as a private property of the individual.[880] Radical imagination is like a nest where experiences, language, stories, ideas and art and theories are shared. People create, or co-create, from this material, landscapes, horizons, but also multiple landscapes, sometimes overlapping and contradictory or coexisting landscapes.[881] This approach to stories is an alternative to Western literature, with its focus on the author as a unique artist producing the story from his/her individual or inner life. The use of local lore and mythology can be seen as a form of recycling of old material, the telling is a re-telling, a continuous creative reworking process, where contemporary issues of the Anthropocene can be expressed. The mythic frame offers symbols, language, characters, and it relates to place, in this case to Dartmoor, to ancient history, and to deep time perspectives of geological and ancient records.

The Anachronism of the Ancient Landscape and Narratives of the Post-Apocalypse

Given its Bronze Age history, the ancient landscape of Dartmoor works as an example of collapsing societies – or collapsing civilisations, and therefore it is a suitable place to visit as a part of eco-education. The conception of Dartmoor as an ancient mythic landscape is an anachronism because the lost-civilisation narrative is set within a contemporary environmental discourse of the end of civilisation. Telling the story of the collapse of Dartmoorian Bronze Age civilisation at the site makes it possible to play out the narrative in real life. The reading of the landscape, the enigmatic question of why this civilisation collapsed, the answer, of misuse of nature resources, or changing climate, makes this story into more than just a story

[879] Gain, Tsing, Swanson and Budant 2017.

[880] Haiven and Knasnabish 2014:4.

[881] Haiven and Knasnabish 2014:4.

of something long gone. There are striking parallels to the contemporary context of environmental discourse, where Jared Diamond's collapse theory states that civilisations collapse when they put too much strain on the ecological environment.[882] In visiting Dartmoor these collapse theories come to life as part of the history of the place. In one sense, Dartmoor is a place where the collapse already has taken place. It is thus an anachronistic landscape, that is, we look at the historical landscape as a stage for setting a story that addresses a contemporary predicament, and in this the anachronism spins over to an environmental apocalypse.

'Apocalypse' is a prophetic story of how the end of the world gives way to a new and better world, and contemporary political theories have taken the notion to form 'apocalypticism'. Sasha Lilley describes it as a politics of collapse and political rebirth.[883] Bron Taylor consider apocalypticism to be distinctive for radical environmentalism. Taylor notes that this apocalypticism is "radically innovative in the history of religion – because it is the first time an expectation of the end of the known world has been grounded in environmental science."[884] Today scientific models agree on the problem; climate crisis is not just a prophecy of some environmental group; it is a problem that a majority of society agree on even if there might be strongly dividing views on the cure. Nor can the theme of a civilisation in deep crisis be said to be restricted to some circles of radical environmentalism. Taylor argues that ecological problems reflect and express a profound change in cultural models and are fused together, as a bricklayer or mason pieces together a wall or a building with mortar and stone. Today there is a global environmental milieu in which shared ideas incubate, cross-fertilise and spread. It is a process characterised by hybridisation and bricolage.[885]

Apocalyptic stories express the moods of Anthropocene, but this raises the question: how can the decline of ecosystems and the collapse of human societies pave the way back to an earthly paradise? Apocalypses are seen as a way forward to something different to come, that is, the post-apocalypse. The post-apocalyptic theme does not just wallow in catastrophes, and Lucy Sargisson points that although these dystopias often are pessimistic about human nature, contemporary "post-apocalypse dystopias are ambivalent"[886] Similarly, Bron Taylor characterises these expectations of the collapse as an "inseparability of pessimism and optimism, and the ambivalence about the coming catastrophe".[887] Disaster is immanent, it involves

[882] Diamond 2011.

[883] Lilley 2012.

[884] Taylor 2011:84 Taylor claims that "what separates radical environmentalism from many other forms of dark green religion is apocalypticism." Radical environmentalism does not necessarily imply a political radicalism, according to Taylor.

[885] Taylor 2010:14.

[886] Sargisson 2012:114.

[887] Taylor 2010:85.

the desecration of a sacred world, and it must be resisted.[888] Therefore, if these collapse stories give rise to neither pessimism nor optimism, what is the use of them? I think Sargisson's notion of post-apocalypticism addresses something distinctive: The post-apocalyptic theme "strips away society to see what lies beneath", [889] which is in tune with the etymology of 'Apocalypse' which is connected to 'uncovering' and 'revelation'. Post-apocalyptic stories make it possible to "imagine human society after the removal of current institutions, structures and norms".[890] *The end of civilisation* is one such post-apocalyptic narrative, which is part of the emic discourse on climate change and civilisation. To strip away society to see what is underneath invites the historical long-term and deep-time perspectives. To strip away society is to dig deeper than the present, and thus resonates with what I describe as negotiating baselines. The post-apocalyptic story is an imaginary collapse. The post-apocalypse narrative and imagination may feed from the history and legends, but it is also set in the present because it relates to a wider environmental discourse, and it mediates an ethos of environmental concern. I found that the long-term or deep-time perspectives play a vital role in mediating an ecological ethos, as intergeneration justice is at the core of ecological ethics.

