THE SACRED JOURNEY OF THE EARTH COMMUNITY:
TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL AND ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY
VIA THE COSMOLOGIES OF
THOMAS BERRY AND ZHOU DUNYI

by

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Abstract

The present context of the ecological crisis and the concomitant bio-geological change demands an urgent, comprehensive response in order to restore the integral functioning of the Earth’s processes. Since the ecological crisis is deeply rooted in a mechanistic and reductionistic worldview and a spirituality of alienation from the Earth, this thesis attempts to develop a functional and ecological spirituality in light of a cosmological perspective, seeking an interpretation of religion and spirituality in terms of the story of the universe and of the Earth process and a functional presence of humanity on the Earth community.

This thesis explores the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou by employing two methods – a method of critical cosmological discourse and a method of retrieval, re-evaluation, and reconstruction. By giving special attention to the integral relationship among God, the cosmos and humanity, the works of Berry and Zhou provide insights that speak to the current ecological crisis, a cosmological context for developing an Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality, while helping to advance clear values and ethical parameters that lead to a more authentic human presence on the Earth community. In particular, an Ecozoic spirituality has three interrelated yet distinct components: i) an eco-theological recognition of a triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity; ii) a transformation of worldview, human identity, and human attitudes toward the rest of creation; and iii) certain distinctive virtues that such an integration promotes. This Ecozoic spirituality can help
develop a sacramental sensitivity to the rest of creation and can promote humanity’s participatory responsibility for the sacred journey of the Earth community.
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INTRODUCTION

A. Thesis Statement

*Status Quaestionis*

B. The Scope, Description, Method, and Procedure of the Dissertation

1. Scope: Thomas Berry and Zhou Dunyi
2. Description of Key Terms
   a. Cosmology
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3. Methodology
4. Procedure

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A. Thesis Statement

This study will examine how a functional and ecological spirituality – i.e., an Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality – can be developed by means of a critical discourse involving the cosmologies of Thomas Berry (1914-2009, USA) and Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073, China) in order to propose an effective response to the ecological crisis. Because the works of Berry and Zhou each develop a functional cosmology as well as a functional spirituality and explore the triadic communion among the divine, humanity and the rest of creation, their cosmologies can serve as resources for articulating an Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality that will promote an authentic and sustainable human presence on Earth. Such a spirituality will transform our worldview, human identity, and attitudes towards creation thereby helping us to integrate the evolutionary journey of the Earth community and the ecological practices of Christianity.

I am not attempting to compare every aspect of the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou in order to build a *summa* cosmology. Instead, I will select aspects of their respective cosmologies that can contribute to an effective response to the ecological crisis presently besetting Earth and its inhabitants.

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1 In this thesis statement, the term “theocosmoanthric” refers to an integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity. The term “Ecozoic” was created by Thomas Berry to refer to the geo-biological era that follows the terminal phase of the Cenozoic era “when human conduct will be guided by the ideal of an integral earth community, a period when humans will be present upon the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner.” Thomas Berry, “Ecozoic Era,” 1. http://www.earth-community.org/images/The%20Ecozoic%20Era.pdf (accessed on May 12, 2011)
Both cosmologies recognize the integral relationship among the divine, humanity, and the rest of creation while nevertheless remaining congruous with their respective Christian and Asian roots.

While Berry’s Ecozoic vision has been influenced by Neo-Confucian works and often echoes Zhou’s thought, a closer examination of Zhou’s Neo-Confucian cosmology may assist in fleshing out some undeveloped aspects of Berry’s scholarship. The functional and ecological spirituality that results from a critical discourse with their cosmologies can help us develop a sacramental sensitivity to the rest of creation and can promote humanity’s participatory responsibility for the sacred journey of the Earth community.

Status Quaestionis

The complexity of the ecological crisis requires many interdisciplinary solutions and an openness to diverse ideas. Among these approaches are the dialogues between ecology and religion that have informed contemporary eco-spiritual studies. The ecological crisis is not only the result of certain economic, political and social factors, deeply influenced by a “fractured worldview,” it is also significantly related to a moral and spiritual crisis. Thomas Berry sees the ecological crisis as a spiritual crisis that ultimately contributes to a collapse of ethics, which is inseparable from a dysfunctional cosmology. He states, “The brutality of our relation to the earth cannot but indicate a

\[\text{2 For a recognition of the indebtedness of Berry’s work to Confucian influences, see Mary Evelyn Tucker, “An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry,” in } \textit{Evening Thoughts, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006), 151, 156-161.}\]

\[\text{3 According to Ken Wilber, the current ecological crisis is due primarily to a fractured worldview. He notes that “a fractured worldview” is “a worldview that drastically separates mind and body, subject and object, culture and nature, thoughts and things, values and facts, spirit and matter, human and nonhuman; a worldview that is dualistic, mechanistic, atomistic, anthropocentric, and pathologically hierarchical – a worldview that, in short, erroneously separates humans from, and often unnecessarily elevates humans above, the rest of fabric of reality, a broken worldview that alienates men and women from the intricate web of patterns and relationships that constitute the very nature of life and Earth and cosmos.” Ken Wilber, } \textit{Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: the Spirit of Evolution} (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 12. Emphasis is original.\]

radical absence of spirituality in man (sic), not the lack of a spiritual dimension of the earth.”

In response, and concurrent with his articulation of a functional cosmology, he pursues a functional spirituality for a viable human and Earth community. If we accept that spiritual and ethical issues rooted in a dysfunctional cosmology and spirituality are significantly contributing to the ecological crisis, then the remedy and corrective should be sought there as well.

In recent years, much research has provided considerable insight on these ecological, ethical and spiritual matters. For instance, David Kinsley adds historical and cross-cultural depth to this dialogue in his book *Ecology and Religion*. He focuses on the rediscovery of ecologically sensitive intuitions in all the major world religions while showing how humans build intimate relationships beyond the human species. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, surveys extensively the transformation of religious traditions in light of a rising awareness of the ecological crisis. Paul Knitter refers to this examination of ecological issues by world religions in his book *One Earth Many Religions* and suggests a correlative and globally responsible model for a primary commitment to humanity and ecological well-being. Most prominently, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim organized a three-year intensive conference series held between 1996 and 1998 and entitled “Religions of the World and Ecology.” Subsequently, their Forum on Religion and Ecology, working with Harvard University Press, has published nine books in the “World

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6 Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, co-directors of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, also share the view that the “current environmental crisis is spiritual and ethical.” They contend that world religions might provide a more ecologically friendly worldview. See Tucker and Grim, “Series Foreword,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, xvii. Similarly, the Earth Chart recognizes “the importance of moral and spirituality education for sustainable living.” Earth Chart IV. 14d: http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html (accessed on Oct 6, 2011).


Religions and Ecology Book Series,10 including two volumes that are of particular interest in this thesis, namely Christianity and Ecology and Confucianism and Ecology.11 In this thesis, I will draw on this contemporary research and explore the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou to tease out ecological sensibilities and an ethical participatory responsibility which will subsequently inform the development of a functional and ecological spirituality.

The genesis for my decision to create a cosmological discourse between Berry and Zhou began with my appreciation for the work of Berry. Not only did I find that work appealing in its own right, but Berry’s thought has been significantly influenced by an East Asian worldview. More specifically, his deep appreciation of the ethical and cosmological dimensions of Confucianism drew me to explore the Neo-Confucian roots that have informed my own life.12

Confucianism has generally been criticized both as a nationalistic, authoritarian mechanism of control associated with East Asia’s feudal past, and for the discrepancy between its teachings and its practices.13 Nevertheless, contemporary Confucian scholars, the so called New Confucians, have revisioned their tradition through interpreters that include Chung-ying Cheng, Julia Ching, and Tu Wei-ming.14 Neo-Confucians like Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), Zhang Zai (1020-1077), Zhu Xi (1230-1298), Hessel and Ruether, ed. Christianity and Ecology; Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, ed. Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

For a complete list of the books in the World Religions and Ecology series, see: http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/books/book_series/cswr/index.html (accessed on Sep 26, 2012)


12 My Korean Christian identity is inseparable from Confucianism and the influence of other religious traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism, and shamanism. Many Korean and Western scholars agree that Confucianism has been a major influence in the formation of a Korean-Christian religiosity. See Heup Young Kim, Wang Yang-ming and Karl Barth: a Confucian-Christian Dialogue (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996); Hans Küng and Julia Ching, Christianity and Chinese Religions (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 85.


1200), and Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) are often mentioned in current ecological literature. The New Confucians, building on Neo-Confucianism, posit a viable philosophical and spiritual tradition that will serve a new ecologically sensitive age. Similarly, Western scholars such as Berry, William T. de Bary, John Berthrong, and Tucker are particularly interested in the cosmology and the spiritual dimension of Confucianism, and link that tradition intensively with contemporary responses to ecological issues.15

Christianity is also developing an impressive body of work focusing on eco-theology. Eco-theologians, such as Denis Edwards, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sallie McFague, Jay McDaniel, Stephen Bede Scharper, Mark I. Wallace, and Charles Cummings, agree that the present ecological crisis results from an anthropocentric mode of consciousness that leads humans to believe that they are separate from each other and other creatures, and can use and abuse other creatures and the Earth itself.16 They also critique certain inwardly psychological or otherworldly transcendental emphases within Christian spirituality that have contributed to the development of the ecological crisis, resulting in what Ruether calls “an earth-fleeing ethic and spirituality.”17 By and large, these theologians agree that our current spiritualities are inadequate and therefore call for a revision that will transform our attitudes toward the Earth.

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17 Ruether, Gaia and God, 139.
B. The Scope, Description, Method, and Procedure of the Dissertation

1. Scope: Thomas Berry and Zhou Dunyi

The primary aim of Berry’s New Story is to heal a distorted human-Earth relationship in order to enable humanity to develop a more effective and integral functionality with the Earth. Although Zhou Dunyi articulated his cosmology a millennium ago, his insights can still provide a method to cultivate an authentic human presence within the cosmological community. In this regard, the scope of this thesis is to focus deliberately on the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou since these cosmologies will help to explore both the complex relationship among cosmology, morality, and spirituality, and the integral relationship among the divine, the natural world, and the human.

Berry is recognized as a pre-eminent pioneer in a cosmological approach to spirituality and morality. He is regarded as “one the 20th-century’s most probing thinkers on the human relationship with the natural world and its implication for religion.” His continuous effort to overcome the current ecological degradation while trying to build a foundation for a viable future through the development of a functional cosmology has been given considerable attention. Berry explored a new interpretation of religion and spirituality in light of the evolutionary story of the universe and of the Earth’s processes. A functional cosmology is presented in his several texts, including: The

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19 Various aspects of Berry’s thought have been expounded by theologians and ecological scholars, including theologians of the University of Toronto, such as Stephen Dunn, Dennis P. O’Hara, and Stephen B. Sharper to mention only a few examples. In recent years, publications in the fields of economics, education and psychology have shown the immense appeal of Berry’s thought and point to an increasing interest in his functional cosmology. See Ervin Laszlo and Allan Combs, ed. Thomas Berry, Dreamer of the Earth: The Spiritual Ecology of the Father of Environmentalism (Rochester: Inner Tradition, 2011). For economic connection in particular, see Paul Hawken, The Ecology of Commerce: a Declaration of Sustainability (New York: HaperBusiness, 1993); for education, see David W. Orr, Earth in Mind: on Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004), and Edmund O’Sullivan, Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); for psychology, see Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes and Allen D. Kanner, Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995).
**Universe Story** (with Brian Swimme), *The Dream of the Earth, The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, and *The Sacred Universe*.²⁰

As noted by Tucker, Confucianism played a central role in the formation of Berry’s thought and had the greatest influence on his work of all the Asian religious traditions.²¹ Tucker says, “For Berry, Confucianism has had significance because of its cosmological concerns, its interest in self-cultivation and education, and its commitment to improve social and political order.”²² Thus, Berry’s acquaintance with and affection for the work of Zhou Dunyi and other Confucians offers me another portal into his thoughts.²³

Zhou Dunyi is considered to be the pioneer who laid the pattern of cosmology, human morality, and the practice of self-cultivation for later Neo-Confucianism.²⁴ In the midst of the troubling times of the early Song Dynasty in China (960-1279) when Daoism and Buddhism challenged the place of Confucianism, there was a pressing need for a more coherent and systematic cosmology that would both sustain and develop the central Confucian value of morality. This calling for a new cosmology was taken up by Zhou. Zhou’s ethical and organic cosmology became the foundation of an officially recognized East Asian worldview and moral philosophy that flourished during the Song dynasty and until the early twentieth century.²⁵ I will examine his texts: *An

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²¹ Tucker, “An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry,” in *Evening Thoughts*, 151, 156-161

²² Ibid., 159.

²³ Berry, for instance, recalls that Zhou Dunyi was so attentive to the “communion of man with all the universe” that he was compelled “not to cut the grass.” Berry, “Affectivity in Classical Confucianism,” *Riverdale Papers* III(n.d.), 12.

²⁴ See Chan, *Source Book*, 460. There were Five Masters of the early Song period in China, who gave Confucianism a new direction called Neo-Confucianism: Zhou Dunyi (1017-73), Shao Yong (1011-77), Zhang Zai (1020-77), Cheng Hao (1032-85) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107).

Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (Taijitu shuo), and Penetrating the Book of Changes (Tongshu).²⁶

More specifically, I will consider how the cosmologies of both Berry and Zhou will enable an exploration of an integral relationship among the divine, the natural world, and the human – a triadic relationship that has increasingly drawn scholarly attention.²⁷ The integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity that has been studied in the cosmotheandric experience of Raimon Panikkar, the theandropocosmic vision of Heup Young Kim, and the ontology of communion of Douglas Hall.²⁸ Whatever it is called, an understanding of the profound, integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity would help us to avoid slipping into anthropocentrism (separation from God and the rest of creation), theo-centrism (ignorance of creatures and all created things), or bio-centrism (ignorance of the Creator and the Creator’s call to all people).²⁹

For his part, Berry seeks a mutually enhancing Earth-human relationship that is situated within the sacred milieu of a creation rich with Divine immanence.³⁰ This view is partially informed

²⁶ Zhou Dunyi, An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (Taijitu shuo) in Chan, Source Book; and Zhou Dunyi, Penetrating the Book of Changes (Tongshu) in Chan, Source Book.

²⁷ For instance, Tucker and Grim assert that there is now a particular need for religion and ecology to explore “more fully divine-human-earth relations.” See Tucker and Grim, “Series Forward,” in Confucianism and Ecology, xxiv. As H. Paul Santmire notes, the term ecological includes the notion of the systemic interrelationship among God, humanity and the rest of creation. See H. Paul Santmire, The Traval of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 252. Furthermore, Elizabeth Johnson contends that, in our times, there emerges a need for a right spiritual and ethical relationship with Earth, as a new, vitally important issue that also encompasses a right relationship with God and peaceful justice among people. See E. Johnson, “Passion for God, Passion for the Earth,” in Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-first Century: Essays in Honor of Joan D. Chittister, ed. Mary Hembrow Snyder (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001), 118.


³⁰ It is worthwhile to mentioning Teilhard de Chardin’s influence on Berry here. In particular, The Divine Milieu and Hymn of the Universe should be mentioned. See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu: an Essay on the Interior Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Hymn of the Universe, translated by Simon Bartholomew (London: Collins, 1965). Berry states, “We need to establish a rapport among the divine, the natural world, and the human. These three each have their proper language. We need to understand that the locus of meeting of the human and the divine is in the natural world.” Berry, Sacred Universe, 146.
by his reflection on biblical passages (particularly St. Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, and the Fourth Gospel), his study of Aboriginal spirituality, and his comprehension of an Asian (Confucian) worldview.\(^{31}\) He concludes that due to a favouring of divine-human and inter-human relations, “the sense of integrity of the divine, the natural, and the human has been neglected for centuries by Christians.”\(^{32}\) By understanding the universe as divine manifestation in a time-developmental sequence, he hopes to re-establish an appreciation of the inherent integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity.

The harmonious interrelation among heaven, Earth, and humanity is inherent in the Confucian (Asian) worldview as the title of the text *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, suggests. In particular, Zhou illustrates this integration, drawing from the *Book of Changes* and the *Centrality and Commonality*. He states, “Hence, the character of sage [the ultimate standard for humans] is identical with that of Heaven and Earth.”\(^{33}\) Zhou praises Confucius who established a trinity with Heaven and Earth.\(^{34}\) Indeed, the supreme achievement of human personality in this context is to achieve integrity with the Way of Heaven and Earth through the practice of self-cultivation.

For these reasons, I believe that Berry and Zhou can serve as resources for articulating a functional ecological spirituality which will highlight the importance of both an Ecozoic vision, and a contemplative commitment nourished by the practice of ecological cultivation. In addition, the


\(^{32}\) Berry, *Christian Future*, 78; See also Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 149; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 48; Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 199.


\(^{34}\) Zhou, *Penetrating*, ch. 34, in Chan, *Source Book*. 
contribution of the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou has been widely accepted but little examined in the area of eco-spirituality, an oversight for which this thesis will offer some remedy.\textsuperscript{35}

2. Description of Key Terms

For this study, it will be necessary to describe some essential terms such as cosmology and spirituality. I prefer to use the term description rather than definition. The former seems to indicate dynamics that are relational and transformative, and therefore more appropriate for the purposes of this thesis than the latter, which seems to assume something to be static and unchangeable.\textsuperscript{36}

a. Cosmology

In its simplest sense, cosmology is understood as “the belief about the nature of the universe.”\textsuperscript{37} More specifically, a cosmology provides the story of the universe, a universe which is the primary source of intelligibility and value; a cosmology explains the role of the human in that universe story, providing a “ground for reflection on human meaning and orientation in the world.”\textsuperscript{38} Thus, a cosmology or worldview is not limited merely to the scientific study of the physical universe, but it also encompasses religious, ontological and ethical aspects. Swimme and Berry note that a cosmology aims to explain “the story of the universe so that humans can enter fruitfully into the web

\textsuperscript{35} Particularly, research on Zhou, although his role and influence on Neo-Confucianism was so crucial, is still in its early stages. There are currently few scholars examining Zhou’s thought. Western scholars, for example Joseph Adler, seem to center their studies on the question of Zhu Xi’s characterization of Zhou as the founder of the Neo-Confucian tradition. Meanwhile Asian scholars’ studies focus more on the genuineness of Zhou’s work regarding the debate on the origins of the An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate (Taijitu shuo), and focus less on its importance in terms of ecological implication. See Joseph A. Adler, “Response and Responsibility: Chou Tun-i and Confucian Resources for Environmental Ethics,” in Ecology and Confucianism, 123-149; Byounghown Kim, “A Study of Chou Tun-i’s Thought,” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Arizona, 1996).

\textsuperscript{36} Indeed, the thought of Berry and Zhou is more descriptive than definitive. Anne Marie Dalton understands that “a story is a descriptive account,” so that Berry’s New Story is primarily descriptive. See Anne Marie Dalton, A Theology for the Earth: the Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), 108.


\textsuperscript{38} Berry, Dream of the Earth, xi; Tucker and John, “Introduction,” in Christian Future, xxiii.
of relationship with the universe.”39 Accordingly, it provides both a mythic and scientific understanding of the universe.

In addition, a cosmology is not a static conceptual belief system. When a current cosmology becomes too problematic and/or dysfunctional to deal with contemporary pressing challenges, a new cosmology eventually emerges.40 As the ground for reflection on meaning and value in the midst of crises, an emerging cosmology offers new answers to the questions of who we are, where we are going, and what our relationship is to God, the natural world, and other people. Such is the case with the work of Berry and Zhou.

In Berry’s case, the narrative of the universe is a functional cosmology that provides a “new sense of the earth and of the human as a function of the earth.”41 By meditating on the scientific description of evolution of the universe for several decades, Berry tells the narrative of that cosmogenesis through its sequence of transformations, and identifies numinous mystery within that epic. Thus, echoing Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, he asserts that cosmogenesis must be understood as having both physical-material and psychic-spiritual dimensions from the inception of the universe.42 Similarly, Zhou offers a functional cosmology for Neo-Confucianism by articulating the inseparability of the innately moral nature of the human from both the universe and the ultimate reality.

b. Spirituality

39 Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 23.
41 Berry, “Spirituality of Earth,” 152.
As there is no single generic spirituality, the term spirituality is used in many differing ways by various professions. I do not attempt to offer a comprehensive description of spirituality but limit my description of the term to its functional as well as its ecological elements. Here, functional denotes a spirituality that promotes a mutually enhancing presence of humanity to Earth, thereby supporting the flourishing of both humans and the rest of planet Earth. An ecological spirituality serves to unite and experience the systemic interrelationship among God, humanity and the rest of creation.

Today, the notion of spirituality must also be understood in terms of the current ecological crisis. Concluding that the ecological crisis is significantly caused by a crisis of spirituality and morality, Pope John Paul II raises the necessity of an ecological conversion. Similarly, Kinsley notes that spirituality is the “ethical, moral or religious tendencies that related to the ecological issues.” Berry critiques modern spirituality for offering minimal resistance to the degradation of the Earth and further affirms that “the ultimate basis of our ecological difficulties [lies] in our spirituality itself.” Accordingly, he holds that “man (sic) in the future needs a spirituality superior to the spirituality of the past ages, a spirituality with the capacity to confront the desolation that threatens

43 As Stephen B. Bevans says, the contextualization of all theology – the attempt to understand the Christian faith from within and for a particular context – is really “a theological imperative.” It is likewise true that spirituality must be contextual since “there is no such thing as ‘generic spirituality’ because spirituality is always particular - that is, grounded in historical-cultural contexts.” See Stephen B. Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology: A Political Theology of the Environment (New York: Continuum, 1997), 3. Cummings also echoes this thought when he writes: “Christian spirituality is a developing tradition woven of many strands, not a fixed monolithic system.” Cummings even goes a step further than Bevans when he urges that a contextual spirituality needs to recover its cosmological dimension. Cummings, Eco-Spirituality, 10; See Philip Sheldrake, “Introduction,” in New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, vii.

44 Berry identifies the need for a functional spirituality that guides humanity into a mutually enhancing relationship with the rest of creation through a functional anthropology that is rooted in a functional cosmology. Berry, Dream of the Earth, 120.

45 Santmire, Travail of Nature, 252.


47 Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, xxi.

48 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 116.
man (sic) in a world of his own making.”

An effective response to the ecological crisis requires a functional and ecological spirituality.

Moreover, the term spirituality is understood in light of a triadic and intimate relationship among the Divine, humanity, and the rest of creation. According to Berry, spirituality means to “a mode of being in which not only the divine and the human commune with each other, but [in which] we discover ourselves in the universe and the universe discovers itself in us.” Similarly, in this thesis, I understand spirituality in the light of a profound integrity among God, the cosmos, and humans so I will pay significant attention to developing a right relationship with the Earth that necessarily encompasses a right relationship with God and humanity.

Lastly, spirituality is understood in the light of the planet Earth as our home. According to R.J Raja, eco-spirituality is “based on ecology, the word being derived from the Greek noun oikos which means a house, home or hearth.” Thus, “ecological spirituality is concerned with earth as our home.” There are two implications when we consider the Earth as our home: sacramental sensitivity to the natural world and participatory responsibility. On the one hand, the Earth is not regarded as merely a material resource, but is known to be a true home providing the conditions essential for life’s evolution and the nurturance of morality and spirituality. On the other hand, the ecological crisis calls forth a participatory responsibility of humanity for the rest of creation, as

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50 Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 155. Dennis O’Hara defines spirituality that which “informs the way we engage life beyond our self, drawing us into a unitive relationship with that which is typically considered to be apart from ourselves – others, the world and the Divine.” See Dennis P. O’Hara, “The Implications of Thomas Berry’s Cosmology for an Understanding of the Spiritual Dimension of Human Health,” (Ph.D. diss., St. Michael’s College, 1998), 29. Echoing Berry and O’Hara, Cummings perceives spirituality as an exploration of “the relationships that human beings have with the world around us and with God.” See Cummings, Eco-Spirituality, 27.


52 Ibid.

53 Berry and Zhou not only attempt to provide an origin story of the universe and humanity, but they also encompass the spiritual dimension (Berry) and ethical-moral dimension (Zhou) of the universe. According to Berry, the Earth has its intrinsic spiritual quality from its inception since the universe has had both a psychic-spiritual dimension and a physical-material dimension from its beginning; thereby, our human spirituality extends from the spiritual dimension of the Earth (and cosmos). Zhou identifies the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth which correspond to five moral principles of human nature – i.e., humanness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness.
requested by, for instance, Pope John Paul II, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and the World Council of Churches.\textsuperscript{54} John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch, in a joint statement, declared that, “Christians and all other believers have a specific role to play in proclaiming moral values and in educating people in ecological awareness, which is none other than responsibility toward self, towards others, toward creation.”\textsuperscript{55}

As a consequence of a renewed understanding of spirituality in the light of ecological as well as functional perspectives, this spirituality is rooted in the integral functioning of the bio-systems of the planet Earth. I hope that such a functional ecological spirituality might reawaken us to the natural world as a sacramental locus of divine manifestation and invite us to a contemplative commitment of active response on behalf of creation. Therefore, this spirituality will promote a comprehensive transformation of worldview, human identity, and human attitudes towards the rest of creation.

3. Methodology

For this project, I will apply a critical, cosmological, and extratextual discourse to the works of Berry and Zhou. Firstly, Berry’s own method is to use a cosmological discourse in conjunction with the wisdom of world religions to develop a functional cosmology to address the ecological crisis. Zhou integrates the Confucian tradition with a Daoist cosmology and a Buddhist spirituality to reinforce Confucian concerns for an authentic human relationship with others and the cosmos. Thus, as both authors’ method was to propose a revised cosmological vision in order to engage contemporary challenges, so will I borrow from their efforts and mirror their approach in order to propose an Ecozoic cosmotheandric spirituality.

\textsuperscript{54} In fact, the World Council of Churches has called for ecological responsibility of churches to the rest of creation since 1970. As one example, the WCC held a Convocation on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul, Korea in 1990.

Secondly, Zhou’s texts and thoughts will be utilized by means of an extratextual hermeneutics. R. S. Sugirtharajah, in the *Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology*, proposes this extratextual method for developing an Asian theology. He argues that like western theologians who employ the western philosophical tradition to articulate and explain theological revelations, Asian theologians have drawn from their literary and non-literary resources to construct their theological discourse. By seeking a method that brings both Asia’s religious values and its multiple sacred textual traditions into theology, he witnesses an emerging of extratextual hermeneutics. Accordingly, The extratextual hermeneutics that is slowly emerging as a distinctive Asian contribution to theological methodology seeks to transcend the textual, historical, and religious boundaries of Christian tradition and cultivate a deeper contact with the mysterious ways in which people of all religious persuasions have defined and appropriated humanity and divinity. Without falling into a cultural romanticization, this emerging method can shed light on the religio-cultural inheritances of Asia. Berry, as an exponent of the extratextual method, takes into account Asia’s religio-cultural values and its multiple sacred textual traditions woven into theological discourse. According to Archie Lee Chi Chung, “cross-textual hermeneutics is a way to do theology which is meaningful to Asian Christians and theologians who have both the identity of being Asian as well as being Christian and who value both their cultural-religious text and the biblical text.” Whether identified as an extratextual hermeneutic or a cross-textual hermeneutic, both methods offer a way for Asian Christians to explore Asian ecological wisdoms without giving up their Christian identity.


57 Yet, this approach has been met resistance from ecclesiastical and bureaucratic authorities.

58 Ibid., 3.


Lastly, paralleling the method of Berry and Zhou, I will draw from a renewed cosmological perspective and Asian ecological wisdoms in order to develop a functional and ecological spirituality. Nevertheless, some of the critical understanding that I will propose will diverge from Berry’s and Zhou’s own thought on certain points. That is, for a critical discourse on the works of Berry and Zhou, I will sometimes employ a method suggested by Tucker and Grim – i.e., retrieval, re-evaluation, and reconstruction.

Tucker and Grim propose this method of bringing together world religions and ecology in their essay: “Introduction: The Emerging Alliance of World Religions and Ecology.” First, the study of religion and ecology begins with a retrieval involving the scholarly investigation of cosmological, scriptural, and legal sources. For this thesis, this step would help to clarify the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou and to uncover their distinctive view on our relationship with the natural world. Second, an interpretive re-evaluation assesses the teachings of world religions with regard to their relevance to the current circumstance, and in this case, our concern for the ecological crisis. While admitting the disjunction between the teaching and the practice of each world religion, this approach can nevertheless help to formulate more ecologically sensitive attitudes and sustainable practices. Finally, a focus on reconstruction, moving beyond simply evaluating how a religion’s traditional teachings correspond to current challenges, proposes ways that “religious traditions might

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61 Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, “Introduction: The Emerging Alliance of World Religions and Ecology,” *Daedalus* vol. 130, no.4 (Fall 2001):1-22. See also Tucker and Grim, “Series Forward,” *Religion and Ecology Series*. At the outset, they mention several qualifications regarding the various roles of religion. First, they do not suggest that any one religion has a privileged ecological perspective, but they encourage an interreligious project with multiple perspectives. Second, the alliance of world religions and ecology is understood within an interdisciplinary effort in which each world religion participates as a part. Third, they acknowledge an inevitable disjunction between the principles and practices among world religions. Finally, while they are aware that religions have made negative contributions to the ecological crisis, they advocate that “religions have an important role to play in projecting persuasive visions of a more sustainable future. This is especially true because our attitudes toward nature have been consciously and unconsciously conditioned by our religious worldview.” Tucker and Grim, “Introduction: The Emerging Alliance of World Religions and Ecology,” *Daedalus* vol. 130, no. 4(Fall, 2001): 4.

62 Ibid., 16.

63 Ibid., 17.
adapt their teachings to current circumstances in new and creative ways. This requires a creative modification of traditional ideas and practices to suit a modern mode of expression. For this thesis, the task of a new synthesis will be two-fold: identifying particular elements in the functional cosmologies of Berry and Zhou, and subsequently proposing a functional ecological spirituality – i.e., an Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality.

Whether employing an extratextual hermeneutical method as described by Sugirtharajah, or drawing on the interreligious method for the study of ecology and religion as proposed by Tucker and Grim, the goal is to develop a functional ecological spirituality for an Ecozoic era. Following the example of Sugirtharajah, my theological method preserves both my identity of being Asian and my identity of being Christian thereby valuing Asian traditions and Christian heritages while introducing an ecological sensitivity.

4. Procedure

After presenting the background of this thesis in the Introduction, the thesis will provide a limited analysis of the current ecological crisis and of Christian responses to this crisis. It will subsequently argue that Christian responses to the contemporary ecological crisis would significantly benefit from a functional and ecological spirituality grounded in Berry’s and Zhou’s cosmologies. Then the thesis will present the cosmology, anthropology, and spirituality of Berry and Zhou in order to weave a functional cosmology informed by these authors. Finally the thesis will propose an Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality and the practical implications of adopting the same.

This thesis proceeds as follows. The Introduction has included a thesis statement, a description of the methodology, and a description for each of the key terms used in the thesis. In Chapter One, the thesis will unpack the contemporary ecological context and a limited analysis of Christian responses to the ecological crisis. It will review Christian stewardship and egalitarian

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64 Ibid.

models as well as the eco-theology of Sallie McFague and the contemplative spirituality of Thomas Merton. This review will support the need for a functional and ecological spirituality informed by the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou.

Chapter Two will examine the cosmological perspective of Berry especially as it pertains to his understanding of cosmogenesis and a functional cosmology, the reinvention of the human (i.e., a more cosmological and ecological anthropology), and his vision for an Ecozoic era. Finally I will examine his description of a more Earth-centered spirituality that will provide the theological context for formulating a functional cosmological spirituality.

Chapter Three will present Zhou’s integrated perspective on cosmology, anthropology and spirituality, and how these contribute to the building of a functional ecological spirituality. After initially examining Zhou’s historical and biological context, it will analyze his taiji cosmology which is oriented towards developing human morality in continuity with that cosmology. Then, it will unpack Zhou’s spirituality of sincerity (authenticity) which reveals how the cosmic principles are transformed into the moral virtues of humanity. Both taiji-cosmology and Zhou’s spirituality are essential to understanding his Confucian vision of the harmonious unity among Heaven, Earth and Humanity via the practice of self-cultivation.

Drawing on the work of previous chapters, a functional and ecological spirituality – i.e., an Ecozoic theocosmoanthropic spirituality – will be described in Chapter Four, within an eco-theological framework that will affirm the sacredness of the evolving universe and the participatory role of humanity. More particularly, Chapter Four will explore three components of an Ecozoic spirituality: i.) an eco-theological recognition of a triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity; ii.) a transformation of worldview, human identity, and human attitudes toward the rest of creation; and iii.) certain distinctive virtues that such an integration promotes. It is to be hoped that this spirituality will recover religious sensitivities to develop a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship.
Lastly, after summarizing the main points made in the thesis and giving implications of the findings, the Conclusion will point beyond the thesis itself and consider how future research and inquiries could build upon the work presented here for helping us to integrate the evolutionary journey of the Earth community and the ecological practices of Christianity.
CHAPTER ONE
THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

A. The Roots of the Ecological Crisis
   1. Ecological Crisis
   2. Review on Spiritualities and their Relation to the Ecological Crisis
      a. Spirituality of Alienation from the Earth
      b. An Over-Emphasis of Redemption in Spirituality
      c. Spirituality of Alliance with a Mechanistic Worldview and an Extractive Economy

B. Christian Responses to the Ecological Crisis
   1. The Stewardship and Egalitarian Responses
   2. The Eco-Theological and Spiritual Responses
      a. The Eco-Theology of Sallie McFague
      b. The Contemplative Spirituality of Thomas Merton
      c. Summary of Christian Response to the Ecological Crisis

C. Cosmological Turn

D. Concluding Remarks

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This chapter includes three subsections: the roots of the ecological crisis, the response of Christianity to that crisis, and a proposed turn to cosmology. Firstly, I will provide a brief sketch of the current ecological crisis. From among the many causes of the ecological crisis, I will address how the human community has separated from the Earth community and lost a relationship of sacred communion with the rest of creation, drawing mostly from Berry's analysis. Then, I will examine the various Christian responses to the ecological crisis. As the ecological crisis is rooted in a distorted and dysfunctional human presence on Earth, I will review Christian stewardship and egalitarian models, which shed light on the question of how to develop an alternative human-Earth relationship for a viable future. Subsequently, I will review with two specific Christian voices: the eco-theology of Sallie McFague and the contemplative spirituality of Thomas Merton. Through their distinctive contributions, these models and thinkers suggest new ways of understanding the human-Earth relationship through an ecologically-sensitive Christian lens. Lastly, this chapter will call attention to
the central challenge of turning to cosmology for the integral functioning of humanity with the rest of the Earth community.

A. The Roots of the Ecological Crisis

1. Ecological Crisis

Undeniably, the direst concern facing Christianity and the world today is the very survival of humanity and of our planet. James Lovelock, known for his Gaia theory, discusses the nature of climate change and its impact on the Earth and humanity in *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning*. In this book, he contends that climate change effects are worse than we think and that this is less of an issue for the Earth than it is for the survival of humankind. Indeed, Gaia is already moving rapidly towards its apocalyptic state of global warming. In the *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*, James Hansen, known as the grandfather of global warming, cautions that the planet is hurtling even more rapidly than previously acknowledged to a climatic point of no return. Like Lovelock, he argues that it is already too late to ease into behavioural and economic changes, instead calling for immediate and drastic action.

There is plenty of scientific data that describes the ecological issue facing the whole human and Earth community and that calls for urgent action in the 21st century. The problem is not lack of data, but rather our capacity to understand the order of the magnitude of the ecological problems we are facing. For instance, Edward O. Wilson notes that we are in the midst of the sixth extinction period in Earth’s history, a deadly situation of mass extinction (i.e., greater than 50% of the Earth’s species) marked by the greatest diminution of variety and abundance of life in human history. As

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humans radically and profoundly disturb the Earth’s bio-systems, we are altering the geological structures and functioning of the entire planet, shutting down the very life-system on which we and other lifeforms depend in an unprecedented act of conscious self-destruction. Paul R. Ehrlich compares this mass extinction of life in our times to that of a nuclear winter and laments “the enlargement of the scale of the human enterprise to the point that it is destroying the life-support systems on which all our lives depend.” As a result, this “may be heading us toward the worst catastrophe in the history of Homo Sapiens.”

Similarly, Paul Collins states, “It was not the two world wars that were the most destructive events ever experienced by humanity. It [environmental destruction] has been the developmental binge of the last 65 years.” In Berry’s terms, humanity is killing the life-systems of the planet (biocide) and even the planet itself (geocide).

As Christians, we recognize this as an ecological sin since we understand that we are destroying the house of God, or “the primordial self-manifestation of the divine.”

Thus, because of the seriousness of the ecological crisis, it becomes necessary to grasp its underlying causes and to contemplate its roots. Among other factors, I will discuss what is arguably the primary cause for the devastation of the most basic life systems of Earth, that is, how humanity’s distorted presence on Earth has been cultured by certain dysfunctional spiritualities.

2. Review of Spiritualities and their Relation to the Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis reveals how certain problematic aspects of theology and spirituality have contributed to the crisis itself. That is, the ecological crisis results, in part, from a failure of theology and spirituality to integrate humans into a flourishing human-Earth relationship. To the extent that human lives have been guided by spiritualities that have promoted a dysfunctional human-

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5 Paul Collins, *Judgment Day: The Struggle for Life on Earth* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2010), 133.

6 See Berry, *Christian Future*, 36, 44; Berry, *Great Work*, 74, 104; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 52.

7 Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 84.
Earth relationship, humans have acted in ways that are destructive for Earth, and ultimately for humans. Accordingly, we must come to understand: what makes the human the most destructive being in the Earth community; why are many religiously devout people silent about the ecological crisis; why is the Church’s inadequate response to the fate of the Earth, devastated by a plundering commercial-industrial system; what gives the meaning and value to life, as well as the spiritual-psychic energy to overcome the present crisis? To understand Christianity’s complicity in the ecological crisis, it is helpful to examine how the Western-biblical culture has contributed to the development of the current distorted human-Earth relationship. According to Berry, three crucial moments in particular have contributed to the separation of the human community from the rest of the natural world and have concurrently reinforced anthropocentric norms and values, namely: amalgamating the biblical tradition with Greek humanism, the Black Death, and the emergence of an extractive economic system. In turn, I will correlate these three moments with three specific aspects of our spirituality today: alienation from the natural world, an over-emphasis on redemption, and an alliance with a mechanistic worldview and commercial-extractive economy.

a. Spirituality of Alienation from the Earth

Berry points out that one of the significant moments of alienation from the Earth occurred when the biblical-Christian emphasis on the spirituality of the human and the Greek humanist tradition came together. Although the Psalms and the wisdom literature of the Bible celebrate the natural world as a divine locus, there is also a subtle biblical aversion to the Earth and the natural realm as these are at times presented more as a seductive snare rather than a place of divine

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9 Just as H. Paul Santmire has identified the Christian attitude toward creation as holding an ambiguous ecological promise, Berry sees the bible both as a contributor to the ecological crisis as well as a resource to overcome the crisis through reinterpretation in light of the ecological consciousness. See H. Paul Santmire, *The Traval of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985); Berry, *The Great Work*, 12; *Christian Future*, 61.
presence. Berry asserts that certain biblical phrases show antagonism toward the rest of creation regarding them as “the ultimate idolatry, the cause of the Fall, and the cause of the sacrificial redemption by Divine personality.” This biblical aversion to the Earth deepened when it combined with the influence of Greek humanistic philosophy which emphasized a sense of the human soul as superior to the body and natural world. In Berry’s view, this convergence of the Christian and Greek humanist philosophies had a major impact on the development of Christian spirituality.

Moreover, Berry discusses a still deeper experience of Christian alienation from the Earth’s process when humanity experienced the Black Death (1347-9). He describes it as a “central traumatic moment in Western history,” since at least one third of the European population died due to the pandemic. There were two main responses to the plague: some people turned inward to an excessively private and personal form of spirituality removed from such a hostile world, seeking a return to our true home in heaven; others turned outward to seek truth in an objective search for a scientific understanding of the mechanisms operative in creation. Accordingly, spiritual communities after the Black Death perceived the plague as a punishment from God for the wickedness of the world. Believers became overwhelmingly concerned with repentance, withdrawal from the world, and the quest to redeem its wickedness. Others sought a better understanding of the laws governing the mechanisms of creation to flourish within those laws and perhaps ultimately to control them. These responses prompted either an overemphasis on redemption spiritualities or an alliance with a mechanistic worldview and an extractive economy.

b. An Over-Emphasis of Redemption in Spirituality

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10 See Berry, “Spirituality of Earth,” 152; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 149; Berry, Sacred Universe, 69.
12 For instance, there is relatively little reference to the rest of creation in the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed. See Berry, Christian Future, 28.
13 See Berry, Befriending the Earth, 72; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 125-6; Berry, Christian Future, 61-63; Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 199.
14 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 125.
After the plague “the great need was for spiritual detachment and absorption into the divine. This leads to a more absolute commitment to salvation from the Earth rather than to an integral relationship with the Earth as a single sacred community.” As Berry observes, this spirituality paid great attention to the disengagement and even abnegation from worldly concerns and led to a new devotional intensity directed toward the Saviour’s personality and the intensification of one’s private faith experience. For instance, Berry examines the devotions and prayers, literature, and arts of the time and notes how their main themes were the doctrine of penance and discipline, death, the Last Judgment, and Hell. In particular, Thomas à Kempis’ classic, *The Imitation of Christ*, focused on redemption from this world and an otherworldly salvation ruled by an understanding of faith where the mental faculty dominated. Berry provides persuasive evidence that the experience of the Black Death deepened the separation between Christian spirituality from the natural world and created a dominant redemption mystique. Such emphases were most evident in the Puritanism of Protestants and the Jansenism of Catholics. Theologically, the Cosmic Christ and the creative dynamics in the natural world became marginalized in the Christian community. Accordingly, as spiritual communities neglected the natural processes, this heightened the rise of the emerging scientific control over the physical world.

Since the plague, a redemptive mystique has become more prominent in Western Christian spirituality, all the while increasingly neglecting the creative mystique. Berry argues that:

This response [of the religious community to the Black Death], with its emphasis on redemptive spirituality, continued through the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century and on through the Puritanism and Jansenism of the seventeenth century. This attitude was further strengthened by the shock of the Enlightenment and Revolution periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

He views the present main-line spirituality of North America as similarly redemption-centered, with its over-emphasis on a personal Saviour and the interior spiritual process of the salvific community.

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15 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 199.
16 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 126.
Because this dominant redemptive mystique functions in a private and therefore isolated context, Berry criticizes its ineffectiveness to deal with current ecological issues. He notes its indifference to the natural world because of an excessive concern for otherworldly salvation through an individual saviour relationship. For this reason, irrespective of its recognition of the Earth story and historical story, this redemption-centered spirituality tends to move towards acosmic and ahistorical religious modes. Over-commitment to a redemptive process results in a lack of interest in creation dynamics and a marginalization of creation processes. As spirituality becomes more oriented towards a private intense commitment to the saviour, the sense of awe and wonder for the natural world is diminished, and indeed even considered to be a distraction to the faith. The emphasis on redemption from the seductive forces within humanity and from the sensuous qualities of the natural world creates in turn an immense psychological barrier to intimacy with the Earth.17

In addition, Berry points out that the redemptive mystique neglects the Christian truth that “the context of any authentic spirituality lies in the creation myth that governs the total life orientation.”18 Now, however, the dominant redemptive mystique in spirituality tends to reject this contextualization of spirituality in relation to a new creation story. Rather, Berry assumes that the redemptive rhetoric is not suitable for our world, “or if it is available, widens rather than lessens the tragic inner division between the world of affairs and the world of divine communion.”19 This emphasis on a redemptive mystique does not inspire us to work for the survival and enhancement of life on a planet profoundly threatened in all its basic systems. As well, many Christians influenced by this mystique have difficulty in accepting an evolutionary cosmology that evokes intimacy with the natural world and finds a place for humanity within that process.

c. Spirituality of Alliance with a Mechanistic Worldview and an Extractive Economy

17 See Berry, Christian Future, 39.
18 Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 152.
19 Ibid.
After the plague, the Christian communities became immersed in a religious redemption out of the tragic world, while the other secular communities delved into greater control of the physical world. Since the Black Death, the tendency to see the world as a mode of divine presence severely declined while the mechanistic worldview became more dominant. Following the views of Descartes, Newton, and Bacon, the universe and the natural world came to be understood as having, “no subjectivity, no inner principle, and no anima.”

Berry maintains that “In a very real sense [Rene Descartes] de-souled the Earth with his division of reality between mind and extension. In this perspective the nonhuman world was seen simply as mechanism.”

In Descartes’ view, the machine offered a better metaphor for understanding the natural world, the universe and the reality of things. The scientific mind of the time conceived that there was an absolute separation of the spiritual and material worlds. By the method of scientific reductionism and a worldview of mechanism, science advocated that the particle is primary and the whole is derivative, and “what was not mind was mechanism.”

This mechanistic worldview was further reinforced by Galileo’s & Kepler’s laws for the movement of objects, by Wren’s laws of impact, by Huygens’s laws of centrifugal force, and by Newton’s laws of motion, among others. It has dominated the worldview of the West as it gives the power of empirical examination of the phenomenal world and its expression in quantitative terms. It made it possible to justify human control and dominance over nature, ownership and exploitation, and free commercial exploitation. On the basis of the mechanistic worldview, the anthropocentric norm of meaning and value became prevalent in human consciousness.

