Click to go to Table of Contents

Some Contributions of Liberation Theology to Community Empowerment in Scottish Land Reform 1991 – 2003

A thesis linking works submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works

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Dedication

To my mother, Jean Patricia McIntosh (née Hancox), who would wish that my father, Dr Ian Kenneth McIntosh, "beloved physician" of North Lochs on the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, had been able to enjoy this.

Ethos

"We demand a scholarship with a large human soul and a pregnant social significance"

- John Stuart Blackie on "what Scotland wants" in *The Advancement of Learning in Scotland*, 1855, p. 9.

Table of Contents

(To return to this table at any point, go to the top of page 1 and click the link there)

Index of Figures

These have been printed on colour art paper and are annexed to the body text page numbers as shown. The PDF version is hyperlinked and images follow the page linked to)

My commissioned figures may be downloaded for 3rd party use from:
www.AlastairMcIntosh.com/rekindlingcommunity.htm

The full set of Esquivel's *Stations of the Cross* can be downloaded from:
http://www.AlastairMcIntosh.com/general/1992-stations-cross-esquivel.htm

Index of Works Submitted and Style of Referencing and Pagination

The main work submitted for this PhD by publications is *Soil and Soul*. A printer's facsimile of the 2004 edition of this is bound in at the end of this volume. (In the PDF version of both *Soil and Soul* and *Love and Revolution*, on chapters of key relevance to this PHD are given since these books are commercially published and in print.)

In addition, 12 other publications support *Soil and Soul* as listed below. In referencing within this thesis, *Soil and Soul* will be referred to as (0 – *Soil and Soul*) or, if there are page numbers, for example, (0:37-43 – *Soil and Soul*). The supporting texts will similarly be referenced numbered 1 – 12, as shown in bold for each below.

There is a regrettable but unavoidable potential for confusion in page numbering references within this thesis. Because it comprises a mixture of PDF and Word documents bound together, it has not been possible to employ a unified pagination system. The primary pagination is that which I have employed for the linking thesis, of which this page is a part. The secondary pagination that follows is to provide a unified numbering system for the pages of the twelve supporting publications. Each of these also has its own internal numberings as inherited from the original published versions. My secondary system of pagination is only for the purposes of location using this index. And lastly, there is a tertiary system, comprising the pagination used in *Soil and Soul* at the back of this bound volume, and as ascribed to it in the published version.

The hyperlinks used below should be live for those consulting a disk-based version of this thesis, and, with the exceptions of *Soil and Soul* and *Love and Revolution*, will lead to a web-based version of the full text.

0. *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power* (London, Aurum Press, 2001, 2004). **Referenced as (0 – *Soil and Soul*)** – located at end of this volume with its own (tertiary) pagination. Selected chapters only in PDF.

1. 1992, A 'collector's item' or community ownership - the Isle of Eigg debate, *Edinburgh Review*, 88, 158-162. **Referenced as (1 – *Eigg Manifesto*)** – secondary pagination p. 1.

2. 1994, Journey to the Hebrides, *Scottish Affairs*, 6, 52-67. **Referenced as (2 – *Journey Hebrides*)** – secondary pagination p. 9.

3. 1999, Psychospiritual Effects of Biodiversity Loss in Celtic Culture and its Contemporary Geopoetic Restoration, in *Cultural & Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: a Complementary Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Assessment*, ed. Darrell Addison Posey, United Nations Environment Programme (ITP), Nairobi & London, 480-483. **Referenced as (3 – *UNEP Celtic*)** – secondary pagination p. 19.

4. 2006, *Love and Revolution* (collected poetry), Luath Press, Edinburgh, 96pp, £7.99, 4 September 2006, ISBN 1-905222-58-0. **Referenced as (4 – *Love Revolution*)** – secondary pagination p. 25. (Only selected poems are given in this PDF version. The full book is printed out in the version of this thesis as lodged with the University library.)

5. 1997, The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland, *Cencrastus: Scottish and International Literature, Arts and Affairs*, 56, 6-15. **Referenced as (5 – *GalGael Peoples*)** – secondary pagination p. 119.

6. 1996, Community, spirit, place: a reviving Celtic shamanism, *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy,* 13:3, 111-120, (Canada). **Referenced as (6 – *Celtic Shamanism*)** – secondary pagination p. 149.

7. 1999, Liberation Theology in Scottish Community Empowerment, in *Popular Education and Social Action in Scottish Communities,* Ian Martin, Jim Crowther and Mae Shaw, (eds.), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester, 205-215. **Referenced as (7 – *Liberation Theology*)** – secondary pagination p. 161.

8. 1995, (233KB) Introduction to the Isle of Harris Proposed Superquarry Public Inquiry Theological Testimony, *Journal of Law and Religion,* XI:2, 755-788 (and appendix, 789-791). **Referenced as (8 – Public Inquiry)** – secondary pagination p. 173.

9. 2000, The Case for God: Carbeth Hutters' Feudal Defence Against Eviction, *Ecotheology,* Sheffield Academic Press, Issue 8, 86-110. **Referenced as (9 – *Carbeth Hutters*)** – secondary pagination p. 193.

10. 2004, Peace in the Tiger's Mouth, Chapter 16 of *Seeking Cultures of Peace: a Peace Church Conversation,* ed. Enns, Fernando, Holland, Scott & Riggs, Ann K., World Council of Churches (Geneva) etc., pp. 215 - 226. **Referenced as (10 – *WCC Tiger*)** – secondary pagination p. 207.

11. 2000, Saint Andrew – Nonviolence and National Identity, *Theology in Scotland,* St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, VII:1, 55-70. **Referenced as (11 – *Saint Andrew*)** – secondary pagination p. 215.

12. 2004, Foreword to *Europe, Globalization and Sustainable Development*, ed. Barry, John, Baxter, Brian & Dunphy, Richard., Routledge, London, £65 (hardback), ISBN: 0-415-30276-5, xii - xxiii. **Referenced as (12 – *Euro Globalisation*)** – secondary pagination p. 225.

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful to staff at the Academy of Irish Heritages, the University of Ulster who have taken an interest in my work and led to it being accepted for the award of a PhD by publications. In particular, my thanks to Ullrich Kockel, Professor of Ethnology and Folk Life at the Academy and President of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, who patiently served as my first supervisor and who gave me every encouragement to follow this course of academic development.

To Professor John Gillespie, Head of the School of Languages and Literature and Director of Research in the Faculty of Arts, who served as my second supervisor and whose challenging and inspiring feedback reminded me at least to aspire towards the standards of theological analysis appropriate to our diverse "Irish" cultural heritages.

I also thank my examiners, Professor Michael Cronin, director of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies at Dublin City University, and Professor Máiréad Nic Craith, Director of the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages at the University of Ulster. Professor Nic Craith appointed me to be a Visiting Fellow to the Academy and saw that every need was taken care of during my several visits to the Magee campus.

And lastly, special thanks to my mother on the Isle of Lewis who, every since I was a boy, has encouraged my thinking, writing and public speaking. She gave particular support to my undertaking this work, knowing it would have pleased my late father.

Many others could be acknowledged for their influence, but they are mostly embraced elsewhere in my published works serving as the supporting publications to this thesis. Please note that some of the thesis material presented here will be published in autumn 2008 as Schumacher Briefing No. 15, *Rekindling Community: Connecting People, Environment and Spirituality* (Green Books). Further details of this, including downloads of graphics commissioned for this text that I am making available for third party use, will be found at www.AlastairMcIntosh.com/rekindlingcommunity.htm.

Abstract / Summary

Some Contributions of Liberation Theology to Community Empowerment in Scottish Land Reform 1991 – 2003

A Thesis Paper Linking Submissions for the PhD by Published Works

In 1999 the Scottish Parliament was restored under devolved settlement within the UK. The abolition of feudalism and the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 became what many described as its "flagship legislation". Throughout the campaign that led to the Act's passing, a Scottish version of liberation theology contributed both legitimacy and vision.

This thesis explores the author's participation in that movement through the main submitted work, *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power* (London: Aurum Press 2001, 2004). Supporting it are a further twelve peer-reviewed publications invoking poetry, magical realism and scholarship. While these focus on the raising of land consciousness during the 1990s - especially with respect to Eigg and the proposed Harris superquarry – reference is also made in appendices to the theological positions of other key campaigners.

The thesis posits a *Cycle of Belonging* as a framework for understanding community empowerment. Here a Sense of Place gives rise, respectively, to senses of identity, values and responsibility. The latter feeds back into reinforcing community of place.

Driving this Cycle is an iterative inner dynamic described as the *Rubric of Regeneration*. This entails *re-membering* that which has been dismembered; *re-visioning* how the future could be, and *re-claiming* what is needed to bring about transformation.

Taken together – the outer framework of the Cycle and the inner dynamic of the Rubric – an underlying principle of *cultural psychotherapy* emerges. The "psyche" in question is the "soul" of the community as a whole. It is rooted, as Ferrier saw in his metaphysics, in the essentialism of profound interconnection. As such, land reform is about more than just politics, agriculture or economics: it is also about healing communities and the human condition in general. It follows that when we speak of community development, consideration should be given to grounding "regeneration" in spirituality.

Note on Access to Contents

As required by the University of Ulster

I hereby declare that with effect from the date on which the thesis is deposited in the Library of the University of Ulster, I permit the Librarian of the University to allow the thesis to be copied in whole or in part without reference to me on the understanding that such authority applies to the provision of single copies made for study purposes or for inclusion within the stock of another library. *This restriction does not apply to the British Library Thesis Service (which is permitted to copy the thesis on demand for loan or sale under the terms of a separate agreement) nor to the copying or publication of the title and abstract of the thesis.* IT IS A CONDITION OF USE OF THIS THESIS THAT ANYONE WHO CONSULTS IT MUST RECOGNISE THAT THE COPYRIGHT RESTS WITH THE AUTHOR AND THAT NO QUOTATION FROM THE THESIS AND NO INFORMATION DERIVED FROM IT MAY BE PUBLISHED UNLESS THE SOURCE IS PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

1. Background, Objectives and Standpoint

There was a time in British universities when a PhD was not considered necessary if a scholar had a good track record of peer reviewed publications. Unfortunately, that situation has changed towards the more American and managerialist model of academia. This model is powerfully exposed, for example, in the critique that my friend and sometime mentor, Richard Roberts, provides of Tayloresque quality assurance in his chapter, "The end of the university and the last academic?" (Roberts 2002). Professor Roberts would be the last to suggest that taking a PhD is in any way "Tayloresque". But today's virtual necessity of having one is. It is a cultural shift that has made aspects of my own academic work increasingly difficult. The PhD has become, with research councils and some boards of studies, a kind of union card without which one can be marginalised as unqualified to teach in a university.

Because this has become a practical problem for me, it was with much gratitude that I enrolled with the Academy of Irish Cultural Heritages at the University of Ulster when some of their staff members, who are interested in the work I have undertaken, offered to take me on for consideration of the award of a PhD on the strength of existing published work. This meant that I have not had to "do" a PhD as such. Rather, I have had opportunity, in this extended essay, to draw together my existing work for assessment.

As I enrolled in August 2007 my supervisor wryly remarked that it is unusual for a "professor" at another institution to be registering for a PhD. That may be so, but I would argue that, except that we be "professors" in the first place, we should not be engaged with the sacred work that seeking and using knowledge entails.

What does it mean to be a "professor" but to "profess one's vocation", just as in military life to be a "general" means, as General Sir Rupert Smith points out, to be a

generalist (Smith 2006, 65). In the Scots generalist tradition of what the Tory politician of the interwar years, Walter Elliot, called the "democratic intellect" (Davie 1961, 75), we are called to be both professors and generals in our work with knowledge. We heed a calling – a vocation – to seek out and then usefully to apply disciplinary expertise in a generalist framework of life that tests knowledge against the yardstick of value to the community. This does not lead to the exclusion of "pure" theory, but it does force any such theory to defend itself against the charge of abstract dilettantism. That, at least, is my own standpoint when it comes to epistemological values. It does not have to be embraced by others, but it is the basis from which I will proceed in this work. As George Elder Davie sums it up in his Epilogue, "Democratic Intellectualism in the Twentieth Century":

> The words "democratic intellect" offer a twentieth-century formulation of an old problem. Does the control of a group (of whatever kind) belong, as of right, to the few (the experts) exclusively, and not at all to the ignorant many? Or are the many entitled to share the control, because the limited knowledge of the many, when it is pooled and critically restated through mutual discussion, provides a lay consensus capable of revealing certain of the limitations of interest in the experts' point of view? Or thirdly it may be held that this consensus knowledge of the many entitles them to have full control, excluding the experts. The middle way of the three is, of course, Walter Elliot's "democratic intellectualism". (Davie 1986, 262)

Here I will draw heavily on Davie and, especially, on some of his sources. His two books on the democratic intellect are widely held to have been the single most significant contribution to Scottish educational theory this century. In Scotland, as we will increasingly see, that education was traditionally rooted in the soil and, specifically, the soil of local communities of place. Davie cites an 1856 article by the traveller Charles de Rémusat that captures this profound epistemological grounding of rural Scottish people in their place. It speaks, Davie suggests (1961, 301), to a milieu of thinkers who "typify what is most distinctive about Scotland" … "the classic Scotland." With an obvious need for some exceptions, Here, in Davie's translation from the French, are de Rémusat's words; ones with which, and with but minimal need for mitigation to this day, I would enthusiastically concur:

> The country is wild and mountainous, and yet somehow penetrated by a certain civilisation; its rude cottages shelter a breed of men deeply influenced by the culture of sentiments and of ideas primitive in their beliefs, sophisticated in their reasoning powers, superstitious and sensible at the same time. Whatever be your nation, your social position, your educational background – if you speak to a Scottish peasant you speak to your equal; he; as well as you, knows what it is to be genuinely human and yet at the same time he has the instincts, the passions, the dreams of a dweller in mountainous places. (ibid. 301)

Personally I am undeterred by accusations of "Romanticism". After all, what is the problem with "romance" for those who are alive in the heart? We need that aliveness to go forwards, not backwards, in era of social anomie and ecological crisis.

The university with which I am currently most associated, Strathclyde, has as its motto, "Useful Knowledge." My adaptation of this is *that knowledge must serve either the poor or the broken in nature*. This is what most thoroughly democratises it. Here we stand on the same soil as such "Celtic" intellectuals as Professor Blackie who I have quoted in my Ethos (p.2 above) as well as citing more fully below. An academic who practices the grounded theory of such a grounded philosophy must be a seeker after wisdom in ways that always have service to the biotic community as its end. Such "community" in my opinion comprises, as we will see, community with one another, community with the natural environment, and community of the Spirit.