The post-apocalyptic narrative should not be mistaken for a story of gloom and doom, because *the end of civilisation* parallels the emergence of a new culture of wildness. These are both related to Dartmoor and refer to structural changes in relation to climate change and ecological crisis. It is notable that this double narrative ranges between *end* and *emergence*. Taken together, *the end of civilisation* and the emergence of a culture of wildness forms a narrative that tells of a historical, social and cultural transformation.

6.3.5 The Wild − Wild Places as Spiritual Resources

In this section I will discuss multifaceted notions of 'the wild' as a spiritual resource, in relation to wild places, and sum up some features. I describe Dartmoor as a wild place, because it challenges our expectations of wilderness, it also questions our conception of what it means to be human − as modern man or as a species − and our ways of knowing the larger-than-human world or the stories we tell. The powers of the larger-than-human world such as deep time, wind or light, are something we can experience through our five senses, but also through our sensibilities, such as intuition, compassion, imagination. These riddling powers of the larger-than-human world are expressed in myths, legends and folklore, and therefore these tales often evoke enchanting moods. This deep time encounter may be something like a time

[888] Taylor 2011:86.

[889] Sargisson 2012:114.

[890] Sargisson 2012:114.

travel representing an alternative way to approach the past which does not foreground either knowledge, insights or critique; instead it gives credibility to experience, and holds up sensual immersion as a distinctive feature.[891] This leads towards deep time perspectives, which go beyond presence-absence, and it is part of the hybridity of the Anthropocene which pushes the dichotomisation of life-death, body-place, inner-outer, human-animal over the edge. It is a holistic notion of the world, distinct from the rationalistic Newtonian scientific laws of nature.

Rewilding offer a model for how humans can reform their attitude to nature or the larger-than-human world, as well as their self-conception as a species. This will have positive consequences for how they interact with other species, and to become more compassionate and egalitarian, and their use of natural resources in consideration to other species and ecosystems. These new conceptions of how-to-live-in nature can be referred to as "reconnecting to nature" but can also be referred to as a rewilding of the human mind. In a spiritual vocabulary reconnecting to nature is often conceptualised as 'healing' of broken relation to nature, and this healing is done, for example, in various workshops. Ecological self-awareness sets us in a different relation to the world. The world we presume to save is no longer simply the outer world. We (humans) are part of the ecosystem, and there is no longer any other world but a world of relational intimacy. We are part of the world that needs to be saved, but at the same time, part of a species that has caused the ecological crisis. Hence, ecological self-awareness sets us in a relation of hybrid intimacy with a world; in being part of the human species as the cause of the crisis, we are still forced to face the challenge of how to contribute to change towards an ecologically viable future.

I found wild places − and exploring the wildness of wild places − to be important for the realisation of the wild mind. What I refer to as negotiating baselines is central to finding and exploring these wild places. I see the negotiation of baselines as taking two forms:(i) negotiating baseline – in relation to the actual place in reading the landscape, where various practices help to see the landscape beyond its present shape, and (ii) negotiating baselines in relation to deep time, which sets wild places in relation to the riddling power of the Anthropocene. Negotiating baselines works with both place and time. These places are of interest for the green movement, examples of environmental degradation visited not only for education excursions but also for spiritual reasons. The riddling power evokes both spiritual and eerie moods. Therefore, wild places are spiritual places. They hold the quality referred to as sacramental values (Gerrard) or the power to enchant (Bennett). Dartmoor is a lost forest; in a long-term historical perspective, it is an ecologically wounded place. Wistman's Wood, the reminiscence of that lost forest, is also a haunted place, which is part of its power to enchant. Wild places may hold a reputation of being eerie, uncanny or being haunted. Wild places may be wounded places where various healing practices are performed – they are sites for working with wonder and

[891] Holtoft 2017:4.

wounds. The ancient landscape is a spiritual resource, it is a source of stories and a space for encounters with the larger-than-human world and with ecological ghosts and shadows. Wild places resonate with Thomas Gieryn's truth-spots, which are places that render credibility to beliefs and claims, about the past and future, natural and social reality. These are places that, in Gieryn's words "make people believe", nevertheless, wild places are never to be taken for granted; they may be both mesmerising and evoke uncertainty. They illustrate that truth is a complex thing, and this is very much part of their hybrid character.