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20 Berry, Befriending Earth, 72.
21 Berry, Great Work, 78.
22 Berry, Sacred Universe, 131.
Finally, Berry reflects on the transition from an organic economy to an extractive economy such that the human community has flourished at the expense of the natural world around us.\(^{25}\) He notes that the extractive economic system, combined with the scientific-technological myth, has flourished with its merciless programs of disruption of the organic functioning of the planet. Berry argues that once the scientific-technological period established itself, its own dedication to its objective took on “the characteristics of a religious attitude and a spiritual discipline.”\(^{26}\) That is why he refers to it as a scientific-technological myth, developed on the basis of a trance state or an altered state of consciousness which so blinded us to see the ecological impasse. The resulting commercial mind has been heavily charged with the amazing “arrogance” that is placing the entire planet Earth into a wasteland.\(^{27}\) In this context, no longer has the natural world any value or right except as an object of use, of exploitation. The dominant mode of consciousness is justified under the “myth of progress.”\(^{28}\) The Earth and natural world is conceived as resources for unlimited human use and as not having any spiritual principle or intrinsic values.

The consequence of these characteristics of modern spirituality – alienation from the earth, an over-emphasis on redemption, and an alliance with a mechanistic worldview and an extractive economy – has resulted in the collapse of life-systems on Earth. As Berry aptly points out, the basic establishment of society assumes a radical discontinuity between the human and nonhuman modes of

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\(^{25}\) See Berry, “Economics as Religious Issues,” in *Dream of the Earth* or “The Extractive Economy,” in *Great Work*. It is worthwhile to discuss economics as religious issues, when we consider its effects on the life system of the Earth. David Korten develops Berry’s idea into dealing with economics as a fundamental dimension for the survival of the Earth. See David Korten, *The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community* (San Francisco: BK, 2006).

\(^{26}\) Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 118.

\(^{27}\) See Berry, *Great Work*, 89; Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 208; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 99.

\(^{28}\) Berry claims that the biblical vision of the millennium transformed into the myth of Progress. The millennial vision was initially concerned with the spiritual development of the human community, while the natural world is remaining as an unchanging world. Examples are the Day of the Lord, Isaiah and Daniel, Apocalypse of John the Evangelist in the Bible and the Bolshevik revolutionary movement. Later the development of empirical science provided a new sense of historical progress – the millennium vision would be achieved by human efforts in historical time. Armed with a new sense of human mind as separation from the natural world, the Earth was seen as the product of evolutionary sequences. As a result, “the present devastation is the consequence of a powerful myth that has seized the human soul in recent centuries, the myth of Wonderland, the Wonderland that is coming into existence by some inevitability if only we continue on the path of Progress, meaning by Progress the ever-increasing exploitation of the Earth through our amazing technologies.” Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 218; Berry, *Great Work*, 169; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 93; Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 27.
being, with all rights and all inherent values given to the human.29 For instance, Lynn White Jr. is well-known for his criticism that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion in the world, holding it, to a considerable extent, responsible for the current ecological crisis.30 Since Lynn White’s severe criticism, similar lines of thought can be found in many eco-theologians, with discernible differences on emphases and ground for their critique.

**B. Christian Responses to the Ecological Crisis**

While I am seeking a functional presence of humanity on Earth, I will examine the stewardship and ecological egalitarian models which represent significant attempts to overcome a distorted human presence on Earth. The subsequent section will then discuss the eco-theology of Sallie McFague and the contemplative spirituality of Thomas Merton. Accordingly, this review of models and thinkers will identify some trends and promise in Christian responses to the ecological crisis.

1. The Stewardship and Egalitarian Responses

   a. The Stewardship Model

   When calling for a renewal of human-earth relations, the stewardship model emphasizes the responsibility of the human who has the dignity and capability to care for the rest of creation. In his books *Imaging God* and *The Steward*, Douglas John Hall develops his thoughts extensively on humanity’s stewardship of the Earth. In response to Lynn White’s criticism of Christianity, Hall provides a biblical and theological analysis of the human-nonhuman relationship, seeking to correct the fundamental error of a “distorted relationship between human and nonhuman nature.”31

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29 See Berry, *Great Work*, 72-3; Berry, *Christian Future*, 113.
According to Hall, there are three perspectives of the human-nature relationship: human-over-nature, human-in-nature, and human-with nature. He admits that Christianity has practiced a negative attitude that can be summarized as over nature, which is not supported by the biblical-Christian tradition, but rather, developed through the influence of Constantine on Christianity and modern Enlightenment thinking. Yet, just as Hall rejects human over nature, so does he reject the paradigm human in nature because it appears to him as a romantic reaction against the human over nature paradigm as well as reduces humanity to its instinctual urges by denying human reason. In his description of the human with nature perspective, Hall describes humans as ecological stewards of God's earth, who have a duty to respect God’s creatures. In Hall’s view, stewardship locates Christians within a world they do not own and do not control, but in one in which they act responsibility. Thus, humanity is to be a steward-presence on Earth, recognizing its responsibility to care for creation.

Hall’s articulation of the stewardship model draws from both biblical sources and the Christian tradition. He notes that one of the traditional anthropologies of the ontological human relationship with God – imago Dei – is often blamed as a cause of the distorted human presence on Earth. However, rather than using these charges to jettison the notion of imago Dei, he argues that it must remain central to our Christian faith and needs to be further explored to inform a theology of humanity’s responsibility for the natural order. In order to reinterpret the notion of imago Dei, he maintains that it should be read not from the perspective of the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition, but from within the Hebrew-Biblical tradition and a Christological view. Since the Genesis’ description of the imago Dei raises the human as the counterpart of God, then it also informs the

34 Hall, Imaging God; Hall, The Steward.
human-nature relationship. Hall also believes that Christ plays an important role in our understanding of *imago Dei*, Christ as the embodiment of “the image of invisible God (Col. 1:15)” in whom authentic humanity will be restored.

Hall’s effort to reformulate the human-Earth relationship is notable for its clarity and rigorous attempt to contextualize the Christian faith within the ecological crisis. As stewards acting on behalf of God, humanity ought to renounce its exploitative and destructive impact on the Earth and renew its care of the rest of creation. In particular, by re-interpreting the biblical term *imago Dei*, Hall successfully awakens Christians to be stewards of nature, which helps to overcome the historical bias of the human over nature. Hence, this model has played an important role in articulating a Christian eco-theology and redefines humanity’s relationship with the natural world.

Yet, those who want to see humanity’s place more resolutely within the community of the natural world raise some questions about the stewardship model. According to Bill Deval and George Sessions, the most damaging aspect of the stewardship model is the separation of human beings from nature, a separation that is rooted in the anthropocentric and dualistic worldviews.

Larry Rasmussen also maintains that anthropocentrism is a weakness of the stewardship model’s affinity for a human-centered cosmology and ethic. Similarly, process theologian Jay McDaniel claims that “stewards themselves are creatures among creatures, human nodes in the broader web of life.”

Echoing the above mentioned criticism, Santmire has concerns with the stewardship model which presupposes an absent God who has given riches to his stewards (e.g., the parable of the talents in Matthew 25), and which celebrates the managerial machinations of a scheming steward (e.g., the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16.) He furthermore notes the stewardship model’s alliance

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36 Ibid., 72-5.
37 Ibid., 83-5.
with “the spirit of capitalism” in the North American culture that drives people to amass wealth.\textsuperscript{41}

Eco-feminist theologians are more concerned with the hierarchical structure implied in the stewardship model between human beings and the rest-of-creation.

The opponents of the stewardship model reject the notion of humanity’s separation from and hierarchy over nature, preferring instead an understanding of humans as interconnected and “intersubjective participants in a larger process of life.”\textsuperscript{42} Although no one would deny that the stewardship model is a considerable achievement for a renewal of the human-Earth relationship, the opponents’ opinions are important to stimulate further conversation for an alternative understanding of the human-Earth relationship.

\textbf{b. The Egalitarian Model}

As Hall provides a general tone of the stewardship model, Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, proposes ecospheric egalitarianism. Influenced by the work of Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, he includes an emphasis on non-violence from Buddhism and Gandhian thought, and draws upon the Daoist notion of integral wisdom. According to Bill Deval, the egalitarian model advocates two main tasks. First, a positive or constructive task of encouraging an egalitarian attitude on the part of humans towards all entities in the ecosphere. Its second task is to dismantle anthropocentrism for a new model of human-Earth rationality.\textsuperscript{43}

Naess applies the notion of integral wisdom to propose the principle of biospheric egalitarianism, which is “\textit{the idea that there is value that every living being has in common, namely...}"

\footnote{\textsuperscript{41} H. Paul Santmire, “Partnership with Nature According to the Scriptures: Beyond the Theology of Stewardship,” \textit{Christian Scholar’s Review} 32, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 383-4, in particular footnote 4. According to Santmire, when members of a North American culture hear biblical stories of stewardship, their tendency is to frame the stewardship model in such a way that it celebrates what Max Weber has called the “the spirit of capitalism.”}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{42} Scharper, \textit{Redeeming the Time}, 104.}

intrinsic value. In this they are equal.”44 Deval and Sessions develop the principle further to conclude that “all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom….”45 These authors do not separate humanity from the web of life that is fundamentally interconnected and interdependent, so that all in the web have intrinsic value and inherent rights.46

The provocative and original work of Naess, Deval, and Sessions offers a new Earth consciousness as well as a spiritual and ethical conversion from an anthropocentric attitude toward the natural world.47 Deep ecologists recognize anthropocentrism as a central problem and a systematic bias in traditional Western attitudes to the non-human world. According to Zimmermann, “Instead of regarding humans as something completely unique or chosen by God, they see us as integral threads in the fabric of life. They believe we need to develop a less dominating and aggressive posture towards the Earth if we and the planet are to survive.”48 In this view, an awareness of the intrinsic value of non-human life may offer a valuable ecological consciousness that awakens humanity to its interference in the non-human world. It is believed that this awareness of the bio-ontological interconnectedness of humans with others assists humanity to develop ecological egalitarian human-Earth relations.49

46 The respective values and rights of each being in the web of life will vary. The rights of a bird are not useful to those of a frog, nor is the value of the bird as the same as the frog. Their roles are different.
49 Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue note the eight principles of deep ecology in *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*.

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
Yet, there have been some critiques of this more egalitarian model. Denis Edwards criticizes deep ecology for focusing on an “ecological egalitarianism” and for promoting a “democracy of the biosphere” does not give a “unique place for the human person.” Scharper also points out the undervaluation of human beings in deep ecology, for example in the Gaia theory. As well, McFague critiques deep ecologists who put humanity in a place of no special importance within creation and who make “an oceanic fusion of feeling that denies the diversity, individuality, and complexity of life-forms.” However, I believe that such critiques of the more egalitarian model of deep ecology tend to over-exaggerate a supposed diminished value and role of humanity in relation to the rest of creation.

The egalitarian model also needs to be integrated with both an exterior transformation and an interior conversion towards the natural world. As suggested by Ruether, eco-justice helps deep ecologists to escape such critique of the “privatized intrapsychic activity.” Nonetheless, the insight of this model that all that exist have intrinsic value and the right to live and blossom in the same web of life is not to be undervalued. Furthermore, this model makes the correct observation that the ecological crisis is rooted in a moral and spiritual crisis inseparable from anthropocentrism, scientific

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.
5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.


51 See Scharper, Redeeming the Time, 160.
52 McFague, Body of God, 117, 125, 127.
53 Ruether, God and Gaia, 2-4.
reductionism and instrumentalism. The egalitarian model, as a way of recovery of ecological sensitivities, provokes profound changes of consciousness in terms of a “major paradigm shift in perception, values, and lifestyles – as a basis for redirecting the ecologically destructive path of modern industrial growth societies.”

Since the ecological crisis is deeply related to a distorted human-Earth relationship, the two models – the stewardship and egalitarian – represent crucial attempts to a shift from human dominion model to the human-with-nature. While a part of values of stewardship model contributes to this shift, a further integral relationship is required that the egalitarian model attempts to achieve at some degree. Although the characteristics of the models include their own contributions and weaknesses, this research awakens us to the need of a functional and ecological presence of humanity in relation to the rest of creation.

2. The Eco-Theological and Spiritual Responses

Subsequently, I will explore the two Christian figures – Sallie McFague and Thomas Merton. As Denis Edwards notes her major contributions to ecological discourse, McFague gives as a primer in eco-theological anthropology who we think we are in relation to the rest of creation in the light of the universe as the Body of God. In particular, her efforts to integrate eco-theology with scientific cosmology anticipate how a functional ecological spirituality can be developed in the light of functional cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. On the other hand, as Berry, O’Hara and Monica Wise among others appreciate his ecological sensitivities, Merton, although he lived before the dawn of ecological discourse in eco-theology, has the spiritual vision that is asked to overcome the ecological crisis more urgently. This exploration will help to develop a functional ecological spirituality by addressing the eco-theological and spiritual responses to the ecological crisis.

a. The Eco-Theology of Sallie McFague

McFague makes the case that climate change and global warming are the key issues for theology and anthropology in the 21st century, and further claims that Christians and indeed all humans ought to reconstruct their lives and their work to help the Earth survive and prosper. In McFague’s words, an “ecological, theological anthropology … could have immense significance in transforming how we think about ourselves as well as our relations and responsibilities toward other human beings, other species, and our home, planet Earth.” In *The Body of God,* she presents a model of the universe or of the world as God’s body. Like sewing a quilt, she draws insights from the ancient organic model of the Earth, from contemporary science, and from the Christian incarnational tradition. While criticizing the anthropocentric, hierarchical and dualistic God-world relationship, she creatively suggests a model of the universe as God’s body in order to develop an ecological theology – i.e., a divine body that has a contentious relationship to embodiment and nature.

To construct a revision of the human-earth relationship, McFague firstly analyzes the modern picture of reality, that is, the machine model of the universe and the false view of the individual self, both of which contribute to the development of the ecological crisis. She claims, “the problem … starts with our false view of ourselves, the view that we are separate individuals who enter into relationships when we feel like it and who have the right to own all of the worldly goods we can legally get hold of.” This false view, this anthropocentrism, is closely linked with contemporary culture as consumer-oriented – a culture that is supported not only by theology (especially Protestant theology) but also by government and contemporary economics. That is, she argues that an unjust


57 As she often indicates, the universe is not the body of God in a real sense, but rather in a metaphorical sense. She recognizes that God is beyond description (as, for example, in Exodus 3: 14). By saying that the universe is the body of God, she constructs an organic ecological model of God-cosmos relationship. Advocating Christianity as a religion of the body, and drawing from Moltmann’s comments on embodiment as the final mission of God, she provides a helpful explanation about the God-Earth relationship. See McFague, Ibid., 150.

anthropology causes the distorted relationship between the Earth and the human as endorsed by the modern picture of an anthropocentric reality.

McFague also critiques Christianity for focusing disproportionately on the psychological, in terms of “turning to self,” or political context, while neglecting the cosmological dimension. For her, a central Christian task today is to revise our cosmological perspective in order to remove us from “a narrow psychological or broader political viewpoint.” Thus, she examines the assessment of who human beings are and where we fit into the scheme of things scientifically. Polkinghorne’s work offers useful insight into McFague’s method of presenting an evolutionary cosmology.

In the beginning was the big bang. As matter expanded from that initial singularity it cooled. After about three minutes the world was no longer hot enough to sustain universal nuclear interactions. At that moment its gross nuclear structure got fixed at its present proportion of three quarters hydrogen and one quarter helium. Expansion and further cooling continued. Eventually gravity condensed matter into the first generation of galaxies and stars. In the interiors of these first stars nuclear cookery started up again and produced heavy elements like carbon and iron, essential for life, which were scarcely present in the early stages of the universe’s history. Some of these first generation stars and planets condensed in their turn; on at least one of them there were now conditions of chemical composition and temperature and radiation permitting, through the interplay of chance and necessity, the coming into being of replicating molecules and life. Thus evolution began on the planet Earth. Eventually it led to you and me. We are all made of the ashes of dead stars.

McFague makes this narrative central to her theological discourse since she recognizes that this cosmological, evolutionary, ecological story may provide an explanation for humanity’s place in the cosmos and gives a new critical opportunity to think of who God is.

In her framework of the body of God, McFague employs an evolutionary cosmology to illuminate reality, where even though the cosmos began with a radical unity that evolved into diversity, the diversity remains intrinsically and internally interconnected. Furthermore, this diversity and unity is an expression of God’s body. Accordingly, creation is

59 McFague, Body of God, 65.
61 See McFague, New Climate, 46.
all the myriad forms of matter bodied forth from God and empowered with the breath of life, the spirit of God. … [A]s inspired bodies [humans are] profoundly interrelated with all other such bodies and yet [have] the special distinction of shared responsibility with God for the well-being of our planet.\(^{62}\)

She asserts that not only is God the source of all life, love, truth, and goodness, but that creation and humanity constitute and participate within God’s body.

In addition, McFague proposes an eco-theological anthropology of embodiment: “This [is] a modest, humble beginning but one with enormous consequences for how we view both our status and our responsibilities.”\(^63\) In McFague’s view, it seems possible to dismantle and deconstruct anthropocentrism and to reconstruct who we are in the scheme of things. As she states, “we are – basically, intrinsically, and always – interrelational, interdependent beings who live in total dependence on the others who compose the body, while at the same time we are responsible for the well-being of one tiny part of the body, planet Earth.”\(^64\) Humans are not the lords of the Earth but God’s partners in helping creation to flourish. She notes that when humans realize that we belong to the Earth and are part of the universe story, it is an ecological turning point from the individualistic, anthropocentric human kingship to a cosmocentric or ecocentric communitarian kinship.\(^65\)

Since all creatures in the universe are distinct, McFague argues that humanity’s uniqueness corresponds to our being responsible for the Earth. While humanity is one of many creatures within the story of the universe, she asserts that humans have the unique role of being God’s partner in helping the cosmos to flourish.\(^66\) As the self-reflexive aspect of God’s body, “we [humanity] have become partners with God in maintaining the health of creation, as climate change is making

\(^{62}\) McFague, *Body of God*, viii. Indeed, the integrity of creation of the JPIC underscores “the *intrinsic* value that each living beings has in and for itself as a creature loved by God as well as the *instrumental* value that living beings have for one another and for God as parts of an evolutionary, web like creation.” Ibid., 165.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 102, 103.

\(^{64}\) McFague, *New Climate*, 76.

\(^{65}\) According to McFague, “this implication of the model of the world supports and underscores a radically ecological view of the world. It is entirely opposed to the cult of individualism endorsed by modern religion, government, and economics, all of which claim that human beings are basically separate, isolated individuals who enter into relationship when they wish.” Ibid.

painfully clear." For McFague, humanity is understood as stewards of nature, guardians and caretakers of the planet Earth, and God’s partner, in whom God’s image ought to reflect God’s attitude toward nature.

The embodiment anthropology of McFague suggests a subject-subjects model for a human-Earth relationship and the eco-justice perspective endorsed by the ministry of Jesus Christ. In the subject-subjects model, she expands her discussion of creation as the body of God to focus on the relations between humanity and the rest of creation. Within a creation as the body of God model, each being is a subject – ecological subjects that are radically dependent on each other. Echoing Martin Buber’s “Being is relational,” she argues that humans should relate with nature as I/thou rather than as I/it. The I/thou relationship involves “the loving eye” instead of the I/it of the “arrogant eye.” It is the loving eye that allows for an ecological friendship, that is, awareness of the mutual influence of each subject, that builds both respect for the other and fulfillment of the self. Further, McFague notes that this is similar to St. Francis of Assisi whose love for others extended to the natural world.

In this scheme of things, humans are seen “as caretakers of God’s household, the earth, just as Adam and Eve were told to tend the garden.” Humanity’s central vocation is to be God’s partner in the planetary agenda, to work for a just and sustainable planet. Drawing from Boff, McFague argues that “justice, and ecology – the liberation of the poor and the well-being of nature – are not

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67 McFague, New Climate, 75.
68 McFague, Body of God, 109, 197; Sallie McFague, Super, Natural Christians: How we should love nature (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 166; McFague, New Climate, 34.
69 See McFague, Super, Natural Christians, 2.
70 McFague draws the contrast perspective from feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye, who describes “the arrogant eyes as acquisitive, seeing everything in relation to the self – as either ‘for me’ or ‘against me.’ … The loving eye, on the other hand, acknowledges complexity, mystery, and difference.” Ibid., 33-34.
71 Ibid., 153.
72 McFague, New Climate, 34.
separate issues, but two sides of the same coin.” Her feminist epistemology and adherence to the praxis of liberation theology also inform her concern for the well-being of the oppressed – in this case, the Earth. Thus, she expands her theological concern to include nature as the new “poor” and understands humanity’s exploitation of nature as an ecological sin; that is, “living disproportionately, falsely, inappropriately within this space, refusing to accept the limitations and responsibilities of our place.”

In conclusion, McFague’s re-contextualizing of the Christian faith within a new evolutionary cosmology is highly valuable because it does not ignore Christian ecological traditions. She helps us understand how the creation story that we have now is consistent with the Christian tradition. While admitting that modern Christianity has narrowed its focus to the psychological milieu, she notes that the Christian tradition is “rich and powerful, epitomized in a sensibility that sees God in everything and everything full of the glory of God: the things of this earth are valuable principally as vehicles for communication with the divine.” Yet, her understanding of humanity’s role and distinctiveness still suffers from emphasizing humanity’s role over the rest of creation. Stephen B. Scharper points out that when it comes to the human relationship with the rest of creation, which McFague draws from the common creation story and describes as radical interrelatedness and interconnectedness, she should suggest something far more intimate, something far more “mutually constitutive.”

Notwithstanding some weaknesses, McFague still stands at the frontier of eco-theological reformation, embracing both the tears of people and of the Earth.

b. The Contemplative Spirituality of Thomas Merton

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75 Ibid., 183.
Since Merton was writing at a time when the ecological crisis was not yet clearly identified, it would be unfair to expect him to be as environmentally aware as Sallie McFague whose career has spanned a time of considerable ecological awareness. Merton was deeply involved in humanitarian issues, such as opposition to the war in Viet-Nam and segregation in American culture as well as the promotion of ecumenism and contemplation. Nevertheless, there is evidence that suggests Merton’s growing ecological awareness. For example, Dennis O’Hara speculates on the portents of Merton as an eco-theologian by showing parallels between the work of Merton and the work of Thomas Berry. Kathleen Deignan and Monica Weis among others further develop the monk’s nascent ecological interests. By addressing Merton’s spiritual vision, I hope to reawaken our ecological sensitivities through the immediate experience of the sacred dimension in creation.

One of Merton’s central themes is seeking a true self in a contemplative life. He appeals to those who yearn for the wisdom of “the archetypal lost soul in search of union with God,” and of the “one man who [labours] for transformation and fullness of life.” My reading of Merton in this chapter is based on his deeply attractive ecological awareness that presents the creature as “the manifestation of divine love” where their “inscape is their sanctity.” According to Monica Weis, Merton’s ecological concerns are revealed in three explicitly ecological writings and 1400 references

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77 McFague, New Climate, 45.


81 Merton, New Seeds, 30. This statement reveals how the thought of John Duns Scotus and the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins influenced Merton. According to O’Hara, Scotus wrote that God has given each being its own “haecceitas,” its own “thiness” or unique identity in the eyes of God. In that notion of Scotus, Hopkins developed his understanding of inscape. O’Hara notes, “Hopkin’s description of inscape as ‘the essential and only last thing … species or individuality –distinctive beauty of style’ recalls Scotus’s haecceitas and the subtle doctor’s contention that each element in God’s creative landscape is intrinsically valuable because its unique existence was willed into being by God.” For Merton, the inscape of the colt, the pale flowers of the dogwood, the leaf, the lakes, and the great, gashed, half-naked mountains reflecting the imprint of God’s wisdom and God’s reality in them, becomes its sanctity. O’Hara, “Portents of Merton as Eco-Theologian,” 100-101.
in 3000 personal journals.\textsuperscript{82} This observation accounts for why there is increasing awareness that the monk could potentially be called an “eco-theologian,” who has “a more eco-centered orientation.”\textsuperscript{83}

Just before the dawn of the ecological movement, Merton criticized the awful irresponsibility of human society and examined the roots of the ecological crisis in technocratic culture, commercial interests, and a self-centered anthropology. “Falsification and a perversion of natural perspectives” separates the human from “the reality of creation, and enables him to act out of his fantasies as a little autonomous god, seeing and judging everything in relation to himself.”\textsuperscript{84} This self-centered god armed with technology and non-ecology not only tends to think of humanity as separated from the rest of creation but also dissipates his titanic power on his own species and life itself. In his correspondence to Rachel Carson, Merton writes that \textit{Silent Spring} is “a most valuable and essential piece of evidence for the diagnosis of the ills of our civilization.”\textsuperscript{85} In a time of relatively lesser concern over the extinction of life caused by technocratic power, the monk bemoans, “[a] phenomenal number of species of animals and birds have become extinct in the last fifty years – due of course to man’s irruption into ecology.”\textsuperscript{86} This deep awareness of the value of life is central to Merton’s thought. Indeed, Merton worried not only about the dehumanization of humans but also about the destruction and ecological damage of life in the age of the bulldozer and atomic bomb.

\textsuperscript{82} Monica Weis presents Merton’s ecological responses: one correspondence to Rachel Carson, and two book reviews of “Wilderness and Paradise,” and “The Wild Place.” I will refer to these responses more specifically later in this paper. See Weis, “Kindred Spirits in Revelation and Revolution: Rachel Carson and Thomas Merton,” 128-141.


\textsuperscript{84} Merton, \textit{New Seeds}, 294. While I recognize Merton’s lack of inclusive language in his writing at that time, I do not to amend the exclusive term in quotations of Merton’s work cited throughout this chapter.


\textsuperscript{86} Merton, \textit{When the Trees}, 48.
According to Berry, Merton’s intimate response to nature and his awareness of creation is neither academic nor critical but spiritual, and emerges from the immediacy of his own experience. These passages contain what Merton captures.

[T]he silence of the forest is my bride and the sweet dark warmth of the whole world is my love and out of the heart of that dark warmth comes the secret that is heard only in silence, but it is the root of all the secrets that are whispered by all the lovers in their beds all over the world.

The special clumsy beauty of this particular colt on this April day in this field under these clouds is a holiness consecrated to God by His own creative wisdom and it declares the glory of God…. This leaf has its own texture and its own pattern of veins and its own holy shape, and the bass and trout hiding in the deep pools of the river are canonized by their beauty and their strength.

Up here in the woods is seen the New Testament; that is to say, the wind comes through the trees and you breathe it. These are but a few examples of Merton’s ecological sensitivity, where we imagine the monk at his hermitage communicating with his intimate friends – the forest, birds, a colt, woods, trees, winds, and even silence and warmth. Through his immediate intuition and awareness of the sacredness of creation, Merton does not hesitate to say “it declares the glory of God,” and that the gospel of the New Testament is seen in the woods. Indeed, the contemplative poet proclaims the essence of each being as holy and sacred, for the Life dwells and sings within the essence of every creature. Drawing from a term of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the monk declares “[t]heir inscape is their sanctity. It is the imprint of His wisdom

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87 Thomas Berry, “Forward,” in Merton, When the Trees, 14.
89 Merton, New Seeds, 30.
90 Merton, “Day of Stranger,” 214.
91 Ibid.
and His reality in them.” For Merton, a colt and trees are holiness, and the pale flowers, the lake, the sea, and the mountain are saints who are part of the sapiential world. “The forms and individual characters of living and growing things, of inanimate beings, of animals and flowers and all nature, constitute their holiness in the sight of God.” This monk, who echoes St. Bonaventure’s propensity to see “the vestige of God in His creatures,” knows fifteen pairs of birds near his hermitage and anticipates their mysterious cosmic dance.

Merton also associates the epiphanic moments of nature with Sophia, who is “the highest wisdom-principle, all the greatness and majesty of the unknown that is in God and all that is rich and maternal in His creation are united inseparably, as paternal and maternal principles, the uncreated Father and created Mother-Wisdom.” He anticipates the personification of divinity, at once hidden but manifested in all things through Sophia, “the Mother of all, the diffuse shining of God in creation.” For him, the whole world as the primary manifestation of divine love awakens human intelligence to be a “‘New Adam’ in the garden of the new creation, knowing and naming living things as his kin, saluting all species as the ‘innocent nations’ that comprise the earth.”

In identifying the New Adam who awakens to divine immanent love, Merton seeks to recover a sense of the deep and intimate communion of God with creation in the garden of the new creation. In his contemplative view, Adam, from Adam (earth), has the image of God, and in Eden enjoyed the original unity with the Creator. Yet, after the Fall from paradise there is a state of disunity, alienation or separation from the original unity. For Merton, the symbolic story of Adam’s

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92 Merton, New Seeds, 30.
93 Ibid., 30. “Every plant that stands in the light of the sun is a saint and an outlaw. Every tree that brings forth blossoms without the command of man is powerful in the sight of God. Every star that man has not counted is a world of sanity and perfection. Every blade of grass is an angel singing in a shower of glory.” Quoted in William Shannon, Something of a Rebel: Thomas Merton His Life and Works (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1997), 87.
94 Merton, New Seeds, 30.
95 See Merton, When the Trees, 45.
96 Merton, New Seeds, 141.
98 Ibid., 38.
fall from paradise bespeaks of humanity’s separation from the original contemplative union with God within creation. Drawing from the Church Fathers and Mothers, sin is a perversion of man’s active instincts so that “the world is then exploited for the glory of man, not for the glory of God, [such that] man’s power becomes an end in itself. Things are not merely used, they are wasted and destroyed. Men are no longer workers and ‘creators’ but tools of production, instruments for profit.” This ignoble humanness is a symbol of the false self who seeks only the glory of the human, and who alienates the self from reality and from God. Thus Merton presents that “[t]he only true joy on earth is to escape from the prison of our own false self.” For Merton, such is the fall from Paradise and from unity that makes humans exploit the world for profit.

Moreover, Merton senses oneness with the whole of creation when he rediscovers the ‘inscape’ of nature as well as our unique role as the part of nature that is conscious of God. In contemplation, he rediscovers human identity in terms of an authentic self within creation.

How absolutely central is the truth that we are first of all part of nature, though we are a very special part, that which is conscious of God. In solitude, one is entirely surrounded by beings which perfectly obey God. This leaves only one place open for me, and if I occupy that place then I, too, am fulfilling His will. The place nature “leaves open” belongs to the conscious one, the one who is aware, who sees all this as a unity, who offers it all to God in praise, joy, thanks.

The “green self,” a term coined by Deignan to describe Merton’s true self, emerges when we become purely and simply parts of nature who recognize God. Merton envisages this integral reality of the human communion with the natural world and God in the monastic vocation of silence and solitude.

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102 Ibid., 294.
In contemplation, the union with God is indivisible from familiar kinship with all of creation including all other humans.¹⁰³

For the contemporary Christian, Merton is a spiritual master who offers a contemplative vision of unity with God, with one another, and in kinship with creation. Since he sees the natural world as his “spiritual director” and “bride,” his understanding of nature certainly contributes to an enhanced ecological sensitivity. This understanding is rooted in his mystical awareness of Sapientia and his sense of identity within the wider community of the Earth. Merton teaches, “[h]ow necessary it is for monks to work in the fields, in the rain, in the sun, in the mud, in the clay, in the wind: these are our spiritual directors and our novice-masters. They form our contemplation. They instill us with virtue. They make us as stable as the land we live in.”¹⁰⁴ This voice is echoed by Bernard of Clairvaux, who says: “You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters.”¹⁰⁵ Both know that not only is creation the “transparent manifestation of the love of God” that Merton describes, but that the human-Earth relationship should manifest the same reverential connection as seen between the novice and the master.

Merton’s primary ecological wisdom is to recognize the sacredness of creation and find our true identity within creation, that is, to be a “bride” of the forest. According to Shannon, Merton’s three years in his hermitage were the most memorable in his life. It is there that Merton developed his wisdom of silence and profound ecological balance while adding another dimension to his reflection, that of confronting contemporary issues.¹⁰⁶ His writings during the 60s were filled with his primary concern for peace, non-violence and justice, alongside the spiritual dialogue with Asia. It

¹⁰⁴ Merton, When the Trees, 43.
stands to reason that his justice consciousness inevitably helped to widen his horizon and see the exploitation of nature alongside that of people. Merton notes:

The ecological conscience is also essentially a peace-making conscience. A country that seems to be more and more oriented to permanent hot or cold war making does not give much promise of developing either one. But perhaps the very character of the war in Vietnam – with crop poisoning, the defoliation of forest trees, the incineration of villages and their inhabitants with napalm – presents a stark enough example to remind us of this most urgent moral need.107

He not only despaired for the bleeding corpses in Saigon, but also the incineration of palm trees and entire villages. He further mentions, “The problem of ecology exists in a most acute form. The danger of fallout and atomic waste is only one of the more spectacular ones.”108 Indeed, Merton sowed the seeds of eco-justice at the advent of the movement.109 By recognizing that the well-being of people is inseparable from the well-being of Earth, eco-justice provides a dynamic framework for thought and action that fosters social-economic justice with ecological integrity. For Merton, solidarity with the suffering of people and other creatures is intermingled such that his monastic life is inseparable from his engaged spirituality. Unfortunately, Merton’s eco-justice was revealed to us too late at the closing moment of his journey to Asia where he passed away.

Merton concludes the review of Roderick Nash’s *Wilderness and American Mind* with the question, “Can Aldo Leopold’s ecological conscience become effective in America today?”110 Merton’s question is more valid today than ever. It is an appropriate time to read Merton who can help us develop a deep sense of ‘inscape’ and an enhanced appreciation of our mutual relationship with nature. The monk enjoys, celebrates, and praises nature where often he finds himself totally immersed in the divine. This contemplative life highlights the sense of total kinship or oneness with

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108 Ibid., 104.

109 Weis supports this Merton’s eco-justice perspective: “Indeed, I want to emphasize that reading *Silent Spring* is a grace moment in Merton’s life – a moment of both revelation and revolution – because it appears to have allowed him to see how human justice is related to eco-justice.” Weis, “Kindred Spirits Revolution: Rachel Carson and Thomas Merton,” 133.

the whole reality that “is from God and belongs to God and reflects God.” He teaches how ecological sensitivities can be cultivated by virtue of deep communion with the natural world. His life is reflected in Berry’s statement:

We have no inner spiritual development without outer experience. Immediately, when we see or experience any natural phenomenon, when we see a flower, a butterfly, a tree, when we feel the evening breeze flow over us or wade in a stream of clear water, our natural response is immediate, intuitive, transforming, ecstatic. Everywhere we find ourselves invaded by the world of the sacred.

In a time of ecological crisis, the seeking of true identity necessitates moving beyond the psychological and theological dimensions to the cosmological. Humanity needs to acquire Merton’s awareness of the sacredness of creation and his intimate relationship with the rest of creation. Also, his spiritual vision of communion that comes through his experience of the natural world leaves little room to doubt that to plunder the natural world is to violate the sacredness of creation. In addition, our reawakening to the universe as a communion of subjects, which Berry refers to as the primary task for an Ecozoic era, is anticipated in Merton’s mystical experience of Zen-mind and the non-dualistic vision of East Asia. Indeed, the synthetic heart of Merton imparts a sense of how Asian ecological wisdoms and eco-spiritual practices might contribute to develop a functional ecological spirituality.

c. Summary of Christian Responses to the Ecological Crisis

In order to address the need for a functional and ecological spirituality, I examined the cause of the ecological crisis and the responses to that crisis. As the two models – the stewardship and egalitarian models – represent a shift from human dominion over nature to human with or in nature relations, these two Christian thinkers – McFague and Merton – share their distinctive ecological visions for the well-being of the Earth and its people. I might identify three distinctive contributions of the models and the authors. Firstly, the shared discomfort described in the methods and discussed

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112 Berry, “Foreword,” in Merton, When the Trees, 18.
by the authors is with the distorted human presence on Earth rooted in a mechanistic worldview and a
cultural context of consumerism, and even in certain theologies and spiritualities that emphasize
individual piety and salvation. Secondly, their analyses examines human identity in relation to the
rest of creation – as stewards of God’s earth (the stewardship model), integral threads in the fabric of
life (the egalitarian model), caretakers of the body of God (McFague), and gardeners of paradise
(Merton). Finally, in particular McFague and Merton, offer the possibility for the practice of
ecological cultivation, eco-justice and the immediate experience of the sacredness of creation.

On the basis this examination, I pose three interrelated questions in order to formulate a
functional ecological spirituality: What is a functional cosmology as the ground for reflecting on
human meaning and orientation in the world? What does it mean to be human on the planet? How
can humanity be present functionally and ecologically within the Earth community? These questions
will be pondered in chapters two and three in terms of cosmology, anthropology, and spirituality,
respectively. These three entry points will shed light on the mutuality and integrity among God, the
cosmos, and the human, as the eco-theological foundation for this thesis. Before turning to explore
these themes, I will address why a functional ecological spirituality will be developed in light of the
comprehensive context of the universe.

C. Cosmological Turn: Berry and Zhou

As observed earlier, the present context of the ecological crisis and the concomitant bio-
geological change demands an urgent, comprehensive response in order to restore the integral
functioning of the Earth’s processes. What is needed for the feasible journey of the Earth community
is not merely a replacement of the existing spiritualities that have contributed to the crisis; rather, we
need a re-contextualization of spirituality in terms of a comprehensive cosmological context. In other
words, to revision a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship, I will pay attention to the
cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. According to Swimme, cosmology accounts for “the story of the birth, development, and destiny of the universe, told with the aim of assisting humans in their task of identifying their roles within the great drama.” In fact, any religious interpretation of an object or event relies on cosmology because the latter provides the ground for reflecting on human meaning and purpose in the world. For that reason, cosmology has a great impact on Christian spirituality.

Christianity inherits its understanding of the universe and of humanity’s role in it from both Judaism and Greek philosophy. It is Ptolemy, a Greek astronomer who synthesized the speculations of earlier philosophers to produce a theory of planetary motion, which became the official cosmology of medieval Christianity. Ptolemaic cosmology, which understood the Earth to be at the center of the universe, was dominant in the development of Christian spirituality until, through the influence of Copernicus and Newton, it was replaced by their mechanistic cosmology. In such a mechanistic worldview, the natural world was separated from humanity. It became the object of human interrogation and exploitation in order to provide profit. At the same time, Christian spiritualities retreated from the cosmological dimension and focused inward, into the human, the only locus for the spiritual. Spirituality became more confined to private feelings and moral choices; thus the cosmological was replaced by the psychological dimension.

The twentieth century, however witnessed another cosmological revolution informed by Einstein’s General and Special Theories of Relativity and quantum physics. We are the first humans to witness the explosion of a supernova and the galaxies, and to see the Earth from outside the planet. The impact of this modern cosmological revolution proposes a return to a model of interconnectedness, interrelatedness, and even the inter-species relationality in which humans are

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embedded. Just as the cosmologies of Ptolemy, Copernicus and Newton have imbued the different contours of theology and spirituality, so we need to do develop theology and spirituality in the light of a current functional cosmology.

I argue that it is today’s critical task to recover a cosmological dimension for Christianity and its spirituality. George Hendry observes that there are three major contexts for doing Christian theology, that is, the cosmological, the political and the psychological. Since the 16th century, theology has focused on the psychological, and then later on, the political dimensions. Thus, the older and deeper cosmological context has become marginalized in Christian thought. However, Hendry reminds us that as the creation account of Genesis and the prologue of the Gospel of John show, the most profound context for theology is actually cosmological. Indeed, the ecological crisis necessitates a turn to the cosmological context. According to Elizabeth A. Johnson, our new understanding of our cosmological context and the ecological crisis not only require “that we just think through a new theology of creation, but that cosmology be a framework within which all theological topics be rethought and [become] a substantive partner in theological interpretation.”

Denis Edwards, John Haught, and McFague echo Johnson’s proposal that we need to not only turn to cosmology, but make cosmology the heart of the theological enterprise. For a development of an eco-spirituality, Cummings also insists that there should be a new focus for the theological enterprise:

The three major areas of theology are God, Humans and Nature. The early ages of theological studies laid heavy premium on the understanding of God; the next period placed much emphasis on the study of the Human; it is true that our attention should now turn to Nature, a much neglected discipline in the curriculum of the theological enterprise.

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115 See Ibid.
119 Cummings, Eco-spirituality, iv.
Such is the case with the work of Berry and Zhou. When a current cosmology becomes too problematic and/or dysfunctional to deal with contemporary pressing challenges, a new story eventually emerges. Since the works of Berry and Zhou focus on the complexity of cosmology, anthropology and spirituality, they can serve as resources for a renewal of the understanding of the human presence on Earth by cultivating an ecological sensitivity that is integral with the functioning of the planet. In fact, Berry is arguably the most prominent apostle of the cosmological dimension of religion and spirituality. In Berry’s view, Christian faith has developed an alliance with primarily ancient Greek philosophies, focusing on the divine-human relationship and the inter-human relationship. Thus, “we still think of turning to a new philosophical and conceptual framework for the remedy of our present difficulties and the rendering of our work more effective in the modern world.” He claims, however, that it is time to seek “an interpretation of religion and spirituality in terms of the story of the universe and of the Earth process.” He holds that:

Because none of these forms of religious consciousness has been able to deal effectively with the evolutionary story of the universe or with the ecological crisis that is now disturbing Earth’s basic life systems, we are being led to the cosmological dimension of religion both by our efforts at academic understanding and for practical issues of physical survival on a planet severely diminished in its life-giving capacities.

Berry suggests that a cosmologically oriented religion as the way into the future demands that we recognize the universe as the primary sacred community and humanity as a participatory reality in that community.

As indicated earlier, Zhou’s ethical and organic cosmology contributed to develop a vision of Confucianism and became the foundation of an officially-recognized East Asian worldview until the

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122 Ibid.
early twentieth century.124 Similar to Berry, Zhou integrates the Confucian tradition with a Daoist cosmology and a Buddhist spirituality to reinforce Confucian concerns for an authentic human relationship with others and the cosmos. Zhou’s discourse was developed within a comprehensive re-evaluation of the cosmological perspective of his day that had received little attention since the early days of Confucianism. So, an exploration of the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou might be a robust way to give us “an awareness of the unity of human affairs with the function of the universe and Earth,”125 and thus for reformulating Christian spirituality to “empower us to live in the web of life as sustainers rather than destroyers.”126

D. Concluding Remarks

I have sketched out the current ecological crisis that reveals the alarming and critical issue of survival for the Earth and humanity as well as the functional process of the Earth’s history. I have also examined the roots of the ecological crisis in light of the estrangement of humanity from the rest of creation, and the tragic result of anthropocentrism as the ground of meaning and value guiding society. In reply, I have examined two categories of Christian responses, the stewardship and egalitarian models. The contributions of these two models to ecological movements are difficult to deny and the discussions on human-Earth relations have played an important role in ecological literature. While the stewardship model seeks to develop an ecological consciousness in Christianity, the egalitarian model expands the ecological discourse to include a deep philosophical and “psychological connection.”127 But, it should be added that the cosmological perspective of the human-Earth relationship could bring more fully developed ecological sensitivities. In this vein, I

125 Berry, Christian Future, 116.
anticipate the characteristics of a new model for human-earth relationship that would eliminate the weaknesses of the other models pointed out above. An appropriate model would go beyond both the notion of human separation from the Earth community and of a diminished value and role for humanity.

I have also examined the general contours of a Christian eco-spirituality through two models and Christian authors. I believe that each author brings her/his own piece of a quilt to offer a more profound understanding of the human-Earth relationship. Enough to say, the embodiment and contemplative visions allow us to consider a different mode of human presence on Earth. Nonetheless, they also accentuate the need to seek a more comprehensive cosmological dimension of spirituality that will appreciate more fully the sacredness of creation, a functional human presence on Earth, and the cultivation of eco-spiritual sensitivities, within a time-developmental irreversible process of the universe. Therefore the cosmologies of Berry (Chapter Two) and Zhou (Chapter Three) will serve as a framework for the re-contextualization of spirituality in relation to the ecological crisis and the transitional moment from the Cenozoic era to the Ecozoic era.
CHAPTER TWO
THE COSMOLOGY OF THOMAS BERRY

A. Evolution of Berry’s Cosmology
   1. Berry’s Intellectual Journey
   2. Need for a Functional Cosmology
      Schism between the Christian Creation Story and the Scientific Evolution
   3. The New Story: the Manifestation of the Divine
      Universe as the Primary Revelation of the Divine

B. The Epic of Evolution
   1. The Universe as a Sequence of Irreversible Transformations
      The Universe having Psychic-Spiritual as well as Material Physical Dimension
   2. Reinvention of Humanity
   3. Ecozoic Vision

C. Spirituality of the Earth

D. Concluding Remarks

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Thomas Berry started his academic career by focusing on Western history, but expanded his interests to include Asian cultures and religions, the revolutionary thought of Teilhard de Chardin, and eventually the epic of evolution.\(^1\) Most recently, by identifying himself as a “geologian,” he contemplated the history of the Earth in light of the ecological crisis and looked intensively for a functional presence of humanity in the Earth community. To fulfill this project, he narrated the New Story – the cosmological story of creation – through which he integrated significant portions of his intellectual and spiritual journey. Through a long career including the study of world religions, philosophy, cosmology, cultural history, and their intersections, Berry has touched on a diverse group

\(^1\) Thomas Berry (1914-2009) was born in Greensboro, North Carolina. He received his Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America with a thesis on Giambattista Vico’s theory of history. With Ted de Bary, he founded the Asian Thought and Religion Seminar at Columbia University. He also taught Asian studies of Seton Hall (1956-60) and St. John’s University (1960-66). Later, he established a Ph.D program in the History of Religions at Fordham University while he directed the Riverdale Center of Religious Research. From 1975-1987 he was President of the American Teilhard Association. See Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Biography of Thomas Berry.” [http://www.thomasberry.org/Biography/tucker-bio.html](http://www.thomasberry.org/Biography/tucker-bio.html) (accessed on Nov 9, 2011)
of topics, with very integrated scholarship. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the relevant themes that address the topic under discussion.