If this is what knowledge should serve, what then of a PhD? A PhD as a "doctorate" or teaching qualification purports to be a "qualification" – an achievement in quality - in *philo-sophia* – the love of the "goddess" of wisdom. From a Christian perspective, we might observe that Christ himself identifies with such *Sophia* – the personification of "woman wisdom" – in Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:35. This builds not just on Hebrew tradition but also, on Greek influences. Indeed, the rightful place of the Academy, as Socrates shows in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, ought not be confined to the vantage point of the ivory tower. It should also be down amongst the trees of the grove, walking barefoot, and doing so, the *Symposium* tells us, in pursuance of Diotima of Manitinea's teachings that the goal of philosophy is love. For the Platonic Socrates this was a necessity, not a lifestyle choice. As *Sophia* (Greek) or *Hokma* (Hebrew) herself

similarly asserts in the Biblical wisdom literature, “Whosoever finds me finds life and obtains favour from the Lord; but those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate me love death” (Proverbs 8:35-36, NRSV).

The reader will perhaps sense from these perambulatory thoughts why it is that I have never previously felt drawn to undertake a PhD. Most institutions do not welcome PhDs with attitude … with strongly held values such as derive from an applied human ecology, an essentialist teleology and even a framework of eschatology. I have lived where I will probably continue to live, like Plato’s Phaedrus, on the margins of academic life. That is both the strength and the weakness of what I will present here. I sometimes describe myself as a campaigning academic and the body of work here tabled derives from the world of campaigns. After all, I come in part from that part of the world (the Isle of Lewis with West Highland ancestors) where our Irish (or Gaelic) cultural heritages value education as a sacred trust for the people. Here we can see an archetypal pattern that Joseph Campbell called “the hero’s journey”. The young scholar sets with the birthrite of the out from the community that has given nurture. He or she then wrestles with the wider world – the stage of initiation that requires courage of the heart, Eventually the hero returns to their community, fit to be of service and infusing its life with the boons accrued in the journey (Campbell 1993).

The body of work that I present here documents one such tentative journey. More than being just an academic union card, this PhD is a taking stock; a pulling of things together. It is an attempt to synthesise and to more deeply explore the viewpoints that I propound in the range of written work submitted for the degree. I have found it to have been an iterative journey, a praxis of continuous action and reflection. Perhaps this is what a PhD was always meant to have been beyond its utilitarian functions.

Shortly I shall define my usage of some key ontological terms, but first, allow me provide my reader with a more complete sketch of where my work is situated. I come from a position of “faith” grounded in a Hebridean community that, throughout life, has taken shape not in any “blind” sense but by being empirically informed. That is why I

place the word *faith* here in quotation marks. However (and this is probably a cultural disposition), I accept as an integral part of my empiricism insights that are *poetic* and are tested for truth with the touchstone of beauty. That is to say, if a percept of reality seems to me to be beautiful, and deeply and consistently so, I consider that it probably approaches Truth. My capitalisation of Truth is deliberate. I believe that reality is Truth, and that we live as spiritual beings having a physical experience - the purpose of which is to deepen our knowing of Truth. This is our great vocation: to reach towards a Truth that will set us free (John 8:32).

I believe, too, that the fundamental structure of Truth, as well as its expression, is poetic. As the Greek word implies, reality itself is mythopoetic. It is the arising or making of reality in deep story. My friend, Kenneth White, whilst not taking a theocentric position, calls this "geopoetics" (White 1992; 1998). My work leans heavily on this. Just as the Bible and other sacred texts can sometimes be experienced as a living force, so I believe that poetics is a living force expressive of life. Ultimately the life in question is the life of God. Within the cultural tradition from which I have developed, this is understood as the Holy Spirit of Christ of whom John's gospel said: "In the beginning was the Word…" While this "Word" is a translation of *Logos*, the Logos in question is, if I understand Greek thought correctly, much more than mere logic: it is a divine ordering of reality to which the poetic is intrinsic. It is the beauty of fitting proportionality or, as I would see it, *ecology* writ on a cosmic scale and resting within the supreme metanarrative of Mythos. In addition, while I view what has just been described as expressive of Christian mysticism, I also see it as being compatible with other spiritual traditions that are grounded in a sense of life as love made manifest. For I do not believe that the Holy Spirit manifested only from out of the Middle East and for just the past two thousand years. As John tells us, the Word was, "In the beginning…" and its life is the life of "all that came to be". This does not appear to imply occidental spatial or temporal limits.

Throughout this thesis I shall frequently anchor my writing back into a Christian framework. With the profound and contestable caveat that I consider that framework to

be entirely compatible with universal “faith” perspectives predicated on life as love made manifest, I shall be doing this here even more than my writing normally does. This is because most of my other work is aimed at a secular world. There I seek to draw people in to consideration of metaphysical issues and to bridge these cross-culturally. However, an intriguing spin-off from having had this thesis supervised from within Northern Ireland is that I find there a set of norms that I recognise well from my own Presbyterian upbringing on Lewis. It is an ability to take metaphysical concerns, principles and grounding seriously and to apply them to the modern world without having to feel beholden to the mores of that world. My supervisors have urged me to explore in greater depth than I have done previously how some of my positions sit in relation to the context I have learned them from. In attempting to do this I have found myself covering ground ranging from James Frederick Ferrier (favourably) to Jean-Paul Sartre (unfavourably); and I have richly enjoyed this challenge. It has pushed me to think more deeply and clearly about what it is that I actually believe and why. Compared with what I might have drafted for a purely secular readership it has shifted the balance of my writing more towards the Christian side of interfaith reflection. While no attempt has been made by my supervisors to push me down a particular direction, I have appreciated the opportunity to explore these things under the lens of their expertise. And I have particularly enjoyed so doing under the auspices of what, being based in Derry/Londonderry, must proudly count as the geographically most remote university in Great Britain.

My theological position as thus far hinted at and to be further adumbrated accords with process theology (see Bergmann 2005 with a Foreword by Moltmann). But my approach has, as I have said, the added dimension of a theology that sees poetics as central to empowerment and spiritual development. It resonates with the developing theological field of theopoetics (Wilder 1976). I see poetics as the basis of both natural and human life. That this is why, in the Hebrew Bible, God *said* “let there be life” in breathing out Spirit upon the emergent cosmos. It is why, too, the prophets did much of their most powerful work in poetry.

Poetry is a living force that constellates what would otherwise be disparate. It counterpoints the atomisation that would otherwise lead to cosmic fragmentation. It is the "language" of love. As such, I consider poetics to be the lubricating basis of interconnectivity between peoples – Paul's membership one of another. It is this "membership" that, in my theology, underpins human community in its full context of human ecology. In Christianity it would be understood as the "Body of Christ", but other faiths also have their own ways of putting it. For example, Muslims, too, use the metaphor of the body for the community of the faithful, and Buddhists speak of the unity of the Buddha nature.

We are talking here of the power that empowers community and communities. The word, "empowerment", like its sister, "transformation," suggests a shift from a deficient to a sufficient situation. My focus in this study will be on community empowerment in relation to the land and a shift from a deficit of connection to increasing connection. I will explore this specifically as galvanised during the recent period leading up to the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. My claim is that this episode of land reform, running roughly from 1991 when the original Isle of Eigg Trust was established to the passing of the Act in 2003, has been a political process lubricated at least in significant part by liberation theology. I will take my theological definition of liberation direct from Gutiérrez at his most simplest where he expresses the neat formula (Gutiérrez 1988, xxxvii):

To Liberate = To Give Life

Such a definition, however, begs huge questions as to the meaning of the life that is given. I do not intend to try and answer that question by further definition. To do so would be intellectual arrogance, since the answer is to be found not in our heads but on our knees. In so saying, I am reminded of the time in 1986 that I asked my friend, Helen Dennett, an Australian authority on Papua New Guinea art, what was the meaning of the complex patterns with which traditional artists decorated their carvings – art forms that are not unlike Celtic knotwork. She replied, "When I ask them that,

they tell me: *Luk na bai yu save*." In Melanesian pidgin it means, *Look, and you will understand*. This principle, if transposed to Gutiérrez's definition of liberation, would suggest that we can understand only by saying "yes" to life; only by taking it in with the full faculties that we are given as human beings; and that liberation *theology* is therefore about saying that "yes" to life without which we can never hope to glimpse the God of life.

We tread here ground akin to George Steiner where he takes his bearings by citing Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "It is a matter of *apaideusis* (anti-intellectualism) not to distinguish between that which requires demonstration or proof and that which does not." (Steiner 1989, 231).

I therefore propose to work in this thesis with three inter-related and, to me, fairly self-evident elements – community empowerment, liberation theology and land reform. My selection of what is of importance will be bounded not by theoretical considerations, but by grounded observation and experience of *what mattered in practice* in the run-up to the passing of the 2003 Act. In this respect, my methodology owes much to both grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) and to action research (see overview by Heron & McArdle 2007), and in particular the roots of action research and participant observation in Freirian conscientisation pedagogy (Freire 1972). These approaches iteratively build theory from experience on the ground which is to say, on the foundation from which this life plays out. Academically these approaches are contested. They are seen by some as being potentially biased and lacking sharp definition. Poorly applied this can be, of course, the case. But in practice and when judiciously applied, they prove their worth in effecting social change. That is what has drawn me to them in working with community empowerment, liberation theology and land reform. .

How am I using such terms as these? Let us start with community empowerment. A very minimal literature surrounds this expression and, indeed, "community" in general. Perhaps that is a sign of our times. The UK government uses the phrase as little more than a synonym for participative citizenship. For example, the most prominent recent

publication (Local Government Association, 2007) is introduced by Hazel Blears MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who sets the report's tone with the statement:

> All my life I've been a firm believer in local activism. My whole political approach, fashioned on the streets and estates of Salford, is anchored in localism and devolution. I've seen how genuine empowerment can bring positive change and build the resilience necessary to prevent problems such as anti-social behaviour, which left unchallenged will blight communities. I believe that the best experts, advocates and leaders for local communities are people within local communities themselves. It's they who know most about community problems, and they who are best able to provide common sense solutions.

What follows on from here is practical and down-to-earth, and yet, it is numbingly prosaic. It attempts to tackle the age-old problem in a representative democracy of how to get people participating, but it misses the real point of empowerment as "power from within." It misses, too, any deep analysis of the structures of outer power that inhibit such blossoming from within. As such, the paradigm of empowerment is severely restricted and even, displaced by its lack of ontological perspective.

In contrast to this, work based on the "popular education" approach of Antonio Gramsci and, in particular, the conscientisation pedagogy of Paulo Freire, does tackle the underlying power dynamics. To varying degrees it takes on the ontological perspective in what Freire (1972) refers to as "humanisation." While Gramsci's position is Marxist, Freire broadens the standpoint from which he is coming in a manner resonant with the role that he held for a while as an advisor to the World Council of Churches in Geneva. His former colleague there, the Rev. Ian Fraser of the Iona Community, tells me that Freire would probably not have considered himself to have been a theologian (pers. com. c. 1990). Notwithstanding that opinion, Freire's work clearly echoes liberation theology. It most certainly provides a pedagogical foundation from which that theology can build, and, in practice, has built.

Liberation theology is more than just the theory – it is also the living fire of God that ignites a process that sustains the fire. Similarly, community is a process that deepens

and varies as an iridescent gemstone the more one looks into it. Community is more than just relationship with one another; more than just a synonym for social interactions ("society"). It is also our relationship with the Earth ("soil") and with what we might call "God" or the divine as the deep source of life as love made manifest ("soul"). As such, I use "community" to cover the triumvirate of what Satish Kumar of Schumacher College has alliterated as "soil, soul and society" (pers. com.). I also use religious terms like "soul," "spirit" (with or without capitalisation) and "God" in ways that I will define in the following paragraph – a necessity, not least, because different traditions vary in their terminological understandings.

As used in this thesis, the "soul" is understood to be the *essence* of a person's being. It is who they really are beneath the surface layers of ego and its counterpoint in the shadow. In my published work I use "soul" interchangeably with "great Self", with "Self" (capitalised), "deep Self" and even, "God Self". All these I use to mean the same thing - the point at which the divine and the personal meet – the "eternal soul."

I use "Spirit" both capitalised and in lower case. Where capitalised, I use it as the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, or Great Spirit as some traditions (for example, Native American) describe it. I make an assumption, based on empirical personal observation, that the Holy Spirit is not confined to particular cultures and histories, or even to particular religions. As such, I sometimes refer to "Buddha Nature" as being synonymous with the Spirit. Buddhist scholars vary as to how acceptable they find this to be. Christian ones vary even more! I will not attempt to defend these usages here – they are simply a statement of what I do in my work – using a paradigm that is often informed more by poetry than by the logical categories of systematic theology, whether of the Scholastics or the Reformers.

Where the word Spirit is not capitalised, I use it to mean the manner in which the Holy Spirit is reduced down to give individual vitality to our souls. As such, we have "a spirit", meaning not so much the soul in pneumatic form (though that is not to deny such an understanding), but rather, the individual soul as animated by life. Ultimately

there is no distinction of essence between Spirit and spirit, as the latter derives from the former. As Christ said in John 15, if the branches are cut away from the vine, they wither and are good only for the fire. But at a pragmatic level, the distinction is helpful. It is the branches that require pruning and produce the fruit. It allows us to speak of "my spirit" – for example, "my spirits are down at the moment, and my soul is laid low," or, "she made a spirited defence of her values."

From an academic perspective my usage of such terminology is arguably unsatisfactory. It is overly flexible. But in my work, I write about life, to which academia is subordinate, and which of us can claim with adequate intellectual credence to have fathomed the mysteries of life? Better, I would argue, to engage knowingly with the unknowable than to enter into fallacies of misplaced concreteness. After all, it is said that even Aquinas, author of the self-styled *Summa Theologica*, is said to have conceded in his dying words on the morning of December 6, 1273: "I can do no more. Such secrets have been revealed to me that all I have written now appears of little value" (Catholic Encyclopedia 2008). If such a lax approach to definition renders me a "dunce" then perhaps, after the manner of Duns Scotus, I should be content. The fact is that we are wrestling with matters here that go beyond Logos and into the realm of Mythos. We are dealing with categories that can only be approximated by logic and its categorisation, definition and rules of thought. Their true nature derives also from the realm of myth, story, poetry and song. Academic formulation is a useful starting point, but it must be wary of its role as a constraint. Academia can serve to preserve us from, for example, cultic thinking. But it can also stifle, which is what makes Aquinas's dying words such an important epistemological riposte.

Let me turn now to what I mean by "land reform". Here I shall be very constrictive in my definition for the purposes of limiting this thesis. I will refer to the shifting of land from concentrated private or public ownership into the hands of local communities of place, and, in a modern Scottish sense, to the process that could be said to have started in 1991 when a small group of us registered the first modern Scottish land trust, through to the passing in the Scottish Parliament of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act

2003. As a result of all this, and from the efforts of many different people with a multitude of contributions and varying perspectives, by June 2007, 367,000 acres of Scotland had come under community ownership, representing just over 2% of the nation's land mass (pers. com. 2007 Scottish Land Unit, Highlands & Islands Enterprise).

In linking land reform to the process of community empowerment I shall here present my core model, which I call the *Cycle of Belonging* (Figure 1). This has evolved from observation and experience over the past three decades (McIntosh 2008b). It posits starting with a Sense of Place, which is the grounding that most of us (though not all) have in life as we grow up and move about. This to varying degrees (according to culture, family background and geographical stability) gives rise to a Sense of Identity. Psychologically speaking identity is largely an ego function – a function of the "head" and an "outer" sense of self. But it carries embedded within it a set or sets of values, thus encoding and leading on to a Sense of Values. That connects to the level of the soul, and so pertains, metaphorically, to the "heart".