Hybridity of Wild Places

Wild places are complex not only in the conceptual sense, wild places are hybrid places. They are characterised by ambivalence, and as exemplified by Dartmoor, wild places might be marginal places. This is not the only characterisation of Dartmoor, however, because it is equally pictured as a haunted place, a sacred place, a thin place. Dartmoor's history is distinctive here: it has been settled and abandoned, used as grazing land for centuries, before becoming a national park and marketed in tourist information as an outstanding example of British wilderness, yet despite being a national park, kept open according to swaling practices, in order to remain a characteristic moorland. Dartmoor is a place marked by human presence and interference. In a long-term perspective, a lost woodland, a heavily transformed landscape, and an example of how humans remould landscapes according to their needs and preferences, with little or no consideration for the larger-than-human world. From this point of view, Dartmoor is a site of environmental degradation, it is a wounded place, a lost forest, therefore it is a suitable place to visit to reflect on these matters, and this is compatible with being a wild place. Graham Harvey refers to such places as greenwoods. These are places where we are visitors and can encounter Life in all it many dimensions, and relationships.[892] Greenwoods are special places, and places "in the margins of human dominance".[893] Greenwoods are part of the less human centred world. Despite being marginal, wild places are not set apart as reservations to protect; they are not untouched nature, or pure, they are hybrid places. They include historical, social and cultural perspectives and this mixture is very much their attraction. It brings to life the social processes that go beyond models of climatological or geological data. Being hybrid places, wild places are far from the romantic notion of pure nature or untouched wilderness, they are rather what Donna Haraway refers to as natureculture. Nonetheless, wild places may be places for wildlife, but likewise places for rewilding and the realisation of the rewilding of the human mind. Therefore, wild places do not conflict with the presence of humans, as the romantic notion of wilderness suggests. There is, however, a need for distinctions because domesticated beings, which may be both animals and humans, are contrasted with feral ones, and while the domesticated (or

[892] Harvey 2011:159.

[893] Harvey 2011:158–159.

civilised human being) may still be problematic, the feral is not. Feral is, as George Monbiot notes; “a wild state, especially after escape from captivity and domestication”. [894]

Therefore, I consider wild places as distinctive in the realisation of a less human-centred world. These are the places for encounters and manifestations of the larger-than-human world. The present is set in proportional perspective to the larger-than-human world. At the same time, it relates the present to all those perspectives that are considered deep. Wild places hold the key to let us out of the iron cage of rationalisation. Finally, from a spiritual perspective, the hybridity of wild places sets the present in the long-term and deep-time perspective, which offers an enigmatic quality that is attractive. It is multifaceted and holds a riddling power that stimulates the cultivation of wild enchantments.

In conclusion, to answer the question I posed concerning the relation between narrative, practice and place, I claim that narrative, practice and place both mirror and amplify each other, that they coexist and constitute each other, and when it comes to actual workshops, they merge to a unity in what I refer to as working with wonder and wounds. I also claim that ‘place’ forms a hub, between narrative and practice, therefore places or ‘place’ in one sense form the basis. In simple terms, my reason for this is that both narratives and practices ‘take place’. My notion of negotiating baselines further illustrates how narrative, practice and place comes together and how ‘place’, or the landscape, is central here. From a theoretical perspective this can be referred to ‘places with the power to enchant’ following Bennett, but I also think this can be seen as hybrid places. My study presents Dartmoor as one such place, and I have brought the analysis further in discussing Dartmoor as both a wild place and as a spiritual resource.

6.4 Prospects for Further Research

To conduct a study and write a thesis means to offer answers to the questions posed. In this sense the task is straightforward. So far, I have concluded my analysis and presented answers which I found satisfying. During the process towards the final chapter, something may emerge that falls beside the study you are conducting. As noted, the reality is always stranger than expected and it means that there must be space for the unexpected.

In order to give a stringent presentation of my results, I have been forced to put some findings aside and avoid elaborating on some themes that I would have liked to pay more attention to. At best, these can be kept for later as they offer material and inspiration for further research. I would especially have liked to dedicate more

[894] Monbiot 2014.

space to what I call the paradoxical animism of the Anthropocene, the ghostly shadow of ecological losses that gives them an animistic life. This paradoxical animism seems to emerge in the process of negotiating baselines, which seems to stir up the ghostly presence of futures past. It brings to life a spiritual ecology and ontology of animated lifeforms of unexpected presence and character, which mediate the ethical challenge of ecocide. It is a ghostly or eerie version of the vibrant matter that Bennett pictures, and it seems to resonate with pagan animistic sentiments which would be valuable to analyse in relation that Partridge's term 'paganization'. I would also like to devote further attention to the various aspects of the coming together of the deep and the dark, both in the sense of the ideological and philosophical discussion of deep ecology (Arne Næss) in relation to dark ecology (Timothy Morton), and how deep-time perspectives evoke the dark in a sense that simultaneously brings out the dark of the romantic sentiments of the tradition of the Counter-Enlightenment, and pushes the deep and the dark into the hybrid intimacy of the Anthropocene in the echoing question: *Who is the Anthropos of the Anthropocene*? Therefore, I take these themes as prospects for further research and hopefully I will be able to return to them and give them the attention they deserve.

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