In this chapter, I will explore Berry’s functional cosmology and spirituality, which will be the basic foundation and framework for establishing a functional ecological spirituality later in the thesis. Firstly, I will examine the basic elements of Berry’s intellectual journey, especially his indebtedness to Confucianism. This will show the context of Berry’s writings, an emergent context for an alternative functional cosmology in which the universe is seen as the primary manifestation of God. Secondly, I will analyze several key components of Berry’s functional cosmology. This will include the new scientific paradigm that understands the universe as a sequence of irreversible transformations that began some 13.7 billion years ago and that have had both psychic-spiritual and material-physical dimensions from the beginning. Furthermore, I will examine Berry’s notion of the reinvention of the human (i.e., a more cosmological and ecological anthropology), and his attempt to shift from anthropocentric norms and values to geocentric and biocentric ones in terms of his Ecozoic vision. Then, I will discuss Berry’s understanding of Earth spirituality and associated implications that would help to transform the current distorted human-Earth relationship. As a concluding remark I will highlight Berry’s understanding of a triadic relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity.

A. Evolution of Berry’s Cosmology

1. Berry’s Intellectual Journey

When Berry was elected president of the American Teilhard Association (ATA) in 1975, he described his intellectual journey:

I started off as a student of cultural history. I am primarily an historian. What I have to say are the probings of an historian into human affairs in a somewhat comprehensive context. During my university studies I sought to understand the unity and differentiation of human cultures and the dynamism that shaped their sense of reality and value. I studied especially the Chinese language sufficiently to read some of the basic classics. In 1949, I went to China for a year, and when I came back I took up Sanskrit in addition to continuing Chinese studies, so that I could get into the scriptures of Hindu India. I had begun studying the American
Indian world in the 1940’s, particularly the Plains Indians. I wished to get beyond the classical civilization, back into the earlier Shamanic period of the human community. The more I gave to the study of human venture, the more clearly I saw the need to go back into the dynamics of life itself. I was progressively led back to what I call the study of the Earth community, including its geological and biological as well as its human components. I call myself a geologian.2

As is corroborated from Berry’s own description of his career at the ATA, Matthew Fox compares the influence of Teilhard de Chardin on Berry with that of Plato on Aristotle or Albert the Great on Aquinas.3 Much influenced by Teilhard’s evolutionary thinking and through his own talent for synthesis, what Berry learns from world religions and cultures, contemporary science and Aboriginal spirituality becomes part of his new story of the Earth and humanity’s great work within it.

While many scholars have discussed how Berry integrates the histories of West and East, explores the spirituality of indigenous traditions, and expands Teilhard’s work on the human in an evolutionary universe, I will examine the importance of Confucianism on Berry’s thought.4 First of all, an important aspect of Berry’s approach to world religions and especially to Confucianism must be considered. In his view, the heritage of Confucianism is not limited to China and East Asia; rather it belongs to all of humanity. Berry writes, “The total human heritage belongs to the totality of the human community. Each of us is heir to the human heritage entire. None of us is complete in our human development until we have inwardly appropriated our global heritage.”5 He also attempts to

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illuminate the spiritual dynamics of Confucianism as relevant to ecological issues because “the various traditions constitute a functioning public spirituality of the global village.”

In 1948, Berry went to China to teach at Fu Jen Catholic University in Beijing and spent a year studying Chinese language, philosophy, and religion until Mao took over China. During this time, Berry met Wm. Theodore de Bary, Columbia professor and Confucian scholar, and they subsequently founded the “Asian Thought and Religion Seminar” at Columbia. Berry also taught Asian religions and world religions for several decades at Seton Hall, St. John’s University, and Fordham. Among his studies of world religions, Confucian thought influenced Berry in particular. According to Tucker, one of the greatest authorities on Berry’s work, especially on the influence of Confucianism on his work, “Confucianism has had special significance for Berry because of its cosmological concerns, its attention to nature and agriculture, its interest in self-cultivation and education, and its commitment to improving the social and political order.”

As discussed by Tucker, Berry is attracted mainly to three aspects of Confucianism: an integral cosmology, the practice of self-cultivation and learning, and a participatory responsibility. Berry writes:

[T]he main principle of Confucian thought is that the human is integral with the Earth and the entire universe. That this is compatible with modern cosmology is evident from the observation in contemporary physics that the universe is integral with itself throughout its vast extent in space and throughout its sequence of transformation in time.

Berry notes the compatibility between the cosmological principle of Confucianism and modern scientific cosmology, since in both the human realm is seen as integral with the cosmological order.

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8 Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 85.

This cosmology originates in the experience of an all-embracing harmony between the cosmic and human orders of reality, and Berry often notes how Confucian thought presents the human as the hsin [mind and heart] of universe, forming a triad with heaven and earth.\(^\text{10}\) This Confucian emphasis on an integral relationship with the entire universe helps Berry understand the place and role of humanity within a cosmological context.

Furthermore, through the Confucian tradition, Berry learns how the genetic coding and cultural coding are established in an organic cosmology. He contends that we must find our primary source of guidance in the inherent tendencies of our genetic coding, which bonds us to the universe and is integral with other species of the Earth community.\(^\text{11}\) In other words, the genetic coding of humanity carries within itself spontaneities that guide the authentic development of a cultural coding integral with the Earth community. “For the Chinese the cultural coding is ultimately contained within and guided by the genetic coding. Yet the emergent individual requires a life-long cultivation for this total genetic-cultural coding to reach its full expression,” holds Berry.\(^\text{12}\) This must be done by a process of learning, which corresponds to the Western understanding of interior spiritual development. Moreover, it is consistent with the Confucian notion of self-cultivation of the most profound nature, hsing – the heavenly endowed nature of every being, which is a core teaching of the Centrality and Commonality.\(^\text{13}\) As the heart of Confucian spirituality, the practice of cultivation and learning to be human is the way of mediation between the heavenly endowed genetic coding and the cultural coding of human society.

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\(^\text{13}\) Berry presents this insight in his discussion on authenticity or sincerity as the basis of the Centrality and Commonality . See Berry, “Authenticity in Confucian Tradition.”; See also *The Doctrine of Mean*, trans. Wang-tsit Chan. *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 98.
In addition, by drawing from Confucius’ six-fold sequence of development of the emergent individual, Berry perceives that humans begin with an instinctive awareness of the need for personal discipline through the life-long practice of cultivation, striving for culmination in intimate personal identity with the mysterious Tien ming, the heavenly bestowed nature of the human.\(^\text{14}\) Thus, “The art of arts in this context is in preserving the continuation of the cultivated, the cultural coding, and the spontaneous, the genetic coding,” holds Berry.\(^\text{15}\) In light of an integral relationship with the entire order of reality, Confucian education emphasizes cultivating the spontaneous, teaching the instinctive, and disciplining the natural, which can seem paradoxical. Yet, self-cultivation has consequences for transforming the cultural coding of humanity, and finally for completing the order of the universe through responsible participation in the larger community.

In Confucian spirituality, Berry apprehends that “the final achievement was an integral experience of the total presence of the divine, the cosmic, and the human to each other in a trinity wherein man [humanity] was the third and unifying element.”\(^\text{16}\) Through delving into many classics including Zhou Dunyi’s *Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*, Berry grasps the essence of Eastern culture, which is the vision of the profound intercommunion of Heaven, Earth, and the human.\(^\text{17}\) He also lauds the integral experience of communion with nature as exemplified in the cultivated sensitivity of Zhou Dunyi, who was “so sensitive that he would not permit the grass outside his window to be cut lest he be the cause of hurt a living being.”\(^\text{18}\) This experience of being

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\(^\text{14}\) In *Analects* 2:4, Confucius says: “At 15, I set my heart on learning; at 30, I firmly took my stand; at 40, I had no delusions; at 50, I knew the Mandate of Heaven; at 60, my ear was attuned to the truth; at 70, I follow my heart’s desire without overstepping the boundaries of what was right.”

\(^\text{15}\) Berry, “Individualism and Wholism in Chinese Tradition,” 17.


\(^\text{18}\) Berry, “Affectivity in Classical Confucianism,” 12.
one body with the grass – in Berry’s term, experiencing a communion of subjects – is the primary task for the Ecozoic era. Yet, Berry does not idealize the Confucian tradition, because of the discrepancy between its teaching and the devastation of nature in the practice of its adherents. Likewise, he is aware of the limitations of its cosmology of seasonal cycles. Nonetheless, it is correct to say that “the comprehensive cosmological framework of Confucian thought can be a valuable intellectual resource in reformulating a contemporary ecological cosmology with implications for environmental ethics.”

2. Need for a Functional Cosmology

Berry pursues a functional cosmology as the ground for reflecting on human meaning and our orientation within the world as we confront the current ecological degradation.

Schism between the Christian Creation Story and the Scientific Evolutionary Story

In particular, Berry contends that the Christian estrangement from the Earth and its over-emphasis on the redemptive mystique is deeply rooted in a dysfunctional cosmology that also permeates the myth of progress of a commercial-technological society. Berry suggests the fundamental problem in our times. “It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how things came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story” that emerges in the epic of evolution.

Drawing on the Western tradition of historical interpretation, Berry pays attention to the functional role of story from the great historical vision of St. Augustine in *The City of God* to the account of the Long March in China. Thus, he realizes the significant role of story and the meaning and inspiration that humans derive from their cosmological visions, which could provide guidance.

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19 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 198.
21 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 123.
and energy to overcome the current crisis and to create a better future. In a troubling time of ecological degradation, the biblical account of creation and the scientific description of evolution are incomplete in their spiritual implications for humans at present. Both stories are problematic by themselves and do not provide the spiritual-psychic energy to overcome the contemporary crisis and do not offer the comprehensive vision to achieve a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship.

On the one hand, the scientific achievement of modern times gives a detailed account of the cosmos from its primordial flaring forth to the present moment. Empirical research on the various physical aspects of the universe provides detailed descriptions of reality that seemingly satisfy the human curiosity to know its origins and the meaning of its existence, at least on a theoretical dimension. However, while these descriptions are a great achievement, the scientific mechanistic and reductionist view of the universe that gradually emerge in many context tend to diminish the meaning and value of the evolutionary process by presenting the universe as the product of a random sequences of physical and biological interactions with no inherent meaning.\(^{22}\) For this reason, the scientific achievement sometimes creates issues in the Christian community which understands the cosmos as God’s creation. It disturbs Christians that science presents the universe as having no mystique, no numinous quality, no immanent sacred, and no teleology.

On the other hand, Berry sees the Christian view itself as creating problems, since it has difficulties accepting a cosmology of emergence. For Christianity, “the world [is] an ordered complex of beings that are ontologically related as an image of the divine; it does not present the world as a continuing process of emergence in which there is an inner organic bond of descent of each reality from an earlier reality.”\(^{23}\) As the Christian account of creation begins with an ancient perception of the universe, Christians are frustrated by an inability to cope with the new data; thus they lapse into

\(^{22}\) Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 130; Berry, *Great Work*, 78; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 54; Berry, *Christian Future*, 41; Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 246.

\(^{23}\) Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 129.
their traditional attitudes. This inability to cope with the new cosmology allows the emergence of a fundamentalist fixation on the traditions.\textsuperscript{24}

Berry argues that unfortunately both the biblical account of creation and the scientific evolutionary account of the universe produce the same consequences – the radical discontinuity between humanity and the Earth community. The redemptive mystique overwhelms the creation process because of the neglect of the revelatory import of the natural world, while the commercial-scientific endeavors of secular society are caught in the dream of progress as absolute. “The pathos in our own situation is that our secular society does not see the numinous quality or the deeper psychic powers associated with its own story, while the religious society rejects the story because it is presented only in its physical aspect,” states Berry.\textsuperscript{25}

Berry notes how the traditional spiritual coding of Western spirituality and the industrial-commercial mode of consciousness in western society cause little trouble to each other since both regard themselves as separated from the integral functioning of the Earth community.\textsuperscript{26} The consequence is an anthropocentrism that sees “the human as Olympian ruler of the planet, the planet as naturalistic functioning, and Earth’s resources as objects for unlimited human exploitation.”\textsuperscript{27} By separating the human species from the rest of the Earth community, humanity severs an intimate relationship and solidarity with the natural world. As a result, it is the supreme irony of our time that it is “the anthropocentric basis for a temporary human improvement that would eventuate in the ruin that humans would bring upon the natural world.”\textsuperscript{28}

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\textsuperscript{24} See Berry, \textit{Evening Thoughts}, 56; Berry, \textit{Great Work}, 71.
\textsuperscript{25} Berry, \textit{Dream of the Earth}, 131.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Swimme and Berry, \textit{Universe Story}, 212.
\end{flushright}
It is here that Berry proposes an alternative vision, a way to remedy this situation by healing the schism between humanity and nature and by establishing a vital human presence on Earth founded on a corrected version of human-Earth relationality in the new story.

In its corrected version, this story constitutes the basic hope for a viable future for the human community and for the planet earth. This picture of creation, without the destructive technologies associated with its development, is the only functional view of the universe that is presently available for us.²⁹

3. The New Story: The Manifestation of the Divine

Berry began telling the story of the universe – a universe in continuous evolution from the beginning of its irreversible process 13.7 billion years ago – a few decades ago. Berry incorporates the scientific evolutionary cosmology with the intuitive wisdom of religion to narrate, “a new creation myth which includes both the credibility derived from the scientific account of the universe’s story and the meaningfulness instilled by the spirituality of a faith tradition.”³⁰ Since the universe is an emergent sequence, Berry considers that the universe can be best understood through a sequential story – the galactic emergence of the universe, the shaping of the Earth, the appearance of life and of human consciousness.³¹ Furthermore, he contemplates the profound spiritual dynamics of the universe carrying “within itself a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material dimension.”³² Thus, this new story is now a meaningful and valuable creation myth as potent in our times as the creation stories of antiquity. Process thinkers and contemporary theologians have written much about the scientific evolutionary cosmology. Yet, process thinkers, argues Berry, seldom appreciate fully that “the universe in its unfolding is not simply process but a sequence of meaningful irreversible events

²⁹ Berry, “Contemplation on World Order,” 3.
³⁰ Berry, Befriending the Earth, 5-7. It is important to note Berry’s comprehensive understanding of science. According to Rockefeller, “Berry has an impressive grasp of contemporary science from evolutionary biology and ecology to cosmology, and he became centrally concerned with the reconciliation of religion and science, which has been a major objective of liberal religious thought since the early 19th century. He rejected scientism and the reduction of the real to the known as defined exclusively by science. However, he had great respect for science as a major creative force in modern culture.” Steven C. Rockefeller, “Reflections on Thomas Berry,” The Thomas Berry Award, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NYC (Sep 26, 2009), 4.
³¹ Berry, Dream of the Earth, 128.
³² Ibid., 131.
best understood as narrative.” In his view, the process theologians who contribute to the understanding of our conception of the divine and the relationship of the divine to the phenomenal world have accomplished little to promote the empirical study of the cosmos itself as religious expression. Only Berry seems to provide satisfactory criteria for a deeper understanding of “the spiritual dynamics of the universe as revealed through our own empirical insight into the mysteries of its functioning.” This is Berry’s functional cosmology, told in mythic form, as story, where scientific data is presented in a time-developmental unfolding journey of the universe that is “the primary revelation of divine.”

**Universe as the Primary Revelation of the Divine**

Berry provides twelve principles for understanding the universe and the role of the human in the universe process; i.e., the “universe, the solar system, and the planet Earth in themselves and in their evolutionary emergence constitute for the human community the primary revelation of that ultimate mystery whence all things emerge into being.” Like Teilhard, who interprets faith in terms of a comprehensive cosmological context, Berry reflects on the implications of the new story in the context of the Christian faith. Among Berry’s theological insights that are worth presenting and underlining, I will address the models of cosmological Trinity, the cosmic Christ, and the notion that creation, as one of the two books of revelation, is the primary revelation of the divine.

**Cosmological Trinity**

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33 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 227.
34 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 131.
35 Berry and Swimme, *Universe Story*, 198, 234; Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 105; Berry, *Great Work*, 81; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 70; Berry, *Befriending the Earth*, 7.
36 See Berry, *New Cosmology*, 18; Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 76; Berry, “Cosmology of Religion,” 95; Berry, *Great Work*, 81; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 70, 106; Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 198, 243; Berry, *Christian Future*, 25, 66. According to Berry, we have given a new sense to revelatory experience—a new sense of the universe, the planet Earth, life, and the human. We even have a new revelatory experience within the understanding of the time-developmental universe. For Berry, “Revelation is the awakening in the depth of human psychic awareness of a sense of ultimate mystery and how ultimate mystery communicates itself.” Berry, *Befriending the Earth*, 7.
Berry proposes a model of the Trinity from a cosmological perspective through three insights that will be discussed in later sections: differentiation, inner articulation, and communion. We are accustomed to a familial symbolism for conceiving the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Augustine explained the Trinity with a psychological model and in modern times a sociological model of the self, the other, and community has become prevalent. Similarly Berry articulates the cosmological model on the basis of a scientific understanding of the universe. “We experience the world as emergent diversification and differentiation; each particle has its own interiority. …There is still the bonding.” Accordingly, this threefold tendency provides a remarkable model for the Trinity – the Father as the principle of differentiation; the Son as the icon, the Word, the principle of inner articulation; and the Holy Spirit as the bonding force holding all things together. This model is compatible with the view of Thomas Aquinas, who wrote: “the order of the universe is the ultimate and noblest perfection in things” and “in all creatures there is found the trace of the Trinity, inasmuch as in every creature are found some things which are necessarily reduced to the divine Persons as to their cause.” Berry asserts that the deepest tendencies of the creative process of the universe have manifested the ultimate numinous mystery from the beginning, and thus the universe is the primary revelation of the Trinity.

Cosmological Christology

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40 See Ibid. See Berry, *Christian Future*, 56. Berry uses the word icon in a sense that Christ is the icon of the invisible God, from “Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation.” (Col 1:15)

41 *Summa Theologia* (1, q. 45, a.7).

42 This thought of the universe as the primary revelation of the Trinity is described by Denis Edwards who draws it from St. Great Basil. See Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2004), 24-30.
Moreover, Berry develops his Christology on the basis of a new creation story closely interwoven with the cosmic Christ tradition in the Bible. Berry focuses in particular on the prologue of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (John 1:1-3). Berry comments, “John begins his Gospel not immediately with the human birth of Christ but with the Eternal Christ as the creative Logos of the Universe.”

He continues, “The universe comes into existence through the Word. Later, the Word becomes flesh in a particular human individual.” Therefore, there has been a Christ dimension to the universe from the beginning; in other words, Christ is part of an irreversible, cosmological, and developmental time, not merely a human, historical time. To speak in Berry’s context, “The Christ event was of cosmic dimensions, requiring a cosmic as well as an individual mode of being.” The macrophase mode of the Christ reality incarnates to a microphase in Jesus of Nazareth. As can also be inferred from Colossians, “In Christ all things hold together” (Col. 1:17), the universe is the primary revelation of the Christ from the inception of the universe.

Furthermore, Berry ponders the life and death of Jesus Christ in light of the cosmological context. In particular, the sacrificial death of the incarnational appearance of the divine could be understood as a moment of grace because sacrifice is the choice of macrophase reality. Berry holds,

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43 Berry, *Christian Future*, 56. Berry understands that Christ has three dimensions — the incarnation of Jesus within a historical realism, his cosmological identity (example 1 John 1:1-3), and the physical realism of the incarnation experience (1 Cor. 12:12-3; 15: 17-9).

44 Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 73.

45 See O’Hara, “Portents of Merton as Eco-Theologian,” 109-112.

46 Berry, *Christian Future*, 56.

47 By primary Berry means that the universe has a Christ dimension from the beginning, as Logos goes back to the beginning. The term primary does not mean a hierarchical priority of the universe over the Bible. But he means the chronological order of the universe that could be considered as the primary revelation in a time sequential sense. Berry notes “As the world in its totality with all its diversity is created by the Logos so the world in its totality and with all its diversity is illumined by the Logos. The creative and illuminative functions of the Logos are coextensive. Both reason and revelation assure us that there is no Outer World as regards this work of the Logos.” Berry, “Creative Revolution,” *Riverdale Paper V* (n.d.), 8.

“Sacrifice, ultimately, is the choice of the larger self, because when the larger self is endangered by the smaller self, the smaller self must give way to the larger self when it is in its authentic mode.”

Accordingly, “we see that the wisdom of the cross and the wisdom of the universe are two aspects of a single wisdom, that the universe and the cross are integral parts of a single story.” Neither is complete without the other. The order of the cross is coherent with the order of the universe.

Berry contends that redemptive wisdom cannot be alien to creative wisdom. From the perspective of sacrifice, the wisdom of the cross is inseparable from the wisdom of the universe, with and for each other. For Berry, the central role of sacrifice in the redemptive process and in the unfolding of an emergent universe is a single coherent. When Christians disdain the wisdom of the universe, Berry says, it is “problematic, from a distorted view of the integral revelation that the divine makes of itself.”

When we reflect on this cosmological dimension of sacrifice, it also indicates that the universe and the natural world is a locus of divine presence.

**Two Books of Revelation**

In Christian history, a cosmological view of the Trinity and of the cosmic Christ is available from two revelatory sources: the manifestation of the divine in the natural world and the manifestation of the divine in the biblical word. As Aquinas notes, “Faith comes in two volumes: Nature and the Bible.”

Although the story of the universe began to fade in the Christian faith because of Augustine’s influence on the subjective accounts of a devoted life and the realistic historical narrative of the Bible,

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49 Berry, *Befriend the Earth*, 135.


52 Ibid., 88.

Medieval Europe offered many sources for a more cosmological theology, in particular: Celtic animism, Benedictine stewardship liturgies, Hildegard of Bingen, the fraternal prayer of Francis of Assisi, and the French Victorines and German Rhineland mystics. In particular, Berry appreciates Aquinas’ concern for the cosmic community as the “perfection of the universe.” For Aquinas, all that exists in the universe participates in divine goodness more perfectly, and represents itself more fully as a whole rather than as any single creature. Berry’s favourite theologian, Aquinas, notes that:

God planned to create many distinct things, in order to share with them and reproduce in them his goodness. Because no one creature could do this, he [God] produced many diverse creatures, so that what was lacking in one expression of his goodness could be made up by another; for the goodness which God has whole and together, creatures share in many different ways. And the whole universe shares and expresses that goodness better than any individual creature.

Aquinas, while interpreting God’s revelation within the context of medieval cosmology, explains this diversity as belonging with the perfection of the universe.

In this line, Berry claims, “the universe is the primary revelation of [the] divine” which “awaken[s] the depth of human psychic awareness of a sense of ultimate mystery.” He further reminds us that of the two Scriptures, nature and sacred text, are a revelation of the Divine and are complementary and necessary to each other. “If Christians are faithful to the divine manifestation in the natural world, Jesus will be discovered,” holds Berry. He expands the understanding of revelation from cognitive, verbal, and supernatural to co-existence with creation within a time-developmental universe. In this manner, he sheds light on Christian traditions to recover the sacred

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56 Berry integrates this insight from Aquinas (i.e., the universe as a mode of divine presence among the great diversity of things) with an insight from Teilhard (i.e., an understanding of the psychic-spiritual dimension of the time-developmental unfolding journey of the universe).

57 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 198, 234. See also: Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 105; Berry, *Great Work*, 81; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 70; Berry, *Befriending the Earth*, 7.

58 Berry, *Befriending the Earth*, 76.
dimension of reality, in which the universe and the natural world are a primary locus of divine revelation.

**B. The Epic of Evolution**

Berry published “The New Story” in 1978 and further expanded his narrative in *The Universe Story*, with co-author Swimme in 1992. As did Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Aquinas, and Ignatius, Berry outlines a “Christian Cosmology” for the re-contextualization of the Christian faith in his text, *The Christian Future and the Fate of the Earth*. Yet, he does not intend simply to restore a former religious, spiritual, or moral tradition. Rather,

> [The current crisis] is a case of re-ordering the human in its entire relationship with the planet on which we live, a mission for which Christians are not especially suited, since we have seldom shown any extensive regard for the creation process, dedicated as we have been since the thirteenth century to a primarily redemptive task.

He claims that the magnitude of the current ecological crisis compels us to re-think the relationship with the planet Earth. Outlining seven insights that will inform a more effective response to the ecological crisis, he notes that, first, “the new paradigm sees the universe as a sequence of irreversible transformations that began some 13.7 billion years ago.” Second, “the evolutionary process of the universe has from the beginning a psychic-spiritual as well as a material-physical aspects.” Third, the “Earth has a privileged role as the planet whereon life is born with all those special characteristics we find in Earth’s living form.” Fourth, “the human is by definition that being in whom the universe reflects on and celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness.” Fifth, “the basic referent in terms of reality and of value is the universe in its full expression in space and time.” Sixth, “the universe itself can be understood as the primary revelation of the divine.” Seventh, “biblical

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59 Berry, “Christian Cosmology,” in *Christian Future*.
60 Ibid., 28.
revelation, the incarnation, redemption, and the shaping of the Christian community – all these have taken place within the larger cosmological and historical context.”

In this thesis, I will examine Berry’s cosmology through his sequential categories of the universe: irreversible transformations, the reinvention of humanity, and the Ecozoic vision.

1. The Universe as a Sequence of Irreversible Transformations

Since the time of Copernicus, scientists have approached the universe from an analytic and physical perspective through mechanistic and mathematical symbols of the cosmos. Yet, gradually they have also recognized the continual unfolding process of the universe. We now live not so much in a cosmos as in a cosmogenesis; that is, a universe ever coming into being through an irreversible sequence of transformations moving, in the larger arc of its development, from a lesser to a greater order of complexity and from a lesser to greater consciousness.

With Swimme, Berry articulates the meaning and value of cosmogenesis:

The most significant change in the twentieth century, it seems, is our passage from a sense of cosmos to a sense of cosmogenesis. From the beginning of human consciousness, the ever-renewing seasonal sequence, with its death and rebirth cycles, has impinged most powerfully upon human thought. This orientation in consciousness has characterized every previous human culture up to our own. During the modern period, and especially in the twentieth century, we have moved from that dominant spatial mode of consciousness, where time is experienced in ever-renewing seasonal cycles, to a dominant time-developmental mode of consciousness, where time is experienced as an evolutionary sequence of irreversible transformations.

The former awareness of the universe was of an eternal, seasonally renewable cosmos. For instance, the worldview of India represents this spatial mode of divine experience, a manifestation within an ever renewing, cyclically changing universe. For India, time is metaphysical. Unlike India, the biblical world has awareness that the universe emerged at a certain historical moment, and Christians have acknowledged time in dealing with the human spiritual process, while still perceiving the

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61 Ibid., 29-32.
62 Berry, Great Work, 26, 169, 190; Berry, Befriending the Earth, 12; Berry, Evening Thoughts, 117; Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 223.
63 Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 3.
universe from a spatial mode of consciousness. St. John and St. Paul lived in a spatial mode of consciousness, for which the universe was created once and time was seasonal, ever renewing, and an abiding fixed sequence of transformations. The universe in the earlier spatial mode of consciousness is a fixed container and each particle’s position has a fixed address. Thus, the particle is primary and the whole is derivative.

Now we realize that the universe “within the phenomenal order, [is] a self-emerging process that has gone through a long sequence of transformations through the millennia to become the world about us.”

Cosmogenesis accounts for the interdependence and interconnectedness of all entities in the unfolding sequence of the universe, the Earth, the living world, and the human community.

**The Universe having Psychic-Spiritual as well as Material-Physical Dimension**

While the scientist concentrates on the material and physical processes of the universe, Berry envisions the mystical dimension of the universe: “the universe has had a psychic-spiritual dimension and physical-material dimension from the beginning.” From its beginning in the galactic system to its earthly expression in human consciousness, the universe carries within itself a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material dimension. He asserts that there is no moment of transition from the material to the psychic or spiritual in the universe story.

Berry contemplates the mystical dimension of the universe:

My proposal is that the more integral version of the scientific account of the universe, that is, the account that includes numinous mystery (a more appropriate term than Big Bang) and an inner psychic as well as a physical dimension of the emergent creative process does provide us with a functional origin story capable of sustaining the emerging ecological age.

For Berry, the sequence of developmental processes of the universe in time includes a numinous mysterious dimension, which is interchangeable with an organizing force, divine dimension, or an

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64 Berry, *Christian Future*, 83.

65 See Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 66; Berry, *Great Work*, 81, 95; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 75; Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 24.

indwelling wisdom or *Logos*. Under the influence of Teilhard, Berry perceives that “the sequence of development is the progressive articulation of the more spiritual and numinous aspects of the process."\(^{67}\)

It is here worthwhile to mention Berry’s understanding of numinous presence that permeates the universe, the planet Earth, and dwells in human intelligence. Unlike a mechanistic universe, a numinous, trans-phenomenal, divine creative power enables the self-organizing cosmogenesis to be expressed in a continuing sequence of irreversible transformations.\(^{68}\) For Christians, God is the single source of creation as “God creates himself in creatures” as a spontaneous guiding force in the universe.\(^{69}\) “All are guided by what might be considered *an inner wisdom* determining the course of the universe, for the universe and the emerging process of its unfolding is, from its primordial emergence, a spiritual as well as a physical process,” states Berry.\(^{70}\) For other religions, this principle governing the interaction of all those basic forces is referred to as the Great Spirit, *rita, dharma, dao, cheng,* and *jen*. In fact, Berry thinks that this recognition and coherent action according to these principles is the ultimate form of human wisdom.\(^{71}\) In this view, Berry understands the religious-spiritual meaning of a time-developmental process of the universe as contributing to traditional religions.

Furthermore, Berry uses the term “numinous” precisely in relation to the ontological and cosmological dimensions rather than as an abstract spiritual dimension. He writes, “‘Numinous’ comes from an ancient word for the divine, the sacred, the real over against the ephemeral, the temporal, and the profane. This numinous quality radiates from the absolute eternal reality that

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\(^{67}\) Berry, *Christian Future*, 29.

\(^{68}\) See Ibid., 64.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 92.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 89. Emphasis is added.

\(^{71}\) Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 20.
makes its presence known throughout the entire visible world.”  

By using the term numinous, Berry rejects the excessive emphasis on a rational and physical approach to the universe, which, he thinks, has led to a bias against discovering the mystique of creation. This notion of the numinous is compatible with an indwelling divine mystery (which is beyond all comprehension) and a pervasive guiding mystery that has manifested itself throughout the entire cosmic-Earth-human process. Moreover, a numinous presence consists of a dimension of the natural world, in which human consciousness experiences awe, wonder, and amazement. For Berry, the intuitive wisdoms of wonder, awe, and the numinous in the universe and the natural world are finally witnessed by scientific endeavors.

In Berry’s consideration, the reality of the universe is emerging as a time-developmental sequence of transformations in a mysterious, numinous process. “The numinous mystery of the universe now reveals itself in a developmental mode of expression, a mode never before available to human consciousness through an observational process.” Therefore, the universe has a full interior subjective numinous aspect as part of the entire cosmic order and process. This numinous dimension of nature was perceived by the Aboriginal people’s sense of intercommunion among the divine, humanity and nature. Because of this numinosity in the natural world and in inner human consciousness, it is possible for both to communicate with each other as a way of reciprocity between the divine and creation.

If there were not the numinous mystery, the unfolding sequence of the universe would be impossible. This is why Berry delineates the universe sequence as a “stupendous moment of

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72 Berry, “The Vision Quest of the American Indian,” 1.
73 See Berry, “Future Forms of Religious Experience,” Riverdale Papers I (n.d.).
74 See Berry, Evening Thoughts, 131.
transformation,” in “the balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium.”

Berry says, “The universe solved its problem by establishing a creative disequilibrium expressed in the curvature of space that was sufficiently closed to establish an abiding order in the universe and sufficiently opened to enable the wild creative process to continue.” He asserts that the unfolding process itself has happened only through the creative balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium, known as the scientific principle of cosmogenesis, and the second Law of Thermodynamics. The former principle explains the emergent diversification process or a building up order, while the latter a containing process or a breaking down order. For Berry, this curvature of the universe finds its first expression in the physical bonding, later in the living process of the Earth, and lastly, finds its most intimate expression in human thought and affection, as well as in our arts, music, and dance.

Indeed, the journey of the universe is neither random nor determined, but a stupendous creative process.

As the universe manifests the mode of divine presence in its numinosity, Berry delineates the three modes of expression of cosmogenesis “at all levels through communion (intimacy, interrelatedness), differentiation (diversity), and subjectivity (interiority, self-organization).” Berry refers to these three modes of expression as “the cosmological principle of the universe,” governing all entities and all sequential processes. The first principle of the universe is differentiation. He holds “differentiation as the primordial expression of the universe.” According to Berry, the divine, somewhat like differentiation, creates “a phenomenal world with the power to develop greater complexity through the emergent process.” In other words, the evolutionary episode of the universe

76 Berry, Sacred Universe, 118.
77 Berry, Great Work, 52.
78 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 20.
79 See Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 71-78; Berry, Christian Future, 54-55; Berry, Great Work, 162-3; Berry, “The New Story,” Riverdale Paper V (n.d.): 16-17.
80 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 45.
81 Berry, Christian Future, 65
transforms “in the larger arc of their sequence, from lesser to greater complexity and functioning and also from lesser to great consciousness.”

The second creative principle of the universe is increased subjectivity. He notes how “interior psychic unity [has] consistently increased along with a greater complexification of being.” Each differentiated object in the universe has its own subjectivity because from the beginning, everything has both a material-physical dimension and a psychic-spiritual dimension. Each being in the universe contributes to the epic of evolution in its own unique way according to its nature and context.

The third principle is “the communion of each reality of the universe with every other reality in the universe.” Not only does the entire process of the universe depend on this bonding force, but every being in the universe enters into communion with every other being. These principles of cosmogenesis reinforce that the dynamics of development revealed in the curvature of the universe are the very same throughout the universe. The dynamism and creativity of the universe are enough to guarantee the emergence of new stages of transformation within the balance of equilibrium and disequilibrium, or of constructive and destructive energy. In other words, all beings that are bonded emerged from this process, and are presented as having an inner dimension, an interior reality that reflects the diversity and the original bursting forth of energy at the beginning of time.

Therefore, cosmogenesis suggests a new mode of harmonious relationship among all that exists in the universe. Namely this time-developmental universe within the compassionate curvature reveals its journey of an intimate presence of all things to each other, that is, a pervasive harmony between each mode of being and every other mode of being.

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82 Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 117.
83 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 45.
84 Ibid.
85 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 219.
2. Reinvention of Humanity

A frequently asked question in eco-theology and eco-spirituality is the role and place of humanity in relation to the rest of creation. Berry understands the human as a cosmological mode of being as well as a species of the Earth community – as part of the unfolding cosmogenesis and with a functioning role in the ecosystem of the planet Earth. He also reminds us to resituate the human place and role as inseparable from the universe and the Earth community. Not only did the human’s physical body emerge from the Earth, but the spiritual-consciousness of humanity is deeply interrelated to the process of the universe.

The order of the magnitude of the task imposed upon humanity in response to the ecological crisis and the need for a viable Earth and human future is impressive. For this reason, Berry asserts that this task requires reinventing the human from solely a rational animal to the heart of the universe or the conscious mode of the universe.86 “This historical mission of our time is to reinvent the human – at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience,” states Berry.87 Indeed, his cosmology proposes how to reinvent humans and how to change the destructive human presence on Earth. For this purpose, Berry offers a new awareness of “what it is to be human, the role of consciousness on Earth, and the place of the human species in the universe.”88

First of all, our very humanity is to be understood in light of the story of the universe. Berry’s cosmological anthropology is derived from an account of the transformation of the universe and Earth. “We cannot know ourselves in any adequate manner except through an account of the transformations of the universe and of the planet Earth in which we came into being. This new story

86 Berry borrows this notion from the Confucian tradition, that understands the human as the heart and mind of the universe. See Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 21; Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 155; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 61; Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 73; Berry, “Earth Community,” *Riverdale Paper* VIII (n.d.), 4.

87 Berry, *Great Work*, 159.

88 Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 73.
of the universe is our personal story as well as our community story."^{89} An extract from Berry’s poem “It Takes a Universe” shows this eloquently:

\begin{verbatim}
It takes a universe
to make a child both
in outer form and inner
spirit. It takes
a universe to educate
a child. A universe
to fulfill a child.
\end{verbatim}

In this poem, Berry shows how human identity could be defined in relation to the universe. In understanding human presence as emerging in universe time, Berry urges us to contemplate “the source of life, our being, and our destiny [as] unfolding dynamics of universe and Earth evolution."^{90} This poem also reveals a cosmological anthropic principle in which humans were an intended outcome of the evolutionary process.^{91} By seeing humanity within a cosmological context, the new story might awaken us to integrate into the larger context of meaning that is the endeavour of the entire cosmos.

To illustrate the relationship between the universe and each being, Berry employs the analogy of macrocosm and microcosm. Every being in the universe has both a macro-phase and a micro-phase dimension. Microcosm refers to the particular mode of being, present here and now, that has a specific structure, while macrocosm indicates the entity’s cosmological mode of being, that is, both its place in the largeness of the Earth and the universe, and the mystery of an unborn future.^{92} In contrast to the reductionist view that the part is primary and the whole is derivative, Berry contends that the macro-phase mode of being is primary, while the micro-phase is derivative. In his terms,

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^{89} Berry, Great Work, 83.

^{90} Tucker, “Introduction,” in Berry, Christian Future, xxv.

^{91} In presenting his anthropic principle, Berry draws from the thought of Freeman Dyson: “The more I examine the universe and study the details of its architecture, the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we are coming.” See Berry, Christian Future, 30, 57; Berry, Sacred Universe, 45; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 16

^{92} See Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 55.
“the Earth is primary and the human is derivative.” In this framework, the Earth (universe) is macrocosm while humanity evolved from Earth processes is microcosm so that the personal identity of humanity should be in resonance to the functioning of the universe itself.

In Confucianism, macrocosm as the intercommunion of all things is primary, while microcosm as their differentiation into the multiplicity of things is secondary. The understanding of the Cosmic Christ emerging from the Prologue of John’s Gospel and the hymn of Christ as head of all creation in Colossians is understood as the macrophasic reality of Christ. Jung’s individuation process can be understood as an awareness of macrophase being within the larger cosmic-Earth dimension. Accordingly, the macrocosm and microcosm have “a total presence to each other and to that deeper mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged.” Berry contends that this coherent account of the cosmological mutual inter-relationship is understood more fully in light of the new story than through any other explanation.

Tucker and Grim note how as a geologist, “[Berry] viewed himself as a human being who had emerged out of eons of Earth’s geological and biological evolution and was now reflecting on our world. This became a context for reinventing the human at the species level.” His identification as a geologist indicates a geo-theological anthropology. The geological understanding stresses how the human species is derived from the Earth’s geo-biological transformation processes; through theology, humans reflect and celebrate the processes of the functioning of the Earth that is revealing a mode of divine presence. This reflection allows humans to reflect as a species on their relational resonance with the rest of creation. In fact, Berry wants to emphasize the role and place of human beings, not in separation from the Earth but within and as members of the Earth community. In this regard, Berry

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93 Berry, Sacred Universe, 128.
94 In the Confucian tradition, this macrocosm and microcosm relationship is especially central to the Book of Changes, and the Centrality and Commonality, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter 3.
95 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 132.
urges us to reinvent the human as a species of the Earth community as well as to reawaken to our specific role of a functional presence on Earth.

The special task of humanity today is the role of enabling “the Earth and the universe entirely to reflect on and to celebrate themselves, and the deep mysteries they bear within them, in a special mode of conscious self-awareness.”\(^97\) Such a full symphony cannot be reduced to a single note; every being has its own voice and sound just as humans are the reality of self-reflexive consciousness in the universe. Berry compares the role of humans to “a sounding board within a musical instrument,”\(^98\) as “the merest echoes of the universe entire,”\(^99\) and at the same time as “activating the most profound dimension of the universe.”\(^100\) As Berry highlights humanity’s role within the story of the universe at a species level, and as a member of the Earth community, humanity’s disruptive impact upon the functional processes of the Earth community can be understood as self-destructive. Moltmann echoes that “If human beings are themselves ‘part of nature’… then any destruction of nature necessarily also includes an element of human self-destruction.”\(^101\) We know that the exploitation of nature endangers many life forms on the planet and moreover, this disturbance threatens the very existence of human beings. Berry laments the activity of human beings, understood as “the most pernicious mode of earthly being” and as “the affliction of the world, its demonic presence.”\(^102\) This decisive reflection of Berry is aimed at bringing healing to the Earth when humans accept their place and role in the context of the universe and Earth community.

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\(^{97}\) Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 1.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., 40.

\(^{99}\) Ibid.

\(^{100}\) Berry, *Befriending the Earth*, 132.


\(^{102}\) Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 209.
We develop our individual self with a “neglect of our community self, our relation with the planet Earth, and with the entire natural order that constitutes the larger self of our own being.” In contrast, if human identity is found in the universe, it provides us with a common identity as a member of the human family, the great community of life, and an evolving sacred universe. According to Berry, “To take the universe story to heart is to awaken to ‘our own deeper self,’ ‘the Great Self,’ which is the heart-mind of the sacred universe.” This new spiritual discipline could lead us to a cosmological awareness of subjective communion, in which “the human [is] seen as that being in whom the universe in its evolutionary dimension became conscious of itself.”

This experience of such a communion of subjects is at the heart of Berry’s Ecozoic vision.

3. Ecozoic Vision

According to the Bible, “where there is no vision, the people perish.” John Haught, a leading theologian on the dialogue between religion and science with an ecological awareness, proposes that we need a new vision to move us to a firm and permanent commitment to ecological responsibility within the context of natural flux and cosmic evolution. Such a model can be found in Berry’s Ecozoic vision. Berry argues that,

We must first have a vision of the future sufficiently entrancing that it will sustain us in the transformation of the human project that is now in process. Such an entrancing vision we propose here as the Ecozoic Era, the period when humans would become a mutually beneficial presence on the Earth.

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103 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 259.
104 Berry, *Great Work*, 170; See Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 190; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 113; Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 119.
105 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 132.
106 Proverbs 29:18.
108 Berry, *Great Work*, x.
Berry names the current ecological crisis the terminal phase of the Cenozoic era characterized by the industrial-technological fixation with consumer acquisitiveness. In contrast, we have the potential to enter an Ecozoic period characterized by a mutually enhancing human presence on the Earth. In his distinctive vision of the Ecozoic era, Berry emphasizes the capacity to see the magnitude of ecological degradation, as well as the spiritual dynamics of the cosmic process within the context of developmental time.

Berry anticipates two kinds of future transformations: the cultural and geo-biological. As a cultural historian, he advocates that the cultural move is from a scientific-technological phase to the ecological age. This is a cultural-historical transformation. On the other hand, his Ecozoic vision is a geo-biological transformation, that is, a cosmological-geological transformation. Berry prefers the term Ecozoic era situated in the history of geological transformations of the Earth.109 He writes, “I prefer the term ‘Ecozoic’ to that of ‘ecological,’ since this term enables us to place the coming geobiological period in its proper context: the sequence from the Paleozoic Era, to the Mesozoic Era, to the Cenozoic Era, and now to the Ecozoic Era.”110 By using a geobiological term for the shift, Berry awakens us to the magnitude of the change that is taking place, due mainly to the dysfunctional presence of humanity on Earth. In particular, Berry is conscientious to the sixth mass extinction of life, as marking the shift.111 As an emerging Ecozoic era, the description is of an overall epoch rather than a limited, closed, and defined concept – i.e., an era fumbling toward the future in which Berry would hope to activate a creative orientation in the midst of mass extinction of life.

Indeed we are caught between the myth of the Ecozoic era and the myth of scientific-technology. According to Berry, the future will be attained in the “tension between those committed to the Technozoic, an increased future exploitation of Earth as resources, all for the benefit of

109 According to Berry, “the geological shift is marked by the fact that the sixth extinction spasm is occurring, and it is of our own making.” Berry, Evening Thoughts, 45.

110 Berry, Sacred Universe, 93.

111 See Berry, Evening Thoughts, 45.
humans,” and “those committed to the Ecozoic, a new mode of human-Earth relations, one where the well-being of the entire Earth community is the primary concern.” Yet, the survival of humanity is impossible if it keeps to “the Technozoic,” where intrinsic inherent value belongs only to humans, in contrast to the instrumental value given to the rest of creation. This anthropocentric referent is a catastrophe to the Earth systems. When humans lost an awareness that they exist only as a component of the larger Earth community, a brutal attitude toward the natural world emerged. Once, we considered ourselves the glory of creation, but now we are a destructive presence on Earth. In Berry’s phrase, “the glory of humans becomes the desolation of the Earth, and the desolation of the Earth will be the future of humans.” In the midst of this critical pathway, Berry hopes to not simply diminish the devastation of the planet but also alter the mode of consciousness that is responsible for such deadly human activities.

Contrary to the Technozoic myth, we should transform our consciousness from a human-referent to a universe-referent in terms of a geo-biocentric norm of meaning and value. In 1978, the first edition of “The New Story” was published with the subtitle: “comments on the origin, identification and transmission of values.” In this article, Berry proposed the new story by commenting on the spiritual dynamics of the cosmic-earth-human processes and identifying the three values of differentiation, subjectivity and communion. He concluded that “the basic values depend on conformity with the Earth process. To harm the Earth is to harm man and to ruin the Earth is to destroy man.” As revealed in the subtitle, his intention was the transformation of the basic referent from human to the universe. Thus, Berry’s enduring significance is that he proposed a new way of

112 Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 15.
113 See Berry, Befriending the Earth, 72; Berry, Great Work, 78, 103; Berry, Evening Thoughts, 26; Berry, Christian Future, 78; Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 229.
114 See Berry, Befriending the Earth, 1; Berry, Great Work, 12, 104; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 21, 208; Berry, Evening Thoughts, 43; Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 212, 250.
117 Ibid.
understanding reality and value that evokes an ecological sensitivity as response to the creative processes of a developing universe.