The process by which liberation theology contributes to community empowerment pertinent to land reform is that by which the Sense of Values is actualised. This is a consequence of realising, or in Freirian nomenclature, *conscientising,* community – community that is made with place (soil), with one another (society) and with deep human values and meaning (soul). When the heart's Sense of Values is guided by the head's sense of who we are (Sense of Identity), it kindles a Sense of Responsibility. This motivates action, which makes it the basis of *activism*. Metaphorically it is the realm of the "hand" – of doing and managing. It generates the practical empowerment and transformation that completes the cycle by renewing grounding in Sense of Place. And such place can be local, planetary, or the spectrum inbetween.

It follows from this that personal psychospiritual development, community empowerment and ecological regeneration are all inter-related. They can be stimulated at any point in the Cycle of Belonging, and similarly, they can be weakened at any

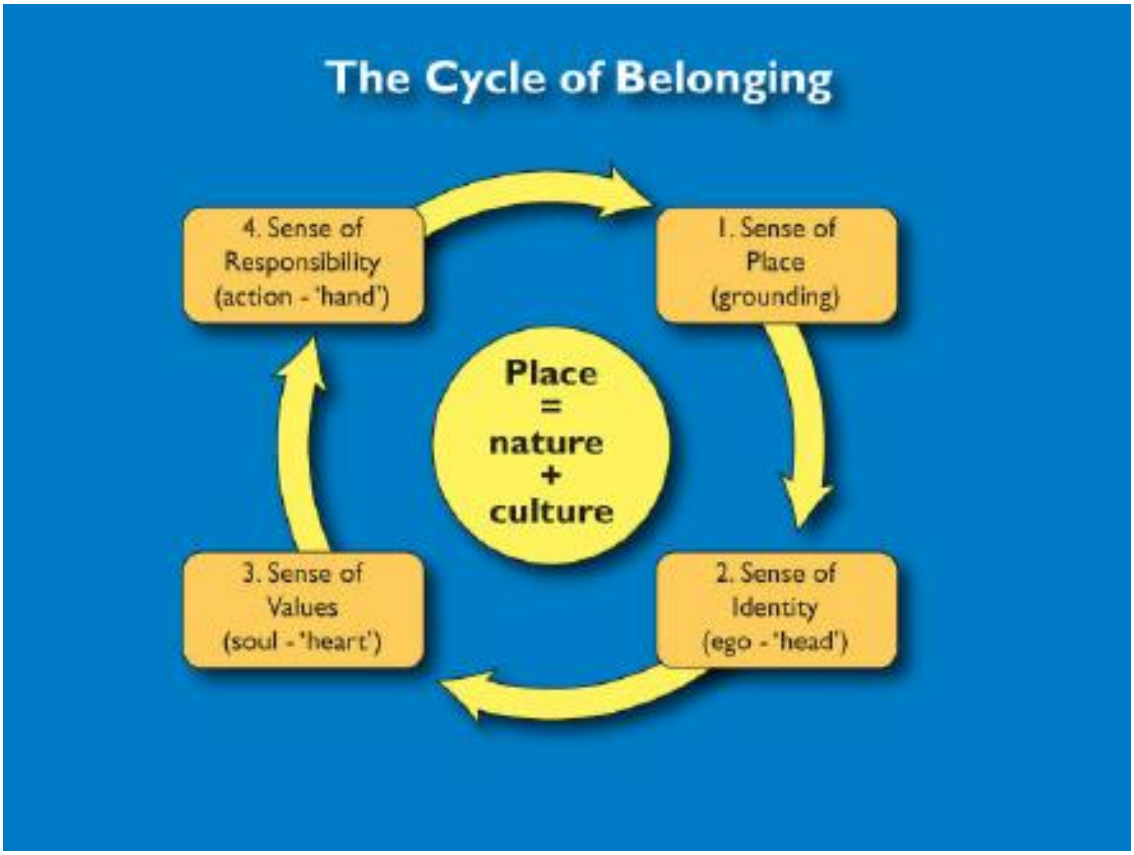


Figure 1: The Cycle of Belonging

point. The work of community empowerment as understood from the praxis of liberation theology becomes the work of ever-deepening the Cycle of Belonging. In Christian theology, it is the work of realising the “Kingdom”. Just as Kingdom is traditionally capitalised in this context, so I have, for the purpose of this model, capitalised the four stages within it to differentiate the specific technical sense in which I am using these terms in this text.

Let me now move on to suggest that the sequence posited in the Cycle of Belonging is, in practical terms, brought into consciousness and activated by a process of, 1) re-membering what has been lost or never incarnated in the first place, 2) re-visioning an alternative way of being (i.e. “the Kingdom” in traditional language), and 3) re-claiming what this requires (theologically, the deepening of incarnation). I shall refer to this as the *Rubric of Regeneration*. As we shall see later, it was used explicitly in my work with the Isle of Eigg Trust, and implicitly with much else. It is illustrated in Figure 2.

This, then, is my fundamental framework of community empowerment leading to the regeneration that finds expression in land reform. But in what ways does it accord with clause 2 of the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work at the University of Ulster? The regulation requires showing that “a significant contribution to scholarship has been made.” This must derive from “original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding.” It can take the form of books, articles and “work which may be non-text based”. My first supervisor has suggested that, in my case, it should be presented as being “akin to a PhD involving practice.” I will be taking land reform, including land consciousness as expressed in the Harris superquarry campaign, as being my non-text basis. This will be presented as reflected through the text-based publications that I am submitting. I will here attempt to show that my work, variously led, flanked, inspired and supported by that of many other people, has evolved as “a significant contribution to scholarship” because of the “knowledge and understanding” it has developed around the spirituality of community.

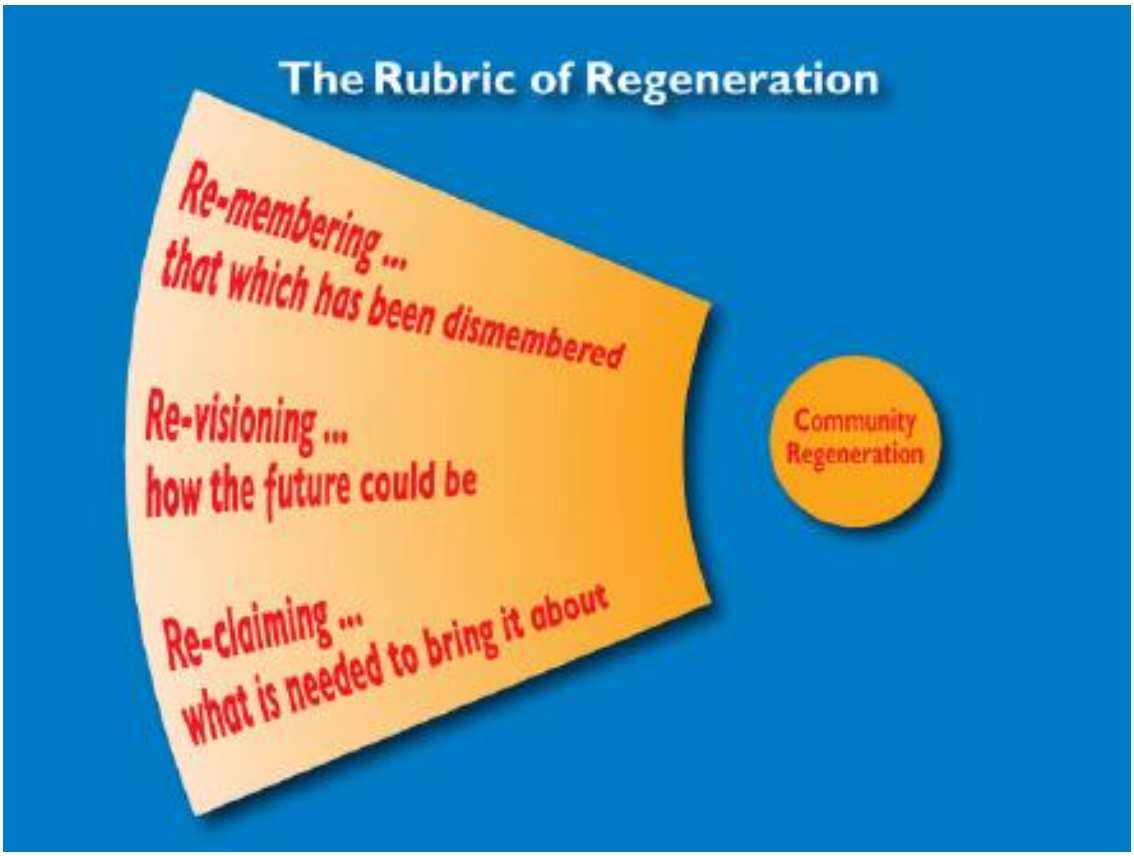


Figure 2: The Rubric of Regeneration

In viewing engagement with land reform as a "non-text" research process, I am not speaking from the convenient retrospect of hindsight. From the outset, I saw my work with land reform as action research in which I would be advancing engagement with the issues while, at the same time, researching and documenting them. For example, I vividly remember, circa 2002, articulating the work on Eigg in this way to an Academic Board meeting of the Centre for Human Ecology chaired by the head of the university's Institute of Ecology and Resource Management, Professor Colin Whittemore. I said then that my work would involve both campaigning for and researching land reform, and asked whether this was acceptable to the Board. It was, though subsequently, and partly as a consequence of that work, Professor Whittemore with a heavy heart had to accede to the University of Edinburgh's closure of the Centre for Human Ecology. It had, as one university manager put it (pers. com. 1996), failed to be "in alignment" with the university's plans to subsume it into a new institute. In the view of a *New Scientist* leader at the time, these managers had stifled "a tradition of fearless inquiry" (0:264-9 – *Soil and Soul*).

In my work I see myself as a campaigning academic or an "engaged" academic – this, in much the same way as my friend, Sulak Sivaraksa in Siam/Thailand, has developed the notion of "engaged Buddhism" (Sivaraksa 1999). I seek both to draw upon and to generate theory in iterative praxis with activism. My examiners at this point will notice a scholarly tension that runs through this work. The action research and participant-observer paradigm means that, in part, I am both an observer and subject of my own research. It has components that are strongly first person inquiry as well as second and third person. This is unconventional in traditional scholarly research, but is accepted within paradigms of action research and in some applications of grounded theory. The upside is that it makes for profoundly connected research. The downside is that it raises major questions of bias in how work is reported when one has, oneself, partly influenced it. I have no answer to this other than to say that as best as I am able, I seek to evaluate my own work objectively. At the end of the day, if I fail to do so, self-delusion and the ridicule of other informed observers will undermine the results.

As my published work makes clear, land theology runs deep in Scottish culture and comes from a number of leading thinkers both past and present. Mine is only one of a range of current voices; indeed, I could not do what I do were it not rooted in a living culture that creates the possibility. As I draft this text I am working with a student, Rutger Henneman, from the Netherlands, who is interviewing other key theological players who have contributed to modern Scottish land reform. His interim research report for the Anthropological Journal of European Cultures is attached (Appendix 1). But the undertaking of a student study into broader influences does not overcome the truth that I myself have done everything I can to use theology in land reform, and therefore my work is open to criticism on scholarly grounds for having overtly set out to create the realities that it then purports to describe!

Personally, I have no problem with having so done provided it is consciously acknowledged. To the accusation of trying to create the realities that I then report I plead "guilty as charged," with the caveat that my own contributions should not be overstated just because I myself have documented them and, therefore, wittingly or unwittingly influence the public perception of how they might be attributed. And so, guilty, yes, but in mitigation of sentence, I would further plead that it is in engaged scholarly application that mythopoetic ideas can propagate into the world and, thereby, move from the Academy of the tower to that of the grove. I have never been interested in just being an academic. Consistent with the paradigm of "useful knowledge" and with being an activist, I am interested in *getting results and making a difference*. In particular, I am interested in stimulating awareness of spirituality, a useful definition of which might be *the dynamics of that which gives life*.

I believe that such an applied yet metaphysical paradigm is justifiable within the Scots democratic intellectual framework – the principle, as I would interpret it, that knowledge ought to serve the community (Davie 1961, 1986; Walker 1994). In his unpacking of Scots' democratic intellectual pedagogy, George Elder Davie shows that the cultural drift went against the pedantic and favoured the holistic. He says that in traditional Scots pedagogy:

> …the emphasis was less on questions of detail than on topics connected with what one might call the common sense of subjects, *and with their relation to life in general*, and hence, perhaps, it was established in these tutorial meetings that the vote of the class, or the public opinion of the class, had a real authority as to the merit of doctrines, equal, or perhaps superior even, to that of the Professor. (Davie 1961, 15, my italics)

After all, which of us can really claim to say anything meaningful about matters that pertain to the roots of life? Is it not true that most of academia is but part of the bonfire of vanities that compounds the hubris of the world? Theologically, as I have mentioned with Aquinas, this cannot be denied. And yet, as can be seen by analogy with the place of "works" in a theology of faith, works (as the Book of James points out in the Bible) are not without their value. They just should not be over-rated. Similarly, in the work described here the "works" that have unfolded with the help of scholarly analysis and theory are not without debt to that scholarship, though neither should that debt take on Pelagian proportions. As such, I offer to my examiners a peculiar PhD – one in which the value of academia itself is relativised to the providential grace of God mythopoetically expressed. To cite Davie again:

> Hence the very democratic nature of the examination system, developed under the auspices of Presbyterianism, helped to perpetuate a type of mind, long associated with North Britain, which – its enemies said – was always forward in explaining the metamathematics of mathematical subjects it was little versed in, and was always ready to produce literary and aesthetical criticisms of classical authors it could translate only haltingly and with a crib. (Ibid. 15)

By now my supervisors and examiners will see that not only does my work sit on the margins of academia, but my Presbyterian background shamelessly seeks the cultural security of assured justification in holding it there amongst all the self-confessed weaknesses of a priesthood that is open to "all believers"! In this, Davie's chapter on democratic intellectualism as comprising "The Presbyterian Inheritance" is profoundly important (Davie 1961). Being culturally "Presbyterian" that inheritance was bottom up rather than top down. Intellectuals were (and are) subordinate to their communities; not the other way around as in the elite pedagogical model. This presses home the importance of intellectual generalism as a social context that can hold specialisms, but

is not intimidated by them. Such a culture knows that there are smarter things in life than just being smart. This was why the traditional Scots general MA degree was, as Davie calls it (1961, 14), "a tripartite affair" – a broad-ranging melange of logic and moral philosophy, languages and literature, and maths and natural philosophy. Such was what made up the "lad o' pairts" – the talented youth from a humble background who, sent to university with but a sack of oatmeal and a few shillings to provide for a term, knew that the purpose of his subsequent profession was not to be for self-aggrandizement, but service whether direct or indirect back into the community that had sent him. And while I speak here of Scottish mores which are only partly of "Irish" origination, I believe that the same would probably be true of "Irish heritages" in a general sense.