For the fourth biological age, the Ecozoic era, the role of human beings as functional of and for the Earth is more important than any other process in the Earth’s history. Berry states that, “the Earth will never again function in the future as it functioned in the past.” He argues further, “In the past, it functioned independent of human beings. Now, almost nothing will happen on Earth that humans will not be involved in. We cannot make a blade of grass, but there is liable to not be a blade of grass if we do not accept it, protect it and foster it.”¹¹⁸

While the Cenozoic era emerged without human contribution, Berry points out that the emerging Ecozoic era is dependent upon the human’s creative response over a significant period of time. What he wants to say here differs from anthropocentrism; he intends a human functional presence of an integral relationship with the Earth that is creative rather than destructive.

However, to achieve a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship, a new mystique is necessary to understand the most intimate aspects of the natural world. Moreover, this mystique must be associated with the highest level of comprehensive knowledge and critical competence. Berry and Swimme are convinced that “the narrative of the universe, told in the sequence of its transformations and in the depth of its meaning, will undoubtedly constitute the comprehensive context of the future.”¹¹⁹ A meaningful universe is available to us as a foundation for the total range of human activities on the basis of the intercommunion of all living and nonliving components of the universe. Moreover, creating a viable future for the entire Earth community and for us depends on the realization that “the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.”¹²⁰ Expressed in

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¹¹⁸ Berry, *Christian Future*, 72; See also Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 98; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 98.

¹¹⁹ Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 5.

¹²⁰ Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 17. See also Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 199, 242; Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 96, 104; Berry, *Great Work*, 16, 82; Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, ch.1.
a way analogous to an organism, a communion of subjects offers a sense of inner coherence and integral presence to each other and demands the return to a sense of intimacy with the Earth.

In other words, the primary condition for creating a viable future for the entire Earth community and for us is to realize that “the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.” The modern mechanistic worldview and anthropocentric norm of value and meaning can be transformed when humans appropriate an ecological awareness of the universe as a communion of subjects. Contrary to the exploitative relationship between humanity and the Earth, an I-Thou relationship, as suggested by Martin Buber, is central to the recovery of subjects in relationship. Contrary to the exploitative relationship between humanity and the Earth, an I-Thou relationship, as suggested by Martin Buber, is central to the recovery of subjects in relationship. The basic character of the I-Thou relationship, that is, “one of intimacy, mutuality, sharing and trust,” is that we cease to put our profit first through an active and destructive attitude towards nature. Instead, we need to learn to be passive in this relationship as derivative from the Earth.

Finally, the vision of the Ecozoic era we are entering requires a new understanding of religion and spirituality:

Religion begins to appreciate that the primary sacred community is the universe itself. In a more immediate perspective, the sacred community is the Earth community. The human community becomes sacred through its participation in the larger planetary community. As a functional cosmology, the new story provides us with a way to attaining an Ecozoic era in which humans are sensitive to the sacredness of creation and resituate their presence within the Earth in a benign manner. Here, the spiritual dimension of the human should be re-thought to reflect this momentous change in our relationship with the planet Earth.

C. Spirituality of the Earth

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121 Ibid.
124 Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 257.
One of the significant implications of Berry’s cosmology is to provide a new interpretation of classical and contemporary spiritualities as well as a context for reformulating a functional spirituality. Berry holds that “because we have no functional cosmology we have no adequate spirituality; nor in this situation can our inquiry into the spiritualities of the past be of any great significance.” So after establishing a functional cosmology that provides a new creation mystique, Berry argues that a new development of spirituality has been taking shape within the cosmic-Earth-human process. Unlike the spirituality that contributes to the ecological crisis, a functional spirituality should be allied with the transformative processes of the emerging universe. There are three contours of Berry’s functional spirituality.

Firstly, our human spirituality must extend from the spiritual dimension of the Earth. With a very real sense of the maternal aspects of the Earth, Berry states: “In our totality we are born of the Earth. We are earthlings. The Earth is our origin, our nourishment, our support, our guide. Our spirituality itself is Earth-derived. If there is no spirituality on the Earth, then there is no spirituality in ourselves.” In this way, it is this mystical dimension of the Earth that is the primary religious bearer, which is the very source of spirituality and religious sensitivities. In this manner, Berry claims that a human spirituality is derived from the spiritual dimension of the Earth and an Earth-derived spirituality can function to guide how the human relates with the larger community of the planet Earth.

In the new story, the Earth is “a one-time endowment” and “a single community,” as the garden planet within the unfolding story of the universe. The Earth is a place for geo-emerging, bio-

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126 Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 151.
127 Berry, “Classical Spirituality and American Experience,” Riverdale Paper VII (n.d.): 5; Berry adds, “so the human psychic structure too and our spirituality have been taking shape over all these billions of years beginning with the primordial atomic particles which held themselves the destinies of all that has followed, even the spiritual shaping of the human.” Ibid.
128 Berry, Befriending the Earth, 15, 96; Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 246; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 220; Berry, Great Work, 162; Berry, Evening Thoughts, 111.
emerging, and mind-emerging. Moreover, “In reality there is a single integral community of the Earth that includes all its component members that are human or other than human.”

So, this spirituality revisions the understanding of the Earth: the Earth ceases to be merely the foundation of economic purposes, the object of scientific research, or either a fallen world for an expelled people or an instrumental resource for human pleasure. Rather, the Earth, born out of the larger process of the universe, takes a privileged role in the unfolding story of the universe as an integral community and a primary religious bearer, which is the mystique of itself. For Berry, this mystique of the Earth and the universe will help us counter the myth of progress. In other words, this will help the transformation of the human mind from its confinement in the technological and industrial myth to an entrancement in the ecological myth.

Secondly, a spirituality of the Earth is concerned about the Earth as a single community. Scientists designate this integral community the Gaia hypothesis, that is, the belief that the Earth has the capacity for homeostasis, namely the regulation of atmosphere and life. Understanding the Earth as a living organic system challenges the instrumentalist and materialistic mindset. In fact, Berry stresses that the Earth community is an imperative emerging from the very nature of our being. Berry states, “In this community every being has its own role to fulfill, its own dignity, its inner spontaneity. Every being has its own voice. Every being declares itself to the entire universe. Every being enters into communion with other beings.” In this integral community, each being is genetically related to the other as well as interrelated through its life processes. In other words, they share a common origin, that is, they are kin to each other. Peace on Earth is essential for all components on the planet as a single community. As the Earth is a single reality, Berry asserts that Pax Gaia, the peace of the

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129 Berry, Great Work, 4.

130 While Berry shares Lovelock’s notion of Gaia, he goes beyond this theory by indicating that “we need a cosmology of Gaia as well as a biology of Gaia since everything in the universe finds its context of interpretation within the universe.” Berry, Sacred Universe, 103.

131 Berry, Great Work, 4.
Earth, comes to be possible only if “we understand that the Earth is a single community composed of all its geological, biological, and human components.”

Thirdly, the spirituality of the Earth evokes religious sensitivities to be compassionate along the sacred journey of the universe. According to D.T. Suzuki, “The attitude to save the environment should be imbued with a vision of the sacred.” Berry is able to see the sacredness and numinous power of nature from his experience of the meadow and his seeking a history of the universe. He writes, “Now we are in the process of rediscovering the sacred dimension of the great Earth community in its stupendous unfolding over these past billions of years.” Within their bonded togetherness, all beings that exist in the universe will share existence and participate in a common destiny. Thus, “there is need to be sensitive to the Earth, for the destiny of the Earth identifies with our own destiny, exploitation of the Earth is exploitation of the human, and elimination of the aesthetic splendours of the Earth is diminishing of existence.” Indeed, he wants to foster the deep awareness of sacred presence within each reality of the universe. In this consideration, to destroy a living species is to silence the sacred forever. When this mystique is available, Berry asserts that the integration of the human within an organic functional world will be achieved.

Therefore, the main task for this spirituality is the survival of the planet Earth in its integral reality. Berry concludes:

We need to move from a spirituality of alienation from the natural world to a spirituality of intimacy with the natural world, from a spirituality of the divine as revealed in verbal revelation to a spirituality of the divine as revealed in the visible world about us. From a spirituality concerned with justice merely to humans to a spirituality of justice to the devastated Earth community. From the spirituality of the prophet to the spirituality of the

132 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 220.
134 See Berry, “The Meadow Across the Creek,” in Berry, *Great Work*.
135 Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 46.
136 Berry, *Great Work*, 175.
137 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 96.
shaman. The sacred community must now be considered the integral community of the entire universe, more immediately the integral community of the planet Earth.\textsuperscript{138} Indeed, a functional spirituality begins with “the new sense of the Earth and the human as function of the Earth,”\textsuperscript{139} and orients to “an awareness of the unity of human affairs with the functioning of the universe and the Earth.”\textsuperscript{140} Therefore, it is appropriate that the spiritual transformation must be thought within the universe context, in which there are physical-material and psychic-spiritual dimensions from the beginning.

D. Concluding Remarks

In light of Berry’s cosmology, we have come to understand that the fate of the Earth is directly connected with the Christian future, so that establishing a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship is “pre-eminently a religious and spiritual task.”\textsuperscript{141} As we stand in the midst of the greatest diminution in the variety and abundance of life on Earth, it is urgent and necessary to establish the renewal of the entire Western religious-spiritual tradition in relation to the integral functioning of the biosystems of planet Earth. I believe without any question, that Berry’s wisdom can guide and help us to a viable future.

As a concluding remark, I will highlight one particular aspect of Berry’s cosmology that emphasizes the integrity among God, the cosmos and humanity. Berry states, “When a person associates creation with the divine, it is an existential fact that there is no God without creation and there is no creation without God.”\textsuperscript{142} Berry acknowledges this integral relationship among the heavenly and earthly realities not only in Asian religions but also in the contours of Aboriginal spirituality. In fact, it is observed that this three-fold experience of intimacy is the core of each

\begin{footnotes}
\item[139] Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 152.
\item[140] Berry, \textit{Christian Future}, 116.
\item[141] Ibid., 11. Berry holds, “Only religious forces can move human consciousness at the depth needed.”
\item[142] Berry and Clarke, \textit{Befriending the Earth}, 10.
\end{footnotes}
religious tradition and spirituality – in Confucianism, recognized as a mystical experience of the One Body with heaven, Earth and myriad things, but with different emphases and grounds for explanation in other traditions. For instance, Berry notes how Indigenous peoples preserve the experience of continuity of the human with the natural world in a sacred community, as well known by the story of Black Elk.143

As a monk, Berry was familiar with several biblical sources and traditions to support this three-fold integral relationship. Drawing from Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, “from the things that are made we come to know the Maker,” Berry asserts these three – divine, natural, human – are so integrally connected with each other that none can function effectively without the others. He also appreciates the Christian awareness of communion – communion with the divine source of our being, communion with the entire human community, and communion with the universe itself. Nonetheless, the Christian community has recognized the inseparable nature of God’s communion with the human community, but has not yet realized the importance of communion with nature. Thus, Berry urges that Christians establish a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature as a prerequisite for integrity among God, the cosmos, and human beings.

While the traditional religions developed this integral relationship in the context of a seasonal consciousness, Berry re-situates this experience in light of a time-developmental unfolding story of the universe. “A new stage of interaction between (sic) the divine, the human, and the natural is begun,” holds Berry, who foresees this in terms of the universe story.

We need to establish a rapport among the divine, the natural world, and the human. These three each have their proper language. We need to understand that the locus of meeting of the human and the divine is in the natural world. The voice of the natural world is the resonance of the divine voice. Here the human enters into the divine order, since the divine in itself is not directly accessible to human intelligence or understanding. The human in its own structure and functioning is also a manifestation of the divine. But an inner activation of

143 See Berry, Great Work, 23, 185, 193; Berry, Dream of the Earth, 15; Berry, Evening Thoughts, 51; Berry, Befriending Earth, 20.
the divine is not possible by humans alone. We need the outer world to activate the inner world of the human.\textsuperscript{144}

As an arc of compassion draws in the shared story of the divine, the cosmos, and humanity, the new story will reawaken us to the sacredness of the universe in an unfolding sequence of transformations that lead to the same destiny for the Earth and humans. Berry makes clear that this irreversible sequence of transformations is “a new awareness of how the ultimate mysteriousness of existence is being manifested in the universe about us.”\textsuperscript{145} In Berry’s view, the empirical mode of knowing is “the most sustained meditations on the universe” and “truly the Yoga of the West,”\textsuperscript{146} because it has given humanity a new revelatory experience.

This allows us to think of a foundation for a functional ecological spirituality in a time-developmental universe that has a sacred dimension, a mystical dimension, and moreover a divine dimension from the beginning. When we understand the spiritual dynamics within this unfolding process of the universe, this story will provide the psychic-spiritual energy to overcome the current ecological crisis and enter into the Ecozoic era. The universe and the Earth, which reveal the mysteriousness of self-organizing powers, will evoke an even greater sense of awe and wonder. It is here that the Ecozoic vision can be established on compassionate reverence, mutual presence, and benevolent kinship among all that exists.\textsuperscript{147}

Furthermore, this particular view of Berry’s work might alleviate some critiques to his ecological spirituality. While I acknowledge the many critiques directed against Christianity for contributing philosophically and spiritually to the emergence of the current degradation of the Earth, it is necessary to heal and recover and, therefore, to develop the ecological wisdoms and sensitivities

\textsuperscript{144} Berry, \textit{Sacred Universe}, 146.

\textsuperscript{145} Swimme and Berry, \textit{Universe Story}, 223.

\textsuperscript{146} Berry, \textit{Dream of the Earth}, 18.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 120. He adds: “The greatest single need at present is the completion of the story, as told in its physical dimensions by science, by the more integral account that includes the numinous and consciousness dimensions of the emergent universe from its primordial moment. Once that is done, a meaningful universe, a functional cosmology, is available as a foundation for the total range of human activities in the ecological age.”
of the Christian faith. I believe that when we become aware once again of the sacredness of the emerging universe, our religious sensitivity will be enhanced. Nonetheless, some Christians argue that discourse about the sacred dimension of creation can slip easily into “paganism,” “anti-biblical faith,” or “pantheism.” Though these critiques often maintain an outdated, anti-Earth orthodoxy, this fear and overreaction is nevertheless common. For those who are sceptical or appear to lack an ecological sensitivity, it is important to assure them how being open to an eco-spirituality can nourish and enhance the Christian faith itself, as the Bible and many Christian traditions have witnessed.

Before working out a functional ecological spirituality in Chapter Four, I shall review Neo-Confucian cosmology and the cosmological dimension of its spirituality. Since Berry’s cosmology has been significantly influenced by Confucian thought, Zhou’s Neo-Confucian cosmology will open a new horizon for understanding Asian ecological wisdoms for ecological discourse. Berry contends that this new functional cosmology could identify with each tradition in a profound way, while deepening their vision and increasing their efficacy. This will form the context of Zhou Dunyi’s cosmology in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
THE COSMOLOGY OF ZHOU DUNYI

A. Context of Zhou Dunyi’s Cosmology
1. Zhou Dunyi
2. Challenges and Influences from Buddhism and Daoism
3. Sources of Zhou’s Neo-Confucian Cosmology
   a. The Book of Changes (Yi jing)
   b. The Centrality and Commonality (Zhong yong)
   c. The Cosmology of Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.E.)
   d. The Emergence of Zhou’s Cosmology

B. Zhou’s Taiji (the Great Ultimate) Cosmology
1. The Inseparable Unity of the Universe and Ultimate Reality
2. The Way of Heaven and Earth
   a. The Dynamic Movement and Tranquility of Yin and Yang
   b. Creative Creativity (sheng sheng, Production and Reproduction)
3. The Relationship between Part and Whole

C. Zhou’s Cosmological –Ethical Anthropology
1. Human Embodying within the Process of the Universe
2. How to Be an Authentic Human: The Practice of Self-Cultivation
   a. Need for Cultivation
   b. Tranquility or No-Desire

D. Forming a Trinity with Heaven and Earth

E. Concluding Remarks

Theocosmoanthric worldview

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In the early Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), there was a revival of the Confucian movement through a renewal of the study of the classics and a flourishing the practices of self-cultivation and sagehood. Together with a relationship to other religions such as Daoism and Buddhism, these became central themes for Neo-Confucianism. The Han and Dang Confucians (206 B.C.E. – 907

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1 In a historical sense, Confucianism is classified into three phases: Classical, Neo-Confucianism, and Modern New Confucianism. The early tradition, called Classical, was developed in era through the Han (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.) and Tang (618-907 C.E.) dynasties. Around the 11th century, Neo-Confucianism was developed as an outgrowth of Classical Confucianism under the major influence of Five Masters. It continued until the early 20th century. The twentieth-century form of Confucianism is called New Confucianism. See Tucker and Berthrong, “Introduction: Setting the Context,” in Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, ed. Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), xxxv. For Chinese names appearing in this chapter, I will place the
Until the early Song dynasty, Daoism and Buddhism dominated the cosmological and spiritual discourse in China. The revival movement of Confucianism was allied with the development of cosmology. Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073 C.E.), Zhang Zai (1020-1077 C.E.), and Shao Yong (1011-1077 C.E.) intuited that something was lacking in the Confucian tradition. They stimulated a form of Neo-Confucian thought by drawing their cosmological understanding from the *Book of Changes*. These thinkers anticipated the fully established Neo-Confucian tradition as articulated by the Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao, 1032-1085 C.E., Cheng Yi, 1033-1107 C.E.) and by Zhu Xi (1130-1200 C.E.). These Neo-Confucians revitalized the teachings of Confucius and Mencius by providing the tradition with a more robust cosmological foundation as well as new methods for moral cultivation and for learning to be human.

In fact, Neo-Confucianism was itself an outgrowth of classical Confucianism, but one which had assimilated aspects of the spirituality and cosmology of Buddhism and Daoism. By integrating an organic cosmology with an ethical emphasis on human nature, the revival movement was regarded as the most outstanding cultural event of the age and “the full flowering of Chinese thought.”

The main theme of this chapter is to explore the cosmology of Zhou Dunyi, who is known as a founder of Neo-Confucianism, and who contributed to developing the major revisionist themes of cosmology, human moral nature, and the practice of self-cultivation. Since it is difficult to link

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2 Zhang Zai, the author of *Western Inscription*, wrote, “To understand man but not Heaven, to seek to become a worthy statement but not a sage … These are the great faults of those since the Chin and Han dynasties.” *The Sung-Shih chuan*, 427. Quoted in Hoyt Tilmann, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Cheng Liang’s Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 43; Zhang Zai, *The Western Inscription*, in Wing-tsit Chan, comp. and ed. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 497. This was a correct diagnosis of the early Confucian tradition that had not paid enough attention to cosmology. Thus, Zhang himself provides a *Qi*-cosmology, in which he expounds the concept of *qi* as the psychic-physical reality of all things. Similarly, Shao Yong developed the so-called “Image-Number Study”: “Change is due to Spirit, which gives rise to numbers, numbers to form, and forms to concrete things.” Shao Yung, “The Numerical and Objective Tendencies in Shao Yung,” in Chan, *Source Book*, 481. For Han cosmology see Liu An, King of Huainan, *The Huainanzi: a Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, translated and edited by John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth, with additional contributions by Michael Puett and Judson Murray (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Zhou’s cosmology directly with current ecological issues, I will retrieve and re-evaluate some themes from Zhou’s cosmology to show their relevance to contemporary ecological concerns. Not only might the ecological implications of Zhou’s cosmology help to develop a functional ecological spirituality, this research might also further reveal the ecological sensitivity of the Confucian tradition. Nevertheless, while these themes offer much food for thought for ecological concerns, it is not my intention to idealize either Zhou’s cosmology or the Confucian tradition, and indeed, I have already noted criticisms of Berry in the previous chapter.

In this chapter, I will first briefly outline Zhou’s biography and the major influences on his formulation of Neo-Confucian cosmology. Following this background information, I will discuss Zhou’s functional cosmology, which accounts for the process of emergence of the universe and is the basis of human morality. More specifically, I will discuss the critical implications of Zhou’s cosmology: the inseparability of ultimate reality from the universe, the dynamic process of production and reproduction (sheng sheng), and the One-the myriad things relationship. Next, I will explore Zhou’s cosmological-ethical anthropology, which emphasizes that the human being embodies the process of the universe through its authenticity (or sincerity). Thus, this cosmology calls for the practices of self-cultivation and of learning to be human in order to develop an ethical presence within the larger community (family, country, and finally cosmic community). Lastly, in Zhou’s cosmology, the way of humanity is consistent with the Way of Heaven and Earth, with the cosmological vision of forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth. I will propose that this trinity – human, heaven and earth – is the basis of a Confucian theocosmoanthric vision which can reasonably and effectively revise the established anthropocosmic vision.

A. Context of Zhou Dunyi’s Cosmology
1. Zhou Dunyi

Zhou was born in 1017 in the Daozhou prefecture, the present day Hunan province. His personal name was Dunyi, but he was best known as Lianxi, the name of a stream in his native village. He was known as a local governor, and made much effort to learn Confucian and other religious teachings. Although he wrote relatively little, and for the sake of his life preferred to remain in Confucian ideal, he became an exemplar for Neo-Confucians. Zhou, known as a founder of Neo-Confucianism, contributed to developing the major themes of cosmology, human moral nature, and the practice of self-cultivation through his Taiji Tu (Diagram of the Great Ultimate), the Taijitu shuo (An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate) and the Tongshu (Penetrating the Book of Changes).\(^4\) Besides his major books, his many poems and essays, particularly “On Love of the Lotus,” revealed a sensitive appreciation of nature and exalted its beauty.

Later Confucians remember that Zhou’s mind “was free, pure, and unobstructed, like the breeze on a sunny day and the clear moon,” and “he was in complete accord with moral principles.”\(^5\) This image, integrating as it does the Daoist hermit and the Confucian master, is regarded as a living embodiment of the Confucian ideal. Historian Huang Bojia (1695 C.E.) wrote as follows about Zhou’s life and contributions:

Since the time of Confucius and Mencius, Han (206 B.C.E.-220C.E.) Confucianists merely had textual studies of the Classics. The subtle doctrines of the Way and the nature of man and things have disappeared for a long time. Master Zhou rose like a giant. …Although other Neo-Confucianists had opened the way, it was Master Zhou who brought light to the exposition of the subtlety and refinement of the mind, the nature, and moral principles.\(^6\)

\(^4\) Zhou Dunyi, Taijitu shuo and Thongshu, in Chan, Source Book, 463-480. Because of Zhu Xi’s exaltation of Zhou Dunyi, he became known as the founder of Neo-Confucianism.


\(^6\) Chan, Source Book, 461. Wm. Theodore de Bary, drawing from Zhen Dexiu (1178-1235), one of the leading figures in the Cheng-Zhu school, describes how “the Way of Confucius was rediscovered by Master Chou [Zhou Dunyi], the Way of Chou was further clarified by the two Ch’eng brothers, and the Way of the Cheng was brilliantly expounded by Master Zhu Xi.” Wm. Theodore de Bary, Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart (New York: Columbia University, 1981), 10.
Based on Zhu Xi’s rendition of the succession to the Way, this historian considered Zhou as the first true Confucian Sage since Mencius, even though he did not receive direct transmission from a teaching lineage. Although his influence on the Cheng brothers, who established key doctrines of Neo-Confucianism, is debatable, some see Zhou’s formative influence on the Cheng Brothers as unmistakable. Indeed, it is difficult to understand Zhou’s fame and influence without Zhu Xi’s inclusion of Zhou’s work in the first section in the Reflections on Things at Hand, an anthology that gives a clear outline of the teachings of Neo-Confucianism. In this influential anthology, Zhu Xi placed Zhou Dunyi in the first place, and believed that Zhou actually founded the Neo-Confucian tradition, while the Cheng brothers further developed it.

2. Challenges and Influences from Buddhism and Daoism

According to Wm. Theodore de Bary, an East Asian studies expert at Columbia University, “Song Confucians saw Daoism and Buddhism, and especially Chan (kwon Zen), as still exerting a powerful influence on people’s mind[s].” He goes further to say: “Syncretists minimized the conflict between the Three Teachings by assigning them respective spheres of influence: Confucianism was identical with governance, Daoism with physical culture, and Buddhism with mental culture.” As aptly observed by de Bary, religious diversity was necessary in Zhou’s time, since it operated to supply insights for different aspects of life in society. For example, Confucianism provided social discipline and emphasized human relationships; Daoism offered cosmological insights and aesthetic

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7 Cheng Hao (1032-1085 C.E.) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107 C.E.) were brothers who developed Zhou’s thought and established key doctrines of Neo-Confucianism such as: the Great Ultimate as the universal principle, and the doctrine of one-many, which explains how the principle is one and its manifestations are many. See Chu and Lu, Reflections on Things, 5; Chan, Source Book, 714.

8 Often compared to Thomas Aquinas, Zhu Xi (1130-1200 C.E.) was a great synthesizer of Confucian teaching, and his influence was significant. In particular, Zhu commented on the Four Books: the Great Learning, the Centrality and Commonality, the Analects, and the Mencius. Although Zhu’s teaching was not unchallenged, his commentaries became classic textbooks of the Confucian school and the most complete and authoritative exposition of Confucian teaching in China, Korea, and Japan. Even in the midst of economic suffering, he built a Confucian temple for Zhou Dunyi, and re-established the White Deer Grotto Academy, one of the four great academies in China.


10 Ibid.
feelings; and Buddhism gave religious spirituality and a new intuitive vision. In his novel religious symbiosis, Zhou assimilated Daoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality to develop a coherent and systematic cosmology that laid the foundation for the Neo-Confucian tradition.

In his book *The Golden Age of Zen*, John Wu describes the era of Chan (or Zen) history from the late eighth to the mid tenth century as the golden age of Chan.\textsuperscript{11} Yet, the Buddhist teaching of retreat from family and social responsibility for the sake of the ideal of detachment was a great challenge and stumbling block to Confucians, who regarded these actions as irresponsible by going against the basic virtues of human relationality. For Confucians, the familial relationship is the most sacred community and is fundamental to society. Thus Confucians critiqued this alleged Buddhist “social irresponsibility” and warned against “the Buddhists’… selfishness in leaving behind social and familial relationship.”\textsuperscript{12} In addition, the Buddhist metaphysics of impermanence, emptiness, and moral relativism seemed to contrast with the Confucian doctrine of a human moral nature endowed from Heaven. But, the Buddhist influence on Zhou’s thought is clear in his notion of the one and the many, his famous essay “On the Love of the Lotus,” and in his focus on the spiritual practice of tranquility. Because of his admiration for, and acquaintance with Buddhism, Cheng Yi, known as the disciple of Zhou, called Zhou a “poor Chan fellow.”\textsuperscript{13}

While later Confucians struggled to unravel the Daoist influence on Zhou’s thought, there is no doubt that Daoism had a great impact on Zhou, as revealed in the *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* and the *Diagram. An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* begins with the *wuji* (the Ultimate of Non-being), drawing from *Daodejing*. In addition, although still debatable, the origin of the *Diagram* seems to trace back to the Daoist Chen Tuan (871-898), who


\textsuperscript{12} Chan, *Source Book*, 555, 564. In fact, Neo-Confucians produced academic and practical critiques of other religions, even if the critiques were often superficial, prejudiced, and ignorant of other religions. See also Zhu Xi’s critique on Buddhism in Chan, *Source Book*, 653.

created the *Wujitu* (*Diagram of the Ultimate of Non-being*) for the neidan, or internal alchemy, of Daoism.\(^\text{14}\) Indeed, to establish the Confucian basis of his thought, Zhou assimilates the Daoist elements of non-being, while he discards the more fantastical and mystical elements. He seemed to reject the Daoist over-emphasis on the internal to the neglect of the external.\(^\text{15}\) Robin Wang contends that Zhou’s goal in the diagram was not mapping how to ascend spiritual stages; rather, his goal was to establish a rational basis for authentic Confucian moral teachings and practice.\(^\text{16}\) Though it is reasonable to assume that Zhou’s thought may have been influenced by the Daoist diagram and cosmology, it is clear that Zhou established his thoughts within a Confucian framework to become the foundation for a Neo-Confucian cosmology and the practice of moral self-cultivation.

3. Sources of Zhou’s Neo-Confucian Cosmology

In Zhou’s time, Buddhism and Daoism attracted more people with their developed metaphysical cosmology and spiritual discipline, since Confucianism remained focused on the scholastic study of texts and began to lose its appeal even among intellectuals. Zhou initiates a creative process of reinterpreting traditional Confucian values in the light of an organic cosmology.\(^\text{17}\) The main features of his thought were greatly influenced by insights from the *Book of Changes* and the *Centrality and Commonality*, and the cosmology of Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.E.).

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\(^\text{14}\) *Neidan* or internal alchemy is a sort of Daoist spiritual exercise, whose purpose is to prolong the life of the body and create an immortal spiritual body that would survive after death. See James Miller and Elijah Siegler, “Of Alchemy and Authenticity: Teaching about Daoism Today,” *Teaching Theology and Religion*, vol. 10 no.2 (2007): 101-108. Though the diagrams are very similar, the differences are as follows: the Wujitu should be read from the bottom to the top, while the Taijitu should be read from the top to the bottom. In addition, the Wujitu reveals the Daoist practice of self-cultivation or *neidan*, while Zhou’s diagram explains the origin and process of the universe. The top of the Wujitu shows the Daoist perspective of retreat from *yin/yang* dynamics to *yin* dominant mystery in terms of quiescence. Ching explains that “it reveals the secrets of working in opposition to nature in order to discover its mystery and to bring about some form of longevity and freedom.” Thus, the production and evolution of all things gradually transformed into quiescence of mystery through the way of *qian* and *kun* in the diagram of the Wujitu. However, Zhou’s Taijitu shuo indicates the evolution from *wuji er taiji* through the *yang* movement and *yin* quiescence in a balancing way. See Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 16.

\(^\text{15}\) Chan, *Source Book*, 460, 461.


\(^\text{17}\) Berry compares Zhou Dunyi’s and Zhu Xi’s reinterpretation of Chinese thoughts to the great work of St. Francis of Assisi and Thomas Aquinas. See Berry, *Great Work*, 9.
a. The Book of Changes (Yi jing)

Zhou’s thought is greatly influenced by the Book of Changes. Originally related to divination, the Book of Changes is one of the oldest books in China. Through the Ten Wings, commentaries of the Book of Changes traditionally attributed to Confucius, the book became the classic of Chinese wisdom and cosmology.\textsuperscript{18} Not only did it become the intellectual basis of both Daoism and Confucianism, it also laid the foundation for later developments in divination, geomancy, astronomy, music, medicine, and other arts and sciences of East Asia. Carl Gustav Jung writes the foreword to the Richard Wilhelm’s translations of Yi jing:

[T]his work (the Changes) embodies, as perhaps no other, the spirit of Chinese culture, for the best minds of China have collaborated upon it and contributed to it for thousands of years. Despite its fabulous age it has never grown old, but still lives and operates, at least for those who understand its meaning.\textsuperscript{19}

The Book of Changes provides an influential description of how the Way (Dao, the Great Ultimate) operates, how the universe evolves from the primordial source, and how the myriad things (including humanity) emerge from the original source.\textsuperscript{20} The fundamental cosmological question of the book is explained by its emphasis on change as well as balance and harmony between the two opposite movements of yin and yang. Change (yì) is the power and source of creativity that gives birth to the generation and regeneration of myriad things.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{20} The Book of Changes consists of the 64 hexagrams and general commentaries “Ten Wings and the Great Treaties.” Each set of 64 hexagrams is composed of six lines either yang (unbroken) or yin (broken line). The hexagram is composed of two sets of trigrams, representing the basic trigram relationship: Heaven above, humanity in the middle, and the Earth at the bottom.

\textsuperscript{21} There are three meaning of change; 1) simplicity (chien I), 2) change(Pien I), and 3) no change or changeless (Pu I).
According to the *Book of Changes*, the Great Ultimate is the source of the dynamic act that produces the *yin* and *yang* relationship understood as a symbol of balance between oppositions. In view of *yin* and *yang*, every reality in the world has its opposite, which is not only necessary but also complementary to the other. This mutuality of opposites is the foundational principle for the East Asian disposition to see harmony in opposites or complementariness. Moreover, the eight trigrams, with their three lines representing Heaven above, humanity in the middle, and Earth below, consist of solid lines (*yang*) or open lines (*yin*). The *Book of Changes* offers symbolic representations of several things such as images of nature, directions, family relationship, body parts, characteristic attributes, and even animals.

While this book influenced both Daoism and Confucianism, the Song Confucians were particularly attracted to and influenced by the *Ten Wings*, since it highlighted the cosmological harmony of and correspondence between nature and human affairs. There is no doubt that the *Book of Changes* exerted a heavy influence on Zhou’s thought and on later East Asian cosmology. Indeed, Zhou’s two main texts, *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* and *Penetrating the Book of Changes* are understood as the best depiction of the heart of the *Book of Changes*.

**b. The Centrality and Commonality (Zhong yong)**

Like the *Book of Changes*, the *Centrality and Commonality* played an important role in the development of Neo-Confucianism, since scholars delved into the text to apply its teaching to practical life. It is said that the *Centrality and Commonality* appeals to Buddhism and Daoism forming a bridge between these two and Confucianism. In this way it may have paved the way for

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22 “In the changes there is the Great Ultimate (*taiji*), which produces the Two Forms. These Two Forms produce the four emblems (*xiang*), and the four emblems produce the eight trigrams.” *The Book of Changes* (Appen. III).

23 Three members of Heaven, Earth, and humanity share the same essence and shape each other’s destiny so that these three are interrelated and mutually influence the other as part and whole.

24 There are many translations of the Chinese term *Zhong yong* into English. For instance, Legge translates it into “Constant Mean,” Leys Simon, the “Middle Way,” Roger Ames and David Hall, the “Focusing the Familiar,” and Tu Weiming, the “Centrality and Commonality.”
the influence of Buddhism and Daoism on Neo-Confucianism.\textsuperscript{25} The \textit{Centrality and Commonality} is regarded as “the most philosophical in the whole body of ancient Confucian literature,” yet, it is also, at once, psychological, metaphysical, and religious.\textsuperscript{26} The word, \textit{zhongyong}, allegedly comes from the saying of Confucius: “The Master [Confucius] says, the virtue of the \textit{The Centrality and Commonality} is of the highest order. But it has long been rare among people.”\textsuperscript{27} Yet the \textit{Analects} does not explain the meaning of \textit{zhongyong}, and the composition of the \textit{Centrality and Commonality} is attributed to Zisi (481-402 B.C.), the grandson of Confucius.\textsuperscript{28}

According to Chan, \textit{zhong} means what is central and \textit{yong} indicates what is universal and harmonious.\textsuperscript{29} The former refers to human nature, endowed by Heaven, and the latter to its relationship with the universe. Thus the meaning of the compound word, \textit{zhongyong}, is that “there is harmony in human nature and that this harmony underlies our moral being and prevails throughout the universe. …In short, man and Nature form a unity.”\textsuperscript{30} Indeed, this book provides a vision of unity between the Way of Heaven and the way of humanity, by saying;

\begin{flushright}
Sincerity (authenticity) is the Way of Heaven. To think how to be sincere is the way of man. He who is authentic (sincere) is one who hits upon what is right without effort and apprehends without thinking.
\end{flushright}

In this tradition, the concept of authenticity embraces both the cosmological and ethical dimension. Moreover, through authenticity, the Way of Heaven and the way of humanity form a unit in practice.

\textsuperscript{25} See Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 95.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{27} The \textit{Mean}, 6:26.
\textsuperscript{28} See Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 97 (footnote 6).
\textsuperscript{29} Unlike Chan’s understanding, \textit{yong} should be understood in a sense of common in everyday life in terms of commonality.
\textsuperscript{30} The \textit{Mean}, ch. 20, in Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 96.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 107. Translated as authenticity, integrity, or sincerity, as revealed mainly in the \textit{Mean} (ch. 16, 20-26, 32), \textit{cheng} is the foundation of human nature and morality, I prefer the translation of \textit{cheng} as authenticity rather than sincerity for the purpose of this thesis. Authenticity is a more appropriate term in relation to the cosmological dimension of \textit{cheng} that I am emphasizing.
Particularly in *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, Zhou employs this notion of authenticity to link the Way of Heaven to the practical and moral Way inherent to humanity.\(^{32}\)

**c. The Cosmology of Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.E.)**

Zhou was also influenced by the classical Confucian cosmology of Dong Zhongshu, whose view remained significant in later cosmological discourse. Dong, founder of imperial Confucianism, is traditionally known as the promoter of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Chinese imperial state. He synthesized the *yin/yang* cosmology and Five phases theory with the ethical Confucian tradition to establish a hierarchical vision of nature and humanity to support the imperial order. In his *Chunqiu fanlu* (*Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), Dong sought to legitimate his views of government by grounding them on natural modes derived from the macrocosm of Heaven and Earth and from the microcosm of the human body.\(^{33}\) He also emphasized the Five Relationships and Three Bonds on the basis of the doctrine of the correspondence of Heaven and Man and their mutual influence. This doctrine expands the human ethical relationship and the cosmos-human relationship to correspondence between the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of humanity. Further, in an organic sense, Dong provided a Confucian “trinity,”

Heaven, Earth, and humankind are the foundation of all living things. Heaven engenders all living things, Earth nourishes them, and humankind completes them. With filial and brotherly love, Heaven engenders them; with food and clothing, Earth nourishes them; with rites and music, humankind completes them. These three assist one another just as the hands and feet join to complete the body.\(^{34}\)

By integrating the cosmology of the *Book of Changes* with the help of the *yin-yang* school, Dong offers a cosmology of the triadic relationship among Heaven, Earth, and humankind.\(^{35}\) Similarly,

\(^{32}\) Zhou, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 35.


\(^{34}\) Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu*, de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 299.

\(^{35}\) The most importance development in the *yin-yang* school was the synthesis of *yin and yang* with five phases (movements), symbolizing the images of water, fire, wood, metal, and soil. Each of the five agents exists within a *sheng* and *ko* (creation and control) relationship. The Chinese observed and meditated on this *sheng* and *ko* relationship resulting in the agricultural process.
Zhou combines the basic thought of *yin* and *yang* cosmology with the Confucian emphasis on morality and the vision of unity among Heaven, Earth, and humankind, while departing from the pattern of subordination in human relationships.\(^{36}\)

**d. The Emergence of Zhou’s Cosmology**

In the early period of the Song dynasty, Zhou attempted to rescue the ethical teaching of the Confucian tradition by integrating the cosmology of the *Book of Changes* and the *Centrality and Commonality* with Daoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality. In this manner, Zhou attempted to revitalize Confucian morality by suggesting an organic-ethical cosmology and by emphasizing the practice of self-cultivation. He drew the *Taiji Tu* (the *Diagram of the Great Ultimate*), to represent visually an organic cosmology and to show the unity of the universe from its very origin to the emergence of myriad things and humanity.\(^{37}\) In the *Diagram* (see figure 1), Zhou symbolizes the root of the unity of all myriad things by using a simple circle and line, and shows the beginning of the manifestation of manifoldness without and the discontinuity between ultimate reality and the myriad things.

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\(^{36}\) Zhou’s cosmology is different from Dong’s. Dong’s cosmology is criticized because of its static nature and departure from the original meaning of *yin* and *yang* as well as for its pattern of subordination within human relationships. Dong also sought primarily the Confucian canon, playing an important role in the doctrinal and political life of the state. See Robin Wang, “Zhou Dunyi’s Diagram,” 308; de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 294.

\(^{37}\) There are still controversial debates on the origin of the *Diagram Taijitu*. There are mainly three perspectives: Zhou’s own work, Daoist origin, and Buddhist origin. Generally, the Daoist influence on Zhou’s *Diagram* is accepted because of the many similarities between the Daoist diagram *Wujitu* and Zhou’s *Taijitu*. Robin argues that Zhou’s goal in the diagram was not mapping how to ascend spiritual stages; rather, his goal was to establish a rational basis for authentic Confucian moral teachings and practice. Though it is reasonable to assume that the *Taijitu* may have been influenced by Daoist or Buddhist principles, it is clear that Zhou gave it a Confucian perspective based on the *Yijing*. See Wang, “Zhou Dunyi’s *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate Explained*”; Boughown Kim, “A Study of Chou Tun-I’s Thought (1017-1073),” (Ph.D. Diss.: University of Arizona, 1996).
Zhou explains the cosmology of the *Diagram* further in *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* (*Taijitu shuo*), which became the foundation of Neo-Confucian cosmology. *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* consists of three parts: a cosmology, that discusses the origin and progress of the universe; the emergence of humanity with the vision of sagehood as the ultimate standard for humanity; and, the vision of humanity forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth. Zhou’s moral anthropology is also discussed in the second half of *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* and *Penetrating the Book of Changes the Changes* (*Tongshu*).\textsuperscript{39}

B. Zhou’s *Taiji* (the Great Ultimate) Cosmology

I will explore three main themes of Zhou’s cosmology: firstly, the “*wuji er taiji*” as the foundation of his cosmology; secondly, Zhou’s account of the ongoing process of the universe from its beginning to the emergence of myriad things, as his understanding of a dynamic and organic


\textsuperscript{39} Chan argues that *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* was originally placed at the end of *Penetrating the Book of Changes*. However, Zhu Xi shifted it to the beginning, and eventually it became an independent work. See Chu and Lu, *Reflections on Things*, xxvii.
cosmology; and, thirdly, the relationship between part and whole as the basis of a holistic and ethical cosmology.

1. The Inseparable Unity of the Universe and Ultimate Reality

In order to understand Zhou’s cosmology, first it is necessary to provide an explanation of the enigmatic statement “wuji er taiji” as the foundation of cosmology. Functionally equivalent to the Prologue of John’s Gospel or the creation story of Genesis, Zhou begins his cosmology with the statement: “The Ultimate of Non-being (wuji) and also the Great Ultimate (taiji)!" 40 Although there is much controversy on the meaning and relationship between the two words, my premise is that this “wuji er taiji” is the cosmological and hermeneutical foundation of Neo-Confucianism, in which an inexhaustible source of creativity is expressed by the inseparability of being from non-being as well as the universe from ultimate reality. 41

The Great Ultimate, the most fundamental idea running through all Neo-Confucian cosmology and a unifying concept penetrating the universe, nature, and human beings, was familiar to Confucians. But the Ultimate of Non-being troubled them because it was more often found in Daoist texts such as Daodejing, Zhuangzi, and Liezi. 42 Laozi uses the word wuji to describe the original state, which is sometimes equivalent to dao

… He who knows the white (glory) and yet keeps to the black (humility), becomes the model for the world. He will never deviate from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of the Ultimate of Non-Being… 43

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40 There are different versions of the first statement in An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate, the so-called seven-word version: “From the Ultimate of Non-Being comes the Great Ultimate.” Yet, I will follow the five-word version which seems to be more accurate than the seven-word one.


42 Daodejing ch. 28; Chuangzi, ch. 6; Liezi, ch.5.

43 Daodejing, ch. 28.
Without explaining why there was an Ultimate of Non-being and what it is, the Ultimate of Non-Being seems to indicate the original ground, which reveals the Daoist concern of return to the original manifestation of the infinite possibility. Laozi says, “All things come into being, and I see thereby return. All things flourish, but each one returns to its roots.” In the Daoist view, the Ultimate of Non-being is compatible with dao, as an original state of all things which is difficult to describe except in a negative way such as “the limitless,” “the unlimited or infinite,” and “the unconditional beginning of the universe.”

Following the wuji and the conjunction term er (translated into “and also,” “in turn”, and “and then”), by drawing from the Book of Changes (Appen. III), Zhou describes the Great Ultimate as follows.

Therefore in the system of Change there is the Great Ultimate (taiji). It generates the Two Modes (yin and yang). The Two Modes generate the Four Forms (major and minor yin and yang). The Four Forms generate the Eight Trigram.

Since the Book of Changes was canonized in the Han period, the Great Ultimate plays an important role in Confucian cosmology. In the Book of Changes, the Great Ultimate is the ultimate reality, the originating source of yin and yang that produce myriad things in the universe. In this sense, every

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44 Laozi explains the importance of return: “Return is the movement of the Tao. Yielding is the way of the Tao. All things are born of being. Being is born of non-being.” See Daodejing, ch. 40.

45 Daodejing, ch. 16.


emerging being in the universe is simply the manifestation of the Great Ultimate by means of the symbolic movement of yin and yang.\footnote{49}

For Confucians, “wuji er taiji” seems problematic since there seem to be two kinds of ultimate reality. It was difficult for them to allow the priority of non-being to being since they think that the entire universe and myriad things are ultimately rooted in and derived from the Great Ultimate. But, the priority of Non-being to being is clear in the Daoist view.\footnote{50} This debate goes back to Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan (1139-1192), the leaders of Cheng-Zhu school and Lu-Wang school in the Neo-Confucian tradition.\footnote{51} Lu argued that Zhou’s usage of the Ultimate of Non-Being was due to the immaturity of his thought, since later, Zhou does not use the term in Penetrating the Book of Changes. In addition, he rejected the conjunctural interpretation of “wuji er taiji” because of its bifurcation of reality as two. For him, the term taiji as the ultimate was clear enough to explain the origin of the manifoldness of things.\footnote{52}

Similar to Lu, Zhu also attempted to deny the Daoist influence on both Zhou’s Diagram and An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate. Yet, he argued that Zhou invented the term “the Ultimate of Non-being” to establish his theory of Confucian cosmology and anthropology. He also contended that Zhou’s theory of the Ultimate of Non-being is different from Laozi’s wuji whose use simply meant as ‘limitless or infinite,’ but Zhou’s term wuji refers to the taiji. In this manner, he interpreted the parallel relationship between the wuji and taiji as two aspects of the same reality. Zhu comments on Zhou’s wuji er taiji:

\footnote{49} Thus, the vital and dynamic cosmology of China has been attributed to the influence of the Book of Changes. See Lee, Trinity in Asian Perspective, 27.

\footnote{50} Laozi says, “Reversion is the action of Tao. Weakness is the function of Tao. All things in the world come from being. And being comes from non-being.” Daodejing, ch. 40 in Chan, Source Book, 160. Emphasis is added.

\footnote{51} Lu Xiangshan was the founder of the School of Mind in the Neo-Confucian movement. The Cheng-Zhu school focuses on “following the path of inquiry study,” while the Lu-Wang school focused on “honouring the moral nature of all things.” See Chan, Source Book, 572.

The operations of Heaven have neither sound nor smell. And yet this *wuji* is really the axis of creation and the foundation of things of all kind. Therefore, the *wuji* and also the *taiji*. It does not mean that outside of the *taiji* there is a *wuji*.\(^{53}\)

In Zhu’s view, there is no sequence between *wuji* and *taiji*, but rather “being and nonbeing are not distinguished as two” like an image of “one wheel of the vehicle or one wing of the bird.”\(^{54}\)

Somewhat like the Arian controversy (325-381 C.E.) in Christianity,\(^{55}\) the issues of the priority of Non-being over being and the consistency between them estranged Daoists from Confucians. In the Daoist view, the *taiji* comes from the *wuji* as Laozi explains in ch. 40, “Being is produced by Nonbeing.” But, Zhu Xi attempted to save the originality of Zhou’s *Diagram* and the “*wuji* er *taiji*,” and not to fall into Daoist influence. Thus, Confucians insist that the *wuji* and *taiji* are two aspects of a single reality.

Influenced by Cheng brothers and Zhu, later Confucians were more interested in Zhou’s Great Ultimate as the universal principle and understood the relationship conjunction *er* as “and also.”

As developed further by the Cheng brothers, the theory of *taiji* in relation to the universal principle became firmly established by Zhu.

The Great Ultimate is merely the principle of heaven and earth and the myriad things. With respect to heaven and earth, there is the Great Ultimate in them. With respect to myriad things, there is the Great Ultimate in each and every one of them. Before heaven and earth existed, there was assuredly this principle.\(^{56}\)

Based on Zhou’s thought of the Great Ultimate as principle instead of material force, Zhu Xi established the doctrine of the Great Ultimate as the highest conceivable principle of Heaven, Earth and myriad things, from and in which existence flows and is present. There is no doubt that the Great Ultimate becomes the foundational philosophical thought of Neo-Confucianism. In the interpretation


\(^{54}\) Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: Life and Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1987), 86.

\(^{55}\) This was the debate between Arius and Alexander on the Father-Son relationship. This debate, which led to the Nicene Council, probably played a key role in how the Nicene Creed evolved. In the theology of Arius, the Christian Bible shows two inconsistencies in the Father-Son relation: a time-gap and a substance-gap between the Father and the Son. Contrary to Arian thought, Alexander argued for the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father in all aspects. See Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5\(^{\text{th}}\) rev. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 223.

\(^{56}\) Chan, *Source Book*, 638.
of the *wuji* and *taiji* as influenced by the Cheng brothers and Zhu, the Great Ultimate becomes the ground for Neo-Confucianism, while Zhou’s cosmological and mythical dimensions appear blurry.⁵⁷

However, the “*wuji er taiji*” could also be understood from the perspective of the *Book of Changes* and of Daoist cosmology since Zhou relies heavily on them and draws from both. Then, it would be possible to say that the “*wuji er taiji*” echoes the classical definition of change as both change and changelessness, which culminates in the expression of inseparability or of non-dual relationship.⁵⁸ In the *Book of Changes*, the bipolarity of non-dual relationship is represented in the *yin* and *yang* movement. Even this non-dual bipolarity includes polarity and non-polarity, differentiation and undifferentiation or multiplicity and unity.⁵⁹ Hellmut Wilhelm, the first translator of the *Book of Changes* for the West, aptly points out:

> We must not forget that the concept of *I* [change] as such connotes not only the dynamic aspect of life, but also what is firm, reliable, and irrevocable in the system of coordinates it covers. An early apocryphon states as much in the paradoxical definition: ‘Change: that is the unchangeable.’⁶⁰

Drawing from the well-known apocrypha of the *Book of Changes*, *I-Wei Chhien tso-tu*, Jung Young Lee also contends that there are three distinctive meanings of change: simple and easy (*Chien I*), transformation and change (*Pien I*), and changelessness (*Pu I*).⁶¹ The first, *Chien I*, is related to the spontaneously self-organizing process of the universe as simple and easy.⁶² The second, *Pien I*, and

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⁵⁷ Mou Tsung-san observes that some Confucians like Shao and Zhang Zai were more interested in cosmology, whereas Mencius, Cheng Hao, and Wang Yang Ming stressed more the purely human and ethical dimension of the tradition. See Berthrong, *Confucianism and Ecology*, 251.


⁶² Zhou mentions “easy and simple” in relation to the way of the sage, “the way of sage is nothing but humanity, righteousness, the Mean, and correctness. … Is it not easy and simple?” Zhou, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, ch. 6, in Chan, *Source Book*, 468.
third, *Pu I*, indicate the characteristics of change as both change and changelessness.\(^63\) This shows that the meaning of change itself embraces the radical inseparability between nonbeing and being which can only be expressed through both *wuji* and *taiji*. This is somewhat similar to the classical account of what may be said about God in *apophatic* and *kataphatic* terms.\(^64\)

Unlike the main theme of the Arian controversy, which was a debate on the difference in time and substance between God and Christ, the understanding of *wuji er taiji* is related more to the radical absence of ontological distinctions in favor of a cosmological parity among all things. Thus, an implication of this *wuji er taiji* is to emphasize the inseparability of the universe from ultimate reality, the source of creativity and the ground of all being. Thereby Zhou returns to the position that “the Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-Ultimate.”\(^65\) As a prologue to Zhou’s cosmology, this position emphasizes the inseparability of ultimate reality and the myriad things, including humanity, in the universe. As a rational basis for a dynamic cosmology, Zhou’s *wuji er taiji* gleans the foundation of being, revealing the inseparable unity of all things, as well as a foundation for practical spirituality, revealing the unity between cosmology and self-cultivation.

2. The Way of Heaven and Earth

On the basis of this cosmological foundation of inseparability, Zhou accounts for the dynamic differentiation process of the universe via the movement and tranquility of *yin* and *yang* and the interaction of the two *qi*’s. While Western scholars discover the anthropic principle in the unfolding process, Zhou and East Asian thinkers highlight the emergence of life without cessation (*sheng sheng*).

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\(^63\) See Lee, *Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 27-8. According to the *Book of Changes*, the Ultimate of Non-being as changeless could be understood as pure negation of existence and comparable to the hidden dragon of the first hexagram *Chien*, Heaven in the *Book of Changes*. Although it is hidden, the Ultimate of Non-being has the latent meaning in being or the root of creativeness.


a. The Dynamic Movement of Yang and Tranquility of Yin

Zhou asserts that the principle of dynamism of the universe is due to the interaction and interpenetration of the primary material force $qi$ in the life-emerging process of the universe. $^{66}$ Further, following the “wuji er taiji,” Zhou explains how the Great Ultimate generates the primary cosmological manifestation of $yin$ and $yang$ through the concept of movement and tranquility. He notes:

The Great Ultimate through movement generates $yang$. When its activity reaches its extreme, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates $yin$. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of $yin$ and $yang$, and the two modes are thus established. $^{67}$

Since the Book of Changes earned authority in Confucianism, the notion of the Great Ultimate and the $yin$ and $yang$ symbol has been employed to explain how the universe operates to produce myriad things. Drawing from the Book of Changes, Zhou further develops his cosmology by correlating the differentiated process of the universe with the endless cycles of movement and tranquility of $yin$ and $yang$ as the basic principle of the entire universe. $^{68}$

Joseph Needham perceives this narrative of the universe as “spontaneous yet ordered, in the sense of patterned movements of a dancer.” $^{69}$ Since the movement and tranquility of $yin$ and $yang$ operate to generate the universe, Needham understands aptly how the universe comes to be “spontaneously” without a godly command or mechanical motion. Yet it is an “ordered dance movement” because “the $yin$ and the $yang$ are established by the way of Heaven” and “the alternation of $yin$ and $yang$ is called the Way.” $^{70}$ Moreover, in Zhou’s view, the way of Heaven, manifested in the

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$^{66}$ Zhou’s understanding of $qi$ compares to Zhang Zai’s psycho-physical reality.


$^{68}$ This correlation of $yin$ and $yang$ with movement and tranquility explains not only the generation of the universe, but also provides the methodology of self-cultivation, that is, ‘no-desire and tranquility’, as I will discuss later.


$^{70}$ Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 1, in Chan, Source Book, 465-466.
spontaneous yet ordered dance of the universe, results in an unending transformation of generation and regeneration of life-giving processes.\footnote{71 The Chinese term “yuzhou” is generally translated into English as cosmos, which implies the sense of an orderly, harmonious universe. But, the term yuzhou is more similar to the modern scientific understanding of the emerging universe in the light of time and space. Indeed, the character of “yu” in such books as the Zhuangzi and Huainanzi, was rendered as “heaven, earth, and the four directions,” and “zhou” as “the past and the present.” Needham’s explanation suggests a leaning towards the western view on the universe.}

The relationship between yin and yang, and between movement and tranquility, seem to oppose each other, yet this indicates the principle of mutual interpenetration within the dynamic opposites. As Zhou says, “[Although] water is yin, it is rooted in yang. [Similarly, even though] fire is yang, it is rooted in yin”\footnote{72 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 16, in Chan, Source Book, 471-472.} and “movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other.”\footnote{73 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 1 and ch. 16, in Chan, Source Book, 465-466.} This mutual penetrating relationship between opposites appears in the second circle of the Diagram, which interlocks blank and shared areas of six semicircles with a small black circle in the middle (see figure 1.). The left side has two light outsides and one dark inside, which is the li trigram (Fire, one of the eight trigrams), and the right side two dark outside lines and one light inside (Water). This paradoxical characteristic of mutual presence in opposite sides demonstrates the East Asian propensity to understand harmony and balance in terms of complementary non-dualistic notions of reality.\footnote{74 For instance see Daodejing, ch. 42.} In other words, this aspect of interpenetration and inter-presence between yin and yang via movement and tranquility accounts for the relational, integrative, and holistic mindset of East Asia.

Along with the interpenetration of yin and yang, interaction or mutual relationship explains the emergence of myriad things and humanity in the creative and transformative process of the universe. Zhou notes:

Heaven (chien) constitutes the male element, and Earth (kun) constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.\footnote{75 Zhou, An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate, in Chan, Source Book, 463. Emphasis is added.}
By using a marriage metaphor of two material forces (qi), Zhou accounts for the emergence and transformation of myriad things. Heaven (Qian), the first hexagram of 64 in the Book of Changes, is made up of six unbroken lines, which stands for the primal power, the creative, and represents the father in the family. Earth (Kun), the second hexagram, made up of six broken lines, represents the receptive, an image of the mother. Thus, the interaction of Heaven and Earth highlights the importance of interaction between two material forces, to engender and transform myriad things in the universe.

In the Book of Changes, the relationship between two different positions decides their harmony or disharmony. For example, the eleventh hexagram called T’ai (Prosperity or Pervading, and the twelfth hexagram called, P’i (Standstill or Stagnation), reveal how the creative Heaven and the receptive Earth generates harmony and disharmony. The 11th hexagram of the Book of Changes, Peace consists of the Receptive, Earth, which has the character of moving downward and, standing above, while the Creative, Heaven, has the character of moving upward and sitting below. “Hence their influences meet and are in harmony, so that all living things bloom and prosper.” Yet, the 12th hexagram Stagnation(P’i), is the opposite of the T’ai qua. Heaven(qian) stands above, which moves farther and farther away; Earth(kun) is below, sinking into the depths. In that diagram, the interaction of the creative power of Heaven and the receptive power of Earth is difficult and temporarily impossible. So the universal attractive interaction of the two modes of material force

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76 The image of Heaven as origination is similar to God the Father who is often known not only as the Godhead but as the source of all creation. In the Book of Changes and Zhou’s work, the primal cause of all that exists is attributed to the most important and most inclusive character of the Creative [Heaven]. In this manner, Lee claims that the Hebrew concept of God and the Asian concept of Heaven are correlated since both represent the creative and the source of creativity. See Lee, Trinity in Asian Perspective, 132,142.

77 Wilhelm, I Ching. See the 11th hexagram and the 12th hexagram of the Book of Changes; undivided line presents yang, having upward movement character and the divided lines, yin having downward movement.
constitutes not only the creative principle, but also the principle of harmonious relationship between differences.

b. Creative Creativity (sheng sheng, Production and Reproduction)

Here it is difficult to find the idea of a transcendental God who created the world out of nothing. Rather, the dynamism of the universe is understood as “the all-embracing nature of the so-called spontaneously self-generating life process.”

Zhou accounts further for the dynamic process of transformation and evolution of the universe toward the organic and life-emerging sequence: “The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.” It is sheng sheng (life, life) or “incessant creativity” that illustrates the ongoing creativity and renewal of nature on the basis of the interaction between Heaven and Earth.

According to the Book of Changes, “the great characteristic of Heaven and Earth is to produce,” and “change means production and reproduction.” The Way of Heaven and Earth has the generative reality of life and manifests its transformative power within the unfolding life-giving process of the universe. This life-affirming cosmology is also found in the Centrality and Commonality which states: “The Way of Heaven and Earth may be completely described in one sentence: They are without any doubleness and so they produce things in an unfathomable way.” Since the Way of Heaven and Earth is so sincere and authentic, they give birth to a new life or a new being in the universe. Cheng Yi comments: “The Way spontaneously produces all things. It is the Way that spontaneously produces and reproduces without end.” In this view, the authenticity of the universe is revealed to itself by giving birth to the myriad things in its ceaseless self-renewal process.

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80 The Book of Changes, Appended Remarks, III, in Chan, Source Book, 266.
82 Cheng I, I-shu, in Chan, Source Book, 553.
Furthermore, the notion of *sheng sheng* contributes to the Confucian notion that everything is renewed daily. Confucius says in the *Appendix*, “Great is the originating [power] of Heaven; all beings owe their beginning to it. This power permeates all heaven.” Further, he says, “The Creative works sublime success, furthering through perseverance.” In *Tongshu*, Zhou links this life-giving process with authenticity: origination (the beginning of things) and flourishing (their development) characterize the penetration of authenticity (sincerity), while advantage (their harmony with one another) and firmness (completion) are the recovery of authenticity. When Zhu Xi comments on this chapter, he says,

The character of Heaven and Earth is to produce and reproduce. Origination, Flourishing, Advantage, and Firmness are all indication of the mind of Heaven and Earth. …Its force increases every day, the Mandate of Heaven begins to operate and the process of creation and development states, that the mind of Heaven and Earth is to produce and reproduce without ceasing….

In this view, it is difficult to distinguish between the cosmological principle and a moral principle, which shows why the Classical Confucian cosmology is typically understood in the light of morality and ethics. The life emerging process is an unceasing dynamic and organic evolution. This cosmology could be understood as a dynamic, creative and differentiating life-giving process as well as a manifestation of morality in its rhythms of transformation.

On the basis of the *Book of Changes* and Zhou, later Confucians more fully developed this idea of *sheng sheng* in relation to human virtue as a dynamic process of creativity, which becomes the foundation of Heaven, Earth, and myriad things forming one body with humanity. According to Wang Fu-zhi (1619-1692 C.E.), the notion of *sheng sheng* becomes more clearly linked with daily renewal.

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84 Zhou, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, ch. 1, in Chan, *Source Book*, 465-466. In the *Book of Changes*, there is a fourfold activity of heaven and Earth, which is correspondent to the four qualities of morality. Zhou employs two sets of morality from both the *Book of Changes*, and *Mencius*.

By nature is meant the principle of growth. As one daily grows, one daily achieves completion. Thus by the Mandate of Heaven is not meant that Heaven gives the decree (ming) only at the moment of one’s birth. …In the production of things by Heaven, the process of transformation never ceases.\(^{86}\)

This Confucian thought implies that the stupendous creativity of the universe is manifested without ceasing, since the Mandate of Heaven is repeated through the process of “daily renewal”\(^{87}\) and “incessant change.”\(^{88}\) According to Wang, the universe is a process of continuous production and reproduction, the \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} elements of material force constantly fusing and intermingling, so that both material force and principle are renewed daily.\(^{89}\) Through its production and reproduction, the natural world manifests the way of Heaven and Earth, by a daily renewal process in a harmonious and relational manner in which humanity could form one body with Heaven, Earth, and myriad things.

3. The Relationship between Part and Whole

In the Chinese tradition, the cosmic quality of the universe is associated with such phenomena as weather, compass direction, and the constant human virtues whose categorical and associative basic concepts are seasonal and cyclical as well as in an organic relationship between the part and whole. Zhou continues to explain the procedure of evolution: “The Five Agents are \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}. \textit{Yin} and \textit{yang} are the supreme ultimate. The Four seasons revolve; the myriad things end and begin. How undifferentiated! How extensive! And How endless!”\(^{90}\) By the transformation of \textit{yang}...
and its union with *yin*, the Five Agents of water, fire, wood, metal, and earth arise. When these five Agents are distributed in a harmonious order, the four seasons run their course. In harmony and mysterious union, these five Agents make up *yin/yang* and *taiji* and finally return to the *wuji*. In this view, all creation is entirely dependent on and ultimately returns to its source. This is an inexhaustible mystery and a dynamic process of outgoing that finally returns to the Ultimate of Non-Being.

As Joseph Needham notes, in Confucian thought the universe is a single organism and Zhou’s cosmology essentially arrives at an organic view of the universe.\(^9\) Here an organic cosmology means that “all the parts of the entire cosmos belong to one organic whole and that they all interact as participants in one spontaneously self-generating life process.”\(^9\) In the *Tongshu*, Zhou notes,

> The two [modes of] *qi* and the five Agents transform and generate the myriad things. The five are the differentia and the two are the actualities; the two are rooted in fundamentally one. Thus the myriad things are one, and the one actuality is divisible into the myriad things. Each one of the myriad things is correct; the small and the large are distinct each in their own position.\(^9\)

This one-the myriad things relationship offers the characteristics of a holistic organism and yet realistic pluralism, in which each being has its own distinctive subjectivity and is present to each and every other being.\(^9\) According to Chan, opposites and diversities are synthesized in the one and the

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\(^9\) Chan compares the Neo-Confucian understanding of the universe as a single organism with that of Whitehead. He views the world (the universe) as more than an organism because the principle (particularly in Zhu Xi) is metaphysical. See Chan, *Source Book*, 636.


\(^9\) The relationship between Zhou and the Cheng brothers is also controversial, as mentioned above. Chan argues that Zhou’s influence upon the Cheng brothers is difficult to deny because their own writing mentions Zhou’s influence on them, whether it is great or not. But, A.C. Graham thinks that Zhou was less relevant to the Cheng brothers since they did not speak of the Great Ultimate, called Zhou by his personal name, and through stressing Cheng Yi’s elevation of Cheng Hao for discovering the Way independently. I think that Chan is correct to confirm that the basic problems and the general direction of the Cheng brothers were within the broad outline of Zhou’s philosophy, including the concept of the one and many. See Chan, *Source Book*, 521.
one is manifested in the many.\textsuperscript{95} It is no doubt that this one and many principle becomes the fundamental principle of Neo-Confucianism, as fully developed by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi.\textsuperscript{96}

Indeed, the principle of one and many is a result of religious symbiosis. The Book of Changes uses the metaphor, “In the world there are many different roads but the destination is the same. There are a hundred deliberations but the result is one.”\textsuperscript{97} The one-many in Hua-yen Buddhism is known through the metaphor of Indra’s net where any given individual in the net of Indra is actually perceived by all others in the net. Chan observes: “The Hua-yen doctrine shows the entire cosmos as a single nexus of conditions in which everything simultaneously depends on, and is depended on, by everything else.” He further states, “Seen in this light, then, everything affects and is affected by, more or less immediately or remotely, everything else; just as this is true of every system of relationships, so is it true of the totality of existence.”\textsuperscript{98} When Zhu comments upon Zhou’s one-the myriad things, he employs the Buddhist metaphor “the one moon is universally reflected in all rivers and the reflections of the moon in all rivers involve the same moon.”\textsuperscript{99} Such analogies of the moon and the thousands of rivers and many different roads and one destination provide an Asian sense of reality that is a holistic one but manifests diversity in a mutual interconnectedness with the one.

But Zhou and the Confucian tradition are distinct from Buddhism because of their emphasis on the correctness and distinctiveness of every innate subjectivity. The Buddhist metaphor addresses well mutual interrelatedness and interdependence, but Zhou and the Confucians add the emphasis on the subjectivity of myriad things, what Zhou calls the Great Ultimate or what Zhang Zai names Taihe

\textsuperscript{95} See Chan, Chu Hsi: Life and Thought, 92.

\textsuperscript{96} According to Chan, this aspect of harmony of the one and many is one of the most celebrated philosophical statements in China and sums up Neo-Confucian metaphysics. See Chan, Source Book, 544.

\textsuperscript{97} The Book of Changes, Appended Remarks, pt. 2, ch. 5.

\textsuperscript{98} It is similar to the Buddhist symbol of Indra’s net of jewels where each jewel reflects all others and presents an image of the whole in an endless system of mirroring. In Buddhism, Indra’s net provides a vision of all things in interrelationship with each other without being blended into a single homogeneous entity. See Chan, Source Book, 472.

\textsuperscript{99} Chan, Chu Hsi: Life and Thought, 93.
(Great Harmony). Similar to the egalitarian argument of the intrinsic value of every aspect of creation, each being is present to a whole without losing their distinctiveness in a mutually relational manner. Myriad things (even the universe itself) each have a distinctive subjectivity, in continuity with the Great Ultimate.

Another expression of this one-many relationship is the analogy of macrocosm and microcosm. Zhu deliberately comments on Zhou’s chapter 22 of the Tongsu,

[S]ince the Great Ultimate is the ultimate of principle and everything has principle, it means that everything has the Great Ultimate in it. So, the Great Ultimate involves all things as a whole and at the same time every individual thing involves the Great Ultimate. The universe is a macrocosm while everything is a microcosm. This macrocosm and microcosm relationship highlights not only each cosmic entity possessing the inherent presence of the Great Ultimate, but also how each entity functions by following its own inner spontaneity in relation to the whole and to the ceaseless transformative process of the universe. Yet this subjectivity is inseparable from the Great Ultimate since the universe emerges from the same origin and there is nothing apart from this ultimate. In other words, this universality does not limit each individual being of its distinctiveness. Michael Kalton aptly points out, “the interdependent systemic process of evolving life insures both differentiation and that each thing develops it own distinctive specialization precisely.” Each part of the macrocosm of the universe contributes to the process of complementing every other part, and the macrocosm contributes to the formation and transformation of the microcosm.

In fact, this one-the myriad things relationship becomes the practice aspect of the relationship between the cosmos and humanity in Neo-Confucian cosmology, which emphasizes the ontological meaning of morality within cosmology. Chung-ying Cheng, drawing from Mou Tsung-san, describes

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100 In this view, we might understand why Mencius teaches a human compassionate response even to the frightened cry of the birds, the crushing of a plant, the shattering of a tile, or the senseless breaking of a stone that immediately and spontaneously cause pain in a human heart. See Mencius 2A:6. Cheng Hao also continues, “The human mind (in essence) is the same as that of plants and trees, birds and animals.” Chan, Source Book, 527.

101 Chan, Chu Hsi: Life and Thought, 117.

it as: “the ontological is revealed in the functioning of the cosmological, and the cosmological is embodied in the framework of the ontological.” Here, cosmology is inseparable from ontology; the organic cosmology is deeply linked with the ethical manifestation of the ultimate reality. Zhou links the life-emerging process with morality:

Heaven generates the myriad things through yang, and fulfills the myriad things through yin. Generating [to produce] is humaneness. Fulfilling [to bring to completion] is appropriate [righteousness]. As the Way of Heaven operates, all things are in harmony. Although Zhang Zai and the Cheng brothers develop this concept of humanness much further, Zhou presents origination as depending on, or owing to, the cosmological virtue of humanness, which is the source of the dynamic process of creativity and the life-giving force. Zhang Zai in the Western Inscription establishes this expanded notion of humanness to embrace all humans and all things and finally the Cheng brothers developed the idea that the person of humanness is a man of the unity of Heaven and Earth.

Hence, Zhou correlates the ethical virtue of humanness to the core virtue of creation, which manifests the source of fecundity and growth, the Great Ultimate. Until the twelfth century, classical Confucians elaborated the virtue of humanness as kindness and love for all humans, but Neo-Confucians expanded the virtue to universal love on the basis of some points in Confucius, Mencius and the Centrality and Commonality. Zhou and the Neo-Confucians realize that the ontological reality of the human is none other than the ontological reality of Heaven within an organic cosmology.

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104 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 11, in Chan, Source Book, 470.

105 When the Cheng brothers comment on the Book of Changes, they correlate more explicitly humaneness and the thought of sheng (production). Cheng Hao says “the most impressive aspect of things is their spirit of life… This is jen [humaneness].” Chu, Reflection on Things, 21. Cheng Yi also notes “The mind is like seed. Their characteristic of growth is jen.” Quoted in Chan, “The Neo-Confucian Solution of the Problem of Evil,” in Neo-Confucian Etc.: Essays by Wing Tsit-Chan (New York: Oriental Society, 1969), 105. When they reflect on the Way of Heaven, which spontaneously produces and reproduces without end, the Cheng brothers understand the heart of heaven and earth as humaneness.

C. Zhou’s Cosmological – Ethical Anthropology

The subject matter of *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* is to show the unfolding process from the Great Ultimate to myriad things and in particular to human beings. In the midst of challenges from other religions, Neo-Confucian scholars attempt to recover the Confucian value of morality within an organic view of the universe. Zhou’s intent in emphasizing the transformative process of the universe is to help a recovery of human moral virtue. By meditating on the deepest rhythms of the natural world that manifest the Way of Heaven and Earth, he proposes that human moral nature is consistent with the process of the universe as the physical body emerges from the process. This onto-cosmology calls further for the practice of self-cultivation, which is a way of harmonizing the way of humanity with the Way of heaven and earth.

1. Human Embodying within the Process of the Universe

In the second part of *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*, Zhou explains the appearance of humanity and its relationship with the external world. As a result of interaction between Heaven (*qian*), the male element, and Earth (*kun*), the female element, all myriad things and humanity emerge. He notes,

> It is man alone who receives (the Five Agents) in their highest excellence, and therefore he is most intelligent. His physical form appears, and his spirit develops consciousness. The five moral principles of his nature (humanness or *jen*, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faithfulness) are aroused by, and react to, the external world and engage in activity; good and evil are distinguished; and human affairs take place.\(^{107}\)

Similar to Berry’s functional cosmology, Zhou explains that the unfolding process of the universe brings out not only the physical dimension but also a psychic-consciousness one. Drawing from the *Book of Rite* that “men … receive the five agents in their highest excellence,”\(^{108}\) Zhou describes humanity’s reception of the five cosmological agents with their highest excellence. Unlike

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anthropocentrism that separates humanity from and over the rest of creation, in Zhou’s thought humanity’s distinctiveness and correctness in the universe is their morality, which is related to the external world and pushes them to engage in activity.109

Mencius says, “the Sage is the ultimate standard of human relations.”110 Echoing Mencius, Zhou expands further the understanding of the sage and proposes tranquility as fundamental,

The sage settles these affairs by the principle of the centrality, uprightness, humaneness, and righteousness (for the way of the sage is none other than these four), regarding tranquility as fundamental. (Having no desire, there will therefore be tranquility.) Thus he establishes himself as the ultimate standard for man.111

The sage as the ultimate standard, model or paradigm of humanness has four ethical characteristics – Mean, correctness, humaneness, and righteousness. The first virtue of the sage is mean or equilibrium, which is seen as the highest virtue: “Only the Mean brings harmony. The Mean is the principle of regularity, the universally recognized by law of morality, and is that to which the sage is devoted." Second, the characteristic of correctness is related to activity and tranquility. Zhou notes, “To be active and yet correct is the Way. To be functioning and yet harmonious is called virtue."112 If activity is correct, harmony will follow since harmony is simply following the Way. The third and fourth characteristics of the sage are humaneness and righteousness. The former is not only a virtue among moral virtues, but it also conceives organically the moral principle of human nature. “As seeds produce flowers and plants, so humanness produces all virtues.” Combined with righteousness, the

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109 The understanding of humanity as receiving the highest excellence and therefore as most intelligent could be contested as a sign of anthropocentrism. Yet, Confucian humanism is different from anthropocentrism. The former is deeply rooted in its continuity with the natural world, while the latter is an attitude of separation. Moreover, Confucian humanism situates humanity within a relational and functional presence to the natural world, while the humans in anthropocentrism are placed above everything. Tu adds, “Confucian humanism is fundamentally different from anthropocentrism because it professes the unity of man and Heaven rather than the imposition of the human will on nature. In fact the anthropocentric assumption that man is put on earth to pursue knowledge and, as knowledge expands, so does man’s dominion over earth is quite different from the Confucian concept of the pursuit of knowledge’s as an integral part of one’s self-cultivation. …The human transformation of nature, therefore, means as much an integrative effort to learn to live harmoniously in one’s natural environment as a modest attempt to use the environment to sustain basic livelihood. The idea of exploiting nature is rejected because it is incompatible with the Confucian concern for moral self-development.” Tu, *Confucian Thought*, 75.

110 *Mencius*, 4A:2.


role of the two virtues is similar to the *yin* and *yang* relationship, where the creative process begins with humanness and is complete with righteousness.

Heaven produces the ten thousand things through yang and brings them to completion through yin. To produce is humanity, and to complete is righteousness. Therefore, when the sage administers an empire, he cultivates all things with humanness and sets all people right with righteousness.\(^{113}\)

Just like Heaven’s generation and completion of the myriad things, so the sage educates and nourishes the myriad things with humanity and corrects the myriad people with righteousness.\(^{114}\) As a cosmological and anthropological figure, the sage plays a correlational role in humanity, by instructing and cultivating the Way. Zhou says,

The Way of Heaven proceeds and the myriad things comply [with it]. The virtue of the sage cultivates [others] and the myriad people are transformed. Great compliance and great transformation leave no visible trace. Since no one understands them, they are considered spiritual.\(^ {115}\)

The sage as educator enables the myriad common people to transform their evil tendencies to reach the mean on their own and to stay in that state of equilibrium.\(^ {116}\) In this manner Zhou establishes in one subtle but vital area that the Confucian sage is different from the Daoist holy man, who tends to dwell in a state of non-action.\(^ {117}\)

**Authenticity**

In *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, Zhou presents the notion of authenticity (*cheng*, sincerity) as the fundamental attitude of the sage. Drawing from the *Centrality and Commonality* combined with the cosmology of the *Book of Changes*, Zhou offers the doctrine of authenticity to recover the moral principles of human nature by suggesting the vision of the sage as an authentic and

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\(^{114}\) Ibid.


functional presence in the universe and to human society. In *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, Zhou notes,

Authenticity (*cheng*) is the foundation of the sage. ‘Great is the Heaven (*qian*), the originator! All things obtain their beginning from it.’ It is the source of authenticity. Being a sage is nothing more than being authentic. Being authentic is the foundation of Five Constant [Virtues] and the source of the Hundred Practices. …When the Five Constants and Hundred practices are not authentic, they are wrong, blocked by depravity and confusion.¹¹⁸

Zhou identifies the creative source of Heaven as the source of authenticity, which is also the foundation of the sage. For humanity, authenticity is indeed the source of all activities and the foundation of all moral virtue, which is what Tu calls the “transcendent anchorage of Confucian morality.”¹¹⁹

One of the main themes of the *Centrality and Commonality* is that the concept of authenticity has two distinct aspects: the cosmological Heaven’s Way as the fundamental foundation of all existence and “the truth and reality of human’s Heavenly endowed nature.”¹²⁰ As a moral principle, authenticity is flawless and pure, and as a cosmological one it manifests the creative source. According to the *Centrality and Commonality*, “Authenticity is the Way of Heaven” and “achieving [authenticity] is the human way.” Further, the *Centrality and Commonality* says that “Authenticity means the completion of the self, and the Way is self-directing. Authenticity is the beginning and end of things. Without authenticity there would be nothing.”¹²¹ In this regard, authenticity is described as both a cosmological dimension of the universe and “the most genuine manifestation of human virtue.”¹²² Thus, this notion of authenticity becomes the foundation of the Confucian vision of

¹¹⁹ Tu, *Centrality and Commonality*, 78.
¹²⁰ Ibid., 77. Tu notes that authenticity is “the truth and reality of human’s Heavenly endowed nature.”
¹²² Tu, *Centrality and Commonality*, 77.
the human completion of things; that “the human who attains perfect authenticity can assist the transforming and nourishing operations of Heaven and Earth.”

In Zhou’s view, authenticity is the foundation of human moral nature, an innate goodness endowed from Heaven, which is related to the source of creativity and the original state of purity and flawlessness. Such embodied authenticity is manifest in the sage, who is naturally and easily in harmony with the Way; his exterior manifestation of authenticity corresponds with his interior transformation. The sage is not simply a moral person but also a cosmic person who is embedded in the order of the universe; thus, the sage is the ultimate standard in the paradigm of humanity. Furthermore, every person can be a sage because human nature is identical with the principle of the universe; thus, self-cultivation makes possible the potential for sagehood in every human.

According to de Bary, this egalitarian aspect of sagehood as accessible to all is a distinctive characteristic of the religious orientation of Neo-Confucianism. The sage represents a unique figure who is both cosmological and ethical since he completes all things and helps people. If a human achieves sagehood, she/he is considered as the mind-and-heart of the universe, who establishes a trinity with Heaven and Earth. Fung, echoing de Bary, states that the concept of the sage is thus no longer merely ethical, but religious or even mystical. He says, “the Sage is a man who develops these human relationships and practices the ceremonies and music not only for ethical reasons, but in order that he may reach the highest state of self-cultivation, which is the state of union of the individual with the universe.” Indeed, this notion of cosmological and ethical sagehood

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123 According to Tu, “the ontological reality of man is none other than the ontological reality of Heaven, and that the relationship between Heaven and man is ‘an indivisibly single oneness.’” Ibid., 84.

124 See Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, “[Being authentic] is perfectly easy, yet difficult to practice,” ch. 2 in Chan, Source Book, 466.


provides a framework to establish one being with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things that becomes the Neo-Confucian vision of the one body.\(^{127}\)

### 2. How to Be an Authentic Human: The Practice of Self-Cultivation

The vision of sagehood is achieved by recovering the heavenly endowed moral principles by means of learning the Way of Heaven and Earth, and the practice of self-cultivation. The unfolding transformative process of the universe faithfully reveals the Way of Heaven and Earth without ceasing. Yet, human morality is obscure and hidden since it is manifested through the reaction to the exterior world and engagement in activity.

#### a. Need for Cultivation

If humanity inherits the Way of Heaven and Earth, why do we seek to be authentic human beings via the practice of self-cultivation? We need to look for answers by going back to the Confucian understanding of human nature. In China, the debate on human nature goes back to Mencius’ good human-nature theory and Xunzi’s evil human-nature theory. While Zhou does not discuss this theme clearly, he understands that human nature is inherently good, but as one’s nature comes into contact with external things, good and evil appear in its functions. Thus he highlights the importance of incipience along with perceiving the subtle problem of human nature from the view of Mencius’ good human nature theory.

Besides *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*, in which he briefly mentions the rising of good and evil, Zhou employs the concept of incipience in *Penetrating the Book of Changes* to explain the division between evil and good. He says, “Authenticity [in its original substance] engages in no activity, but is the subtle, incipient, activating force giving rise to good and evil” and “the five moral nature is stimulated by activity, and good and evil are distinguished.”\(^ {128}\)

The original human nature at one’s birth is good but incipient and undeveloped. When one confronts

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\(^{127}\) See Berry, “Authenticity in Confucian Spirituality,” 1-2.

a moral situation or the external world in activity, the sensation of qi arises at the same time, leading the person in either a good or evil direction. In a moment of incipience, there is an initial, subtle sign of human desire as separate from unity through the stimulation of external things. This initiates an incipient activity of the mind. In the *Book of Changes*, incipience means the subtle sign of activity or the beginning of activity, a moment “active but not yet formed, between existing and not existing” and “subtle and therefore obscure.”¹²⁹ Thus, one must discern whether that activity and engagement come from the Way of Heaven [daoxin, the manifestation of the moral mind and heart, flowing from the Way of Heaven] or human desire [renxin, the manifestation of the human mind/heart, flowing from selfish desire]. Thus, Zhou concludes, “Knowing incipience is his spirituality.”¹³⁰

One can detect the subtle, incipient and activating force of good and evil, as well as make the choice for good or for evil since the moment of authenticity is a state of “absolute quiet and inactivity,” a moment of unity of the human mind with the mind of Heaven and Earth. Zhou understands evil as a status of alienation from authenticity, resulting from man’s failure to cultivate his Heavenly endowed moral nature. Thus the fundamental object of cultivation is to recover the authentic self residing within the heavenly endowment. Though Zhou does not offer a full explanation for the origin of good and evil, he emphasizes how “the successive movement of yin and yang constitutes the Way. What issues from the Way is good, and that which realizes it is the individual nature.”¹³¹ This highlights the subtlety of good and evil and calls for the practice of self-cultivation, for the purpose of the continuation of life process.

According to Chan, Zhou teaches in chapter 3 of the *Penetrating the Book of Changes* that “good results from one’s being correct and evil from one being one-sided,” a theory that is accepted

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¹³⁰ Ibid., ch. 9, in Chan, *Source Book*, 469.
by later Confucians.\textsuperscript{132} Authenticity is stillness and the moral mind must arise from the activity of authenticity, whereas human desires must be regarded as the deviant branch of its activity, or isolation and separation from authenticity. Unlike a static notion of good and evil, Zhou understands good and evil on the basis of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} opposition as complementary to each other. This is evident more clearly when Zhang Zai provides the theory of \textit{qi}, “the two forces sometimes mutually supplement each other and sometimes contradict each other. …Sometimes their operation is even and easy but sometimes unbalanced. Hence there is evil and there is good.”\textsuperscript{133} Through \textit{qi}’s relative turbidity and purity, coarseness and fineness, Confucians understand the relative distortion of mind and heart and become concerned with the corrective practice of self-cultivation.

\textbf{b. Tranquility or No-Desire}

As a methodology of self-cultivation, Zhou integrates the traditional Confucian emphasis on learning, the pursuit of knowledge on the basis of the Confucian canon, with the inner transformation by the spiritual practice of tranquility or no-desire. To recover the moral principles of human nature endowed from Heaven, Zhou notes that one must begin by “regarding tranquility as fundamental” and “learning to be sage.” Such learning to be a fully authentic human is a typical focus of Confucianism. Yet, the teaching of tranquility and no-desire is more typical of Buddhist and Daoist practice. Buddhism teaches that by extinguishing human desire, one becomes a true person, one who is in a state of non-action and who transcends the duality between wrong and right. In the Buddhist model, it is the Bodhisattva who lives without attachment to the things of the world. Laozi also says,

\textsuperscript{132} Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 467. On the other hand, Hu Hong (1100-1155) said that both good and evil proceed from nature. Wang Yang-ming illustrates this further: “Someone said, “All people have this mind, and this mind is identical with principle. Why do some people do good and others do evil?” The Teacher said, “The mind of the evil man has lost its original substance.” He goes on to say, “Such a view of good and evil is motivated by personal interest and is therefore easily wrong. … The spirit of life of Heaven and Earth is the same in flowers and weeds. Where have they the distinction of good and evil? When you want to enjoy flowers, you will consider flowers good and weeds evil. But when you want to use weeds, you will then consider them good. Such good and evil are all products of the mind’s likes and dislikes.” Wang Yang-ming, \textit{Instructions for Practical Living}, in Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 677.

\textsuperscript{133} Quoted in Chan, “The Neo-Confucian Solution of the Problem of Evil,” \textit{Chu Tzu Chuan-shu}, 43:4a. Here, the attribution to \textit{qi} traces back to the teaching of Mencius that “it is the nature of things that they are not equal.” \textit{Mencius}, 3A:4. The imbalance of \textit{qi} is not only accepted by Neo-Confucians but is also an essential aspect of the Way. Cheng Hao says, “Nature produces various things – some long, some short, some large, and some small.” \textit{I-shu}, 11:6b.
“This returning to its origin means tranquility. It is called returning to its destiny. To return to
destiny is called the Eternal Dao.”\textsuperscript{134} Indeed, the concept of tranquility as a spiritual practice is found
mostly in Daoist and Buddhist thought. Thus later Confucians take pains to explain what Zhou meant
by tranquility as the basis for activity, or his understanding of the method of self-cultivation for the
four moral qualities of the sage.\textsuperscript{135}

Zhou’s notion of tranquility is different from that of Buddhism and Daoism, however, since it
is rooted in authenticity and understood in light of its relationship with activity. Zhou explains the
notion of tranquility as aligned with activity in An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate
and in chapter 16 of Penetrating the Book of Changes. He says, “It is not the case that having no
activity in activity and having no stillness in stillness is neither activity nor stillness.”\textsuperscript{136} There is
tranquility within movement and movement within tranquility, so that humanity should be active
within stillness and still within activity.\textsuperscript{137} When tranquil one is capable of activity, and when active
one is capable of stillness, just as within \textit{yang} there is \textit{yin} and vice versa. Moreover, cosmological
movement and tranquility as modes of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} are manifested in the practice of self-cultivation
by emphasizing tranquility as a mode of authenticity. Chan is correct to observe that “in Zhou’s mind
tranquility is never divorced from activity. It is true that in the \textit{Tongshu} itself activity and tranquility
are spoken of together.”\textsuperscript{138} Thus, the purpose of tranquility is to nourish activity in a way consistent
with the Way of Heaven and Earth.

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Daodejing}, ch. 16.


\textsuperscript{136} Zhou, \textit{Penetrating the Book of Changes}, ch. 16.

\textsuperscript{137} Zhu comments further on the relationship between tranquility and movement in relation to authenticity and
originating. He says, “\textit{Yuan} and \textit{heng} are the penetration of authenticity as activity. \textit{Li} and \textit{Zhen} are the recovery of
authenticity as stillness. \textit{Yuan} (originating) is the starting point of activity, rooted in stillness. \textit{Zhen} (being correct) is the
material of stillness, which is expressed in activity. The alternation of activity and stillness is an endless cycle. And yet
\textit{zhen} is how myriad things achieve their ends and achieve their beginnings. Thus, although humans cannot be inactive,
establishing the peak of being human (\textit{renji}) requires emphasizing stillness. Only by emphasizing stillness can their
expression in activity always be measured and never lack their fundamental stillness.” See Zhu Xi, \textit{Discussion of Taiji (Taiji
June 1, 2012)

\textsuperscript{138} Chan, \textit{Source Book}, 465.
Zhou’s method of tranquility and no-desire (having no-desire, there will therefore be tranquility) further expands on Mencius’ teaching of “limiting or controlling human desire,” and even Laozi’s “less desire.” This cultivation of no-desire is interrelated with tranquility and activity, which is “learning to be a sage.”

“Can one become a sage through learning?” “Yes.”
“Is there any essential way?” “Yes.”
“Please explain it to me.”
“The essential way is to [concentrate on] one thing. By [concentrating on] one thing is meant having no desire. Having no desire, one is vacuous (being absolutely pure and peaceful) while tranquil, and straightforward while in action. Being vacuous while tranquil, one becomes intelligent and hence penetrating. Being straightforward while active, one becomes impartial and hence all-embracing. Being intelligent, penetrating, impartial, and all-embracing, one is almost a sage.”

In this passage, learning is explained as a way to achieve no-desire and tranquility. By integrating the traditional Confucian focus on education as rational process with tranquility as intuitive or unconscious process, Zhou provides a meditative or reflective technique for self-cultivation for the recovery of the inner spontaneity of human nature.

In fact, Zhou teaches that the practice of no-desire prevents mind and heart from slipping into personal interest, wealth, and honour. Therefore, no-desire in one’s nature of impartiality, intelligence in one’s understanding, reasonableness in one’s judging, responsibility in one’s action, and an all-embracing harmony result in the ultimate achievement of learning to be a sage. When the Buddhist challenges that every man has Buddhahood, (i.e., the capacity to be enlightened), Zhou reaffirms the teaching of Mencius that all men have the possibility for sagehood, (i.e., according to the cosmological principle and moral foundation of authenticity). Unlike the teaching of impermanence in Buddhism, the Way of Heaven and authenticity are seen as guiding the process of

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139 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 22, in Chan, Source Book, 474. Emphasis is added.

140 Later Confucians, the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi substituted Zhou’s teaching of no-desire and tranquility with reverence (jing) while developing a meditative or reflective discipline known as quiet-sitting. Zhu Xi claims that what Zhou meant here by no-desire (wuju) is the same as what Cheng Yi meant by reverent composure (jing) in order to escape the Buddhist resonant term. According to Kim, Zhou’s no-desire indeed is not a process of inner self-realization that is compatible with Buddhist practice, but is the final result of moral self-cultivation. In both cases, later Confucians regarded tranquility to be extreme, so they maintained the balance between internal and external life in light of the notion of reverent composer or seriousness. See Kim, “Study of Zhou,” 242-244.
change, understood as the potential capacity for interior transformation and a growth process. In Zhou’s view, the Way of Heaven is authentic by showing a growth and renewal process since humanity has the same potential for transformation within the movement and tranquility of the Great Ultimate. In this manner, Zhou expands Mencius’s earlier teaching of moral cultivation to a process of psychophysical expansiveness that makes possible the unity of Humanity with Heaven and Earth and myriad things.

In order to provide a vision of the sage, achieved through the practice of no-desire and tranquility, Zhou gives an example of sagehood as lived out by Yen Tzu (521-490 B.C).

Yen Tzu (Yen Yuan) had only a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and lived in his mean narrow home. Others could not have endured this distress but he did not allow his joy to be affected by it. Now, wealth and honor are what people love. Yen Tzu did not love or seek them but instead enjoyed poverty.