Indeed, such a democratic intellectual inheritance has historically been recognised as being of significance well beyond the estimation of Scots alone. Even before the 18th century Scotland's intellectual reference points were more continental in philosophical terms than Anglocentric. Thus, for example, Davie says of Ferrier (of whom more shortly, and in a remark with which, I think, Ferrier himself would *not* have agreed because he disdained claims that his work was German influenced): "thus the general effect of the synthesis: *Scottish and German* is to give a French look to Ferrier's best pages" (Davie 1961, 283). In contrast to the emerging English empiricism, "l'école écossaise" of Scots metaphysics was described, from the continent, as being "une terre de savoir et d'intelligence" (ibid. 260).

In support of this Davie quotes several French intellectuals (though not, as far as I can see, Voltaire, with the oft-quoted attributed saying - I cannot find the original source - "It is to Scotland that we look for our idea of civilisation." These confirm my sense that Scots theology has always had a metaphysical grounding that empowers the people of the land from the land, with its mythos of religion, story, poetry and song, and does so in ways that integrates checks and balances on the excesses of nationalism that has blighted other European countries. For example, Davie (ibid. 255) cites Charles de Rémusat (Revue des Deux Mondes, 1856), who said:

> L'Ecosse est un peu oubliée. Le temps n'est pourtant pas si éloigne où la raison, l'imagination, l'amour de la vérité, de la poésie, de la nature, dirigeaient vers ce pays et nos esprits et nos pas.

Davie presumes not to provide translations where he thinks that too much would be lost in translation. That is, however, a loss for many of his readers suffering from a less generalist education today. But with my own meagre faculties supplemented with some help from Vérène, my French wife (such internationalism is best lived and not just philosophised about), it equates roughly as:

> Scotland is a little forgotten. The time is not long passed when reason, imagination, love of truth, of poetry and of nature, directed our spirits and our steps towards this country.

Similarly, Victor Cousin in *La Philosophie Ecossaise* (1857) said:

> La philosophie écossaise présente en effet ce phénomène bien rare dans l'histoire de la philosophie moderne, si mobile et si agitée; déjà elle compte un siècle et elle est loin d'être épuisée. (Davie, 1961, 272)
>
> [Scottish philosophy is a rarity within the transitory and agitated history of modern philosophy: it has already completed a century, and it remains far from being exhausted.]

These qualities of human nature are grounded in the nature of natural nature, thus David Masson, writing in the summer 1852 edition of *North British Review*, concluded:

> [The Scotchman's (sic)] walk, as a thinker, is not by the meadows and wheatfields, and the green lanes, and the ivy-clad parish churches, where all is gentle and antique and fertile, but by the bleak sea-shore which parts the certain from the limitless, where there is doubt in the sea-mews' shriek, and where it is well if, in the advancing tide, he can find a footing on a rock. (Davie, 1961, 317)

Davie argues that the French especially admired how Scots intellectuals could – sometimes and it has to be conceded, at our best, hold together what has been called "a community of contested discourses". As the French saw it, such scholarly community

mistrusted ideology but affirmed diverse individuality that emerged from within the collectivity. Thus, to cite Cousin once more:

> Dans cette famille de nobles penseurs, dispersée à Aberdeen, à Glasgow, à Edinburgh, une heureuse variété se mêle à une libre unité. Point de symbole imposé; nul n'imite; tous différents par la tournure d'esprit et du caractère, par la diversité des goûts et des talents; tous se rencontrent dans une égale répugnance aux chimères et aux excès de toute sorte. Ils sont indépendants, et ils composent une école! (Davie 1961, 276)
>
> [Within this family of noble thinkers, spread from Aberdeen to Glasgow and Edinburgh, a happy diversity mingles with a free unity. No norms are imposed; no-one imitates others; all are different by virtue of spirit and character, by the diversity of their tastes and talents; and they all find common cause in their repugnance of both superficiality and excesses of all sorts. *They are free spirits, yet they comprise a school!* (My emphasis.)]

Voltaire, incidentally, was less kind on this account. Describing Scots Presbyterianism as "nothing more than pure Calvinism as it was established in France and survives in Geneva," he quips:

> As the priests in this sect receive very small stipends from their churches, and so cannot live in the same luxury as bishops, they have taken the natural course of decrying honours they cannot attain. Picture the proud Diogenes trampling underfoot the pride of Plato: the Scottish Presbyterians are not unlike that proud and tattered reasoner. (Voltaire 2005, 40)

But while touching a disquieting home truth, this was not the general continental view of Scotland. Dating back to the "peregrini" Scots/Irish monks of the so-called Dark Ages, Scotland was seen by Europe as being outward-looking towards the world. Such was "Scots internationalism" (MacDiarmid 1969). It stood its ground yet reached to the world. It equated learning with generosity of spirit. Thus Davie (ibid. 239) cites the Celtic Revival scholar and professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, John Stuart Blackie, as follows from his epistle, *The Advancement of Learning in Scotland* (1855):

> My cry is for learning in the widest and most comprehensive sense of the word; not for Greek and Latin leaning only, but for Icelandic also and Sanscrit; for the history of the beautiful forms of art and of great social revolutions, as well as of

> Greek particles and Latin pronouns. What Scotland wants, and what Scotland, I feel assured, will at no distant period produce, is not new editions of trite Greek plays already edited so often, and tortured so critically …, on the contrary, *we demand a scholarship with a large human soul and a pregnant social conscience.* (My emphasis.)

But as a school the Celtic Revivalists had their enemies – both from some of the home-grown Evangelicals surrounding the Disruption of 1843 who saw it as laying too much store by human reason as well as tending towards "pantheism", and by post-Union incoming forces of Oxbridge Anglicisation that predicated Classical linguistic pedantry over Scots metaphysical generalism. In what Davie calls "a reaction against the cultural nationalism which Blackie stood for", the editor (from 1860 to 1864) of the *Edinburgh Courant*, James Hannay, set out consistently to belittle young Scottish professionals in both law and the church. These, he said, "never had the prolonged grounding of an English public school-boy; nor the intellectual opportunities combined with the pleasant, liberal, gentlemanlike sociality of an English University man" (from Hannay's "The Scot at Home" in *Cornhill*, 1866, cited by Davie, 1961, 245).

Hannay himself was described by the East Lothian novelist Mrs Oliphant as 'the very essence of what has been called the Cockney school, and out of his element in the Northern capital.' He would, in due course, return to London; but not before leaving a surprisingly considerable dent in Scots intellectual confidence. That dent was made possible, in the view of Blackie, by the fact that such Anglicisers "had in their favour the prestige of fashion and the still more potent influence of gold" (cited ibid., 248) – a critique shared by both Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy in their various literary mentions of how "English" (with some help from Scotland's Adam Smith) technical and economic principles were impacting on the fabric of the Russian soul.

Davie (ibid. 244) sums up as follows the difference between Hannay and the Anglicisers, and Blackie and the indigenous school:

> As his friend Espinasse said, in reference to this part of Hannay's criticism – "Culture is perhaps more generally diffused among Scotchmen than among

> Englishmen, but the educated and educating classes are certainly inferior to the Southerners in classical scholarship, and this Hannay chose to identify with culture."
>
> The theme of classics was indeed central to Hannay's polemics against the surviving traces of the Scottish way of life. His object apparently was to discredit once and for all the vague prestige which still clung to Edinburgh as a result of the French admiration for *l'école ecossaise.* He set himself to oppose to the Northern ideal of democratic intellectualism a principle, associated in his mind with the South, of 'Blood and Culture', according to which a system of racial exclusiveness was presented as preferable to the anarchism of Scottish democracy, and the scheme of detailed classical scholarship was lauded as incomparably superior to the generalities of [imputed] premature intellectualism. (My interpolation.)

This would all be just curious intellectual history but for three considerations. One, is that, as both Davie (1961 & 1986) and Lockhart Walker (1996) forcefully show, the consequences of Anglicised pedagogy have shaped the current epistemology of Scottish universities, this being an arguable loss that invites restoration in the course of the ongoing empowerment of the people. Secondly, it is this very groundedness of knowledge in, for and with the community that has, in my opinion, contributed to the ability, residual but potent, of contemporary Scottish communities to take the initiative with both Devolution and its flagship legislation, land reform. And thirdly, a decisive effort has been made, as we shall touch on in our discussion shortly of the GalGael principle, to handle the identity issues that are thereby raised within a rubric of "soil and soul" rather than "blood and culture" or even, "blood and soil". This finds expression in the Scottish Government's rubric, "One Scotland; many cultures". It makes possible a strong re-connection with communities of place without these necessarily having to be xenophobic. That is important in order that land reform can advance in a socially life-giving manner that is consistent with freedom and liberation.

To understand such outlooks better we must examine the foundations. One place where the archaeology lies exposed is Scots metaphysics. As Davie correctly saw, central to the 19th century flowering of this was the figure of James Fredrick Ferrier (1808-1864). Davie devotes to him Part 4 ("Ferrier and Common Sense") of his 1961 treatise on democratic intellectualism.

Ferrier took a middle way in the great debate as to whether the Absolute, or the particular, was the central reference point of epistemology. He sided with the philosophy of common sense, but if I impute correctly, he saw reason as God-given. Human reasoning powers when tested and discerned with the help of philosophy are therefore an emanation of, and not necessarily an anathema to, the divine essence. As such, Ferrier attempted to square the circle in the squabble between philosophy and the Church that followed the Disruption of 1843 when the Free Church broke away from the Established Church of Scotland. But in this endeavour he was unsuccessful. Perceived as a "Moderate" he lost in 1852 the coveted chair in moral philosophy at Edinburgh to the then-ascendant Evangelicals.

Here we can leave aside Ferrier's contested views on common sense and his acerbic attack on the Evangelicals whose principles, I suspect, he may not have fully understood being not grounded in those parts of Scotland that had suffered most from a national church framed by the patronage of landed power. My interest in Ferrier lies in his articulation of a very Scottish perspective on *reality*, and its relevance to *essentialism* such as, in my view, is a vital but overlooked and often, feared, component in both community empowerment and the reconstitution of communities of place. In essence, essentialism *is* spirituality – essence being as Aristotle defines it in the *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 2001: 988a:30-35) as "the substantial reality" of any thing, beyond which it "cannot be reduced to another definition which is fuller in expression" (994b:15-20).

In 1854, working from St Andrews University, Ferrier produced his *opus magnum*, *Institutes of Metaphysic*. It is a book about the nature and knowing of reality. Contemporary Scots will often tell their adversaries to "get real, man", and this reflects how deeply rooted the construct of "reality" is in popular culture. We would be hard pressed to see it expressed with less ambiguity than in Ferrier's writings.

"Metaphysics is the science of real existence" he resolutely affirms (Ferrier 2005, 561). Reality is for him a common-sense, essential or essentialist given quality; thus he counters his critics saying:

> It is not true that I attempt to reach real existence by demonstration. I assume real existence; I take it for granted that there is something. I assume this; and I care not what the grounds of the assumption may be called (ibid. 558).

And Ferrier has no compunction whatsoever about being an essentialist; indeed, he accuses those who play philosophical games with the term of intellectual skirmishing and tampering. What he says here is of such importance that I must quote him at length, since, like a good whisky, I find him unsuitable to distil further and risk loss of flavour:

> At this place it is proper to take some notice of those random skirmishes or stray shots – they can scarcely be called controversies or discussions – which occasionally show themselves in the history of speculation touching what is called the "essence" of the mind. And, first of all, it is important to remark the change of meaning which this word has undergone in its transmission from the ancient to the modern schools of philosophy. Formerly the word "essence" meant that part or characteristic of anything which threw an intellectual illumination over the rest of it. It was the point of light, the main peculiarity observable in whatever was presented to the mind. It signified the quality or feature of a thing which made it what it was, and enabled the thing or things in question to be distinguished from other things. It was a synonym for the superlatively comprehensible, the superlatively cogitable. Nowadays it means exactly the reverse. It signifies that part of a thing which carries no light itself, and on which no light can be thrown. The "essence" is the point of darkness, the assumed element in all things which is inaccessible to thought or observation. It is a synonym for the superlatively incomprehensible, the superlatively incogitable. Other words, as shall be shown hereafter, have been tampered with in the same way.
>
> No great mischief can ensue from the reversal of the meaning of a philosophical term, provided those who employ it in its modern signification are aware of the sense in which it was formerly used, and are careful to record the distinction between the two acceptations. No precaution of this kind has been observed in the case of the word "essence." The ancients are supposed by our psychologists to have understood the term in the sense in which they understand it; and hence the charge has gone forth against them that they prosecuted their inquiries into matters which are inaccessible to the faculties of man and hopelessly incomprehensible. Never was there a more unfounded accusation. They prosecuted their researches, we are told, into the essence of things; and this, we

> are assured by a wiser generation of thinkers, lies beyond the limits of human cognition. What *you* choose to call the essence of things may be of this character, but not what *they* called the essence of things. With the old philosophers the essence of things was precisely that part of them of which a clear conception could be formed: with you of the modern school it is precisely that part of them of which there can be no conception. Whether anything is gained by thus changing the meaning of words, is another question; but certainly it is rather hard treatment dealt out to the early speculators, first to have the meaning of their language reversed by modern psychology, and then to be knocked on the head for carrying on inquiries which are absurd under the new signification, but not at all absurd under the old one.
>
> Considered, however, even as a matter of nomenclature, the change is to be deprecated. The reversal has resulted in nothing but confusion, and the propagation of unsound metaphysical doctrine. The *essence* of the mind, and the mind *per se*, are nowadays held to be identical; and these terms are employed by psychology to express some occult basis or unknown condition of the mind. That the mind *per se* is absolutely inconceivable (although for a reason very different from that alleged by psychology) is undoubted. But the essence of the mind is, of all things, the most comprehensible. The essence of the mind is simply the *knowledge which it has of itself*, along with all that it is cognisant of. Whatever makes a thing to be what it is, is properly called its essence. Self-consciousness, therefore, is the essence of the mind, because it is in virtue of self-consciousness that the mind is the mind – that a man is himself. Deprive him of this characteristic, this fundamental attribute, and he ceases to be an intelligence. He loses his essence. Restore this, and his intelligent character returns. Perhaps these remarks may assist in restoring to the word "essence" its right signification, and in dissipating the psychological hallucination, that the essence of the mind is inconceivable. (Ibid. 249-52)

The implications of Ferrier's reflection on consciousness for the work of *empowerment* must not be lost on us. In effect, he is saying that to deprive a person of connection with an understanding of "essence" is to render them *imbecilic*. Ferrier's agenda was not political. As we have seen, he was a Moderate in the nomenclature of the times, and his invective was aimed at the Evangelicals who deprived him – Spinozian "pantheist" that they suspected him of being – of the Edinburgh chair. But the conflicted convulsions of that debate (Davie 1961, 253-258) need not avert us from valuing the relevance of Ferrier's insights to understanding essentialist leanings in the Scottish psyche, and from seeing the importance of carrying these forward into the future. After all, if we understand Freire's *conscientisation* as meaning the raising of critical awareness of oppression through bringing consciousness and consciousness to bear upon the power

dynamics of life – then such consciousness is, in Ferrier's sense, precisely a process of *revitalising the essence.* Poverty, as revealed in Ferrier's final sentences just quoted, is at root both epistemological and ontological. It raises metaphysical questions, which is why empirical, positivist or worst of all, logical positivist approaches on their own can only skirt around the fundamental questions of poverty's causes. Positivism makes for good "positive economics", but has no solid ethical reference point from which to predicate social and ecological justice and thereby hold such economics in an ethical framework. Such an observation elevates essentialist Scots metaphysics to a potentially life-giving role – one that is integral to liberationist praxis in advancing a basis for being fully human that can, in the sense Gutiérrez's liberation theology, "give life".