Zhou highly esteems Yen Yuan, as second only to the Sage Confucius, showing the greatness of the Way. When Yen took pleasure in “seeing what was great,” being rich or poor becomes irrelevant since “with his mind at peace … nothing was insufficient.” Because Yan recovered the innate spontaneity of Heavenly endowed nature, he became a sage who revealed human morality as derived from the basic pattern of order in the emerging universe. By developing inner authenticity, he was also able to understand Confucius’ comprehensiveness and teaching without limitation.

According to Zhou, “[Being authentic is] perfectly easy, yet difficult to practice. When one is determined and precise, there is no difficulty with it.” The result of strenuous and continual effort in self-cultivation is a recovery of inner spontaneity of human nature so that one has “the aesthetic experience of mutuality and immediacy with nature.” Indeed, Bruce contends: “In all this

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142 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 23, in Chan, Source Book, 475.
144 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 2, in Chan, Source Book, 466.
145 Tu, Centrality and Commonality, 118.
we recognize that sympathy with nature which showed him [Zhou] to be poet as well as philosopher and which, it may well be, had much to do with the influence he possessed over the minds of those who attached themselves to him”

In “On the Love of the Lotus,” Zhou is affectionate towards the lotus, known as a Buddhist symbol of purity and tranquility. Besides Zhou’s spiritual intimacy with Buddhism, this essay also shows that a distinctive teaching of the practice of self-cultivation is balance between the internal and external, similar to the lotus that is empty in the center and upright outside, as well as deeply rooted in mud but blooming above the water.

The consequences of self-cultivation are not limited to the personal dimension. They are also oriented to public and cosmological relationships. de Bary claims: “The Confucian way is a way of learning, learning to be human. Learning to be human in the Confucian spirit is to engage oneself in a ceaseless, unending process of creative self-transformation, both as a communal act and as a dialogical response to Heaven.”

Aptly observed by de Bary, what is known as Confucian public spirituality always emphasizes active engagement in ordinary affairs, especially the virtues of participation, responsibility, and reciprocity to self, family, society, nation and finally the universe. And yet, Zhou deepens this public spirituality by linking it with a method of no-desire (tranquility), rooted in inner authenticity, as well as manifested in the natural world. This is echoed in a teaching of the Book of Changes: seriousness to straighten the internal life and righteousness to square the external life. What is significant here is to seek balance between internal awareness and external participation, since this spirituality highlights the triadic unity of the human with Heaven and Earth.

D. Forming a Trinity with Heaven and Earth

The fundamental interest of the Confucian tradition is learning to be fully human through the practice of cultivation. By cultivating the heavenly endowed moral nature, humanity forms one body

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146 Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters, 29.
147 de Bary, “Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucian Spirituality,” 77.
with Heaven and Earth. This task involves developing within the continuity and harmony of the universe the central relationship with other humans and the Way of Heaven and Earth. In other words, it is a learning to be human that focuses not on one’s profit, but on seeking harmony in a reciprocal relationship with Heaven and human society. In the last part of An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate, Zhou contends that true humanity is attained in the vision of a trinity with Heaven and Earth. Zhou states: “the character of sage is identical with that of Heaven and Earth.” He goes on to say: “Therefore, it is said that yin and yang are established as the way of Heaven, the weak and strong as the way of Earth, and humanity and righteousness as the way of man.”

He also sees the vision of the trinity in the example of Confucius.

Confucius was the only one whose Way and virtue were lofty and abundant, whose educational influence was unlimited, and who could truly form a trinity with Heaven and Earth and be equal to the Four seasons.

He respects Confucius as the incarnation of the lofty and abundant virtue of Heaven and Earth. Besides his educational influence on many people, the life of the master was coordinated with the rhythms of the natural process, primarily with the cycles of the four seasons that manifest the life-giving process of the universe without failure.

This idea of a human forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth is found in the Centrality and Commonality and the Book of Changes. The Centrality and Commonality says, “If they [people] can assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth, they can thus form a trinity with Heaven and Earth.” In the Book of Changes, three lines in the trigram symbolize the Way of Heaven, Earth, and humanity so that the respective functions of the six lines in each hexagram embody the way of Heaven, Earth, and humanity. Fung describes this vision as “the highest stage of

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149 Zhou, Penetrating the Book of Changes, ch. 39, in Chan, Source Book, 479.
human self-realization, the embodiment of the spirit of Heaven and Earth.” Tucker and Berthrong concur: “For the Confucian tradition as a whole, the idea of self-cultivation implies a ‘creative transformation’ such that one forms a triad with Heaven and Earth.” By means of cultivation of the moral nature, humanity participates in the cosmological process of change and transformation within this triadic relationship.

For Zhou, forming a trinity with heaven and Earth is how humans become at home in the universe through finding their place and role within its unfolding process. In a cosmological sense, an authentic human identity is found in forming a trinity with heaven and Earth, while in a moral and spiritual sense it is an identification process of forming one body. As a product of the universe, humans have distinctive characteristics of morality and spirituality to enable their participation in the trinity. While Zhou does not reject that the human inherits the highest intelligence of chi, this distinction is qualitatively different from all that exists, while still sharing the same material force. Here the role of humanity is of completion of the transformative process of the universe (not a dominion over nature, and not even as its steward).

E. Concluding Remarks

Currently, a common challenge for all religions is how to respond to the Earth’s ecological crisis. Because the myth of human separation from the natural world still operates in a mechanistic worldview, exploitation of the natural world is thereby fostered and continued. As indicated earlier, Berry’s work inclined me to go back and explore Confucian cosmology, since as Tucker’s biographical sketch of Berry notes: “the comprehensive cosmological framework of Confucian thought can be a valuable intellectual resource in reformulating a contemporary ecological cosmology with implications for environmental ethics.” As a concluding remark, I will propose a

151 Quoted in Tu, “The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism,” 482.
theocosmoanthric worldview on the basis of Zhou’s cosmology. This revision of the Confucian worldview might better reflect a Neo-Confucian cosmology and also help to develop a more ecological Confucianism.

**Theocosmoanthric Worldview**

In order to describe the Chinese worldview, Carl Jung refers to its psychophysical structure, Needham to its organismic cosmos, and Benjamin Schwartz to its correlative anthropocosmology. The most influential description, by Wei-ming Tu, is of an “anthropocosmic vision.” Tu highlights the integral relationship between humanity (anthropos) and the cosmos. Tu successfully introduces the Chinese propensity to favor concepts of immanence over transcendence by noting the continuity of being as the basic motif in Chinese ontology. On the basis of the Centrality and Commonality and the notion of qi as psychophysical reality, he addresses the anthropocosmic vision of Confucianism, while, at the same time, emphasizing communication, harmony, and mutuality between humanity and Heaven. This anthropocosmic vision has been widely accepted and characterized as the Chinese worldview and as an alternative to anthropocentrism.

In the Confucian tradition, it seems certainly true that the relationship between the cosmos and humans is inseparable, not in the manner of an antinomic bi-unity but in an indivisible single oneness. Although the tradition preserves the triadic relationship among Heaven, Earth, and humanity, the categorization itself remains dubious, since Heaven (tian) is often understood as an

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154 Carl Jung, “Forward to The I Ching or Book of Changes,” xxiv.
157 Tu, Centrality and Commonality, 102.
160 See Tu, Centrality and Commonality, 84.
abbreviation of heaven and earth, and heaven and Earth as “an integrated, coherent organism.” In light of Tu’s anthropocosmic vision, it is possible to say the unity between Heaven and humans without mentioning Earth explicitly.

However, I am proposing a theocosmoanthric worldview on the basis of Zhou’s cosmology and the vision of forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth. My revision is that Zhou’s cosmological vision of trinity among the Way of Heaven, Earth, and humankind could be described as theocosmoanthric – i.e., Heaven (qian) referred to as theo-dimension, the Earth (di) representing the Mother of universe in terms of physical dimension, and anthric to humanity respectively. In Zhou’s thought it is difficult to find a theistic notion of God as is found in Christianity. And yet, the Way of Heaven seems to have a functional equivalence with the divine dimension. What I propose is that this theocosmoanthric worldview represents the radical inseparability of myriad things from

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161 Wang observes that the Way of Heaven and Earth is used synonymously with the Way of Heaven, suggesting that “Heaven often appears as an abbreviation of ‘Heaven and Earth,’ or Nature.” The author further indicates that the interpretation of cosmology in the Mean is clearly naturalistic rather than theistic. According to Cheng I, “Spoken of as one, Heaven is the Way. Spoken of in its different aspects, it is called heaven with respect to its physical body, the Lord (T’i) with respect to its being master, negative and positive spiritual forces with respect to its operation, spirit (shen) with respect to its wonderful functioning, and Ch’ien or tian with respect to its nature and feelings.” Chan, Source Book, 570. Similarly, Fung identifies five distinct meanings of the term Heaven (tian): a material or physical tian or sky; a ruling or presiding tian; a fatalistic tian, a naturalistic tian, and an ethical tian. Among these diverse understandings, in Confucianism Heaven (tian) is traditionally understood as purposive and as the source and ultimate controller of human’s destiny, while in Daoism Heaven is closer in meaning to Nature. Wang Hui, Translating Chinese Classics: James Legge and His Two Versions of the Zhongyong (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 86, 85; See, Hall and Ames, “Chinese Philosophy,” in E. Craig, ed. Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1998), 241; Weller and Bol, Confucianism and Ecology, 322.

162 While this proposed theocosmoanthric perspective is similar to that of Heup-Young Kim, I will explain a perspective that is rooted in the cosmological vision of Zhou Dunyi. See Heup Young Kim, Wang yang-ming and Karl Barth: a Confucian-Christian Dialogue (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996).

163 Also Zhou’s notion of spirit [shen] seems strikingly similarity to that of the Christian Spirit. Zhou notes, “One whose subtle signs of expression are imperceptible, and whose fullness is inexhaustible, is called Spiritual [shen].” He adds, “That which has no activity in activity, and no stillness in stillness, is spirit [shen].” Zhu comments on this, “Spirit does not leave physical form but is not restricted by it.” For Zhu, the spirit is pattern (li), “Is ‘spirit’ the creative process of transformation in Heaven and Earth? ‘Spirit is precisely this pattern.’” For East Asian Christians, the spirit [shen] is used to describe God. It is the divine dimension that I identify as either the wujir et taiji or the spirit.

The way of heaven has a functional equivalence with the divine dimension, as the emblem of creativity and originator, identified with the Ultimate of Non-being and the Great Ultimate, and the fundamental foundation of authenticity. In contrast to Heaven, Earth is often regarded synonymously with the universe, cosmos or simply nature. Nonetheless, sometimes the Earth dimension is not clear in Confucian cosmology. While Zhou notes the interaction between Heaven and Earth, it is still difficult to remain in a clear category as two interwoven qi. Moreover, identifying Heaven with Father, earth with Mother, the Earth dimension is subordinate to Heaven. See the evolution of the Chinese notion of Heaven (tian), Robert Eno, The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Wang, Translating Chinese Classics (2008).
the universe, and implies an intertwining of three dynamic co-relational dimensions among the divine, the cosmos, and humanity.

Although I realize some ambiguities remain in this argument and the possibility remains to call it both anthropocosmic and theocosmoanthric, this revision has implications helpful to the development of ecological Confucianism. First, as long as we understand the Confucian worldview as “anthropocosmic,” Confucian stewardship, as described by Tu, remains paramount – i.e., “the human should become the steward, guardian, and protector of nature.”

While Tu proposes the unity of Heaven and humanity to overcome a blatant form of anthropocentrism, he still emphasizes stewardship since humanity is given priority and responsibility in the universe through the anthropocosmic worldview. Furthermore, this anthropocosmic vision could be paraphrased as the “God-world polarity,” referred to by the Christian Confucian scholar John Berthrong, who points out Tu’s notion that “professing the unity of man and heaven, chong yong neither denies nor slights a transcendent reality.”

Because of the multiplicity of meaning of the term Heaven in the Confucian tradition, it remains debatable whether in the anthropocosmic vision the emphasis is on the divine-human reality or the nature-human relationship. For this reason, it would seem more appropriate to describe a three-dimensional reality, or a theocosmoanthric worldview, since it refers more appropriately to “the great triad of heaven (a guiding force), earth (nature) and humans.”

In fact, the term anthropocosmic seems to obscure that the cosmological order is the primary referent in Confucian thought and, to some degree, would limit the Confucian contribution to ecology. Acknowledging this problem, Jung Young Lee describes the Confucian worldview as “cosmo-

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164 Tu, “Ecological Turn,” 490.

165 John Berthrong, All under Heaven, quoted in Tu, Centrality and Commonality, 10. Nonetheless, Berthrong acknowledges that Tu recognizes that this human-cosmos relationship of the Mean is different from a Christian understanding of the ontological gap between God and human.

anthropology” since it is a more fitting description of the priority of cosmology over anthropology.\(^{167}\) Similarly, Young-Chan Ro uses the term “cosmoanthropic worldview” which implies appropriately the priority of cosmology.\(^{168}\) Indeed, if we consider only the mutual relationship between Heaven and humanity, the description “cosmo-anthropo” is more fitting than anthropocosmic. Nonetheless, neither “anthropocosmic” nor “cosmoanthropic” describes a worldview that accounts for Zhou’s emphasis on the human forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth as a triadic relationship.

If understood as a theocosmoanthropic worldview, Zhou’s cosmology will help foster evolution beyond Confucian stewardship as well as to increase appreciation of Zhou’s religious symbiosis and its implications. Confucianism is often characterized as a religion of yang (of Heaven), and Daoism, as a religion of yin (of Earth). The Daoist influence on Zhou’s cosmology is clear, and yet Zhu and later Confucians attempted to erase the Daoist contours of Zhou, and to some degree they achieved their purpose, resulting in prejudicial attitudes towards other religions.\(^{169}\) Perhaps, the failure to integrate the Earth dimension might be attributed to the emphasis on Confucian stewardship, which is often a parallel to humanistic philosophy and social ecology.\(^{170}\) However, Zhou’s cosmology is more balanced between the Confucian value of Heaven and the Daoist value of Earth. Not only does he start with the Ultimate of non-being for his cosmology, he also elaborates the value of non-being (no-desire) and tranquility for the practice of self-cultivation. Indeed, his notion of the Way of Heaven seems more compatible with the concept of Dao itself as inner spontaneity. Thus, by recovering the

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\(^{167}\) Lee, *Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 18.  
\(^{169}\) Although the Neo-Confucians’ critique seems superficial, prejudiced, and ignorant towards Buddhism and Daoism, later Confucians, even the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi, had a very hostile reaction to them. See Chan, *Source Book*, 653.  
Earth dimension, the cultural imbalance would be remedied. As Capra points out, a feature of Western culture over the last three centuries is the dominance of *yang* characteristics over *yin*.

Finally this theocosmoanthric worldview would stress the importance of the practice of self-cultivation, without either devaluing humanity or separating it from the universe. In a triadic relationship, if humanity understands and follows the deep rhythms of the universe, they will not deviate from the Way and thus achieve the heavenly endowed morality consistent with the way of the Earth. In the *Book of Changes*, the way of Heaven and Earth – their interactive, interpenetrating, and mutual presence with one another – is the foundation of all other relationships. It is the same in Zhou’s *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*. In Zhou, the human way is understood as inseparable from the way of Heaven and Earth, which are presented as the heart and mind of the universe. Within a trinity, the idea of humanity is that of a microcosm of the universe; humanity is, in this sense, the universe itself. This is not an anthropocentric emphasis on human dominion over nature; rather, it highlights human participation and responsibility as a microphase of the macrocosm of the universe.

In Zhou’s view, a distorted human-earth relationship could result from the failure of the practice of self-cultivation, because the primary purpose of cultivation is to recover the inner spontaneity that is shared with the natural world. By understanding humanity within a trinity, it is possible to suggest and foster a sense of participatory responsibility for the natural world in a harmonious manner. Indeed, the vision of the human forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth is mystical and symbolic. As Cheng notes, “Heaven is a symbol of cosmology of creativity and development; Earth is a symbol of ecology of comprehension and harmonization, and finally the humanity is a symbol of the combination of the two, thus producing the ethics of integration and

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fulfillment of values.” I believe that the theocosmoanthric worldview of Zhou offers the possibility of reformulating the Earth-human relationship in a mutually enhancing way.

In this chapter, I have explored how Zhou’s cosmology might contribute to the development of a functional ecological spirituality in a manner complementary to Berry’s universe story. In particular, the understanding of the inseparability of the universe from ultimate reality can help to overcome the dichotomy between sacred and secular, spirit and matter, and finally humanity and the rest of creation. Moreover the emphasis on the practice of self-cultivation within an organic and theocosmoanthric worldview could reformulate the human-Earth relationship, which is the core theme of Chapter Four.

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CHAPTER FOUR
AN EMERGING FUNCTIONAL AND ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

A. A Theology of Integrity among God, the Cosmos, and Humanity
1. Resource: the Cosmotheandric Vision of Raimon Panikkar
   a. A Cosmotheandric Vision of Reality
   b. Ecological Implications of Cosmotheandrism
2. Towards Developing an Ecozoic Spirituality
   a. Theocosmoanthric Vision
   b. The Sacred Shared Journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity
   c. Appreciation of the Mystical Experience of Creation
   d. Restoration of a Sense of Sacred within the Rest of Creation

B. The Transformation of Worldview, Human Identity, and Human Behaviour
1. An Ecozoic and Organic Worldview
   a. Oikos of Life as Root Metaphor
   b. Earth as Organic, Integral Community of Life
2. Human Identity as Participatory Responsibility
3. Human-Earth Relationship

C. The Practice of Ecological Virtues
1. Ecological Discernment
2. Eco-Justice
3. Ecological Ecumenism

D. Concluding Remarks

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In this thesis, I have explored a functional and ecological spirituality that can be called an “Ecozoic theocosmoanthric spirituality,” or more briefly, an Ecozoic spirituality, which has the potential to help promote and authenticate a sustainable human presence on Earth. For this purpose, I have examined the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou by employing two methods – a method of critical cosmological discourse and a method of retrieval, re-evaluation, and reconstruction. Because both authors proposed a revised cosmological vision for their time in order to engage contemporary challenges, a critical discourse of their cosmologies has helped me to develop, through retrieval, re-evaluation and reconstruction, an Ecozoic spirituality that I propose can speak to the ecological crisis of our time. That is, the thesis has thus far employed a process of retrieval involving the scholarly
investigation of cosmological, anthropological, and spiritual sources from Berry and Zhou, as well as an interpretive re-evaluation that uncovers their distinctive views on the relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity.

Now, this chapter will focus on a creative reconstruction of spirituality that moves beyond simply comparing two cosmologies. In other words, I will present the contours of an emerging Ecozoic spirituality. Paralleling the method of Berry and Zhou, this Ecozoic spirituality is developed in the light of a functional cosmology and a functional spirituality that reflects, in part, not only my appropriation of their cosmologies and anthropologies, but also my discernment of the implications of adopting and developing the same. My work is distinctive from theirs in its blend of three components: i.) an eco-theological recognition of a triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity; ii.) a transformation of worldview, human identity, and human attitudes toward the rest of creation; and iii.) certain distinctive virtues that such an integration promotes. These three interrelated yet distinct components of an Ecozoic spirituality are informed by both the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou as well as my Asian Christian perspective. I will argue that an Ecozoic spirituality can promote an authentic and sustainable human presence on Earth as well as provide an ecologically sensitive practice of the Christian faith.

In the first section of this chapter, I will argue for a theology of integrity among God, the cosmos, and the human, drawing on Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisrn as well as a critical appropriation of an East Asian Christian perspective. This section will make evident how an Ecozoic spirituality emerging from the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou could be relevant to the Christian tradition. This will be the first component of an Ecozoic spirituality, that is, the implications of an eco-theological recognition of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity. Subsequently, I will discuss the second component of an Ecozoic spirituality, that is, a transformation of worldview, human identity, and human behaviour involving a shift from a mechanistic to an Ecozoic-organic worldview, and
from anthropocentrism to human identity as a more ecocentric participatory responsibility. As a result, I will propose that human behaviour toward the rest of creation would be best understood in terms of kinship or family relationship. Finally, focussing on the third component of an Ecozoic spirituality, I will note the distinctive virtues associated with this spirituality, as a type of spiritual discipline that cultivates ecological sensitivity and the practice of the Christian faith, including ecological discernment, eco-justice, and ecological ecumenism.

A. A Theology of Integrity among God, the Cosmos, and Humanity

The purpose of this section is to offer a theological understanding of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity as derived from the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. A robust theology that effectively integrates these three dimensions is an essential support for an emerging Ecozoic spirituality. Berry has a profound awareness of the primordial dimension of communion and further seeks to recover a sense of triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity as an essential task for achieving an Ecozoic era. But, he does not articulate a detailed theological stance since he discusses ecological issues and the implications of the new story for a viable future more than he discusses theology (although the latter is certainly not absent in his work). Accordingly, I will begin by examining cosmotheandramism as described by the theologian Raimon Panikkar since he has been thematically concerned with a harmonious interrelatedness of the divine, the human, and nature for well over fifty years.¹ His vision of cosmotheandramism will offer a more theological understanding of a triadic communion. Furthermore, since this thesis has also drawn an understanding of a triadic communion among Heaven, Earth, and humanity from Zhou’s Neo-Confucian tradition (cf., a triadic communion of God, the cosmos and humanity), I will also integrate an East Asian Christian perspective. Then, the second portion of this section of the chapter moves beyond an articulation of a

¹ Panikkar confesses that “[f]or well over fifty years I have been thematically concerned with the problem spelled out in this book …my lifelong fondness for synthesis, theandramism, myth and apophatism, all vouch for this attitude which I now try to formulate as a hypothesis.” Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness*, ed. Scott Eastham (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993), 4-5.
triadic communion to a discussion of the implications of awakening to such a communion. It will consider four elements required for developing the first component of an Ecozoic spirituality, namely: a theocosmoanthric vision; an awareness of the sacred journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity; an appreciation of the mystical experience of creation; and a restoration of a sense of the sacred within the universe and the rest of creation.

1. Resource: the Cosmotheandric Vision of Raimon Panikkar

In the forward to the Panikkar’s book, Christophany, Francis X. D’Sa writes, “[o]ur age has problems with all three centers of reality: God, World, and Man. Science ignores God; Man does not care for the world; and now the world is fighting back.” Aptly described by D’Sa, Panikkar seeks a unified vision of reality to remedy the crisis of broken relationship among God, World, and humanity. This disharmonic relationship among the spheres of reality causes an ecological predicament, a humanistic crisis, and a theological dilemma. Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision – a form of consciousness and mystical experience – is the culmination of his efforts to describe the dynamics of reality and the grand role of humanity. The new vision that this Asian mystic contemplates seeks “a radical re-orientation of contemporary Man by situating him in an open horizon embracing the millennia of human experience crystallized in the different cultures of the world.”

a. A Cosmotheandric Vision of Reality

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2 Francis D’Sa, “Fullness of ‘Man’ or Fullness of ‘the Human’?” in Raimon Panikkar, Christophany: The Fullness of Man (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), xvii. While I am aware that the term “man” is regarded as exclusive language, and while I try to employ more inclusive language, I have kept Panikkar’s use of the word “Man,” by which he means humanity, but I use it without exclusive intention. Furthermore, Panikkar states that he prefers the term “Man” rather than “human being” because the “Latin word for Man is homo; it signifies neither male nor female but the totality of Man where there are polarities but no divisions…. Man (not man) stands for Mensch and his uniqueness.” Panikkar, Dwelling Place (Louisville/John Knox Press, 1993), 4.


4 Ibid., 3.
Panikkar proposes three kairological moments of consciousness – the ecumenic moment, the economic moment (scientific humanism and ecological interlude), and the cosmotheandric moment.\(^5\) In the first, the ecumenic moment, the human has a non-historical consciousness and has no sense of separation from the universe since humanity both belongs to the universe and every man and woman experiences a numinous relationship with it. “[The human being] is thus sacred, for the entire universe is sacred, and he is a part of the whole. Communion with reality is coextensive here with the absence of a separating and reflexive self-consciousness.”\(^6\) The divine permeates the cosmos, the human is placed in the universe, and the entire cosmos is a living organism. In this consciousness, “[h]armony is the supreme principle – which does not mean that it has been achieved. The meaning of life consists both in entering into harmony with nature and in enhancing it.”\(^7\) Here humanity is not isolated and separated from the whole universe and the divine world.

Panikkar explains that in the second economic moment there is an ecological interlude annexed to scientific humanism. The ecumenic moment of consciousness comes to an end when “\textit{Man is the center of everything, and measure at the very core of Man.}”\(^8\) Panikkar characterizes this second kairological moment as “\textit{Man above Nature.}”

Man is the ‘king’ of creation, the lord of the universe. Moreover, in discovering the laws of the cosmos, he also slowly comes to discover his own \textit{nomos}… [H]e becomes more and more aware that his mind, his \textit{nous}, is the criterion of intelligibility and perhaps even of reality.

\(^5\) In ancient Greek, two words in particular were used to refer to time: \textit{chronos} and \textit{kairos}. While the former refers to chronological or sequential time such as years, weeks, and hours, the latter refers to time as “a significant moment.” In the New Testament, the central \textit{kairos} is the advent of Jesus Christ (e.g., Mark 1:15). Justo L. González, \textit{Essential Theological Terms} (Louisville, Kentucky: WJK, 2005), 91-2. In theology, kairological is used to employ to express a qualitative understanding of significant moments or movements in time (e.g., the eschatology of Moltmann). See Timothy Harvie, \textit{Jürgen Moltmann’s Ethics of Hope: Eschatological Possibilities for Moral Action} (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), ch.5. Similarly, Panikkar identifies three kairological moments to stress the qualitative character of certain significant moments or movements of time, acknowledging that “time has both a sequential, more formal (chronological) character and a qualitative, more content-oriented (kairological) aspect.” Panikkar, \textit{Cosmotheandric Experience}, 20. Furthermore, Panikkar contends that “kairological dynamism” should not be confused with a linear conception of “progress” or a rigid notion of development or “evolution.” In other words, it is these three moments of human consciousness that are “qualitatively different and yet intertwined, coexisting in one way or another, in the human race and the human person as well.” Ibid., 80.

\(^6\) Ibid., 25.

\(^7\) Ibid., 96.

\(^8\) Ibid., 32.
After wondering at Nature, he begins to wonder at his own mind and is awestruck to see that the physical universe seems to follow the laws his mind discovers and can formulate.\textsuperscript{9}

If we say that, in the ecumenic period, humanity exists harmoniously on the same plane as nature, in the second or economic period, Man is over nature. In the economic period, the divine is hidden under Man’s reason, or as Descartes suggested, “Reason becomes the Spirit and the Spirit the supreme reality, God.”\textsuperscript{10} Along with the praise of intelligibility, reason becomes the basis for the development of science and technology. Compared to the ecumenic consciousness that has a cosmocentric vision, the economic consciousness has an anthropocentric vision of reality that parallels a “radical humanism,” a vision which has “converted Man into an isolated Dasein – with neither Da (here, there) where to rest, nor a Sein (being, essence) which to be.”\textsuperscript{11} This anthropocentrism separates humans from nature as humans use nature for their own profit regarding nature to have limited capacity and to be absent of intrinsic value. Panikkar identifies this futile approach as the ecological interlude of the second moment of kairobological consciousness. “We are learning that the being of the Earth is finite. Ecological consciousness arises [in the latter stages of the second moment] when Man begins to discover that Nature is not just infinite passivity.”\textsuperscript{12} Due to the scientific accomplishments during the second moment, an anthropocentric vision of reality gradually becomes a more worldwide consciousness, but, on the negative side, we are worried about the extinction of life itself.\textsuperscript{13} The exploitation of the Earth and the extinction of life provoke an instinct for survival, emanating an ecological awareness that the physical Earth is limited and that humanity’s fate can parallel that of the already extinct.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Quoted in Panikkar, *Cosmotheandric Experience*, 35.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{13} Panikkar notes, “It is this period [scientific humanism] which has made possible for the first time an inkling of planetary consciousness, or at least human communication on a global scale.” Ibid., 37.
Following the ecological interlude, and through pursuing the vision of totality or ultimate unity, there is the actualization of the third moment of consciousness: the catholic moment or cosmotheandric vision of reality. Panikkar delineates three dimensions of this reality – *theos*, *anthropos*, and *cosmos*.\(^\text{14}\)

\[\text{[T]he divine, the human and the earthly – however we may prefer to call them – are the three irreducible dimensions which constitute the real, i.e., any reality inasmuch as it is real. … [T]he parts are real participations and are to be understood not according to a merely spatial model, but an organic unity. … They are constitutive dimension of the whole, which permeates everything that is and is not reducible to any of its constituents.}\(^\text{15}\)

This tripartite division manifests the “ultimate constitution of reality,” and no single dimension is reducible to the others.\(^\text{16}\) Drawing from an advaitic (non-dualistic) worldview, Panikkar states that “the three dimensions of reality are neither three modes of a monolithic undifferentiated reality, nor three elements of a pluralistic system.” Rather, although intrinsically threefold, these three dimensions are related and penetrate into each being.\(^\text{17}\)

Panikkar developed this cosmotheandric vision of reality as a synthesis of theandrisms, myth, and apophatism. He appreciates the universal tripartite dimension of reality as shown, for instance, in the spatial terms above, below and in-between; in the Trinity of Christianity; and in the Heaven-Earth-Human of the East Asian paradigm.\(^\text{18}\) While philosophically he draws on the myth of the cosmos – an all-pervading awareness of space – he is keen to emphasize the theological dimension of the mystical language of *theoandrisms*. Scott Eastham states:

\[\text{Cosmotheandric, for example, is rooted in the respectable theological tradition of ‘theandrisms,’ which goes back at least to the synergasia of St. Paul – ‘We are God’s}\]

\(^{14}\) Panikkar describes the expression cosmotheandric rather euphonic than theanthropocosmic. See Ibid., 54-55.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 60. Emphasis is original.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Panikkar escapes from the monistic temptation and recognizes diversity in unity. He explains that “[t]he metaphor ‘dimension’ is intended to help overcome the monistic temptation of constructing a simplistic modalistic universe, viz, a universe in which all things are but variations and modes of one substance. … Without denying differences, and even recognizing a hierarchical order within the three dimensions, the cosmotheandric principle stresses the intrinsic relationship among them, so that this threefold current permeates the entire realm of all that is.” Ibid., 72.

\(^{18}\) Panikkar notes the East Asian paradigm which is an understanding of the triadic communion among Heaven, Earth, and humanity as one example of the universal tripartite dimension of reality.
coworkers’ (1 Cor. 3:9) – and surfaces again in the fifth century as Semi-Pelagianism, or synergism. But Panikkar adds to this ancient structure of human/divine co-operation the entire kosmos, the Spirit of the Earth with which we are today still struggling to rediscover our ‘partnership.’ The oldest of the old returns as the newest of the new.\textsuperscript{19}

Attained through the third eye or the middle way, Panikkar integrates the Christian notion of “theandrim” with a cosmic dimension, affirming the myth of the cosmos. In this vision, he makes an effort to find guidance for tomorrow by receiving lessons from the past.

b. Ecological Implications of Cosmotheandris

I will examine three ecological implications of Panikkar’s thought: i.) a new vision of humanity, ii.) ecosophy, and iii.) Christophany. First of all, the cosmotheandric vision of Panikkar beseeches an awareness of a terrestrial spirituality that defines anew the human-earth relationship and the understanding of humanity. Humanity is not simply the product of evolution, a speck of dust, or even a mind in the midst of an immense universe. The Earth and universe do not simply expand mechanically or automatically. For Panikkar, the human adventure cannot be separated from the adventure of God and of Earth. Thus, Panikkar proposes a new vision of humanity: “Man is embarking upon a new venture, about which we know only that we shall act the more freely the more we allow the internal dynamism of our deepest being to express itself, without projecting beforehand what we are to do and to be.”\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, human beings are “creatively participating in the very existence of the cosmotheandric reality.”\textsuperscript{21} This new human being due to the internal dynamism of his deepest being, will be a full participant in the life of the Earth and the divine. In this grand vision of a radical change in consciousness, Panikkar proposes how the ancient wisdom of anima mundi can communicate to us toward Life.

The Earth is alive. She is the Mother. Intercourse between Heaven and Earth bears all creatures: she gives them life, and sustains that life. Innumerable spirits and powers dwell within the World. This World overflows with Gods. This entire universe is the creation, i.e.,

\textsuperscript{19} Scott T. Eastham, “Introduction,” Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, xiv.
\textsuperscript{20} Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 131.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
the offspring of a divine Life which extends its own vitality to the entire cosmos. Life is not the privilege of Man alone, but Man shares in the Life of the universe. Man, precisely because alive, has been called the microcosm. The mode is the macrocosm, not the other way round, and that macrocosm is a living being. It has a principle of unity, a living principle, a soul.22

The Earth is a living organism, not only the ground of reality; but she yields life as well.23 In this view, Panikkar acclaims the Earth as the dwelling place of wisdom; yet so is Man. In this way, Panikkar expands his dialogical methodology to the Earth-human relationship, a method of I-Thou. Contrary to the I-it relationship of modern science, the I-Thou relationship between Man and the Earth opens a different experience of how the cosmos speaks to us. Hence, when humanity builds a total relationship with the Earth as a whole, this will help to advance humanity toward listening more carefully to the thou-dimension of the planet and universe.

Moreover, Panikkar notes that ecosophy – listening to the wisdom of the Earth – is the contemporary imperative of human consciousness. The Asian mystic hails ecosophy because “the spirit of the Lord, indeed fills the whole world, and that which all things together knows every word that is said.”24 According to Jyri Komulainen, author of An Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion?, the ecosophy that Panikkar espouses should be viewed as “an effort to reject Galilean science and go back to the more holistic ways of thinking of Galileo’s counterparts. Cosmotheandrism thus provides the metaphysical basis upon which Panikkar establishes his ecosophical thinking.”25 Anand Amaladass, an Indian Jesuit theologian, also accentuates the need for ecosophy.

‘Save the earth’ was the motto of the conference in Rio in 1992. Instead, ‘serve the earth’ would have been more appropriate. There is a difference between these two attitudes. In the first case, reason is the final authority deciding the human action and plan. In the second case,

22 Ibid., 137. Panikkar’s statement that “this world overflows with Gods” can be understood only from within his own heritage of Hindu worldview.
23 Ibid., 139.
24 Wisdom, 1, 7.
a higher realm is accepted which one cannot manipulate and to which one should listen. Ecology belongs to the first category and Ecosophy to the second.  

Amaladass observes Panikkar’s agony over and rejection of science-based ecology, and both indict ecology because of its contribution to an unsuitable relationship between Earth and humanity. The logic of “save the earth” in which humanity is still the lord of the universe is wrong; however, “serve the Earth” recognizes the mystical dimension of the Earth which is necessary for us to appreciate the sacredness of the Earth.

In addition, not only is an ecosophical anthropology congruous with Panikkar's mystical intuition of Christ – christophany – but it also affirms the wisdom that dwells in the Earth and the human soul. First of all, Panikkar coins a new term, christophany, to reinforce the mystical dimension of Christ as the symbol of the whole of reality which can evoke a “more passive attitude of receiving the impact of God” and “reintegration of the Christ figure into a cosmological vision.”

What he intends by the neologism is to suggest that “all the treasures of divinity’ are included in Christ, but that ‘all the mysteries of man’ as well as the thickness of the universe are also hidden in him. He is not only the ‘first-born’ but the ‘only begotten,’ the symbol of reality itself, the cosmotheandric symbol par excellence.”

Hence, Panikkar comprehends how “Christ has to deal with both [the first born and the only begotten], as well as with mother earth.” In other words,

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27 To understand this new term, we need to understand the difference between Christology and christophany, the meaning of symbol, and its theological tradition. According to D’Sa, the experience of Jesus illustrates “the path (but not the method) that christophany takes. It is not the logos that dominates here; what is required is an openness to the phania. For christology, unlike christophany, ignores the mysticism of Jesus Christ.” See, Francis X. D’Sa, “Fullness of ‘Man’ or Fullness of ‘the Human’,?” xiii-xiv. Panikkar draws the phania from the Greek word phania, meaning appearance or manifestation (such as an epiphany).

In addition, Panikkar allows the world symbol to express “an experience of reality in which subject and object, the interpretation and the interpreted, the phenomenon and its noumenon, are inextricably linked.” Panikkar, Christophany, 144. Panikkar introduces this idea from the theological tradition drawing from the Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila, saying “seek for yourself in me; seek for me, in yourself.” Ibid., 27.

28 Komulainen, Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion?, 120.

29 Panikkar, Christophany, 147. In and through Christ, the cosmological vision that the whole universe is the “trinitarian perichoresis,” coming to realization. Panikkar prefers to call the cosmic Christ, Christustotus as “the cosmotheandric Christ, or simply the Christ.” When Panikkar refers to the cosmic Christ, he does not separate the cosmic Christ from the creator and glorifier.
“ecology (science of the earth) is a problem that also belongs to christophany and in its light becomes ‘eco-sophy’ (wisdom of the earth, not just *our* wisdom of the earth).”

Moreover, since he is troubled by ecology’s singular focus on the physical dimension of Earth, giving insufficient attention to its mystical and Divine dimension, Panikkar renounces a scientific cosmology that is not able to offer a dwelling place for wisdom. Drawing from Proverbs in the Bible, he asserts that the entire Earth and the human heart are a dwelling place of wisdom. On the one hand, “the primary dwelling place of wisdom is our universe, our world, and still more concretely, our Mother Earth. In this way, I understand the word ‘ecosophy’ which is to be distinguished from the word ‘ecology.’” On the other hand, “it is the human heart (Hebrew *leb*) that is a dwelling place of wisdom (Prov. II.:1).” In light of christophany and the wisdom tradition, Panikkar criticizes a science and a mathematical methodology that is mainly concerned with the physical dimension and the intellectual approach. In his revisions of *anima mundi*, he emphasizes an ecosophical relationship between Man and the Earth. This distinction between ecology and ecosophy summarizes the mystic’s integral vision in relation to the ecological crisis.

Panikkar has had a curious academic journey from a doctorate in philosophy (1946, University of Madrid), to a doctorate in chemistry (1958, University of Madrid), and finally earning a doctorate in theology (1961, Pontifical Lateran University, Rome). He also reflects his spiritual journey, “I left Europe [for India] as a Christian, I discovered I was a Hindu and returned as a

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30 Ibid., 168.
31 See Panikkar, *Dwelling Place*, 14. Panikkar shows his affinity with the idea of the Big Bang of modern science: “We have at the very beginning a dimensionless triangle, a still point, in which the material element, the factor of consciousness, and the unfathomable freedom I call divine are all three already there. Then this triangle evolves: a spherical wave unfolding globally in all directions. There is a kind of rhythm, or breathing – the systole and diastole of reality – and these pulsations are what constitute time(s).” Ibid., 104.
32 Ibid., 15, 17. For Panikkar, the Hebrew *leb* –heart, symbolizes the totality of the person. “The heart is understood in an intellectual, spiritual, and physical sense; it follows the rhythm of nature, being at the same time contact and symbiosis with other hearts.” He presents biblical passages to support a view of the heart as the dwelling place of wisdom, both in the Earth and human soul from “it is the entire earth that is a dwelling place of wisdom (Prov. VIII: 22-31). Hence, a dwelling place is neither just a small house nor a certain community or civilization but the human heart and the earth at large.” Ibid., 16. Emphasis is mine.
Buddhist without ever having ceased to be Christian.”\textsuperscript{33} Both the academic and spiritual journeys converge to highlight Panikkar’s integral vision of reality – cosmotheandrisrn. Although he reflected on the ecological problem during the middle 1970s, Panikkar has been thematically concerned with the problem of cosmotheandrisrn.\textsuperscript{34} Panikkar criticized modern Western humanity as being enslaved by the power of credit and the market value of the myth of progress. He also contended that the contemporary crisis originated from a modern consciousness framed by authors such as Descartes who, Panikkar charged, legitimized the human exploitation of nature. Indeed, he demanded a radical change of consciousness as necessary and unavoidable for the survival of life.

One of the valuable contributions of Panikkar’s cosmotheandrisrn is its implication for a totally new relationship among three dimensions which belong to the same destiny. “The destiny of the Man is not just an historical existence. It is linked with the life of the Earth (ecological interlude) and with the entire fate of reality, the divine not excluded.”\textsuperscript{35} These three belong to the same journey, which is an ongoing dance of the universe, moving rhythmically without repeating itself.\textsuperscript{36} In this rhythmic harmony of the universe, “[t]he change required is radical; it is less a new policy of Man toward Nature than a conversion which recognizes their common destiny.”\textsuperscript{37} Panikkar calls to us, saying that “Nothing short of a radical metanoia, a complete turning of mind, heart, and spirit will meet today’s need.”\textsuperscript{38}

Indeed, Panikkar provides a profound mystical vision of cosmotheandrisrn, which is the ultimate metaphysical structure of reality and a critical moment of human consciousness. In my

\textsuperscript{33} Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, v.


\textsuperscript{35} Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 128.

\textsuperscript{36} See Komulainen, Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion?, 186-8.

\textsuperscript{37} Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 46.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
ecological view, while he is able to use a contemporary cosmology and even calls for a new cosmology, his excessive philosophical and metaphysical concerns keep him at a distance from a concern for the functional process of Earth. If he would engage the more positive aspects of a scientific account of evolutionary cosmology, his vision of ecosophy as “a contemporary imperative of human consciousness” and his suggestion of “a total relationship with the Earth” would be more helpful to current eco-theological discourse.

2. Towards Developing an Ecozoic Spirituality

I have explored an Ecozoic spirituality in the light of an integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity. Although the works of Berry and Zhou enable us explore a triadic communion among them, it is necessary to understand eco-theologically and “more fully [the] divine-human-earth relations.” Since theological discourse tends to focus on either God-world or inter-human relationships, I added Panikkar’s cosmotheandris to understand an integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity. I contend that the cosmotheandric vision of Panikkar provides a remedial theological lens to approach the question of how humanity has viewed its relationship with God and with the cosmos. This is a different lens from a traditional theological focus on either the God-human relationship or the inter-human relationship. It is a three-fold integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity. According to Kolvenbach, the elements of the three-fold relationship are “so closely united that a person cannot find God unless he finds him through the environment and, conversely, that his relationship to the environment will be out of balance unless he also relates to God.” Thus, I assert that as a first component of Ecozoic spirituality, a recognition of the deep and broad integral relationship among these elements is necessary in order to develop an Ecozoic

39 Panikkar, Christophany, 6; Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 149.
spirituality. More specifically, this discussion will seek to identify some implications that emerge from adopting an Ecozoic spirituality. Accordingly, I will explore four themes: a theocosmoanthric vision; awareness of shared sacred journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity; an appreciation of the mystical experience; and recovery of a sense of sacredness.

a. Theocosmoanthric Vision

Since Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision is rooted in the Hindu *advaitic* tradition and the Christian mystical tradition, my understanding of an integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity is slightly different since it is developed from firstly a theocosmoanthric vision which is influenced by my study of East Asian traditions, and in particular, Zhou’s cosmology. Secondly, this integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity is understood in light of a time-developmental unfolding story of the universe that I also have been influenced from Thomas Berry. The orientation of the Confucian traditions is much more cosmological and ethical than that of Panikkar’s mystical and metaphysical reflection. As noted earlier, these East Asian traditions show a cosmological focus and seek a harmonious relationship between the cosmic phenomena and human affairs. For instance, the Way of Heaven and Earth in Zhou’s cosmology is not only the great mystery itself in the vast cosmological cycles in which the myriad things emerge into being, but it is also an innate dimension of humanity so that the way of humanity is seemed as an ethical presence to the universe. As a result of this cosmology, the Confucian culture establishes an authentic public spirituality in which humans attain functional values and meaning in both an identifiable human community and a cosmological community. For this reason, Confucians place a primary emphasis on education and

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42 “East Asian traditions” refers to the religio-cultural tradition of China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, whose main religious roots are traced back to Confucianism and Daoism. When Buddhism as a foreign religion arrived in China 2000 years ago from India, it also influenced the development of religiosity in the East Asian traditions.
the practice of self-cultivation in a way that seeks for harmony with the deepest rhythms of the universe and fosters a participatory role in a family, society, and nation.\footnote{Jai-Don Lee compares the Confucian notion of the cosmos to the organic worldview of India. “While Hinduism puts its emphasis on the other world, Confucianism puts its emphasis on this world. Unlike the Hindu way which is indifferent towards this world and concentrates on the transcendental world, Confucianism encourages a realistic and practical way of life which is deeply involved in this world.” Lee, “Towards an Asian Ecotheology,” 113.}

From his concrete experiences of East Asia, where the fusion of the horizons of Confucianism and Christianity has been in progress, Huep Young Kim, a Korean systematic theologian, articulates a \textit{theanthropocosmic} vision, referring to the interrelation of God, humanity, and the cosmos.\footnote{Heup Young Kim, \textit{Wang Yang-ming and Karl Barth}, 175-88. Similar to Panikkar’s cosmotheandric, he coins the term \textit{theanthropocosmic} by combining a composite adjective of \textit{theos} (God), \textit{anthropos} (humanity), and \textit{cosmos} (universe).} Kim suggests that “[t]he ecological crisis is a great \textit{koan} (an evocative question) for contemporary Christian theology.”\footnote{Heup Young Kim, “Life, Ecology, and Theo-tao: Towards an Ecumenism of the Theanthropocosmic Tao,” \textit{Windows into Ecumenism: Essays in Honour of Ahn Jae Woong}, intro. by D. Preman Niles (Christian Conference of Asia, 2005), 144.} As a participant at the landmark conference on Religion and Ecology hosted by Harvard University and chaired by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim in 1998, he observed that eco-theology was nurturing a shift from anthropocentrism to cosmo-centrism, or earth-centrism. While he appreciates the validity of such a revision, he questions how eco-theology could be developed beyond “the inherited habit of an either-or way of thinking (either anthropocentrism or cosmocentrism).”\footnote{Ibid., 141.} To construct a more holistic eco-theology, he utilized an East Asian non-dualistic worldview, known as the harmony and symbiosis of humanity and things, and proposes a \textit{theanthropocosmic} vision, a vision of triadic communion of God, the cosmos, and humans. Kim describes his vision as follows:

\begin{quote}
God, earth (the cosmos), and humanity compose a triad, an ontologically indivisible reality. True humanity can be realised only through the right relationship with God and the earth. A theanthropocosmic vision refers to this triadic communion of God, the cosmos and the humans.\footnote{Kim, “Life, Ecology, and Theo-tao,” 143.}
\end{quote}
Perceiving an ontologically indivisible reality among God, Earth (the cosmos), and humanity, Kim argues that a vision of triadic communion is nothing new in Christianity but has been understood since its earliest times. He demonstrates not only that the Jewish and Christian scriptures honour the religious value of the Earth, but also how the doctrine of the Trinity was articulated in the light of a pluralistic and concentric reality.\textsuperscript{48} Moreover, he examines medieval theology, with its harmonious integration of cosmology, anthropology, and theology, as evident in Hildegard of Bingen, Bonaventure, and Aquinas, among others. Besides the Christian lineage, he appreciates how East Asian traditions also support his theanthropocosmic vision of reality. Kim employs a Korean ethos of the triadic reality of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity, by calling it the Trinity or the Triune Ultimate, as shown, for instance, in the ideographic structure of the Korean language.\textsuperscript{49} Like Panikkar, he argues that God, humans, and the cosmos constitute three inseparable and concentric axes of the one reality. While he admits that his notion is comparable to the cosmotheandrisum of Panikkar, he also advocates that his insight is rooted in the experiences of a concrete context, “where the fusion of horizons has been in progress between the two great traditions; namely the anthropo-cosmic paradigm of Neo-Confucianism and the theo-historical paradigm of Christianity.”\textsuperscript{50}

Kim’s theanthropocosmic vision parallels Zhou’s observation of humanity forming a Trinity with heaven and earth, and in fact Kim draws a non-dualistic East Asian worldview from Zhou’s non-dualistic framework, \textit{wuji er taiji}. Kim pays attention to the notion of the Great Ultimate and the unity of the way of Heaven, Earth, and humanity, drawing this core view from Young-Mo Yu (1890-1981), known as the most innovative religious thinker in Korean history.\textsuperscript{51} Through the meditative

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{49} For instance, the vowels of Korean such as a, e, i, o, and u are composed of three sub-units reflecting concepts of Heaven (•), Earth (ㅡ), and humanity (ㅣ). Peter H. Lee, ed. \textit{Sourcebook of Korean Civilization}, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 517-518.

\textsuperscript{50} Kim, \textit{Wang Yang-ming and Karl Barth}, 183.

\textsuperscript{51} Young-Mo Yu, philosopher, was a person who practised the life of a monk in Christianity. Although he had a limited formal education, he is known as a representative philosopher of Korea. Into the foundation of Christianity, Yu has integrated and synthesized the traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, in a method of meditative reading of the
reading of the scriptures of Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, Yu explicates an intriguing interpretation of the Christian faith in the light of East Asian thought. His salient understanding of God comes from Zhou’s *Explanation*: “wuji er taiji.” Yu says,

> Non-Being is the Non-Ultimate [the Ultimate of Non-being, *wuji*], and Being is the Great Ultimate [*taiji*]. The Non-Ultimate and the Great Ultimate are one, and the one is God. The Great Ultimate of Being cannot be conceived without the conception of the Non-Ultimate of Non-being. Hence they are one.\(^{52}\)

Mou Zongsan, a New Confucian philosopher, explains Zhou’s *wuji er taiji* by employing the categories of *apophatic* and *kataphatic*: “the *wuji* as the *apophatic* expression of a substance and the *taiji* as the *kataphatic* expression of it.”\(^{53}\) He maintains that both *wuji* and *taiji* denote the same thing, since when speaking negatively it is something having no limit and when speaking affirmatively it is the Great Ultimate.\(^{54}\)

Chung-ying Cheng also describes Confucian cosmology as a “cosmology of the life of the whole.”\(^{55}\) He further articulates how a triadic communion helps to develop a Confucian ecology.

Heaven is a symbol of the cosmology of creativity and development; Earth is a symbol of an ecology of comprehension and harmonization; and finally, the human being is a symbol of...
the combination of the two, thus producing the ethics of integration and fulfillment of values.\textsuperscript{56}

Taken together, these Asian thinkers appreciate a non-dualistic East Asian worldview, and in particular, Kim and Cheng attempt to develop their thoughts on the basis of a triadic communion of Heaven, Earth, and humanity, which can be adapted as an eco-theological framework for an Ecozoic spirituality. This theocosmoanthric view of reality not only deepens our understanding of the triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity, but it also shows how Zhou’s cosmology provides a potential foundation for an East Asian eco-theology.

\textbf{b. The Sacred Shared Journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity}

Once we understand either Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism or Zhou’s theocosmoanthric vision in the light of Berry’s cosmology, we might appreciate the three dimensions of reality that are inseparable from each other since the inception of the universe as well as the numinous presence whence all things come into being. This, accordingly, echoes the prologue of St. John’s Gospel declaring that all things were made through Christ and without him was not anything made, and St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians asserting that all things are held together in Christ. Thus, the curvature of the universe can be understood as a sacred shared journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity in terms of a theocosmoanthric curvature.

According to Kim, Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the Way where the way of Heaven, Earth, and humanity unite and mutually participate as one Way, in terms of “comm-union among God, humanity (the life), and Earth (the cosmos).”\textsuperscript{57} Furthermore, to address Jesus Christ within this triadic communion, Kim proposes \textit{dao} [the way] as an alternative metaphor for Jesus instead of either the \textit{logos} of Western Christianity or the \textit{praxis} of liberation theology. He argues that \textit{dao} is a cardinal religio-cultural metaphor for East Asians, which could possibly replace that of \textit{logos} and

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
praxis, since dao is “the most life affirming” root-metaphor. He also contends that dao is more compatible with the Bible than logos, since Jesus said, “I am the way (dao) of life”, and the original title for Christianity in Greek was hodos (which literally means way). Finally, he believes the dao-metaphor denotes the profound ontological communion with the entire order of cosmic and trans-cosmic forces.\textsuperscript{58} Similar to Panikkar’s christophany, Kim calls Jesus Christ the theanthropocosmic Dao, which is an appropriate solution to the koan of the ecological crisis.

Theotao [instead of theology or theo-praxis] searches for the theanthropocosmic Tao, the Way of the Triune Great Ultimate where the Heavenly way (天道), the human way (人道), and the earthly way (地道) are united as one. … Therefore, theotao is a theology of learning how to participate in this holistic trajectory, i.e., the theanthropocosmic Tao [Jesus Christ].\textsuperscript{59}

Berry also asserts and integrates these three inseparable journeys among the divine, the cosmos, and humans. “The great curvature of the universe and the planet Earth must govern the curvature of our own being. In the coincidence of these three curves lies the way into a creative future.”\textsuperscript{60} For Berry, this sacred journey postulates the cosmic-earth-human process of the universe, inseparable from the numinous mystery of God, from its inception to now. While Berry indicates that traditionally, the metaphor of journey is employed in Christianity to represent either the chosen people’s journey into God, or a psychological searching for God in humanity, the metaphor of journey should now be understood in light of the journey of the universe. Berry states,

It is the journey of primordial matter through its marvelous sequence of transformation – in the stars, in the earth, in living beings, in human consciousness – toward an ever more complete spiritual-physical intercommunion of the parts with each other, with the whole, and with that numinous presence that has been manifested throughout this entire cosmic-earth-human process.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{58} Kim, “Asian Journey,” 25-28; Kim, “Life, Ecology, and theo-tao,” 1-46; Kim, Christ and the Tao, 132. According to Julia Ching, “Tao is equivalent of both the Greek word logos, or Word, and the Greek word hodos, the Way… the first principle - indeterminate, and yet that from which all things proceed to become determinate.” Julia Ching and Hans Kung, Christianity and Chinese Religions (London: SCM 1989), 132. Similarly Lewis Hopfe shares, “Though the Tao is defined as ‘the way’, it is most often compared to a stream or a moving body of water as it progresses endlessly and inexorably… For this reason, it behooved mankind not to struggle against the Tao but to seek to blend with it and be guided by it.” Lewis M. Hopfe, Religions of the World (Westerville, Ohio: Glencoe Press, 1979), 169.

\textsuperscript{59} Kim, Christ and the Tao, 170.

\textsuperscript{60} Berry, Dream of the Earth, xv.

\textsuperscript{61} Berry, “Spirituality of the Earth,” 158.
Berry’s thought indicates that the sacred journey has three dimensions: the journey of the numinous presence of God in creation, the journey of the universe through a sequence of transformations, and the journey of humanity as a participating member of the sacred community (that I will further discuss later). The place and function of humanity within cosmogenesis cannot be understood separate from the journey of all of creation within the numinous presence of God. As I describe the sacred journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity (as my thesis title heralds), Ecozoic spirituality enables us to appreciate the three dimension of inseparable journey as a sacred journey. Also, the spiritual dynamics of cosmogenesis can be deeply understood when we understand the theocosmoanthric journey of the universe through the proclamations of St. John and St. Paul.

c. Appreciation of the Mystical Experience of Creation

Merton’s reflections on his immediacy with the rest of creation prompt him to assert that a mystical experience in creation is essential to inner spiritual development.62 Mystical experience, understood here as a wholly transformative event, is at the heart of religious life.63 In this perspective, I assert that the cosmotheandric vision of Panikkar and the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou help us to appreciate the mystical experience of creation, which can be “a revelatory experience of the numinous presence whence all things come into being.”64 Zhou’s notion or understanding of humanity forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth is understood as a mystical experience because this experience leads one to become a sage, a sense of total transformation of humanity.65 Panikkar also

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62 See Berry, “Forward,” Merton, When the Trees say Nothing, 14, 18.
63 As Michael Stoeber notes, the mystical experience is understood as “the essential core of religion,” although he also notes that this view has been criticized by some of the more socially minded and actively oriented theologians. Michael Stoeber, “Mysticism in Ecumenical Dialogue: Questions on the Nature and Effects of Mystical Experience,” in Teaching Mysticism, ed. William B. Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 229.
64 Berry, Great Work, 49. While my understanding of the mystical experience of creation echoes Berry’s perspective, it is also understood in the light of nature mysticism. According to William B. Parsons, the term nature mysticism is commonly understood to denote “a spiritual encounter whose defining characteristic is a deep, meaningful and often life-changing communion or unitive experience with the external world.” William B. Parsons, “Nature Mysticism,” in Christian Spirituality, ed. Philip Sheldrake, 458.
asserts that ultimately the cosmotheandric vision results from mystical experience, maintaining: “By mysticism I mean all that which pertains to the ultimate experience of reality. The ultimate experience of reality is the locus of mystical experience. … By experience I mean a conscious immediacy – that is, the consciousness of something immediately present.” Similarly, Berry asserts: “Even our knowledge of God comes to us from our acquaintance with the earth for God has revealed himself first of all in the sky and in the waters and in the wind, in the mountains and valleys, in the birds of the air and in all those living forms that flower and move over the surface of the planet.” When Berry examines the Aboriginal experience of communion, he describes: “The cosmic, human, and divine are present to one another in a way that is unique. It is difficult to find a word or expression for such a mode of experience. It might simply be called a nature mysticism.”

The example of James Profit, the founder of the Ecology Project at the Jesuits’ Loyola House, in Guelph, Ontario, who describes a Native pipe ceremony ritual, echoes Berry’s understanding:

It was a beautiful day. The sun was out. The lake was calm. The hardwood trees around us were majestic. No one was in a rush. Yet, it was not only this that made it so beautiful. Something else much more profound happened to me. Spiritually, it was a ‘coming home.’ I had the feeling that in my communing with nature, I was communing with God! I was worshiping God. I experienced God. It seemed all of Creation was participating in this religious event. I experienced awe, peace, harmony, because I felt at one with God and the Earth community.

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65 According to Fung, a notion of humanity forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth is a mystical experience. See Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, 129-131. Berry also understands the Confucian vision of one body with Heaven and Earth as mystical humanism. See Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 184. Stoeber argues three types of accounts of mystical experience: (1) an interconnection or unity with the “essence” of the natural world (nature mysticism); or (2) an intimate communion or union with the Divine experienced as personally good, loving, intelligent, and creative (theistic mysticism); or (3) a unity or identity with an impersonal and inactive Oneness or Unity (nondual or monistic mysticism). According to Stoeber’s category, a notion of humanity forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth can be understood both nature and theistic mysticism. Stoeber, “Mysticism in Ecumenical Dialogue,” 228.

66 Panikkar, *Christophany*, 40. Emphasis is original.


68 Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 184.

69 James Profit, “Connecting With the Earth: Experiencing the Sacred,” in *Sacred Earth, Sacred Community*, 193. This experience of Profit is also resonant with that of Merton, as follows, “Either you look at the universe as a very poor creation out of which no one can make anything or you look at your own life and your own part in the universe as infinitely rich fully of inexhaustible interest opening out into infinite further possibilities for study and contemplation and interest and praise. Beyond all and in all is God.” Merton, *A Search for Solitude*, 45.
Profit concludes, “The Native spiritual tradition explicitly expresses a spiritual relationship with nature. A relationship with the Earth is a relationship with an aspect of the Divine. Hence, an ‘experience of God.’” In Berry’s view, “The communion that comes through these experiences of the wild, where we sense something present and daunting, stunning in its beauty, is beyond comprehension in its reality, but it points to the holy, the sacred.”

Berry’s mysticism of nature was undoubtedly influenced by his early experience of a meadow.

I was a young person then, some twelve years old…. Down below was a small creek and there across the creek was a meadow. It was an early afternoon in May when I first looked down over the scene and saw the meadow. The field was covered with lilies rising above the thick grass. A magic moment, this experience gave to my life something, I know not what, that seems to explain my life at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember.

As Berry recalls, this deeper meadow experience continued to have an impact throughout his whole life and shaped his view on the nature-human relationship. This experience of stumbling upon a meadow became normative for all his thinking and reflecting. With this in mind, Berry states, “Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; what is opposed to this meadow or negates it is not good. My life orientation is that simple. It is also that pervasive. It applies in economics and political orientation as well as in education and religion and whatever.”

While Berry names this mystical experience “nature mysticism,” Panikkar argues further that a cosmotheandric spirituality helps to overcome the dichotomy between so-called nature mysticism as a lower form of union with the World, and a theistic mysticism as a supposedly superior form of

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70 Ibid.
71 Berry, Sacred Universe, 176.
73 Ibid.
union with God. In fact, Berry’s attention to mysticism is not directed solely to supernatural mysticism nor would he consider nature mysticism to be an inferior form of mystical union.

However, Berry’s mysticism is understood in terms of the spiritual dynamics of the universe that we come to realize through an empirical insight into the numinous functioning within a context of developmental time. I assert that the concern of Berry with mysticism is to intensify a transforming awareness of the divine presence manifested in the natural world and the unfolding processes of the universe. The natural world is the locus where humans encounter the divine. For Berry, unless humanity recovers the mystical experience of the Earth, we will fail to reformulate a more mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship. Therefore, Berry advocates a mystique of the land or a mysticism of the Earth for the renewal of our human-Earth relationship that Merton anticipates as a mutually enhancing mode of human presence to the natural world. For Merton, it is theoria physike that is the “intuition of divine things in and through the reflection of God in nature and in the symbols of revelation.”

Indeed, Merton’s understanding of theoria physike echoes Berry’s seeking of the numinous presence of God in the physical hierophanic cosmos, as the latter applauds the former’s

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74 Panikkar reflects on the dichotomy between a nature mysticism and a theistic mysticism, as follows: “Nature is nothing if not naturata (begotten), and God equally remains an abstraction if not naturans (begetter). If I climb the highest mountain, I’ll find God there, but likewise if I penetrate the depths of an apophatic Godhead I shall find the World there. And in neither case will I have left the heart of Man. The ‘creation’ of the World does not need to mean that the ‘creator’ has gone away. Nor does the ‘incarnation’ of God need to mean exclusive ‘hominization’ in a single individual. The entire reality is committed to the same unique adventure.” Panikkar, Cosmotheandric Experience, 151.

On the other hand, although Berry seems to understand this integral relationship as a form of nature mysticism, his cosmology might show how the major component of our task at hand is to construct a different theological lens for viewing reality, adjoining the cosmic dimension with the divine and anthropic dimensions. This integral embracing of the cosmic dimension with the divine and anthropic dimensions is meant to remedy a certain tendency among religions to renounce the world, or at least to subordinate immanence to transcendence. My observation is that Berry’s universe story is consonant with cosmic mysticism rather than nature mysticism. Richard N. Fragomeni states, “Cosmic mysticism is a mode of human consciousness and creative activity grounded within an experience and understanding of reality in its all-embracing cosmic dimensions. While cosmic mysticism can be likened to nature mysticism and to other mystical traditions involving the human person with creation, its uniqueness rests with the insights, articulations, and implications it draws from the theories and discoveries of modern science, space exploration, and ecological concerns.” See Richard N. Fragomeni, “Cosmic mysticism,” in The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 235.

75 Merton, Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation, 67. Merton writes upon the natural mysticism, “Now the word ‘natural’ in connection with this kind of contemplation refers not to its origin, but to its object. Theoria physike is contemplation of the divine in nature, not contemplation of the divine by our natural powers.” Ibid., 67-8.
reflections that “assist in bringing about a sacralized universe, to enable the world to be in its full sense.”

**d. Restoration of a Sense of Sacred within the Rest of Creation**

Mircea Eliade, a philosopher and historian of world religions, reflects on the importance of the sacred, as follows:

‘Consciousness of a real and meaningful world is intimately connected with the discovery of the sacred. Through the experience of the sacred, the human mind has perceived the difference between what reveals itself as being real, powerful, rich and meaningful and what lacks these qualities, that is, the chaotic and dangerous flux of things, their fortuitous and senseless appearances and differences.’ In short, the ‘sacred’ is an element in the structure of consciousness and not a stage in the history of consciousness.

Eliade shows that the sacred is “an element in the structure of consciousness” and that out of this experience of the sacred, world religions develop and spiritual traditions come into existence. If we view religion as “a search for significance in ways related to the sacred,” spirituality, as the most central function of religion, facilitates the search for the sacred. Indeed, at its core, spirituality seeks where the authentically sacred is to be found in our world. If we accept the theocosmoanthric curvature of the universe as a sacred story, then we will be more open to the mystical experience as

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77 Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, trans., by Willard R. Trask, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xiii. Quoted in “Preface” to *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Interestingly, Eliade’s understanding of the sacred as an element in the structure of consciousness and not a stage in the history of consciousness” is parallel to Teilhard’s and Berry’s position that the universe has had a psychic-spiritual dimension from its inception. However, Eliade argues that the manifestation of the sacred takes place in discontinuity with the ordinary, that is, as “something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world.” Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1959), 11. Unlike the wholly other of Eliade, Berry understands that the sacred is revealed throughout the entire unfolding process of the universe.


79 Philip Sheldrake attempts to overcome a split between the sacred and the profane, which can strongly influence our understanding of spirituality. In light of Eliade’s notion of the sacred as distinct from the profane, influenced by Rudolph Otto’s *Das Heilige* (in English, The Idea of the Holy), spirituality is understood to be apart from mundane concerns and from everyday activities. To overcome the split between the sacred and the profane, Sheldrake, on the basis of the doctrine of incarnation, reconfigures human conceptions of the sacred. “No part of the material world or of human activity is inherently profane although it may be profaned by sinful human action. The everyday world is an authentic theological locus.” Philip Sheldrake, “Spirituality and the Integrity of Theology,” *Spiritus* 7, no. 1 (2007): 96.
well as to reacquiring a sense of the sacred within the rest of creation. In other words, an experience of theocosmoanthric curvature of the universe story will help us to search for the sacred as an essential element for Ecozoic spirituality.

In their appeal at the 1990 Global Forum on Human Development in New York, scientists challenged religious people to recover a vision of the sacred that would promote a re-envisioning of the human-Earth relationship:

As scientists, many of us have had profound experiences of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred.  

David Suzuki shares the same idea, asserting, “The attitude to save the environment should be imbued with a vision of the sacred.”

Unless nature is regarded as having a dimension of the sacred, human attitudes towards nature will continue to view the rest of creation as having no intrinsic value and meaning, but only being a mere collection of objects, to use Berry’s language.

As a response, we see that Merton’s notion that “[t]he inscape is their sanctity” describes how “each element in God’s creative landscape is intrinsically valuable because its unique existence was willed into being by God.” In such a view, everything has a sacred dimension. Berry also confirms that the emergence of the universe is inseparable from the numinous presence whence all things come into being. He asserts that “when a person associates the creation with the divine, it is the existential fact that there is no God without creation and there no creation without God,” in a time-developmental universe.

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82 Merton, New Seeds, 30. Recall the earlier discussion on Merton’s notion of inscape, see page 46 in Chapter One.

83 O’Hara, “Portents of Merton as Eco-Theologian,” 100-101.

84 Berry, Befriending the Earth, 10.
cosmic Christ who holds together the emerging process of the universe’s unfolding from its primordial emergence – a spiritual as well as a physical process.\textsuperscript{85}

Beyond an anthropological inquiry of the sacred, Berry contends that the context of any authentic spirituality lies in the creation story that governs the meaning and value of life. At the core of Berry’s thought, the epic of evolution is a new creation story that describes how the universe originally came into being, how it came to be as it is now, and the role of the human within the ever-emerging history of the universe. Now, Berry observes, “Religion begins to appreciate that the primary sacred community is the universe itself. In a more immediate perspective, the sacred community is the Earth community. …The human community becomes sacred through its participation in the larger planetary community.”\textsuperscript{86} For Berry, by perceiving the universe story as a sacred story, we can recover spiritual sensitivities for the rest of creation, from the bluebirds to the butterflies, from the insects to the trees.\textsuperscript{87}

In Zhou’s cosmology, the \textit{wuji er taiji} offers not only a sense of the inseparability of the universe from the ultimate, but, as an inexhaustible source of creativity, it is also differentiated into concrete and individual things. Since the \textit{wuji er taiji} is manifested primarily in the natural order, such as in the four seasons, the natural order that manifests the spontaneity of the Way is intrinsic to the human order that constitutes a single order of the universe. According to Bruce, Zhou provides “the positive connotation of an ethical Being, the absolute Truth, immanent in the universe as the source from which all things spring.”\textsuperscript{88} For Zhou, the phenomenal world is derived from one single primal unity – the Great Ultimate, the utmost ground for the universe that is also immanent to the

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\textsuperscript{85} For example, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation…. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Col., 1: 15-7.

\textsuperscript{86} Swimme and Berry, \textit{Universe Story}, 257.

\textsuperscript{87} See Berry, \textit{Befriending the Earth}, 98. Berry also holds, “Recovery of meaning involves a recovery of the sacred.” Berry, \textit{Sacred Universe}, 55. With respect to the evolutionary cosmos, Haught echoes that the meaningful implication of an evolutionary cosmology is to provide “the raw reality of the sacred.” John F. Haught, \textit{God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution} (Boulder: Westview Press, 2008), 2. See also Elizabeth Michael Boyle, \textit{Science as Sacred Metaphor: an Evolving Revelation} (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{88} Bruce, \textit{Chu Hsi and His Masters}, 54
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universe. In this cosmology, “everything has intrinsic value, value in the sense of being able to form a mutually enriching or mutually strengthening relationship among things contributing to the total unity and harmony of things in reality.”

Tu refers to this Chinese culture as “the secular as sacred” since the concentric community (Earth, body, family, and community) is meant to emanate from Heaven’s inner virtue that is creative vitality. Drawing from Berry, Tu elucidates, “Our recognition of the sanctity of the Earth, the divinity of the body, the holiness of the family, and the sacredness of the community is the first step in transforming our sense of the outside world as ‘a collection of objects’ into a ‘communion of subjects.’”

As a way of recovering the innate sacredness of humanity, Confucians seek a humanity forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth to experience the macrocosm of the universe called the Great Self. According to Aquinas, all creatures exist by participation in the perfection of the universe so that the order of the universe is the ultimate and noblest perfection of things. Echoing Aquinas, Berry sees the divine presence within the unfolding process of the universe. In this regard, to recover a sense of the sacred is to have a sense of a communion of subjects among God, the cosmos, and humanity.

As a conclusion, while their emphases and backgrounds differ, Panikkar, Kim, and Berry all contend that the integrity, that is, the integral unity of the divine, the human and the rest of creation constitute the true view of reality. Nevertheless, Kim’s and Panikkar’s visions of reality can be criticized for the philosophical and metaphysical preferences that make them less interested than Berry in a fuller integral functioning of the Earth community, since their thinking remains based more

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90 Tu, “The Ecological Turn,” in Confucian Spirituality, 494.
91 Ibid.
on a cyclical worldview of Asian cosmology than a cosmogenesis derived from the new cosmology. While Panikkar and Kim search for a new philosophical and conceptual framework as remedy for the current crises and to render of our work more effective in resolving these crises, Berry advocates that we need not merely a rethinking of theological concepts, but a rethinking of theology within a new cosmological context. That is, we need a more complete understanding of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity in term of the story of the universe. Nonetheless, the effort of Kim and Panikkar to restore a holistic vision challenges us to examine how that integral vision of reality can be shown to be relevant to Christian and Asian traditions.

According to Berry, “Just as we can no longer live simply within the physical universe of Newton, we can no longer live spiritually in any adequate manner simply within the limits of our earlier traditions.” For this reason, a developing spirituality for the 21st century moves us into a transition from our present Cenozoic religious and spiritual life to life in an Ecozoic context. Drawing on Berry’s work, a recognition of integrity among God, the universe, and humanity as well as the implications of recognizing such an integrity might help us recover a primordial awareness of communion in light of a time-developmental universe. In turn, as a first component of Ecozoic spirituality, an eco-theological recognition of integrity will help to establish “an awareness of the unity of human affairs with the functioning of the universe and Earth.”

B. The Transformation of Worldview, Human-Identity, and Human Behaviour

In Chapter One, I posed three interrelated questions in order to derive a functional and ecological spirituality that would inform Christian responses to the ecological crisis: 1.) what is a functional cosmology as the ground for reflecting on human meaning and orientation in the world; 2.)

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94 Berry, Sacred Universe, 122.

95 Berry, Christian Future, 116.
what does it mean to be human on this planet; and 3.) how can humanity be present functionally and ecologically within the Earth community? These questions guided the main themes of Chapters Two and Three which examined the cosmological, anthropological, and spiritual perspectives of Berry and Zhou, respectively, in order to discern their understanding of the communion among God, the cosmos, and humanity. Then, I pondered a theological integration of these notions in order to develop Ecozoic spirituality. Gathering the results of these investigations, I now attempt to answer the aforementioned questions. To construct the second component of Ecozoic spirituality – i.e., the transformation of worldview, self-identity, and human behaviour – I will first propose an Ecozoic-organic worldview, a shift from a mechanistic dualistic worldview. Secondly, I will address human identity as a participatory responsibility, a shift from anthropocentrism. Finally, as a consequence of a shift of worldview and human identity, I will establish a renewed human-Earth relationship as kinship or familial relationship, a shift from a supposed human separation from the rest of creation.

Here I use the term “transformation” to refer both to a paradigm shift and to the Confucian idea of great transformation. According to Marcus Borg, “A paradigm is a comprehensive way of seeing, a way of seeing a ‘whole.’ Sometimes called a gestalt, a paradigm is a larger interpretive framework that shapes how everything is seen, a way of constellating particulars into a whole.” In the midst of the transitional moment from the end of the Cenozoic to the beginning of the Ecozoic era, the two cosmologies of Berry and Zhou recall the Confucian idea of the great transformation, which is predicated on the participation of humanity in the cosmic process, rather than on the imposition of the human will on nature. In this view, transformation is not only a paradigm shift, it also calls for

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96 The Confucian idea of the great transformation, according to Xiong Shili, a modern Chinese philosopher, is based on the participation of the human in the cosmic process, rather than the imposition of human will upon nature. This idea draws from the Centrality and Commonality that the human is understood as a transformative participant in the cosmic process. See Tu, “The Ecological Turn,” in Confucian Spirituality, 486.


98 See Tu, “The Ecological Turn,” 486.
participation in the cosmic process, through the practice of ecological cultivation, and a deepening integration of human affairs within the functional processes of the Earth community.  

1. An Ecozoic and Organic Worldview

The consequence of adopting an Ecozoic spirituality would be to shift from a mechanistic worldview to an Ecozoic-organic worldview. The word “Ecozoic” includes “eco” or oikos, the Greek term for a house or dwelling place, and zoe, the Greek word meaning life. Hence, I understand this term ecozoic as implying that the Earth is the integral community of life or the dwelling place that gives rise to life. Indeed, the Ecozoic era is an imaginary era in the future when humans will live in harmony with Earth’s biological and geological systems. When I discuss the Earth as an organic whole, this term is an analogous expression that describes the inner coherence and integral functioning of the planet Earth. Thus, a primary aspect of an Ecozoic-organic worldview is that we recognize the larger community of life, the Earth, as an organic whole, and the value of life as our primary referent for reality and value.

a. Oikos of Life as Root Metaphor

According to Berry, symbols (and metaphors) such as journey, Great Mother, Tree of Life, and Death-Rebirth are understood as ordering principles, activating powers, healing visions and guiding disciplines. He notes the important role of symbols for making human life intelligible on

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99 My understanding of spiritual transformation based on worldview, human identity and human behaviour is indebted to Michael Hryniuk’s understanding of spiritual transformation. While he does not include worldview as a constituent element for such a transformation, he argues that “it is then possible to understand spiritual transformation as a shift in consciousness, identity, and behavior brought about by the experience of and response to the power of the sacred in the context of one’s whole life.” Michael Hryniuk. Theology, Disability, and Spiritual Transformation: Learning from the Communities of L’Arche (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2010), 26. While Benjamin Baynham’s notion of a transformation of consciousness echoes a similar perspective, he includes worldview as a constituent element. “‘Transformation of consciousness’ is a modern term used to constellate change undergone in one’s psychological, intellectual, and spiritual horizons, changes that can be as radical as embracing a whole new worldview and a wholly new self-understanding.” Benjamin Baynham, “Transformation,” in Catholic Spirituality Dictionary, 967-8.

100 See Swimme and Berry, Universe Story, 243.

101 McFague develops the metaphors of God as mother, lover, and friend, in the context of the universe as the body of God. Likewise, I propose oikos of life as a root metaphor that provides a way of being.

102 Berry’s new story can be understood to be an integration of various complementary perspectives – e.g., science and myth, and consciousness and unconsciousness. Firstly his scientific articulation of the universe story is associated with
its cosmological level, for inspiring the most significant aspect of our activities, and for providing us with the highest values and meaning.\(^{103}\) This role for symbol is evident in Zhou’s *Diagram* and Berry’s universe story. Accordingly, I contend that as a root metaphor, *oikos of life* (*ecozoe*) is even more appropriate for understanding the universe and the Earth.\(^{104}\)

The Newtonian view of the universe relies on the metaphor as machine; hence it is consonant with a static cosmos that is relatively deterministic, atomistic, and dualistic. The metaphor of machine when applied to our conception of the universe and the natural world has influenced the psyches of Westerners for these past few centuries. The sense of a machine, along with the emphasis given to human reason and power, has played an important role in developing an age of industrial-scientific technology. This age does not regard humanity as an integral component of the geobiological community Earth. Indeed, the Earth is esteemed simply as having no intrinsic value and meaning.

However, an Ecozoic spirituality challenges the dominant machine metaphor and shifts to an *oikos of life* perspective based on an integral community of life as a life-emerging, organic community.\(^{105}\) Thus, I contend that *oikos of life* can symbolize the journey of the organic continuity of the universe as “a dynamic and creative process of change and transformation” and as a creative a functional and critical-intellectual basis for reordering the *consciousness* of humanity. Secondly, he is much interested in symbolism within religious traditions, where “in the obscure regions of the unconscious where the primordial archetypal symbols function as ultimate controlling factors in human thought, emotion, and in practical decision-making, a profound reorientation toward this integral human-Earth relationship is gradually taking place.” Berry, *Great Work*, 69; emphasis added.


\(^{104}\) Eco-theologians such as Dieter Hessel and Jürgen Moltmann describe the Earth (the universe) as being *oikos*, which emphasizes the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of the reality. See Dieter Hessel and Larry Rasmussen, ed, *Earth Habitat: Eco-justice and the Church’s Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 195; Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: an Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (London: SCM, 1985), 10.

\(^{105}\) As the ancient Greek *oikos* is equivalent to a house or family, I further expand the meaning of *oikos* to “the universal community of life,” and the “house of life.” Indeed, when we understand the cosmos-Earth-human process within the epic of evolution, we cannot limit the house of life to the Earth. It is possible to expand it to the whole universe as the universal community of life.
journey of “the balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium.” This metaphor intends to revision the Earth (the universe) as an organic integral community of life, thereby helping to overcome a mechanical understanding of the universe and its influence on spirituality.

b. Earth as Organic, Integral Community of Life

There is increasing awareness that a consumer-oriented industrial society causes disruption of the organic functioning of the Earth. When we reflect the degradation of the Earth, we wonder at the lateness and laxity of the response to the crisis. As Berry describes, it is probably a pathological time in our history, since humanity seems blind to the destruction of life and deaf to the “groaning of creation,” such that even when it seemingly awakens to this destruction, it does not modify the behaviour that is causing the devastation. In fact, Berry frames this cultural pathology as the result of a radical discontinuity between humans and the rest of creation. He states, “One of the most fundamental sources of our pathology is our adherence to a discontinuity between the nonhuman and the human, which gives all the inherent values and all the controlling rights to the human.” As a solution for the pathology, Berry proposes that “we need to foster a new sense of the organic world over the merely mechanical world” and that “the primary value rests not with the human, but with the larger community within which the human comes into being.”

Instead of a distorted dream of an industrial-technological paradise, Berry envisions an era of human presence within an organic-based Earth community, lived in a mutually enhancing way. “The future shaping of the community depends on the entire Earth in the unity of its organic functioning, on its geological and biological as well as its human members.” Accordingly, for Berry, the task of spirituality is to promote the survival of the Earth community by understanding its integral reality. Recalling that the Earth community is imperative for the very nature of our being, Berry states, “In

107 Berry, Sacred Universe, 138.
109 Berry, Dream of the Earth, 23.
this community every being has its own role to fulfill, its own dignity, its inner spontaneity. Every being has its own voice. Every being declares itself to the entire universe. Every being enters into communion with other beings. In this integral community, every being shares a common origin, each being is interrelated to the other, each being is derived through the same cosmogenic process, and every being is “genetically” related to every other being.

The Neo-Confucian worldview is known as an organic and life-emerging process. According to the Changes, “The great virtue of Heaven and Earth is to give life.” Zhou and the Neo-Confucians further delve into the Changes and arrive at an essentially organic view of the universe. Robin Wang presents a detailed discussion of the Diagram of Zhou. She observes that the first circle in the Diagram, associated with the inscription that the “the Ultimate of Non-Being and also the Great Ultimate” symbolize that “the universe as a whole is an organic entity,” while the fifth circle, associated with “transformation and generation of the myriad things,” represents the continuous organic process of the universe. Zhou also explains the organic process in the unfolding transformative process of the universe.

Qian ([乾]) (Heaven) constitutes the male element, and Kun ([坤]) (Earth) constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.

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110 Berry, Great Work, 4.
111 Berry extends genetic relationship beyond the biological sphere. According to Berry, “The universe is a unity, an interacting and genetically-related community of beings bound together in an inseparable relationship in time and space.” Thomas Berry, “Twelve Principles for Understanding in the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process,” ed. Lonergan and Richards, Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology, 176. I will discuss the fuller explanation of this theme on the third part of section B.

112 Joseph Needham observes that “The Neo-Confucians arrive at essentially an organic view of the universe. Composed of matter-energy [material force] and ordered by the universal principle of organization [principle], it was a universe which, though neither created nor governed by any personal deity, was entirely real, and possessed the property of manifesting the highest human values (love, righteousness, sacrifice, etc.) when beings of an integrative level sufficiently high to allow of their appearance, had come to existence.” Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, vol.2, 412.


Both *Diagram* and *Explanation* view the universe as a single organism that manifests ongoing life-emerging creativity. In this organic view, the parts are real participants and are to be understood according to the organic whole, that is, the macrophase of reality. Zhou states, “the many are one, and the one actuality is divided into the many. Each one of the many is correct; the small and the large are distinct.”\(^{115}\) In this view, the way of Heaven “transforms and each receives its correct nature and endowment. In this way authenticity is established.”\(^{116}\) Therefore, echoes Berry, “every part of the universe activates a particular dimension or aspect of the universe in a unique and unrepeatable manner. Without the perfection of each part, something is lacking from the whole.”\(^{117}\)

While Berry emphasizes the continuity of spirituality with the spiritual/psychic dimension of the universe, Zhou correlates the cosmic life-emerging process with the ethical virtues of humanity. Zhou states that “Heaven produces the ten thousand things through yang and brings them to completion through yin. To produce is humanity, and to bring completion is righteousness.”\(^{118}\) Here, Zhou links the virtue of humanity to a virtue of creativity. Toshio Kuwako notes how Zhou has a key influence on Cheng Hao’s development of his idea of humanity. In a dialogue between Zhou and Cheng Hao, Cheng Hao asked his master Zhou, “Why don’t you weed the grass in front of your window?” Zhou answers that “the spirit of life is the same.” Zhou’s teaching is that the feeling of the grass is the same as his own feeling, which restrains him from cutting the grass. Kuwako says, “The idea, manifest in Chou Tun-i’s attitude toward nature, that there is a fundamental parallelism between the life system of grass and that of a human being led the philosophers of the Sung dynasty to observe how humans are related to their environmental universe.”\(^{119}\) Furthermore, Zhu notes: “The most impressive aspect of things is their spirit of life. This is what is meant by origination being the

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\(^{115}\) Zhou, *Penetrating*, ch. 22.


\(^{117}\) Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 58.


\(^{119}\) Toshio Kuwako, “The Philosophy of Environmental Correlation in Chu Hsi,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, 151.
chief quality of goodness. This is humanity.” A later Confucian scholar, Kang Yu Wei notes eloquently,

    With respect to Heaven, humanity is the principle of production and reproduction, and with respect to man, it is the virtue of universal love. … Heaven is humane [humaneness]. It sustains and nourishes all things, transforming them, producing them, and further nourishing them and bringing them to completion. Man takes humanity from Heaven and thus becomes a man of humanity [humaneness].

Since the image of the universe as a machine cannot entice an awareness of a spiritual and an ethical reality, the critical role of an Ecozoic spirituality is to reawaken us to the Earth as the integral community of life that has a spiritual/psychic as well as an ethical dimension. Within this integral community of life, we need to recognize the new vision of the Ecozoic era – i.e., the intercommunion of all the living and non-living forces of the planet, based on an awareness of the integrity among God, cosmos, and humanity. So, an Ecozoic-organic worldview grounded in the oikos of life as a root metaphor is a robust alternative to the machine metaphor that has dominated our understanding of the reality of things since the time of Newton.

2. Human Identity as Participatory Responsibility

    What does it mean to be human in the integral Earth community? Much has been written about anthropocentrism, understood as the view that humanity presumes “a radical discontinuity between the nonhuman and the human modes of being, with all the rights and all inherent values given to human,” which leads to an injurious effect upon nature. While existing literature aptly identifies a problematic human consciousness of superiority over nature, and a sense of distance and

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121 Chan, *Source Book*, 735.

122 Berry, *Great Work*, 72.
separation from the rest of creation, the participatory responsibility of humanity remains seemingly unsettled.\(^{123}\)

As a step toward solving this question and to further understanding the participatory role of humanity in achieving an Ecozoic era, it is necessary to understand the place and role of humanity, since without human participation, reaching an Ecozoic era will be impossible. According to Berry, humanity’s place and role must be understood in light of a comprehensive cosmological context.

We are a pervasive presence. By definition we are that reality in whom the entire Earth comes to a special mode of reflexive consciousness. We are ourselves a mystical quality of the Earth, a unifying principle, an integration of the various polarities of the material and the spiritual, the physical and the psychic, the natural and the artistic, the intuitive and the scientific.\(^{124}\)

Seen as a mode of being of the Earth, human identity is understood in union with all the other modes of existence that constitute the integral community. In this manner, Berry stresses that we should shift from an emphasis on human transcendence \textit{from} the natural world, to an emphasis on human identity \textit{in} the natural world.

Therefore, human responsibility might be understood as the integral dimension of the Earth. In pondering the destructive presence of humanity on Earth, and by identifying humanity’s fate with the destiny of the planet, he discerns the role of humanity as drastically influencing the functioning of the Earth.

The Earth will never again function in the future as it functioned in the past. In the past, it functioned independent of human beings. Now, almost nothing will happen on Earth that

\(^{123}\) For instance, while Roger Gottlieb introduces Berry as a leading advocate of deep ecology, Scharper criticizes Berry’s emphasis on our human responsibility to enter an Ecozoic era as still being potentially bound to a dangerous anthropocentrism. On the other hand, Scharper contends that Berry’s contribution leads us well beyond Christian notions of stewardship into the idea of co-creation with the Creator. In my view, Scharper seems to fail to understand that Berry’s depiction of human responsibility is part of a larger discussion recognizing the current challenge of humanity’s equal capacities to destroy the planet as well as to creatively participate in the next phase of the Earth’s history. Stephen B. Scharper, “The Gaia Hypothesis: Implications for a Christian Political Theology of the Environment,” http://www.crosscurrents.org/Gaia.htm (accessed on March 21, 2012); Stephen B. Scharper, “The Geologist’s Gift,” http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/articles/the-geologists-gift (accessed on March 21, 2012); Scharper, \textit{Redeeming the Time}, 122.

\(^{124}\) Berry, \textit{Great Work}, 175.
humans will not be involved in. We cannot make a blade of grass, but there is liable to not be a blade of grass if we do not accept it, protect it and foster it.\textsuperscript{125}

While the Cenozoic era emerged without human contribution, Berry points out that the emerging Ecozoic era is dependent upon humanity’s creative response over a significant period of time. Because we have destructive as well as creative powers, the only way for a viable future to be realized is for humanity to become a functional presence to the rest of the Earth community. Indeed, for Berry, the participatory responsibility of humanity must be understood in the context of the functioning of the Earth community. The next sequence of the Earth’s history can come about through the human participating in the great work. “In its every aspect the human is a participatory reality. We are members of the great universe community. We participate in its life. We are nourished, instructed, and healed by this community,” holds Berry.\textsuperscript{126} This participatory role of humanity is necessary to establish a deeper understanding of the spiritual dynamics of the cosmic-earth-human process, such that the only way to effectively function as individuals and as a species is to understand the history and functioning of our planet and of the universe itself. Berry also argues that our responsibility to the Earth is not simply that of “preserving the earth and establishing an equilibrium of forces upon the Earth.” Rather “it is the task of leading the Earth on through its next series of transformations which must eventuate as the future unfolds before us.”\textsuperscript{127}

In the Confucian traditions, the place and role of humanity is to be found in between Heaven and Earth. As one of the trinity, the human is neither a definitive nor static being, nor a transcendental being, yet is understood in light of its relationship with Heaven and Earth. Thus the understanding of human participation in the functional processes of the Earth’s systems is not an anthropocentric approach. As a product of the universe, humans have distinctive characteristics of morality and spirituality to participate in the cosmological trinity with Heaven and Earth. When we

\textsuperscript{125} Berry, \textit{Christian Future}, 72.
\textsuperscript{126} Berry, \textit{Sacred Universe}, 118.
\textsuperscript{127} Berry, “The Dynamics of the Future,” 15.
understand humanity as part of the universe, and when we think of humanity as a microcosm of the macrocosm of the universe, the human already has the intrinsic possibility of participating in the processes of the universe.

In the *Explanation*, Heaven and Earth are regarded as the macrocosmic symbol of parents, the source of life, and the myriad of things including humanity are the offspring of Heaven and Earth. Furthermore, Zhou correlates this life-emerging creative process of the universe with sincerity. Thus, sincerity [authenticity] is a way of becoming an authentic self and of participating in communion with others and the universe. The *Centrality and Commonality* says,

> Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature. If they can fully develop their nature, they can then fully develop the nature of others. If they can fully develop the nature of others, they can then fully develop the nature of things. If they can fully develop the nature of things, they can then assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth. If they can assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth, they can thus form a trinity with Heaven and Earth.

Owing to sincerity, the *Centrality and Commonality* affirms humanity's participatory and transformative responsibility for other-than-human kind, the myriad of things, and finally for the processes of Heaven and Earth. Since the myriad of things and humanity share sincerity [authenticity], the practice of self-cultivation, as a deepening process of subjectivity and solidarity, leads people to experience communion with others, with society, and with the universe.

Accordingly, the practice of self-cultivation is emphasized throughout Confucian history since the practice can re-situate the human within the web of relationships and further awaken humans to profoundly interrelate with each other and with other-than-humans as companions of the universe. In fact, the purpose of the *Explanation* and the *Penetrating* is to provide the possibility of learning to embody the universe through authenticity and the practice of self-cultivation. Since there is an innate human goodness endowed by Heaven, there is the inseparability of humanity from the

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128 The *Doctrine of Mean*, in Chan, *Source Book*, 107-8. Chan comments that whether this chapter refers to rulers, as Cheng Hsuan and other Han dynasty scholars contended, or to the sage, as Zhu Xi and Song scholars thought, is immaterial. The importance of this chapter is the ultimate trinity with Heaven and Earth. See Chan, *Source Book*, 108.
ultimate reality and the universe. Although the heavenly innate goodness of human morality is hidden, authenticity is a means of cultivating this goodness, making harmony and unity the Way of Heaven and Earth.