Ferrier follows Aristotle's division in seeing metaphysics as comprising both epistemology and ontology. He therefore subtitled his *Institutes*: "The theory of knowing and being." Indeed, etymologists credit Ferrier as having introduced the word "epistemology" from the Greek into the English language around 1854 (OED). Although much of his philosophy comprises dry cognition, he does appear to have recognised the place of the heart in such epistemology: Davie, drawing from Ferrier's unpublished lecture manuscripts, quotes him as saying beautifully in 1849-50: "Sympathy seems to play the same part in the moral world as touch plays in the physical" (Davie 1986, 263). The ecologist in me delights, moreover, in what Davie refers to as Ferrier's "remarkable outburst … which has puzzled the historians of philosophy" – something which "his literary executors found too embarrassing to publish except for the first eight words" (Davie 1961, 305). These eight words find their truncated expression in the Papers Supplementary to the 1875 third edition of the *Institutes*. But cited more fully by Davie from another source (Davie 1961, 305-6, citing Ferrier's *Scottish Philosophy, the Old and the New*, p. 12.), Ferrier's essentialism rooted in bioregion, or community of place, could hardly be clearer:

> My philosophy is Scottish to the very core; it is national in every fibre and articulation of its frame. It is a natural growth of old Scotland's soil … [and] – whatever its merit or demerit may be – was born and bred in the country and is essentially native to the soil.

In short, the body of work that I present here to my colleagues at Ulster comes from a grounded place in both its application and the body of theory from which it has arisen. As Ferrier repeats in those eight words permitted to append the *Institutes*, "My philosophy is Scottish to the very core" (Ferrier 2005, 554) … though that is not to imply that it is in any way *exclusively* so! It is the body of theory arising from such soil, physical and cultural, that this thesis seeks to present alongside the specific cases that illustrate its application. I acknowledge that such grounding sits ambiguously with the mainstream Academy, and unconformably (in the geological sense of discontinuity) with Oxbridge tradition, as both Davie (with his reference to puzzled historians of philosophy) and his intellectual successor (and staunch supporter of the Centre for Human Ecology), Andrew Lockhart Walker (1994), repeatedly show (op. cit.). That is a consequence of presenting academic work that emerges up from the grove rather than down from the ivory tower. That is what even Socrates had to learn when Phaedrus took him down to the grove, the sacred grove. It is for my examiners to decide whether this is justifiable and constitutes a coherent piece of scholarly work, and I suspect it is no coincidence that I have ended up, serendipitously, presenting my work in a university rooted in the Celtic world.

In concluding this introduction, let me just emphasise that I do not see this thesis essay as being in any way a substitute for the accompanying published pieces of work but a theoretical and practical contextualisation of them. They are my primary testimony. The function of thesis essay is simply to show how they interrelate to a semi-coherent body of work – the nature of which dawns more fully on my own awareness even as I reflect on and write about it here.

2. Summary of the Work

In presenting my thesis I am indebted to Tim Gorringe, professor of divinity at Exeter, who, in reviewing *Soil and Soul* in *Political Theology* (2003) while he was still on Ferrier's old stamping ground at St Andrews, has stated:

> McIntosh offers a revolutionary praxis which, as it actually worked itself out, never demonized its opponents but which continued to extend love and understanding to them.... The book has received wide praise, and can be read on many levels.... What has not attracted comment, and the reason for reviewing it here, is that it is also a book of theology.... Providing the backbone to the narrative of the whole book, is a theology of creation which draws on ecofeminist insights but which is also a robust theology of grace. This is what makes the book theologically important.... Here we have a liberation theology, emerging out of liberative praxis, in which Calvinism and ecofeminism are indissolubly fused to offer a liberation theology of creation.... As an unregenerate Marxist and Barthian I do not agree with all the theological and political emphases, but on the other hand this is without doubt one of the most creative pieces of British liberation theology ever written, and it deserves wide currency, debate and discussion.

Soil and Soul is the primary piece of work that I place on the table for this PhD. When I wrote it, I always saw it informally as my *magnum opus*, a kind of PhD that had unfolded from my work and which was written in a manner that had firm academic undergirding yet was approachable to the public. Gorringe's words speak more than adequately, indeed, over-generously to my hopes for *Soil and Soul* and how I see it to be of PhD relevance.

I have been asked by one of my supervisors to give "evidence of practice" that my work justifies being considered "as akin to a PhD involving practice". In my original draft I had expressed reservations about doing this. None of my work is "mine" alone. In most of it, I have been only one voice in a much wider process. Sometimes the importance of that voice has been inflated beyond others because much of my work has

involved the media, and I am myself a writer. Acclaim for that writing can be seen in the book reviews at http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/soilandsoul.htm . But what of recognition for the tangible work on the ground?

I have in my files a number of letters from individuals who have felt supported or affirmed by my work, but to bring them out as "evidence" feels distasteful. Perhaps it will suffice if I give just two examples, one each from local representative bodies relevant to my two main areas of work – the campaigns on Eigg and on Harris.

In 1996, when the Centre for Human Ecology was being closed by Edinburgh University, well over a hundred letters from prominent people the world over poured in to defend our work. The one that meant the most to me personally came from the Residents' Association of the Isle of Eigg. Part of this said:

> The people of Eigg would not be where they are now without the expertise of teachers and students from the Centre who have tirelessly helped us strengthen our resolve and morale when our small isolated community was under threat.

In 2004 when Lafarge finally withdrew from their superquarry proposal on the Isle of Harris, I received a letter from Harris Voluntary Service signed jointly by its Secretary, Councillor Morag Munro, and the Chairman of the Quarry Benefit Group, John Macaulay. This said:

> It is now some time since that memorable day of 2 April, when Lafarge brought the Lingerbay Superquarry saga to an end by withdrawing from the planning appeal process.
>
> This letter in recognition of your part in this result is long overdue. There is no doubt that you were in the right place at the right time. Nevertheless, your own contribution to the Lingerbay debate ensured that you were the right person. This can be traced back to your contribution to the Public Inquiry, your book, "Soil and Soul" and your constant commitment to the well-being of this and other small communities. All this history meant that you were the ideal person to facilitate Lafarge's final decision and "dignified exit".

> We are very much aware of the fact that the relationship which you formed with Lafarge personnel did not happen overnight. This was achieved through a great deal of effort, diplomacy and wisdom on your part.
>
> We, in Harris, are very grateful to you for your efforts on our behalf and although you have been at pains to keep a low profile, there is no doubt in our minds that your intervention was crucial to the final outcome.
>
> Mile taing. Leis gach beannachd. Yours sincerely ….

Only the second of these testimonies refers, indirectly (by reference to my public inquiry role) to theological input – but since much of the thrust of my work was theological, that can be assumed to be implicit rather than needing to be rendered explicit.

For the purpose of this PhD submission I wish to offer, in addition to *Soil and Soul*, the following twelve pieces of published work, which I have divided into four categories of three items each.

This corpus comprises a personal account of engagement with land reform and community conscientisation 1991-2003 and, in particular, the campaigns on Eigg and Harris. Woven through *Soil and Soul* is a spiritual and psychological history of the land issue in Highland and Hebridean Scotland and material that demonstrates the role that liberation theology played in building the political momentum that contributed (after the book's initial publication) to the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Here I will briefly introduce each of the works to show why they are included and what they contribute.

I. **Publications that show where land reform concerns came from culturally in my work:**

1. 1992, A 'collector's item' or community ownership - the Isle of Eigg debate, *Edinburgh Review,* 88, 158-162.

This was the launch text of the Isle of Eigg Trust. It sets out the methodological framework of re-membering, re-visioning and re-claiming – the Rubric of Regeneration - by which much of my work has proceeded. It explicitly addresses cultural sickness.

2. 1994, Journey to the Hebrides, *Scottish Affairs*, 6, 52-67.

An early work that shows how the process of land-people-spirit relationships developed in the course of understanding and teaching the meaning of human ecology.

3. 1999, Psychospiritual Effects of Biodiversity Loss in Celtic Culture and its Contemporary Geopoetic Restoration, in *Cultural & Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: a Complementary Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Assessment,* ed. Darrell Addison Posey, United Nations Environment Programme (ITP), Nairobi & London, 480-483.

A work that puts cultural sickness in a "Celtic" context into global perspective.

II. Publications that testify to the geopoetics, engaged spirituality and storytelling that quickened the various campaigns:

4. 2006, *Love and Revolution* (collected poetry), Luath Press, Edinburgh, 96pp, £7.99, 4 September 2006, ISBN 1-905222-58-0.

This is a recent work, but it draws on poetry written throughout the period under study. Poesis has been central to my epistemology. This collection seeks to express what it means for human beings to become empowered.

5. 1997, The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland, *Cencrastus: Scottish and International Literature, Arts and Affairs*, 56, 6-15.

This was an important piece in expressing group identity. It came out of the Pollok Free State M77 motorway process in the mid-1990's that gave rise to the GalGael Trust. It speaks to urban disempowerment from the insights of growing rural empowerment, and it was requested from us in Scotland by native North Americans. It defines, or redefines, an inclusive indigenous identity based on soul rather than blood. As such, it contributes to the claim of right inherent in land reform.

6. 1996, Community, spirit, place: a reviving Celtic shamanism, *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy,* 13:3, 111-120, (Canada).

The work of cultural healing is fundamentally "shamanic". Eliade (1989, 4) states, "A first definition of this complex phenomenon, and perhaps the least hazardous, will be: shamanism = *technique of ecstasy*." At the risk of facing the hazard that Eliade seeks to avoid, I would venture to expand on that. The "ecstasy" or "being out of the ordinary" that is in question is a vital cultural function. It involves stepping out of the normal framework of reality, perceiving the sickness or dysfunction of the culture or of individuals within it from that vantage point of *ex-stasis*, and then stepping back into the mainstream to effect healing.

I have argued in *Soil and Soul* that in many indigenous cultures, this is the essence of the bardic or prophetic function and I believe that Eliade – the foremost recognised authority on the subject – would concur. The epilogue to his book concludes that the shaman's essential role is "the defence of the psychic integrity of the community" (ibid. 509). His

or her function is, Eliade tells us, to “stimulate and feed the imagination, demolish the barriers between dream and present reality, open windows upon worlds inhabited by the gods, the dead, and the spirits” (ibid. 511).

My Celtic shamanism paper similarly uses magical realism – a literary style that interweaves the fantastical with reality - to draw that out. At the time when I published it, I felt wary of publishing in the UK and was happy to find a Canadian journal of philosophy willing to take it on. It seems strange now to have felt that fear, but before pulling things together in *Soil and Soul* and justifying them theologically, academically, and in practical results, my own work troubled me as to how it might be understood or misunderstood, especially as we were then fighting for the survival of the Centre for Human Ecology within Edinburgh University.

III. Publications that articulate a liberation theology of *place* as community with one another, environment and God:

7. 1999, Liberation Theology in Scottish Community Empowerment, in *Popular Education and Social Action in Scottish Communities,* Ian Martin, Jim Crowther and Mae Shaw, (eds.), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester, 205-215.

That struggle for epistemological and ontological legitimacy came not by running from the theology inherent in my work, but by deepening it, and reconciling across diverse traditions. As such, liberation theology became not just a theology of liberation for me, but the liberation of theology itself from the boxes into which it had often been constrained by the hyper-Calvinism of my Hebridean upbringing.

8. 1995, (233KB) Introduction to the Isle of Harris Proposed Superquarry Public Inquiry Theological Testimony, *Journal of Law and Religion*, XI:2, 755-788 (and appendix, 789-791).

Part of that liberation of theology entailed a fresh perspective (informed by crosscultural and interfaith considerations) on our own Calvinist Hebridean roots. I myself have become a Quaker, but I grew up in a family where my father was an elder of the Church of Scotland, and that, in a strongly Free Church and Free Presbyterian community. We would have not one, but three ministers – one for each locally represented denomination – come and examine our knowledge of scripture in Leurbost primary school each year! I also have forebears who participated in the genesis of the Free Church culminating in the 1843 Disruption (my great great grandfather, the precentor Murdo Maclennan of Strathconon). Our family genealogist tells me that a several-times great grandfather from the Scottish Borders is the Rev Thomas Boston of Ettrick (1676-1732). Known as the original "Ettrick shepherd" (before Hogg), his "Puritan" works remain to this day in print, being described as having "changed the zeitgeist of his era" (Burns mentions his theological influence in the *Epistle to James Tennant of Glenconner* (Burns 1993, 200-2).

Boston was best known for his theology of free grace that countered the narrowly legalistic understanding of election in double predestination. He was considered a heretic by some because of his involvement in the Marrow Controversy (a book, subsequently banned by the Church of Scotland because of the liberality with which it promoted free grace). As a boy during the late seventeenth century he had spent time accompanying his own father who was held in Duns prison as punishment for nonconformity.

Honouring as a "critical friend" aspects of these traditions and, often, learning to see them in new light, has been very important to me. Many observers of my work puzzle as to the relevance of such culturally conflicted material. They suggest that my work

would be “more powerful without all the baggage” that Christian perspectives bring with them. I disagree. It is not baggage; it is the wheels on which the rest has built up, rides and evolves. We may not understand or even know about our antecedents earlier in our life’s work, but I do suspect that we carry them in the family and cultural configuration of our psyches. They await there as locks in the mind, into which a prospective key can fit and turn at the coming of age. Such is the nature of archetypal activation.

I remember a wise Irish woman saying to me that it was “no coincidence” that the material about Murdo Maclennan had surfaced while I was writing *Soil and Soul*. It provided me with a helpfully deepened cultural legitimacy and resulted, for example, in the Gaelic scholar, John MacInnes, insisting on taking me out to dinner to explain “old Murdo’s” significance to me. I also find myself wondering if it might be “no coincidence” that the link with Thomas Boston was told to me while writing this thesis and wrestling with the fact that my supervisors had invited me to be more explicit about some of the otherwise implicit Christian theology.

> 9. 2000, The Case for God: Carbeth Hutters’ Feudal Defence Against Eviction, *Ecotheology,* Sheffield Academic Press, Issue 8, 86-110.