In research on Panikkar’s cosmotheandric vision, Komulainen describes an idea that is similar to Confucian cosmology. “Man participates in cosmic rhythms, and correspondingly, these cosmic rhythms are transformed through his participation. The spiritual development of man goes hand in hand with the transformation of reality since the person has an intrinsic ontological connection with reality.”\textsuperscript{129} When we understand human identity as a participatory responsibility, this also demands the practice of self-cultivation for a deeper self-identification with the whole universe. Once we appreciate ourselves as constitutional beings forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth, the meaning and value of humanity differs from that implied by anthropocentric norms and values. In an Ecozoic era, an essential task of humanity is to participate in harmony with the rest of creation.

In a nutshell, the emergence of humanity and of human nature is to be understood within the processes of the universe. As a part of a cosmological trinity, humanity is asked to participate in the processes of cosmological transformation and completion through the practice of self-cultivation. If we reject the arrogance of the special claims that humans have made, especially since the beginning of Industrial age, placing themselves over and above (or against) other species and the planet, a new understanding of humanity’s place within creation, and an emphasis on the proper place of humanity within the unfolding cosmos, is seen as appropriate and necessary. Such a new identity must be fostered by a profound and right relationship with God and with nature. The human identity to be found in and through the universe provides us with a common identity as members of the single human family, the great community of life, and an evolving sacred universe. In this concentric

\textsuperscript{129} Komulainen, \textit{Emerging Cosmotheandric Religion?}, 202.
community, the human awakens to a participatory reality and as member of the great universe and Earth community.

3. Human-Earth relationship

Is it possible to transform our human presence in the Earth community from a time of death dystopia to a period of oikos of life, oikozoe? What is an appropriate relationship between humanity and the rest of creation that will enable us to grasp the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou and to establish the basis for a flourishing Earth community? In Chapter One, I examined two representative models that attempt to overcome a distorted human presence on Earth. For a renewal of the human-Earth relationship, the stewardship model highlights the responsibility of humanity as being imago Dei and presents humanity as the steward for the rest of creation. But this model is criticized because of the presumed absence of God, the separation of humanity from or elevation above the rest of creation, and its anthropocentric and dualistic worldview. On the other hand, the egalitarian model stresses what “every living being has in common, namely intrinsic value. In this they are equal.” While the awareness of intrinsic value in beings is highly appropriate, thinkers like Edwards, Sharper, and Ruether note ways to improve the model because of its romantic approach and devaluation of the human role. Because of the weaknesses and strengths of the two models, I suggest a model of kin or family relationship as a way to take a small step forward in establishing a functional and ecological human-Earth relationship.

An Ecozoic spirituality assumes kin relationship between humans and the rest of creation, a relationship which highlights a mutually enhancing dependence and an affective reciprocity. This understanding of kin relationship is drawn from Berry’s notion of genetic kinship between humanity and the rest of creation and Zhou’s vision of a cosmological triadic family (Heaven, Earth, and humanity). The entire cosmos is a cosmological family and each part is a member of the family. As

the house of life, the Earth (and the rest of creation) is an integral life community, while humanity is a participatory member of that community. I contend that this kinship helps to establish a subjective communion with the various components of the Earth community. Moreover, a sense of kinship could nurture affective qualities against the autistic and destructive presence of humanity to non-humanity.

In Zhou’s cosmology, the triadic relationship among Heaven, Earth, and humanity conceives all things in the universe as intricately connected as a family. Heaven and Earth are parental figures, and humans are understood as the children of the universe who are responsible for its care and to continue the cosmological triadic family. In the trigrams of the Book of Changes, the central line, which represents humanity, is similar to children surrounded by their parents Heaven and Earth. Jung Young Lee holds that “the life of the Oriental family would be best depicted in the trigram, where the central line, which represents children, becomes the center of attention.” In fact, the eight trigrams of the Book of Changes consist of Heaven and Earth as parents with six children – three sons and three daughters. Zhou describes the interaction of Heaven and Earth through the marriage metaphor. Zhang Zai explicates this further:

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother and even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in its midst. That which extends throughout the universe, I regard as my body and that which directs the universe, I regard as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters and all things are my companions.

In a similar note to St. Francis of Assisi’s “Canticle of the Sun” and Chief Seattle’s message, Zhang Zai eloquently describes the intimate relationship with all that exists. Since the universe and

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131 The Changes consists of the 64 hexagrams and general commentaries “Ten Wings and the Great Treaties.” Each set of 64 hexagrams is composed of six lines either yang (unbroken) or yin (broken line). The hexagram is composed of two sets of trigrams, representing the basic trigram relationship: Heaven above, humanity in the middle, and the Earth at the bottom.

132 Lee, Trinity in Asian Perspective, 193. Lee further notes, the “family structure is the basic unity of the cosmos and a microcosm of the communal life.” Ibid., 153.

133 Zhang Zai, Western Inscription. Quoted in Berry, Dream of the Earth, 15.

134 In the “Canticle of the Sun” St. Francis praises and thanks to God for such creations Brother Sun, Sister Moon and the stars, Brother Wind and Air, Sister Water, Brother Fire, and Sister Mother Earth. Chief Seattle of Duwamish tribe from Washington State reportedly wrote to the American President in 1854, as follows: “We are part of the earth and it is
myriad things share the same psychic-physical substance of *qi*. Zhang Zai describes the unity of all things, the interrelatedness of everything. He identifies Heaven and Earth as parents and the myriad things as one body to present an organic and even affectionate kinship to the universe.

According to Lee, this triadic family structure is the archetype of the creative process and evolution in Chinese thought. Every cosmic process is the bearer of the triadic family. Certainly, Zhou’s attitude towards the grass and Zhang Zai’s kinship and companionship with all things provide a profound sense of intimacy and ethical responsibility derived from the vision of all things united as one body in the universe. All modalities of being and nonbeing are inseparable from the Great Ultimate and are made of *chi*, and thus humans as microcosm are to participate in the macrocosm of the universe. In this view, humans are the third party of the trinity, yet “a human is capable of doing what Heaven and Earth do, namely, nourishing life and helping things to grow. But a human is not exactly Heaven or Earth, although he or she possesses the virtues of Heaven and Earth in order to

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part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters, the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony and man – all belong to the same family.” Chief Seattle, “The Land is Sacred,” *Counselling and Value*, no.18, 1974:275-277.

135 See Tucker, *Confucianism and Ecology*, 192. Tucker mentions two aspects of *chi* – substance and function: “As substance it is known as the Great Vacuity (*tai-hsu*), which is the primal undifferentiated material force, while as function it is the Great Harmony (*tai-ho*), which is the continual process of integration and disintegration.” Tucker, “The Philosophy of Chi as Ecological Cosmology,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 193.

136 Berry does not limit this kinship only to the physical bondedness of each being that the evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin provides to some degree. He recognizes the integral account of the universe story including the numinous and consciousness dimensions that are able to be present to every other being. Berry notes, “Consciousness is certainly not limited to humans. Every living being has its own mode of consciousness. We must be aware, however, that consciousness is an analogous concept.” Berry, “Ecozoic Era,” 6. This understanding of genetic kinship among every being in the universe recalls the conversation between Zhu Xi and his student.

Question: Man and birds and animals all have consciousness, although with varying degree of penetration or impediment. Do plants also have consciousness?

Answer: Yes, they also have. …Can they be said to be without consciousness? Zhou Mao-shu did not cut the grass growing outside his window and said that he felt toward the grass as he felt toward himself. This shows that plants have consciousness…”

According to Zhu’s teaching, Zhou was aware that plants have consciousness dimension, which is the spirit of life. Because of this understanding of consciousness, it is possible for Confucians to develop a mutually affective relationship between humanity and the rest of creation. Chan, *Source Book*, 623.
achieve higher orders of value.” As the respectful sons and daughters of the cosmic process, we are part of an organic oneness.

One of the main contributions of Berry’s cosmology is to provide a sense of the “genetic” kinship among the various parts of the universe, thereby awakening us to an affectionate relationship between humanity and the rest of creation. Berry stimulates us to see the spiritual dynamics of the universe which leads to awareness of the mysteries of its functioning through differentiation, inner spontaneity, and comprehensive bonding. “The various parts of the universe are outwardly differentiated, inwardly articulated, and bonded together in a comprehensive intimacy of every particle with every other particle.” Berry continues to saying, “everything in the universe is genetically cousins to everything else.” In this single story, Berry concludes that “we are, everyone, cousins to one another. Every being is intimately present to and immediately influencing every other being.” Humanity is a “genetically” related and participatory member of a single community with all other modes of existence.

Within the Bible and Christian traditions, there is much evidence to support the kinship or family relationship between humanity and the rest of creation. Many biblical scholars explore and develop an ecological hermeneutic in an attempt to read the Bible with an ecological sensitivity. For instance, Norman C. Habel demands, “we need to face the prior ecological reality of our kinship with Earth: that we are born of Earth, and that we are living expression of the ecosystem that has emerged on this planet.” Denis Edwards also suggests the model of human beings as kin to other creatures

138 Berry, Befriending the Earth, 13.
139 Ibid., 14.
140 Berry, Great Work, 200.

As Western interpreters we are heirs of a long anthropocentric, patriarchal, and androcentric approach to reading the text that had devalued the Earth and that continues to influence the way we read the text; that we are members of the endangered Earth community in dialogue with ancient texts; to recognize Earth as a subject in the text with
within a community of creation. He provides a group of relevant sources to support the kinship model, drawing from the Bible, the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, Aboriginal spirituality, and certain feminist theologians such as Rosemary Reuther, Elizabeth Johnson, and Dawn Nothwehr. He concludes, “this kinship is the essential foundation of truly ecological theology of human beings in relation to other creations.”142

While I appreciate Edwards’ successful development of the model, I attempt to add to his work by establishing the kin or family relationship on the basis of the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. In fact, Edwards notes, “it is for those belonging to other traditions, including Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian believers, to bring out the ecological meaning of their traditions.”143

Furthermore, unlike his theological approach to the model, I adopt a cosmological approach that accentuates the affectionate, mutual relationship between humanity and the rest of creation.

Accordingly, the crux of this relationship is to establish an awareness of the unity of human affairs with the functioning of the Earth community as a way of being present to our home planet.
As Edwards describes his model as “a fundamentally God-centered (theocentric) vision of reality,” his model could be open to a criticism of centrism, as raised by Peter Hans Kolvenbach, Kim, and Berry. 145 While examining the Foundation and Principle of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Kolvenbach asserts that Ignatius pays balanced attention to all three poles of the relationship, and herein lies the sound basis which the Principle and Foundation offers. He avoids an anthropocentrism independent of God and the environment (narcissism); a theo-centrism that pretends to ignore creatures and all created things (disembodied spiritualism); a bio-centrism that ignores the Creator and His call to all people (atheism or pantheism). 146

Echoing Kolvenbach, Kim identifies how eco-theology shifts our understanding from anthropocentrism or theocentrism to cosmo-centrism. For Kim, centrism is rooted in “the inherited habit of an either-or way of thinking (either anthropocentrism or cosmocentrism).” 147 Berry also notes that either anthropocentrism or theocentrism negates “the intimate unity between (sic) the natural, the human and the divine worlds.” 148 Therefore, if we insist to remain either theocentric or anthropocentric, the rest of creation that is no longer seen as our kin, and “family” becomes “a collection of objects to be adjusted to in an external manner.” 149

Finally, Edwards’ concern for a cultivation of creation seemingly implies an exterior mode of human presence to the integral community of life. But I choose to emphasize the practice of the ecological cultivation of humanity, not the cultivation of creation, drawing from Zhou’s cosmology.

In the Confucian view, humanity’s affectionate relationship with nature necessitates the practice of  

144 Ibid., 19.


148 Swimme and Berry, *Universe Story*, 199.

149 Ibid.
self-cultivation. As part of a cosmological family, humanity is neither superior nor inferior to the rest of creation, although there is a prior relationship. Mencius says, “The superior man is affectionate to his parents. He is humane to all people and feels love for all.” Zhu Xi accounts for this through the analogy of taking steps,

One should not skip over steps or look too far [he said]. Nor should one drift in all directions or go or stop abruptly. One should start only with what one understands in things nearby and then take one step. … After having gone the first step, one can, on the basis of this step, advance to the second, and so on to the third and the fourth. … When one has understood how to be affectionate to one’s own parents, one will, by extension on the basis of similarity in kind, be humane to all people, for being humane to all people is of the same kind or class as being affectionate to parents. When one has understood how to be humane to people, one will feel love for all creatures, for loving all creatures is of the same kind as being humane to people.

This statement highlights the importance of the practice of self-cultivation in the Neo-Confucian tradition. Similar to Mencius’ three stages, Zhu teaches that firstly humanity must learn to be affectionate to parents, then to the humans, and finally to all creatures.

According to Berry’s view, this expansion of love to all creatures is understood as a greater sense of the human, as “a nurturing presence within the larger community of the geological and biological modes of Earth being.” Furthermore, “There has to be an equality of opportunity for things to be what they are, but that does not make an egalitarian society in which members lose their qualitative differences, the distinctive grandeur that each process in a unique manner and to a unique degree.” Each member of the family has its own functional role and participatory responsibility. Within a family in the East Asian tradition, the most important attitude towards parents is filial piety, and among siblings, brotherly and sisterly love. This can be expanded to the cosmological family since the way of Heaven and Earth is for these to show their parental love to their children, and

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150 Mencius, 7A:45.
151 Zhu Xi, Reflections on Things at Hand, xxi.
152 Berry, Great Work, 64.
153 Berry, Befriending the Earth, 101.
154 With respect to filial piety, see the Book of History and the Book of Ritual.
accordingly, children should respect their parents as the incarnation of the way by giving life and generous love. As the way of Heaven and Earth is to give birth to new life, the appropriate way of humanity is to have an affectionate reverence and love towards the rest of creation. Then, this sense of kinship can nurture affective qualities of humanity against the autistic, pathological presence of humanity to the other-than-human world.

C. The Practice of Ecological Virtues

One of the high values in Confucian teaching is seeking the unity of knowledge and action, theory and practice. In an Ecozoic spirituality, the practice of ecological cultivation is understood to be grounded in the origin, structure, and functioning of the universe, and the ecological virtues might enable us live in accordance with the functional processes of Earth’s history. In this view, the virtues of Ecozoic spirituality provide not only dispositions for the moral potential of humanity but also a type of discipline that cultivates the ecological practices of the Christian faith. To emphasis the practice of ecological cultivation, I begin with ecological discernment – seeing Jesus Christ in the midst of ecological degradation. This awareness of Jesus’ presence amidst the suffering of people and of the rest of the Earth community might foster an appropriate response in terms of an integral understanding of ecological justice and economic justice. Furthermore, the proposed spirituality appreciates the inherent wisdoms of world religions in order to overcome the ecological crisis and to achieve an emerging Ecozoic era, thereby generating the impulse for an ecological ecumenism.

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155 In the Neo-Confucian tradition, reverence means the sense of moral seriousness and attentiveness toward Heaven, which is the counterpart of filial piety in the social realm. See Adler, “Zhou Dunyi: the Metaphysics and Practice of Sagehood,” in de Bary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, 2nd vol.1, 693.
1. Ecological Discernment

In his research on the *Book of Changes*, Im-Gue Yoon describes the current situation of humanity by comparing it to the arrogant dragon in the first hexagram of *Chien*, Heaven.\(^{156}\) In the *Book of Changes*, the main text consists of sixty-four hexagrams, each of which consists of six divided/undivided lines. Called the judgment on the line, each line of the hexagram has its own text. Upon the sixth lines in the first hexagram of the *Chien/ Heaven*, it notes, “The arrogant dragon will be remorseful.”\(^{157}\) By using the analogy of an arrogant dragon, Yoon deplores the current human destruction of the integral functioning of the Earth community. Yoon, according to the eight hexagrams that symbolize the whole cosmic phenomena, warns of the degradation of nature – Heaven, Earth, Water, Mountain, Lake, and Wind. Excessive use of electricity (Thunder) and Fire become the causes of climate change.\(^{158}\) The arrogant dragon, for Yoon, represents humans who have a macrophase power that impairs the geo-biological functioning of the Earth. Yoon’s reading on the first hexagram of Heaven can be viewed as a discerning process of how the way of the entire universe correlates the way of human affairs at the present moment. Fr. Yoon concludes that the future of humanity and the planet Earth will undergo a turbulent period, similar to the remorseful future of the arrogant dragon in the *Book of Changes*. This discernment, made by Yoon, is echoed by Berry’s words that “The glory of the human has become the desolation of the Earth. The desolation of the Earth is becoming the destiny of the human.”\(^{159}\)

In this consideration of the future, ecological discernment might mediate the practice of ecological cultivation in order to discern the meaning of the current ecological crisis and its

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\(^{157}\) The *Book of the Changes* speaks as follows: “In the Line of the *Book of Changes*, Nine indicates yang, while Six indicates yin.”

\(^{158}\) In the *Book of Changes*, the Great Ultimate evolves into two primary powers, the yin and yang forces. The two powers produce four symbols or four duograms, and four symbols produce eight trigrams, which are Heaven, Earth, Thunder, Wind, Water, Fire, Mountain, and Lake.

implications for spirituality. According to Ilia Delio, “the heart of ecological conversion is the invitation to see, feel and act in this kinship of creation.” When we understand the triadic journey of the Earth community, we identify the destruction of the planet as a consequence of a broken relationship by humans with God and with Earth. The ecological crisis is indeed, then, ecological sin. Aruna Gnanadason calls ecological sin “a collective, systematic destruction of the [Earth] community that is at the foundation of God’s good creation.” Furthermore, the Green Bible notes that “Creation is harmed by human sin. Because our sin disconnects us from God, it disorders our relationship with God’s creation as well. The result is a world out of sync with itself.” If sin is the cause of cosmic and human disorder and more explicitly destruction of the Earth community, the ecological crisis raises the necessity of ecological discernment and ecological conversion.

When we identify the ecological destruction as ecological sin, it expands a Christian understanding of discernment to include the ecological or cosmological dimension. In Christian Spirituality, Lawrence Cunningham and Keith Egan outline a contemporary understanding of spirituality that should respond to the “signs of the times.” Without our awareness, the systemic evil or cultural pathology that Berry names makes us blind so that we cannot see what is happening in the present. For this reason, it is necessary to identify sin in the ecological context. Then, the ecological discernment will reveal the presence of God, the suffering of Jesus Christ, and the communing of the Holy Spirit with all creatures in their “groaning.” Thus, the ecological discernment is a process of becoming aware of God’s presence and even God’s absence in the midst

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of ecological degradation. “To destroy a living species is to silence forever a divine voice,” holds Berry. Johnson also notes that “If the Earth is indeed a sacrament of divine presence, a locus of divine compassion, and a bearer of divine promise, then its ongoing destruction is… sinful desecration.” Once we contemplate the larger pattern of any possible dysfunction, an ecological discernment might help to confront the demonic aspect of the existing mode of humanity on Earth as well as allow creative creativity to work through the Earth’s functional processes.

Through the practice of ecological discernment, this proposed spirituality encourages us to search Jesus Christ in the midst of the suffering of Earth and its people. Drawing from the work of Leonardo Boff, James Profit proclaims,

The cry of the poor is indeed the voice of Earth who is suffering from death and destruction wrought by humans. The cry of the Earth is also the cry of Jesus. Jesus is suffering the erratic weather systems caused by the heating of Earth’s atmosphere. Jesus is suffering in the crisis caused by the near extinction of the cod, not only because of the suffering of the fishers, but because one more revelation of God’s presence is being put to death. The passion of Earth, including the passion of suffering people, is the passion of Jesus. The cry of the poor is the cry of the Earth is the cry of Jesus.

2. Eco-Justice

Echoing the voice of Fr. Jim Profit, we hear the bishops of Quebec proclaim in their Message of May 1st 2001 that “the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one.” The bishops ask, “Are we still capable of hearing and listening to the cry of the poor? Are we attentive to the cry of the Earth itself?” To understand and answer these questions, I contend that eco-justice is an appropriate response to the degradation of nature and the suffering of the people on the Earth.

165 Berry, Christian Future, 15.
There are still arguments that question the priority and level of concern that is applied to ecosystem health seemingly at the expense of human justice. Some argue that the preferential option for the (human) poor is still our primary concern. For others, a concern for ecosystem health embraces the problem of human justice due to the links between ecological health and social justice. Dieter T. Hessel argues that the “hyphenated word ‘eco-justice’ refers to constructive human responses that concentrate on the link between ecological health and social justice. It refers to the dynamic interaction of economic and ecological well-being with the struggle for civil rights and social justice.” \(^{169}\) Besides Hessel, many scholars such as Leonardo Boff, Stephen Scharper, and Larry Rasmussen, among others, provide a dynamic framework for theological reflection and action that brings ecological integrity together with social-economic justice. \(^{170}\)

On the other hand, Asian theologians understand that spirituality is not simply the natural consequence of doing theology. Rather, for Asian theologians, the practice of faith is more important than dogmas defined and explained in rational categories. Asia has an enduring and impressive tradition of religious spirituality that has long valued spiritual praxis in the context of suffering. Sri Lankan theologian, Aloysius Pieris asserts that “spirituality is not the practical conclusion of a theology but radical involvement with the poor and the oppressed, and is what creates theology. We know Jesus the truth by following Jesus the way.” \(^{171}\) Indian theologian, Tissa Balasuriya names a spirituality of “contemplative commitment.”

In it commitment is a response to God and a source of empathetic understanding responding to the exigencies of reality; and contemplation is a union with God that leads to and is nurtured by commitment. This is an approach toward a spirituality of action that is holistic, unitive, and mystical. \(^{172}\)


An emerging and fresh aspect of Asian theology links economic and social justice with ecological issues. Samuel Ryan, writing on Asian Christian Theology, points out that the degradation of nature is “a part of, and an outcome of systems of injustice and exploitation.” Knowing the inseparability of social justice and ecological health, Asian theologians gradually seek an eco-justice perspective in developing an Asian ecotheology.

Berry also asserts that “It is now being called eco-justice, where social and ecological concerns are seen as deeply intertwined.” Miriam Therese MacGillis, inspired by the work of Berry’s cosmological vision, founded Genesis Farm in 1980, a center for eco-justice. MacGillis notes,

[Everything we do here in our ecological work stems from Berry’s clear articulation of the cosmological principles of differentiation, subjectivity and communion, and the implications [are] that these same values embedded in the Earth/Universe show up as the golden rule within the world’s culture (including matricentric and patricentric perspectives).]

In fact, Berry’s understanding of justice is framed by a concern for justice for a single Earth community, that does not separate human justice and ecological justice. He holds that “the human community and the natural world will go into the future as a single sacred community or neither will

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173 R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed. Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Trends (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994). Pieris’ main theological concern is interreligious dialogue with Buddhist and Asian forms of theology – inculturation. Pieris does not work much in the ecological area; his focus is still on living a Christian life in the midst of religious-cultural diverse society with Asian identity. However, his understanding of cosmic religion and cosmic spirituality based on the Earth has enough room to become a feasible resource for eco-justice.


175 Berry, Christian Future, 44. I do not agree with some criticism of Berry’s eco-justice perspective, as raised by Baum, McFague and Scharper. For instance, Baum criticized Berry’s work, noting that it was vulnerable to a social justice critique. See Gregory Baum, “The Grand Vision: It needs Social Action,” in Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology, ed. Anne Lonergan and Caroline Richards (Mystics, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987), 53. McFague also criticizes the supposed absence of “a sense of awful oppression” in either Berry’s work or in writings on creation spirituality. McFague, Body of God, 71. Like Baum and McFague, Scharper argues that Berry’s work is vulnerable to a social justice critique. See Stephen B. Scharper, “The Ecological Crisis,” in Gregory Baum, ed. The Twentieth Century: a Theological Overview (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 224. For me, these authors’ opinions does not unravel what Berry offers concerning an integrated perspective of ecological, social, and economic justice. It is clear for Berry that choosing the human over nature is increasingly problematic. For a viable presence of humanity with the rest of the Earth community, Berry suggests a move from a “spirituality concerned with justice simply to humans to a justice that includes the larger Earth community,” Berry, Christian Future, 60; See also Berry, Befriending the Earth, 98; Berry, Sacred Universe, 132.

survive in any acceptable manner.”177 Thus, he asserts that we need to recognize the human community as integral in its structure and functioning with the larger universe in which we live. In this view, Ecozoic spirituality promotes the practice of eco-justice, which might provide a dynamic framework for thought and action that fosters ecological integrity with social-economic justice. In the light of kin or family relationships within the integral community of life, eco-justice helps to lead people to a strong solidarity with other suffering people and creatures.

3. Ecological Ecumenism

Ecozoic spirituality fosters an ecological ecumenism, a dialogue among religions having an ecological awareness. As I outlined in the previous chapter, there is a growing conviction within the dialogue among world religions that a greater focus on ecology and religion is necessary for the survival of the human species and planet Earth. In the light of Ecozoic spirituality, I explore a correlational, globally responsible model, proposed by Paul Knitter and further refreshed by an ecological ecumenism drawing from Pieris’ method of symbiosis and from Berry’s cosmology of religions. Paul Knitter advocates,

I will be urging that religious persons seek to understand and speak with each other on the basis of a common commitment to human and ecological well-being. Global responsibility therefore includes the notion of liberation intended by traditional liberation theologians but goes beyond it in seeking not just social but eco-human justice and well-being.178

On the basis of a common commitment to human and ecological well-being, Knitter describes a model that seeks both social justice and ecological well-being. For this, he proposes a new Christian understanding of other religions that follows a method that is pluralistic and correlative as well as globally responsible and liberative.179 Knitter confirms that global responsibility to promote human and planetary well-being can and must be the primary context, or basis, or starting point, or goal of

177 Berry, Christian Future, 72. This statement of Berry echoes St. Paul’s letter to Corinthians. St. Paul says, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” (1 Cor. 12:26)
179 Ibid.
all multi-faith dialogue. Knitter furthermore notes that:

This is what I mean by the image of deep ecumenicity: the more the religions of the world can ground themselves in this earth and the more deeply they can connect with the nature and the needs of this planet, the more they will find themselves interconnected. The more deeply religious persons become ecologically attuned, the more effectively they will become ecumenically connected.\textsuperscript{180}

As a way to elucidate the inherent way religion relates to the environment, Knitter argues that in the past theologians traced “a vertical line between the religions of the world, with ‘mystical,’ or inner-oriented, religions (usually Indic) on one side and ‘prophetic,’ or world-involved, traditions (usually Semitic or Abrahamic) on the other. … [Yet] it is generally recognized that the line should be drawn horizontally rather than vertically; mystics and prophets populate, in differing proportions.”\textsuperscript{181} As an example, Knitter provides Aloysius Pieris’ experience of dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism in Sri Lanka, as showing an example of “the dipolarity of the mystical and the prophetic.”\textsuperscript{182} While Knitter appreciates Pieris’ retaining both poles of religious experience – namely, the gnostic and the agapeic – he does not further discuss how Pieris develops this integration of the dipolarity of the mystical and the prophetic. Accordingly, I believe that Knitter still seems to rely on a paradigm of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism as defined by Alan Race.\textsuperscript{183} When questioned about the paradigm of interreligious dialogue, Pieris was uncomfortable at being asked to self-identify as either an inclusivist or a pluralist. He declared, “I have found myself gradually appropriating a trend in Asia which adopts a paradigm wherein the three categories mentioned above

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 375.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 375-6.
\textsuperscript{183} Alan Race, \textit{Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religion} (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1982). Jai-Don Lee identifies particular deficiencies in the scholastic categories of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. In particular, Lee argues that religious pluralism does not take the otherness of other religions seriously, and pluralism runs the serious risk of reducing several dimensions of religions. To support his critique, he identifies the work of Michael Amaladoss, Felix Wilfred, Raimon Panikkar, and Thomas Berry. For instance, Wilfred notes: “Western pluralism is systematic in the sense that it wants to create a rationalist system of theology or philosophy of religions abstracted from their concrete context.” Wilfred, “Towards a Better Understanding of Asian Theology,” 905. Quoted in Lee, “Towards an Asian Ecotheology,” 142.
does not make sense.” Furthermore, he observed, “interreligious dialogue itself is not a conscious target pursued as something desirable per se, as it is a luxury which the urgency of the sociospiritual crisis in Asia would not permit.”

In fact, Pieris proposes a new category that when two or many religions encounter each other, their search for integration may take three forms: syncretism, synthesis, or symbiosis. As we observed earlier in the previous chapter, Zhou employs the three dominant religions of China, drawing on Confucianism for morality, Daoism for cosmology, and Buddhism for spirituality. This bespeaks a spirit of religious symbiosis, which is, in general, essential to Asian culture. Pieris believes that through symbiosis, Christian faith would be verified in the middle of religious diversity and poverty. The method of symbiosis originates from Pieris’ experience of the Basic Human Communities (BHCs), a living community of the poor. Where severe conflict exists between religions, symbiosis serves as a model to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship, thereby sharing their own plentiful spiritual heritage in a living situation. He explains that

[symbiosis is] a cultivated form of reciprocal preexistence whereby each idiom sharpens its identity in conversation with the other. For their mutual exposure reveals the authentic character of each in such a way that it is possible to recognize that which is not genuine in either of them.

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185 Ibid., 161. According to Pieris, syncretism is “a haphazard mixture of religions,” and synthesis creates a new religion out of combining the elements of two or more other religions, destroying the identity of each component religion. Ibid.

186 In July of 1989, Pieris constructed the BHCs where members of Christian and non-Christian denominations – Buddhists, Hindus, and Marxists – strive together for the liberation of life. “The Basic Human Communities is not a group that has come together for interreligious dialogue…. The origin, the development, and the culmination of the activities of a BHCs is, ideally, the total liberation…. It is within the process of this ongoing liberative praxis that each member of the BHCs discovers the uniqueness of his or her religion.” Through an ongoing liberative praxis in the BHCs, Pieris believes that each religion, including Christianity, should discover its own uniqueness. Thus this awareness of other religions makes it possible for encounters and dialogues with each other. He believes that the truth each religion has will be revealed by living together. Pieris, *Fire & Water*, 158.

Pieris started the BHCs not for the primary purpose of inter-religious dialogue, in the expectation that through living together, members of different religions can discover the true beauty and uniqueness of their religion as well as that of others.

The term symbiosis, coined from the Greek words *sym* (together with) and *bios* (life), refers to different kinds of organisms living together in ongoing physical association. Although symbiosis is a fundamental biological relationship, our understanding of its role in ecology and evolutionary theory is still developing. The spirit of symbiosis points to the integral community of Earth, which embraces all life existing in a mode of mutually enhancing relationships. This spirit is consonant with the Earth Charter which states that “we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community… a unique community of life.” In fact, it is Pieris who feels regret that Christian missionaries forgot the teaching of Francis of Assisi, a patron saint for ecologists, who taught his disciples how to appreciate and to be in communion with nature and animals. When we think of the Earth as the integral community of life, the spirit of symbiosis in living together invites people to mutually expose and recognize each other’s subjectivity. Therefore the members of a cosmological family consider the other, not to discriminate the differences, but to attentively explore the differences in each other.

If Pieris provides an example of religious symbiosis, Berry further expands this symbiosis to include the universe story as our primary context for spirituality thereby contributing to a larger understanding of ecological ecumenism. Berry recognizes that it is possible to inherit the global

188 Sometimes a symbiotic relationship benefits both species, sometimes one species benefits at the other's expense, and in other cases neither species benefits. Here, I would like to use the term as mutualism, which benefits both species.


human heritage of the world’s religions since a differentiated yet comprehensive global human community is being created now. Therefore, Berry states,

"Within this community, a comprehensive yet diversified spirituality is finding expression. This comprehensive spirituality must be considered as the affirmation, not the negation, of the individual traditions. The ideal is not a mixture of traditions but the further differentiation of the individual traditions within the comprehensive communion of all the traditions with one another."\(^{192}\)

Here we read that Berry applies his understanding of diversity and communion to understand world religions. For Berry, the universe is the primary sacred community and each religion manifests the revelatory story of the universe in a qualitatively different way among its various expressions. Just as Berry explains the diversity of being in the universe as the expression of God’s perfection, drawing from Aquinas, so diverse world religions reveal the perfection of the divine goodness. As Berry describes the world religions holding the “floods of illumination and truth,” then encountering with other religions provides opportunities to experience a different dimension of God’s manifestation. Therefore, the “more intimate and the more universal our communion, the more sublime the presence of the human, the cosmic, and the divine realms are to one another. In this manner we attain our authentic existence; an integral form of contemporary spirituality is established.”\(^{193}\)

Having a sense of its microphase and macrophase dimensions, each religion as a subject will open to the broader meaning or resonance of the comprehensive human traditions within which it now begins to function. Tucker aptly describes what Berry seeks through the universe story and its implication for world religions.

This is Berry’s fondest hope – that the dynamizing sources of human energy will be found in a broadened religious and spiritual sensibility. This comprehensive sensibility includes a revitalization of the world’s religions and a robust dialogue among and between civilizations. It also invites an opening to the universe story as a context for situating our biohistorical nature in a multireligious planetary culture of peace.\(^{194}\)

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192 Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 51.
Berry seeks a recovery of religious sensitivity in a comprehensive cosmological context in order to overcome the ecological crisis. Through a universe story that provides a comprehensive context for world religions, Berry invites world religions to contribute to the future of the planet in its geological and biological survival, providing for our human and spiritual well-being. Berry notes that, “In the immediate future, our religious concerns will, I believe, be more cosmological. They will be much more sensitive to the universe as the primary religious mode of being and to ourselves being religious through our participation in the religion of the universe.”

Thus, an ecological ecumenism informed by Pieris’ understanding of religious symbiosis and Berry’s articulation of cosmological implications will not only serve to provide an appreciation of global responsibility that seeks the well-being of humanity and the Earth community, but it will also contribute to a marked revitalization of world religions.

D. Concluding Remarks

In general terms, this chapter shows that as a consequence of the critical discourse between the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou within an ecological context, an Ecozoic spirituality can be articulated to describe an adequate human-Earth relationship as kin, cousins, living in the integral community of life. This chapter has described an Ecozoic spirituality that blends three interrelated facets. Firstly, I discussed a theology of integration among God, the cosmos, and humanity drawing from Panikkar’s cosmotheandrism and employing a critical discourse with the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. Through reflection on the triadic communion of reality as described by Panikkar, Berry and Zhou, I identified four essential elements for describing an Ecozoic spirituality: a theocosmoanthric vision; the sacred journey of the Earth community; an appreciation of mysticism; and a restoration of a sense of the sacred.

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195 Berry, Sacred Universe, 99.
Secondly, I examined how an Ecozoic spirituality could help establish an Ecozoic-organic worldview, and human identity as participatory responsibility. I further contended that an Ecozoic-organic worldview and human identity as a participatory responsibility would contribute to reformulated human behavior with the rest of creation now recognized through kinship or family relationship.

Finally, as the third component of Ecozoic spirituality, I have presented a type of discipline that cultivates three virtues: ecological discernment, eco-justice, and ecological ecumenism.
CONCLUSION

A. Summary and Contributions

B. Remaining Concerns: The Christian Faith Enhanced through Ecozoic Spirituality

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A. Summary and Contributions

The purpose of this dissertation has been to tease out a functional and ecological spirituality that I have termed an Ecozoic spirituality. Since the ecological crisis is deeply rooted in a mechanistic and reductionistic worldview and a spirituality of alienation from the Earth, I presented an Ecozoic spirituality developed through a critical appropriation of the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou. By giving special attention to the integral relationship among God, the cosmos and humanity, the works of Berry and Zhou provided insights that speak to the current ecological crisis, a cosmological context for developing an Ecozoic spirituality, while helping to advance clear values and ethical parameters that lead to a more authentic human presence on the Earth community. Thus, this thesis has employed insights and ethical reflections from these two cosmologies as resources for the development of an Ecozoic spirituality integral to the functioning of the Earth and for cultivating ecological sensitivity.

In order to address the need for an Ecozoic spirituality, I examined the current ecological crisis with a focus on the devastation to the functioning of the Earth community in its biological and geological aspects. While the causes of the crisis are many and complex, I concentrated on how certain spiritualities have contributed to the current ecological crisis by fostering an alienation from the Earth through an over-emphasis on redemption and an alliance with a mechanistic, utilitarian worldview and an extractive economy. Subsequently, I reviewed Christian responses to the ecological crisis, and in particular the stewardship and egalitarian models as well as the work of two
key Christian theologians, Sallie McFague and Thomas Merton. The two models represented a shift from human dominion over the rest of creation to a human alliance with or within nature relations. In addition, McFague and Merton discussed the distorted human presence on Earth rooted in a mechanistic worldview and a cultural context of consumerism. This review of Christian responses intimated the importance of a cosmological context for reformulating our understanding of the human-Earth relationship. Accordingly, the chapter set the context for exploring the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou.

If we accept that a spirituality nourished by a dysfunctional cosmology that leads to alienation from the Earth is significantly contributing to the ecological crisis, then the remedy should be sought there as well. For this reason, a study of the cosmology of world religions is needed urgently. Berry states that since none of these [anthropologies of religions] have been able to deal effectively with the evolutionary story of the universe or with the ecological crisis, we are led on to the cosmological dimension of the religious issue both from our efforts at understanding and from our concerns for survival. …We have thought of the Earth as joining in the religious expression of the human rather than the human joining in the religious expression of the Earth. This has caused difficulties in most spheres of human activity. We have consistently thought of the human as primary and the earth as derivative; in the future, and in a cosmology of religions, we must understand that the Earth is primary and the human is derivative. Only when the cosmos is acknowledged as the matrix of all value will we be able to solve the ecological crisis and arrive at a more comprehensive view of who we are in the community of the Earth.¹

As seen in Chapter Two and Three, the cosmologies of Berry and Zhou provided a convincing resource for this task since their cosmologies helped to us to understand the spiritual dynamics of the story of the universe, to awaken us to the place and role of humanity within the universe, and to develop a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship.

Berry’s functional cosmology and spirituality has been widely and extensively studied over the past few decades, but Berry’s understanding of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and

humanity has remained relatively unexplored. Indeed, scholars like Baum and Scharper criticize Berry for being too concerned about the environment and the human-Earth relationship at the expense of the inter-human relationship. In light of Berry’s understanding of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity, this thesis filled an important vacuum by exploring in detail three pivotal aspects of the cosmological discussion – viz., cosmogenesis, the reinvention of humanity, and an Ecozoic vision – that are essential to the task of developing an Ecozoic spirituality.

This thesis searched for a remedy and corrective to a current spirituality that offers minimal resistance to the degradation of the Earth and is unable to integrate effectively our growing understanding of cosmogenesis. Berry’s work helped us to understand the Earth’s geo-biological transition from the terminal phase of the Cenozoic Era to the new Ecozoic era through a narrative of the universe, told in the sequence of its transformations and in the depth of its meaning, which enables and facilitates an awareness of the sacred dimension of the other-than-human world, as well as giving a sense of the genetic bondedness of the human with the Earth community. In addition, his understanding of the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity culminates in a communion of subjects, thereby justifying the use of the term organic to describe the inner coherence and integral functioning of the planet Earth. Finally, the implications of Berry’s thought can foster humanity’s participation in the compassionate journey of the universe, which is inseparable from the journey of the numinous presence which has been manifested through the cosmological principles of increasing diversity, more distinct subjectivity, and a growing and deeper communion.

In response to the current ecological crisis, much research has provided considerable insights by focusing on a dialogue between ecology and religion. Since Berry appreciates the ethical and cosmological dimensions of Confucianism, another portal of this thesis provided an East Asian organic-ethical cosmology by drawing from Zhou Dunyi. While scholars have recognized the central role of Zhou’s cosmology in the formulation of Neo-Confucianism, which became the foundation for
an East Asian worldview from its development in the Song dynasty until the early twentieth century, the implications of adopting Zhou’s cosmology for the development of a functional ecological spirituality has not been studied sufficiently. A closer reading of Zhou’s primary texts uncovered several ecological resources and helpful insights for developing an Ecozoic spirituality.

In his time, Zhou was not faced with ecological challenges as much as with ethical and metaphysical concerns about the origin of the universe and the notion of human beings. Nevertheless, I applied Zhou’s thought to contemporary ecological concerns. In particular, Zhou’s understanding of the penetrating presence of the Great Ultimate both in the emerging universe and in human nature provided an organic worldview and an appreciation of human identity as membership in a cosmological trinity – perspectives that provide a context for ecological discernment. In a cosmological sense, Zhou described an authentic human mode of being founded both in a trinity with Heaven and Earth and in the role of humanity to complete the transformation of the universe through the practice of cultivation. My proposal for a theocosmoanthric vision, which implies an intertwining of the three dynamic co-relational dimensions of the divine, the cosmos, and humanity, fosters evolution beyond Confucian stewardship to an Ecozoic family model.

The remarkable insights of Berry and Zhou suggest the right direction for humanity within the sacred journey of the evolving Earth community. On the basis of their works, I proposed an Ecozoic spirituality presented in three distinctive components – i.e., i. a theology of integrity among God, the cosmos and humanity; ii. the transformation of worldview, self-identity and human behaviour; and iii. virtues for an Ecozoic spirituality. The first component was an eco-theological recognition of the triadic communion among God, the cosmos, and the rest of creation. As Tucker and Grim assert, it is the crucial challenge of our times for religion and ecology to explore “more fully divine-human-earth relations.” In response to this challenge, the works of Berry and Zhou each provided a context for understanding the integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity.

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With the help of Raimon Panikkar’s robust theological insight of cosmotheandrist, an Ecozoic spirituality explored four themes: a theocosmoanthric vision; an awareness of a shared sacred journey among God, the cosmos, and humanity; an appreciation of the mystical experience; and a recovery of a sense of the sacred in the rest of creation. This eco-theological understanding of these integral relationships and their implications contributes to a recovery of a sense of the integrity among the divine, the natural, and the human that was neglected for centuries due to a bias that favoured the divine-human and inter-human relations. Moreover, it also helps to establish “an awareness of unity of human affairs with the functioning of the universe and Earth.”

As a response to three questions that I raised in Chapter One (which sought a functional cosmology, a cosmological anthropology, and transformation of human attitudes towards the rest of creation), the second component of an Ecozoic spirituality provided an Ecozoic-organic worldview as a shift from a mechanistic dualistic worldview. I also suggested a shift from anthropocentrism to an emerging human identity of participatory responsibility. In turn, as a consequence of the shifts in worldview and human identity, an Ecozoic spirituality proposed a renewed human-Earth relationship from a supposed human separation from the rest of creation to a model of kinship or familial relationship. These suggestions are essential for a paradigm shift that calls forth humanity’s participation in the cosmic process through the practice of ecological cultivation.

Subsequently, the third component of an Ecozoic spirituality demands the practice of ecological cultivation through the application of the Ecozoic virtues of ecological discernment, the integration of ecological justice with social and economic justice, and an ecological ecumenism for a viable Earth community.

I believe that an Ecozoic spirituality can help us to develop a sacramental sensitivity to the rest of creation, to promote a functional human presence on Earth, and to participate in the sacred journey of the universe. As Berry envisions it, the Ecozoic era will be a time when humanity will

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3 Berry, Christian Future, 116.
function in such a way that it becomes a mutually beneficial presence within the comprehensive Earth community. For this transition to occur, an Ecozoic spirituality is needed in order to recognize the integrity among God, the cosmos, and humanity as well as to foster a spirituality of comprehensive transformation of worldview, human identity, and human attitudes towards the rest of creation. In this spirituality, the new role of humanity will be to enjoy participating and celebrating as members in the Earth community, within a shared sacred journey of God, the cosmos, and humanity. In other words, the proposed spirituality will assist those who seek a right relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity and at the same time a right participation in the unfolding story of the universe.

**B. Remaining Concerns: The Christian Faith Enhanced through Ecozoic Spirituality**

It is hoped that an Ecozoic spirituality can help Christianity to recover an ecological sensitivity and religious consciousness toward the rest of creation. Since I acknowledge the many critiques directed against Christianity for contributing philosophically and spiritually to the current degradation of the Earth, it is necessary to develop the ecological wisdoms and sensitivities of the Christian faith. Reading Berry and Zhou through an ecological-cosmological perspective will provide a helpful resource for the formulation of a Christian spirituality that resituates the Christian into an authentic relationship with the rest of God’s creation. I believe that when we become aware again of the sacredness of the emerging universe, our religious sensitivity will be enhanced. Then, what are the practical ways of incorporating this spirituality in pastoral and spiritual disciplines?

Although my current research does not speak directly to ministerial and pastoral needs, it has informed my preaching, teaching, and Church ministry. Indeed, my academic interest in seeking the well-being of the planet comes from my own ministerial experience as well as a practice of spirituality. As an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, I have questioned the diminishing Christian leadership in society, the declining numbers of young Christians attending
Church, and the Church’s inadequate response to the fate of the Earth that is being devastated by a plundering commercial-industrial system. In this context, I think that contemporary Christian spirituality must engage both ecological as well as spiritual concerns. Besides my academic journey, I have also engaged in various spiritual practices – the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, Vipassana Meditation, and the Practicum of Spiritual Direction. While these practices gave me a sense of integration between study and faith, I was uncomfortable when the practice of spirituality remained bound to anthropocentrism and a mechanistic worldview. This is not because the new story is worthless, but rather because it seems to lack a proper interpretation of the spiritual dynamics of the scientific achievement that Berry articulates so well. Given this consideration, my concern is that an absence of appropriate spiritual practices is harmful to the planet Earth. Since people need to behave differently from the ways that have contributed to the ecological crisis, exploring the possible impact of spiritual practices would be an important future research project.
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