When people are up against it, those wheels just referred to can help to determine a cause. In this paper I drew on traditional Calvinist theology and British constitutional theory to defend a community organization against eviction. While the arguments proved to cut little ice in the court of law, they nonetheless helped to legitimize the Hutters’ rent strike struggle. That strike continues to this day with the Hutters still in place – indeed, the one who put me up to attempting to defend him in court - Chris Ballance - became a Green Party MSP in the Scottish Parliament.

IV. Publications that advance a theology of community of place into implications for peace and national identity.

10. 2004, Peace in the Tiger's Mouth, Chapter 16 of *Seeking Cultures of Peace: a Peace Church Conversation*, ed. Enns, Fernando, Holland, Scott & Riggs, Ann K., World Council of Churches (Geneva) etc., pp. 215 - 226.

As a Quaker the relationship of my work to violence has been a constant concern, and has pushed me in the direction of deepening an applied theology of engaging the powers; this in ways that seek to avoid Camara's "Spiral of Violence." This paper written for and published by the WCC as part of its Decade for Overcoming Violence explores the centrality of nonviolence to the building of community. It develops the three pillars of community – soil, soul and society – out of an exegesis of Christ's three temptations on the mountain – the temptation to abuse nature's power (stones into bread), to abuse social power (take on kingdoms), and to abuse spiritual power (putting God to the test). It leads to a radical interpretation of the "Evangelical Counsels" (poverty, chastity and obedience) as antidotes to each of these abuses, and thus, as essential spiritual armour in engaging with the community empowerment remit of liberation theology for land reform.

11. 2000, Saint Andrew – Nonviolence and National Identity, *Theology in Scotland,* St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, VII:1, 55-70.

Ultimately, community on a large scale becomes nation, and so, this agenda is about not just land reform in the local sense, but also, redeeming nationhood.

12. 2004, Foreword to *Europe, Globalization and Sustainable Development*, ed. Barry, John, Baxter, Brian & Dunphy, Richard., Routledge, London, £65 (hardback), ISBN: 0-415-30276-5, xii - xxiii.

And beyond nationhood, the community empowerment remit concerns redeeming geopolitical relationships. Ultimately, it means redeeming “globalisation” by shifting it towards a one-world ethic where human being-ness becomes re-situated in the testimony of the Spirit expressed through space and time. In other words, the realised eschatology of land reform sets the local and the individual in a context that can be understood as cosmological. As the cross-cultural scholar Raimon Panikkar puts it, “Peace is participation in the rhythm of the universe” (1991). That is the depth of community that we are invited to enter into.

3. The Cycle of Belonging

What I intend to do now is to tie together my various publications that are under submission using the framework of the *Cycle of Belonging* (Figure 1). Within this, and driving it around, I have posited a further process that, for alliterative satisfaction, I call the *Rubric of Regeneration* (Figure 2).

From where does this concept of the Cycle originate? It is not something that builds on any great body of community empowerment theory. Outside of liberation theology (and closely allied to it, conscientisation pedagogy), such a body of scholarly knowledge hardly exists at any ontological depth. We have already seen an example of the prevailing light-weightedness in the example of the contemporary British government publication discussed above. I would suggest that, consistent with Professor Ferrier's pedagogical (Gr. *paidos* = child) comments relating to pedology (Gr. *pedon* = soil), this Cycle is inherent in much Celtic and otherwise place-grounded indigenous thought throughout the world (Posey 1999; Grim 2001). It is simply how things are understood to be amongst many indigenous peoples of the world – the way that place, values and human identity join up to find expression in taking responsibility for that place. It is a description of human ecological reality.

An explicit example of the world being seen in more or less such a manner comes from the writings of the late Native American philosopher, V.F. Cordova. This is worth quoting at some length. Under the subsection, "A Sense of Place", in one of her most important essays, *Bounded Space*, she writes:

> Today it is common to hear Europeans and their colonial "modern" descendants speak with disdain about "petty nationalisms," as though the sense of a people as a distinct group is somewhat anachronistic…. There is something lacking in a people who do not recognize boundaries: there is no intimacy developed between a people and their homeland. There is, instead, an obsession over ownership that is easily given up in the name of profit or a better deal elsewhere.

> This idea was brought home to me in a rather strange manner. I worked for a program to help youth avoid becoming gang members in a city. An important part of the program was teaching the youth the consequences of their actions on their own neighbourhoods, teaching them that there was a responsibility that accompanied occupation of a place. Most of the youth were immigrants. They balked at the talk of responsibility to a place. "This is a *free* country," one of them reminded me. "Anyone can come here and do as they please." One need only "pay taxes" and avoid breaking the laws. "That's what everyone else did – they all came here from someplace else to do what they wanted." "It's a *free* country," which sounded oddly enough like "free pizza." Boundaries and borders were minor irrelevancies. That, in their estimation, was the attitude of the other "Americans" who came here from throughout the world. These youths were simply the latest arrivals in a long exodus from overpopulated and wasted lands – they had as much "right" to be here as anyone else, America as the world's "commons": *Free* Pizza! *Free* Country!
>
> … To be an "American" was to give up the sense of belonging and being *of a place*. Was their membership in a gang, specifically a gang defined by ethnicity, a substitute for being-of-a-place, I asked? "Yeah, man," they agreed, "we're *brothers*." "*We have to take care of one another."* How much more strongly could I have put it? To feel the sense of place, of a bounded and definite space, involves a sense of *relationship* with that place, of a very specific *responsibility* toward that place, as a unified whole – people and place together…. The "modern" perspective has no sense of bounded space. This view, like that of the potential gang members in an American city, is a perspective of a "free" *planet*. "Free" for the taking. No responsibilities attached…. Beyond the loss of language, the loss of daily ritual practice, and beyond "Dead Baby poetry," what the Native American has not lost is a sense of place. (Cordova 2007, 186-200)

Here we see an indigenous people's epistemology. As we have seen, Ferrier defined his neologism, "epistemology", very simply. He calls it the "theory of knowing" (Ferrier 2005, 77). Not to know; not to "get it" reflects, if I might borrow another of his neologisms, "agnoiology" – the study of ignorance (ibid. 403). And let us remember here that in Scots culture the word "ignorant" is often used in a penetratingly accusatory sense that means, "Ignoring of human relations"! Cordova's critique is an attack on the "ignorant" in this very Scottish sense that, we might venture to infer, her culture also shares.

My reader may be struck at this point by a form of fundamentalism – a passion for the very foundations of a matter - in my approach. The drawback with any epistemology

that purports to be “grounded” in the sense of resting on percepts or values either physical or metaphysical is that such assurance rests on a conviction of one’s own grounding. As I will discuss later, this is problematic amongst those who might not share the same grounding, yet it is difficult to be an *ecologist* – to be concerned with communities in relation to place - without a presumption of the *reality* of the world in which one interconnects. As we saw Ferrier say: “I assume real existence”!

For present purposes, I shall rest my case by saying that the Cycle of Belonging has emerged from my practical observation of how community empowerment appears to work. Writings like those of Viola Cordova subsequently reinforce it cross-culturally. It is an empirical rather than a theoretical model, though it carries theoretical implications. I do not want to suggest that it represents the only means by which community empowerment works, but it is the way that I choose as my rubric for exploration here. While I see it as being a very Celtic understanding, my experience working for four years in grassroots development in Papua New Guinea and with some activism in North America and elsewhere would suggest that it is generally germane to communities of place as distinct from communities of interest.

3.1 Sense of Place – Grounding

The ontology implicit in my work starts from the presupposition that we, as human beings, are *incarnate.* We are spiritually grounded in an environment - a world - that is the base of our primal this-worldly experience. Put another way, it has been said, I know not by whom, that we are “spiritual beings having a physical experience.” One might quibble over the seeming dualism of such a statement, but the reality of death gives it a certain common-sense validity, and in ecology the ever-present possible encounter with death provides a powerful reference point for seeking to remain in alignment with objective physical reality. Philosophically speaking, this running up

against the hard edges of reality is what produces such “interesting times” out of the present ecological crisis.

Grounding, being grounded and having grounds for our percepts imply that location in space and time matters. Without it, we become disconnected or unhinged, which is one of my principal critiques of globalisation. Globalisation, I have argued, homogenises ontological space and time into a uniform market surface. The market seeks both to shrink space and to ignore history to create a “level playing field” for competitive engagement (12 – *Euro Globalisation*). From having worked, rather like Viola Cordova, with alienated youngsters but in Papua New Guinea (as deputy-head of a school for “drop-outs”) and here in Govan in Glasgow (as a board member of the GalGael Trust), I would say that such disconnection from the fabric of place and history dissociates us from being fully human. This is inevitable because “place” is the product of nature and culture. Loss of place therefore implies a loss of part of our humanity, and that becomes a theological issue, for place and humanity are integral. As old Isaac remarked, “The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed” (Genesis 27:27). Set in such context, my constellating question as expressed in one of the submitted pieces of work is:

> How do we overcome that anomie of which Durkheim wrote a century ago – that sense of placelessness, emptiness, rootlessness and meaninglessness which colonisation and the neo-colonialism of advanced industrial society have bequested?
>
> This question is daily forced in the face of Europe's poor. And it has emerged in Scotland at the cutting edge of action for social and ecological justice. At its heart is the nature of identity and belonging in communities that are no longer tribal and preindustrial, but multiethnic and post-modern. (5 – *GalGael Peoples,* 180).

Soil and Soul similarly expresses the importance of Sense of Place as grounding in its opening sentence of Chapter 1. Entitled, “Digging Where We Stand,” this commences with the line, “I must start where I stand” (0 – *Soil and Soul,* 7). As with Ferrier’s assertion about soil-derived epistemology, I make no effort in any of my work to “prove” the importance or truth of such a premise. Rather, it is simply a metaphysical

statement; a bottom line. It is based on the experience of having been held in a community of people of place. It is as fundamental as the experience of family. It is something that I feel viscerally – an embodied epistemology.

The implications of this are considerable. I take as given the classical philosophical position that all logical argumentation proceeds from premises based on the perception of, or the premised assertion of, the structure of reality (Salmon 1963). One either accepts or rejects these primary principles, and in most philosophical discourse, both public and in the Academy (i.e. the university in general), such premises readily and often, conveniently, pass unexamined.

What I want to start with, therefore, is the statement that much of my work embodies a presupposition of *grounding*. I know from where I'm coming both culturally and spiritually. I feel it in my gut a visceral connection to the Isle of Lewis that, for example, in a dream as I was drafting this text had me standing with a group of poets in a church – one of whom had the head of the Salmon of Wisdom poking out of his bag … and I was standing slightly apart from the other poets because I was embarrassed … embarrassed because I was looking out through an open window no longer in the GalGael's workshop in Govan but over Hebridean machair to the sea … to the bursting ocean spray … and I was crying, inconsolably, uncontrollably, at the *sheer beauty of it*; the longing for it; *the sheer beauty of it*.

Such is the pain of exile, but my grounding is based on a sense of "ground" that is both "outer" - being of the rocks and of the people and all else - but also "inner"; because it has, in Walter Wink's sense of the expression, an *interiority* that finds expression in dream, vision, inspiration and the imagination. That interiority, says Wink, *is* the spirituality (Wink 1992).

I had gone to bed that night of the dream just recounted after reading Kenneth White (in Bateman, Crawford & McGonigal 2000, 284):

A HIGH BLUE DAY ON SCALPAY

this is the summit of contemplation, and
    no art can touch it
blue, so blue, the far-out archipelago
    and the sea shimmering, shimmering
no art can touch it, the mind can only
    try to become attuned to it
to become quiet and space itself out, to
    become open and still, unworlded
knowing itself in the diamond country, in
    the ultimate unlettered light.

Such poetry, such thought as is embedded too in my own work, is pure *essentialism*.

I define essentialism as the *empirical* understanding that *reality is real* – it is an *essential*, or *elemental* quality. And that was a sentence that I had written before encountering Ferrier who, as we have seen, says it with much deeper philosophical construction. My essentialist point is that this depth of connection is in the cultural soul, animated by the spirit of place. I say such things, Ferrier says them, and many others say likewise in a confluence that comes from the same place. That is why the continentals beat their paths to Scotland in pursuit of a loosely defined Celtic romanticism that, for all its contradicted discourses (Meek 2000), nevertheless remains vibrant in our people's poetry, song, and as Stevenson called it, the "accent o the mind".

The reality of which we speak is therefore a quality much more than merely "existential" in the sense that, say, Sartre uses that word. We can engage Sartre for helpful contrast here, and what I say about him might be applied to many of the post-modernists as well. Sartre's world is a materialistic one or, at best, an intellectual one. By contrast, the essentialism of which I speak is spiritual. It is values-loaded. The

difference between the two is fundamental in terms of values, experience, perception and so, of worldview. Sartre speaks of "Being and Nothingness", but, in my view, and in spite of his intellectual yoga, he collapses into the nothingness from which he started - *because there is no spiritual core*. The same is true of all materialistic expressions of "humanism". For Sartre, lost in the egocentric solipsism of his being-for-itself, existence is but an angst-ridden fissure in the heart of being. It can never find peace, rest or fulfilment, because being-for-itself is always trying to find God in projections outwards, but never succeeding. Existence is therefore invariably painful. What we project out onto the world must invariably be false – *mauvaise foi* – an articulation of "bad faith" – and this applies even to what we think we see in other human beings, thus, as he famously surmised it, "Hell is other people."

The problem with Sartre is that for all the promising start that he seems to make in his critique of the human condition, he gets utterly lost on the way. For Sartre, there is nothing but our own being. There can therefore be no true relationality and thus, we might impute, no true love. In contrast, a spiritual essentialist perspective (and what is spirituality, but essence?) discerns reality beyond the confines of one's own ego. It testifies to a ground of being that is love. But Sartre cannot see this. In the last paragraph of *Being and Nothingness* before the Conclusion, he declares that "the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves [*sic*] in vain" (Sartre 1969, 615).

The unbelievable (for this reader) depth of Sartre's nihilism is captured in his own dramatic illustration, just three paragraphs earlier, where he discharges himself in obscenity speaking of both woman and God. Woman, as Sartre sees her, is similar to God. She is where men perilously lose themselves. And so here, at the very zenith of *Being and Nothingness* - on the penultimate page of the chapter prior to penning his Conclusion – the supposed sage bizarrely tells us:

> Here at its origin we grasp one of the most fundamental tendencies of human reality – the tendency to fill…. It is only from this standpoint that we can pass on to sexuality. The obscenity of the feminine sex is that of everything which "gapes open." It is an appeal to being as all holes are. In herself woman appeals

> to a strange flesh which is to transform her into a fullness of being by penetration and dissolution. Conversely woman senses her condition as an appeal precisely because she is "in the form of a hole." This is the true origin of Adler's complex. Beyond any doubt her sex is a mouth and a voracious mouth which devours the penis – a fact which can easily lead to the idea of castration. The amorous act is the castration of the man; but this is above all because sex is a hole…. It is with his flesh that the child stops up the hole and the hole, before all sexual specification, is an obscene expectation, an appeal to the flesh (Sartre 1969, 613-5).

I am reminded of a meeting with an Edinburgh University administrator in 1996 as the Centre for Human Ecology was being closed down for reasons that were never specified. Here is how it is described in *Soil and Soul* (249):

> Then there was the niggling question of my research and teaching, and in particular my 'alternative' viewpoints: ecofeminism, deep ecology, spirituality – ideas similar to those of Professor Carolyn Merchant and Vandana Shiva.
>
> 'What's wrong with those?' I asked. Weren't our courses actually making a profit for the University? Hadn't the British Council given us a massive contract to train senior governmental officials in sustainability? Were our external examiner reports not exemplary? Indeed, did they not testify that 'much important work has been conducted within the Human Ecology MSc by both teachers and students [developing] an intellectually innovative, creative and exacting approach to issues of mounting public significance'? And did they not conclude that 'the CHE has brought distinction to Edinburgh University'?
>
> Maybe, said one of the administrators. Maybe, said this man, this otherwise decent man, who in easier times, like so many of them, had actually done much to assist our work. But, he said, the essence of the problem as he saw it now was ... ecofeminism.
>
> 'How so?' I asked.
>
> The administrator's eyes sunk into their sockets, flashing. Then he startled me by snapping back, angrily, that ecofeminism was rubbish. It was a black hole, one that draws you into a morass; a closed way of thinking into which, if you enter, there is no way out.
>
> 'Maybe we don't fully understand each other,' I suggested. 'Maybe some of the students and I could offer you a short seminar ...'
>
> He sort of smiled, as if to suggest that I really ought to know better, and said that it would be a waste of time.

Sartre too, like all patriarchs, feared that “black hole”. He called it “the nothingness which is at the heart of man” (Sartre 1969, 440). The challenge that faces us is therefore both epistemological and ontological – it is a metaphysical issue – E.F. Schumacher called it “metaphysical disease” (McIntosh 2008b). The standard British Library Thesis Service “subject categories” used for recording a doctoral thesis such as this does not even mention “metaphysics” as an option, and the whole of “philosophy” is classified as only one option, itself a sub-category that is shared with “theology” and “religion”. In contrast, “Military sciences”, “Missile technology”, “Ordnance” and “Space technology” have whole categories and sub-categories to themselves – complete with knowledge categories specifically for “missile warheads”, “pyrotechnics”, “bombs”, “guns”, “rockets” and “extraterrestrial exploration” – this latter, fascinatingly, being the very last item on the list! It makes one wonder what planet they’re on. This is just one indicator, but a splendidly objective one, that metaphysics has all but disappeared from the curriculum of the Academy. We who care about it are faced, therefore, with a struggle for the very survival of a culture in which it is possible to affirm metaphysics - and therefore the soul, and therefore community, and therefore any truly liberationist praxis of empowerment. This is a key theme in my forthcoming book on the psychology and spirituality underlying climate change (McIntosh 2008a) as well as the one that follows on community (McIntosh 2008b).

Sartre saves his bleakest moment – his ultimate collapse into nothingness - for the very last lines of the said chapter in the appropriately-named *Being and Nothingness*.

> Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to found being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the *Ens causa sui*, which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion. (Ibid. 615)

Thus, while Sartre does not sexualise God as he does woman, he sees God, similarly, as a vacuous hole into which man “loses himself”. Woman castrates, and though Sartre

doesn't actually say so, the implication is that "God" (not that it is meaningful here to talk of God as "existing") does likewise. As such, "Man is a useless passion" – in other words, life is pointless; not worth getting passionate about – precisely because there is no "point". There is, in Sartre's view, no metaphysical "light" (in Ferrier's sense) from which to know ourselves in "synthesis" (as Ferrier described it) with the Absolute. We may think that we "lose" ourselves in God – mystics would actually speak of so "finding" themselves, as Ferrier shows in his discourse on essence - but our passion is doomed to be useless because God, says Sartre, is nothing but our own projection that seeks to fill the existential hole of ontological angst!

So much for Sartre's nihilistic existentialism. The difference between it and essentialism is that the essence, as I use that expression here, is Spirit-filled. It has a grounded reality. It is the same principle as Underhill in her classic study, *Mysticism*, repeatedly refers to as "vitalism" – as she puts it, "the essence of Reality … fed from within rather than upheld from without … Thus only – by contact with the real – shall you *know* reality. *Cor ad cor loquitur* [heart speaking to heart]…. You can only behold that which you *are*. Only the Real can know Reality" (Underhill 1999 27, 29, 31, 43). The trouble with Sartre, if I might put it as direct address in the Scots vernacular, is: "You're no real, man!"

Reality, then, is the difference between spiritual essentialism and Sartre's existentialism. If we extrapolate from Sartre's words just quoted, Christ would be no more than the child that "stops up" the cosmic ontological hole. Sartre's understanding is blind because it lacks the relationality of love, both human and cosmic. In that, and in that alone, rests its blasphemy; its solipsistic idolatry. His is a tragic collapse into a world that is ugly because it is devoid of the giving that makes beauty perceptible; a world devoid of spirituality; a world of "nothingness" derived from the one real "hole" that is his self-hollowed-out soul. For sure, Sartre proclaims narcissistically, as he does, that "I am liberty." But such liberty is utterly vacuous. It has no meaning, notwithstanding the efforts of secular humanists to give it meaning on the solipsistic grounds that they say it has meaning! There is no relational reference point, be it

Buddha nature, Brahman, Tao or, in our vernacular traditions, Christo-liberty, against which and from within which to express and find meaning in life.

In contrast, to such nihilism, a grounded understanding of reality integrates both matter and spirit. It draws us towards knowing an *incarnate* reality. Such is the nature of Being and the basis of a potentially humanising ontology. As Tillich puts it:

> The courage to take meaninglessness into itself presupposes a relation to the ground of being which we have called 'absolute faith'. The content of absolute faith is the "God above God." Absolute faith and its consequence, the courage that takes the radical doubt, the doubt about God, into itself, transcends the theistic idea of God. (Tillich 2000, 182).

Here is the antithesis of nihilism. Courage (as in the French, *coeur*, for heart) is connected with love. True courage is selfless, and grounding in it is, ultimately, grounding in God. One might suspect that this is the reason why essentialism is so denigrated in the secular Academy: it points inexorably towards God and that is a tectonic challenge to Enlightenment presumptions of the supremacy of human reason. But only in God is full humanisation realised. Only then, in further rebuke to the likes of Sartre, can the fullness of woman be restored to the status not of mere "hole", but to "virginity"; and "virginity" not, in my view, as an indicator of asexuality, but rather, as a symbolic operator of spiritual transformation. Here is the capacity for constant renewal that in any relationship, including the marriage of a man to a woman, can repeatedly overcome the nihilistic dynamic whereby, as Mark Twain famously put it in his *Notebook*¸ posthumously published in 1935, "Familiarity breeds contempt" (or, as J. F. Ferrier similarly puts it in citing what he calls "the old adage" – "Familiarity breeds neglect" (Ferrier 2005, 83).

We might remember that in the New Testament, Mary as the archetype of womanhood powerfully represents renewal of that which is deemed degraded. She embodies transformation. In the Magnificat, Mary brings down the powerful and raises up the lowly. And whatever we believe about the "virgin birth", the fact remains that here was a woman whose condition would have been socially perceived as "fallen". Here was a

woman who, with her child, would otherwise have suffered exclusion under the crippling theocratic patriarchy of her time. But she whether literally or metaphorically she transformed that condition by saying "Yes" to God; by simply saying in her heart, as some translations have it, "Let it Be." In due course, of course, Christ reminds us that all children are sons and daughters of God (John 10:34). In whatever way Mary understood things, she made possible the revelation of this truth in her son. And Joseph, by agreeing to foster God's son into his own line, the House of David, thereby allowed matters to proceed further. His generosity of heart allowed the mission of Jesus to accord with Old Testament prophecy which had said that the Messiah would arise from within the House of David.

Such are the mythic ways by which transformation can play itself through! This is the depth of what we are challenged with in distinguishing secular existentialism or other nihilisms from spiritual essentialism. On the one hand, we end up with an obscene view of both woman and God such as Sartre illustrates so shockingly. On the other, a child is revealed in His full soteriolological capacity to transfigure the world. To me it matters not whether this child was "the unique Son of God." It is sufficient to be a child of God, indeed, *a* unique child of God, and this is what allows my perspective on Christianity to be an interfaith one.

Whatever the sanctioned Christian dogmatics of the matter, the power of these insights to redefine our world is, for this writer at least, overwhelming. All that the nihilists can offer is a worldview that has nothing intrinsic within it to protect the world from being used and trashed. If we are empty at the core, so must the world be. In contrast, the spiritual worldview can look on the Creation as ongoing process. The world is used but, potentially, sacramentally so. We are participants in the world and the whole of Creation awaits salvation. As Ernst Conradie puts it, "Earth is not our home yet," but Christian ecological anthropology (as he calls it) points towards it becoming so (Conradie 2005, 77).

A realised eschatology would suggest that the process of "becoming" is more in the limitations of our understanding than in the reality of what really is. We can agree or

disagree on this point, but it gives me hope when even a very mainstream theologian like Alister McGrath can conclude one of his books with the line: 'To reenchant nature is not merely to gain a new respect for its integrity and well-being; it is to throw open the doors to a deeper level of existence' (McGrath 2003, 186). And here McGrath uses the word "nature" not in the sense that early modern "Puritan" divines such as my distant forebear, Thomas Boston used it – as a synonym for "the sinfulness of man's natural state" predicated, he tells us, on Ephesians 2:3: "And were *by nature* the children of wrath, even as others" (Boston 2008, his emphasis). Rather, "nature" is here used in its modern spiritual sense as a synonym for the Creation, and this is the sense in which I too use it. Indeed, the early modern usage of "nature" to imply a "fallen" state is perhaps akin to the late modern use that a person like me might make of the word "globalisation" to imply human economy in its "fallen" state. And I note in passing that Boston most certainly did not have a downer on the Creation as such. As I was working on the final draft of this thesis I ordered and received in the post a copy of an anthology of the original Ettrick Shepherd's works, *The Beauties of Boston* (Boston 1979). To my astonished delight it fell straight open at p. 109 with the heading, "In what the wondrous Goodness of God is manifested." My forebear's reply was such as I could only describe as "panentheistic"!

> 1. In creation. There is no other perfection of the Divine nature so eminently visible in the whole book of the creatures as this is. His goodness was the cause that he made any thing, and his wisdom was the cause that he made every thing in order and harmony. Here the goodness of God shines with a glorious lustre. All the varieties of the creatures which he hath made are so many beams and apparitions of his goodness. It was great goodness to communicate being to some things without himself, and to extract such a multitude of things from the depths of nothing, and to give life and breath to some of these creatures. Divine goodness formed their natures, beautified and adorned them with their several ornaments and perfections, whereby every thing was enabled to act for the good of the common world. Every creature hath a character of Divine goodness upon it. The whole world is a map to represent, and a herald to proclaim, this amiable perfection of God. But the goodness of God is manifested especially in the creation of Man. (Ibid. 109-10)

And this was not an isolated example. There is more of the same where Boston discusses Providence, drawing especially on my own favourites, Hebrews 1:3, Psalms 104 and Job 38. In a passage that would have delighted Patrick Geddes with his

celebrated dictum, “By leaves we live,” or Walt Whitman with his mystical poem, *Leaves of* Grass, from 1855, Boston asks: “And shall not this good God be loved and cheerfully served by us? Every pile of grass is a preacher of the loving-kindness of the Lord” (ibid. 325).

We must be careful, then, about assuming that the theologically technical way in which those of an earlier era spoke of nature means that all Reformation theologians necessarily saw the natural world and humankind alike as irrevocably fallen. Some undoubtedly did, and this has often been what churches have transmitted, not least out of their reaction to what they call think of as paganism.

I sometimes think that the old “pagan” ways (the name means “country-dweller”) may have lacked forgiveness, and this deficit in our “Old Testament” was, in part, what opened the doors for Christian evangelisation. But equally, the Christian ways were capable of finding very unforgiving expression. As they became over-urbanised and they lost touch with the nature of the Creation. My own work builds on the view that the doctrine of original sin is made even more profoundly liberating when matched with the principle of what Matthew Fox calls “original blessing” (Fox 1983). Arguments about where this left the state of nature formed the heart of my work on the theology of the Harris superquarry (0 – *Soil and Soul;* 8 – *Public Inquiry*). They were important arguments, because we were up against people in the local community who taught that the natural world had fallen alongside human nature. It therefore didn’t matter if the mountain was destroyed by a superquarry.

For me, the raising of these theological points – amateur though my approach inevitably was - became important in trying to stimulate my home community to think more widely about such questions. In particular, I drew on Romans 8:19-23 – a text that provides a scriptural basis to circumvent writing natural nature off. I believe that this had a positive effect. One gentleman of the cloth who had previously held the view that the only thing that mattered in religion was an emphasis on human sinfulness, came up to me some years later. He told me how he had undergone a transformative period of

illness. He concluded, with emphasis that is his own: “And Alastair, I am now getting out walking, *and I am discovering the beautiful hills of Harris!”*

I have tried in the foregoing paragraphs to express a spirituality, and perhaps, a theology that justifies the essentialism of Spirit embodied in place, and also, mandates the redemption of human relationship with that place. Here my endeavour is similar to that of many other contemporary ecotheologians. However, my work is itself very place-predicated. It shows in my having been shaped by local thinkers whose work on the nature of “grounding” has been, and remains, important in my development of Scottish land reform theology. Let me now touch briefly on three of these. They are Hugh MacDiarmid with his Scots poetic epistemology, the geopoetics (as we have just seen an example of) put forward by Kenneth White, and the social poetics (if I might call it that) of the Lewisman, Iain Crichton Smith. I shall briefly demonstrate why they have impacted so strongly on my own thought.

I judge MacDiarmid’s poem, “On a Raised Beach,” as being “Scotland’s finest work of mystical geology” (5 – *GalGael Peoples,* 192). Like Sorley MacLean, like Norman MacCaig, like many great Scottish poets, MacDiarmid harbours no doubts about the centrality of the ground beneath his feet. He would have appreciated the Gaelic fool who, asked by the Lowland king, “Where is the centre of the world?” replied, “Right beneath my feet!” MacDiarmid’s style and his unapologetic unselfconscious engagement with depth has influenced much of my own poetry (4 – *Love Revolution*; 5 – *GalGael Peoples*). Such grounding - respecting and even reverencing that ground - is both my starting point and, in T. S. Elliot’s sense of knowing the place by returning to where we started, my end (Eliot 1959). “I lift a stone; it is the meaning of life I clasp,” wrote MacDiarmid. “We must reconcile ourselves to the stones,” he adds (MacDiarmid 1985, 422). These are fundamental statements of geological ontology. But their geology is not secular. It is not limited to the prosaically mundane. It does not hold back from its conformable (in the geologist’s sense of that word) intersection with the human. Rather, it sets the human in cosmological perspective. It unites us to the stars. Theologically, if we choose so to see, it unites our consciousness to the processes of ongoing Creation.

For Kenneth White, groundedness means “geopoetics” (White 1998). It is, he writes in one of his essays, “in those rock-piles that the poetics lie … poetry, geography - *and a higher unity: geopoetics*...” (White 1992, 173-4, my emphasis). White would probably not think of himself as a religious poet but he does see his work as shamanic. His poem, *Scalpay*, just cited, features in a leading anthology of Scottish religious poetry. White, as I have shown, understands reality as poesis (0 – *Soil and Soul,* 125, 177-8). As I wrote there in speaking of the Eigg Trust’s challenge to landed power:

> ‘You can’t eat poetry!’ a fellow academic once said to me. Well, maybe not, but with poetry you can, perhaps, get by with eating less…. White’s writings helped to legitimise the shamanic nature of what Eigg had drawn us into. Our work was, as Starhawk puts it, that of *changing consciousness at will*. It was a kind of magic, undertaken not with money at this stage, but with incantations of passion – with words – that came from a native ground-sense of place. We were crazy, all of us, very crazy– but not mad. There’s a difference. (Ibid. 177-8)

What MacDiarmid and White are to grounding in wild nature, Iain Crichton Smith is to grounding in human nature. Smith grew up on the Isle of Lewis deeply rooted in a human *community of place*. His most important prose reflection is the tellingly named essay, “Real People in a Real Place,” published in his collection, *Towards the Human* (Smith 1986). Smith left Lewis, I have heard it said, because, as his poetry reflects, he struggled with the heavy hand of the church. But he never left his community. His essay speaks of the importance of being “known as one who belongs to a community and who does service to that community” (ibid. 20). He explains that, “It is not leaving the island or the village that is the terrible thing, it is leaving the community” (ibid. 23). That terror would come about “because one was no longer sustained by communal force” (ibid. 24). With place as the synthesis of nature and culture, a grounding in place becomes that which joins the natural environment with the human environment. It is the basis of a *human ecology* and that is why it hurts and causes hurt to unravel it.

Such essentialist mindsets are neither modern nor post-modern, but, in my view, pre-modern. They are basic to human experience. The cult New Age philosopher Ken Wilber would place such a way of looking at things at the lowest level of his hierarchy

of human development – at the level of “survival clans” and “ethnic tribes” (Wilber 2007, 60). But such denigration of the primal is typical of the post-modern condition - that of which Lyotard could laconically say, “I define *post-modern* as incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard 1986, xxiv). In one sense, Kenneth White is also quintessentially post-modern. His geopoetics deconstructs all art and even the world to leave a condition, as he puts it, “unworlded”. Yet unlike most post-moderns, White is not left with nothing. He finds, instead, a new world, what he calls an “open world”, and this differs from most post-modernism in that it offers – as Spretnak suggests is a necessary counterpoint to the disassociation of deconstruction - space for the reconstructive power of grace (Spretnak 1991). For White, poetics is that reconstructive power and to me, this is the key to overcoming nihilistic existentialism. Poetics as an expression of Grace *is* the patterning essence of essentialism. In ancient Chinese philosophy it is the *Li* – the “pattern of the Tao” that gives inner structure and meaning to outer reality (Watts 1976). Such is the work of the Spirit that gives life.

I express this in one of my own poems (4 – *Love Revolution, 20*):

Sithean an Airgid

The *Li* or ‘pattern of the Tao’
a Chinese word derived
from grain of wood or muscle
the just so and the how so
of the suchness of reality

And did you notice me, my love
the way I watched your figured brow
rippling and flickering
feeling and intelligence
a sensitivity as something free and wild

a deer on Cailleach na Mointeach at Sithean an Airgid
the Sleeping Beauty Mountain and the
Silver Faerie Hill
the ‘pattern of the Tao,’ the *Li*
of muscle under skin, the *Li*
of psyche under flesh, the Dharmic *Li*
of cosmic truth sustaining
you and me

The ecocentric Kenneth White would probably share grounding with the anthropocentric Smith in recognising that people without grounding – those whose connections with space and time have been pasteurised to the point of destruction through deconstruction – are those whom Smith characterises as being of “a land where people no longer feel at home” (Smith op. cit. 43). As such, the compassionate zenith of Smith’s spirituality is where he faces this brokenness of the human condition, but sees beyond it:

> Sometimes when I walk the streets of Glasgow I see old women passing by, bowed down with shopping bags, and I ask myself: 'What force made this woman what she is? What is her history?' It is the holiness of the person we have lost, the holiness of life itself, the inexplicable mystery and wonder of it, its strangeness, its tenderness. (Ibid. 56-7)

Here we see what I would think of as being a profoundly “Celtic” spirituality. It is an anthropology that understands the human being in terms of elementality (fire, air, earth and water as the component forces of place) and history. Energy, space and time fuse in Smith’s work. I have placed the word “Celtic” here in quotes because I understand how contested this construct is in the Academy (Meek 2000). But with genuine respect and warm appreciation to Professor Meek, I have to disagree with him on this. I do think that on the geographic periphery of Britain, mostly beyond the Roman pale, a fusion of God, nature and human community – soil, soul and society – pulses out from the poets

such as Renan, for example, recognised a century ago (Renan, 1896). We do not only have to rely on Carmichael for this, nor even on anthologies drawn from earlier periods of history such as the rich collection compiled by Professor Jackson (Carmichael 1994; Jackson 1971). We don't need to be forced back entirely on history because what we are seeking can be found in our own people to this day: it remains, not for all but certainly in the spirit of some, *our people's way*.

Professor Meek's ire as a "Celto-sceptic" derives in large measure from the abusive appropriation that he has witnessed of this spirituality by people who would never lift a finger politically to stand in solidarity with an internally colonised people such as those of his native Tiree (cf. Hechter 1998). I sympathise with such Celto-scepticism, but consider that it throws out the baby with the bathwater (0 – *Soil and Soul,* 83). What is it then that defines "Celtic" spirituality within a "British" and Irish context? It is not that it contains elements (other than language) that are unique in world terms. Rather, it is that it contains such elements that are rare in mainstream modern Anglicised culture. I mean, for example, a lived synonymy of Christ and the Creation that is known by poetic perception and amounts to nothing less than prayer. I mean, too (and just as controversially) a sense of magic, of enchantment, of faerie that *quickens* the spirit, such as Professor G. Gregory Smith explored in proposing his "Caledonian antisyzygy" – the idea that Scottish literature interweaves seamlessly between the "two moods" of the practical and the fantastical (Smith 1919), and that the Scottish psyche holds these seeming opposites together in creative tension. And mark that Smith has no compunction about getting carried away in his articulation thereof. He speaks, in words that would have delighted Yeats as much as they would dismay my respected friend Professor Meek, of "this sensitiveness to the twilight of earth and fairyland" and, in a footnote, he draws attention to "the dulling of this". Whilst this numinous aspect of Smith's antisyzygy is little recognised in the Academy, it has not prevented his central idea from having become widely accepted. Even today Caledonian antisyzygy is commonly recognised as the single most important distinguishing characteristic of Scottish literature.

In positing the fundamental importance of groundedness, I distance myself from both modern and post-modern philosophers. This distance has been important in my work for land reform because it has shaped a deeper understanding of what land is than the usual economic or agricultural presumptions. Land as I have understood it, is an ongoing expression of the continuously unfolding Creation. It reflects the majesty of God and is the context in which we both live and become more fully alive. Ultimately, it is the stage that gives rise to what Smith saw as the holiness of human personhood. In contrast to Smith, the habitually inchoate Derrida was able, infamously, to dismiss any sense of the holy, saying:

> *There is nothing outside of the text* ... And that is neither because Jean-Jacques' life, or the existence of Mamma or Thérèse *themselves*, is not of prime interest to us, nor because we have access to their so-called "real" existence only in the text and we have neither any means of altering this, nor any right to neglect this limitation. (Derrida 1998, 158).

Such posturing results in a world of mere mental wordplay – a world that can be re-written and word-processed at will in a manner that is blind to the intrinsic value of its own essential reality. As Alice said of such thinking, "It means what I say it means." In contrast, the pre-modern minds of MacDiarmid and Smith in particular, but also much of White's poetry (if not of his essays), affirm the actuality of reality in all its otherness and all the intimacy that respect for "real presence" (Steiner 1989) makes possible. Post-modernity misses the point of this. As Alistair Rennie who comes from the north-east of Scotland puts it, "post-modernists don't climb mountains" (Rennie 2004):

> And let's be clear about this. When we talk about nature we're not talking solely about "spiritual" or "aesthetic" appreciations of nature's "beauty", but raw physical landscapes that will kill you if you don't know what you're doing in them. The removal at a distance by post-modernists of themselves from the reality of their environment convinces me that they are the ones who are creating an illusory version of reality that has no correspondence whatsoever to the *extreme* reality represented, for example, by the Cairngorm Mountains.

By grounding one's perception, cognition and action in a Sense of Place, I am looking on *place* as being much more than just "environment" in the usual abstracted,

presuming-to-be objective, scientific sense. I mean, instead, the synthesis of nature and culture, a very human, warm, sense of the context of belonging such as in Kenneth White's use of the word "world". To develop a sense of place locally serves also as a portal to worlds beyond. We need to stand somewhere if we are to go anywhere.

From a Christian perspective, this knowing of the world means learning to see by spiritual vision whereby "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12); a world in which it is prayed, "Thy Kingdom come … on Earth …" (Matthew 6:9). This gives expression to what the Hindu-Catholic (Indian-Spanish) transcultural scholar, Raimon Panikkar, refers to as "the Cosmotheandric Christ" – the Christ that articulates the Creation, God and Humankind all in one (Panikkar 1993, 152; cf. Wink 2002). In other words, we see unfolding a grounding, a world, that is profoundly "other" (in the sense that we are "not of this world") and yet, profoundly human – comprised both of this world in all its flesh and blood *and* in the image of God. Logic may baulk at such antisyzygy. We of the culture of G. Gregory Smith's antisyzygy – the ability to hold opposites together in energy-releasing tension – do not baulk. It is in such context that I therefore write, and for this Sense of Place section of my thesis, I conclude:

> Consider the paradigmatic value statement that place matters. 'Place' is a soft word, one that, coloured by story, integrates heart with head in humanizing the much more objectified term, 'environment'. Place starts with the ground on which we stand, it spreads out into our local communities and bioregions (perhaps including such social constructs as nation states), and extends into the furthest cosmos. It is geocentric and. often, anthropocentric, capable of placing at the centre of all things the very hearth, or spot, where we happen to be right now…. We may find ourselves left by modernity somewhat alienated from place, but it still matters, and the veneration with which we develop sense of place through the fullness of time is a touchstone of our humanity. It is what makes us Earth-dwellers rather than any other life form. (12 – *Euro Globalisation*, xii-xiii).

3.2 Sense of Identity – Ego

James Ferrier, with his insistence on developing a metaphysical Scottish epistemology commences his epistemology by stating, as his first proposition, a "primary law or condition of all knowledge" that: "Along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of itself" (Ferrier 2005, 79). Writing as he did before Freud, he goes on to articulate this in terms of the centrality of *ego* – the conscious and knowing "I". The implication of Ferrier's honest "owning" of the reality of ego is that our conscious selves must face up to and, thus, find our "ground or condition" from the standpoint of such identity. Here I equate conscious identity very closely, and perhaps even synonymously, with ego. In this there is perhaps some bridging point with the existentialists. Such an equation implies that we must stand fair and square on the ground of what we think we are, and appraise reality as we perceive it from that vantage point. To project a vantage point out onto "God" and presume that this projection defines reality would indeed, to use Sartre's term, constitute *mauvaise foi* - "bad faith". But my quibble with Sartre is not in his insistence upon owning the ground on which we stand: it is in his implicit limiting of that ground to deny infusion by the numinous. We shall return to this crucial point later where discussing Ferrier's "theistic conclusion" about the ego's relationship to knowledge.

The question of how and where the ego is grounded is one of the points where pre-modern philosophy (recall Ferrier's insistence – similar to that of many indigenous peoples of the world - on the epistemology of *soil*) differs from subsequent thought. Post-modernists, such as Wilber (op. cit.), may talk of moving "beyond ego", and even define, as he does, spiritual development in terms of this imperative whilst relegating other ways of being – for example, ones bound in with tribal community - to the "lower" orders of ontological evolution. But personally, I am very wary of claims to be consciously operating from any place that is "beyond ego" and beyond the community that has shaped one. I say this notwithstanding the importance of mystical experience to

my work and the manner in which this infers God as a central reference point (as shall shortly be returned to). For present purposes, suffice to say that my choice (and I think that this is, as Ferrier shows, implicit in Scots culture) is to *own and own up to* the ego self. This means not shying from having a strong sense of outer identity – Alastair McIntosh, writer, academic, father, lover, etc.. (It will be noted that all those self-selected attributions are positive ones.) However, the spiritual name of the game is to hold alongside this ego identity, including all the cultural identities that go with it, an acute awareness of the alter-ego – the Jungian shadow or "shadow self" as I call it.

As well as my ego identity of which I am aware, I must confess the Alastair McIntosh who puffs himself up while lauding humility, the potential rapist and murderer, the sometimes hard-hearted and calculating while professing generosity, the impatient with those who bore him, etc. etc.. That is the cold clay of shadow that separates surface soil from bedrock. This side of our beings too must be confessed. If we doubt its existence, ask colleagues who have fallen on the wrong side, or even his wife. As Jung points out, the shadow that is owned is not to be feared: it is just human nature in the "fallen" sense of that nature such as Puritan divines well recognised. The shadow that is to be feared is the shadow denied, just as power denied is power abused. The question of honesty, and especially, self-honesty thereby becomes the defining characteristic in the expression of "sin" – which is why it is only the Truth, in all senses of that word, that can set us free.

This capacity to face the shadow is often recognised as one of the most characteristic elements of Scottish literature and thus, of Scottish culture. It is intrinsic to G. Gregory Smith 'Caledonian antisyzygy'. It runs as an archetypal chain through Scottish letters – Stevenson's appalling Mr Hyde in counterpoint to the respectable Dr Jekyll; Hogg's murderous Robert Wringhim, "called to a high vocation; to cleanse the sanctuary of thy God in this thy native land by the shedding of blood" – and thereby considering himself a "justified sinner" in the full Augustinian-Calvinist sense of that term; Welsh's *Trainspotters* not shying from the nihilism of a monetarist society's downside – and always in the background, Burns' Holy Willie, and the encapsulation of such cultural self-reflective honesty in *To a Louse* - "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us/ To see

oursels as others see us." Burns' critique of piety, by the way, is why, in the previous paragraph, I enclosed sin in inverted commas. Culturally it is a deeply conflicted term. It is difficult in contemporary society even to raise the question of where we stand in relation to it.

Personally, and with the need to add the dimension of *ecosin*, I would side with Gutiérrez's definition, by no means original, that "sin is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings" (Gutiérrez 1988, xxviii). In a manner that sheds light on all nihilistic philosophies, he expands the notion as follows

> Therefore, sin is not only an impediment to salvation in the afterlife. Insofar as it constitutes a break with God, sin is a historical reality, it is a breach of the communion of persons with each other, it is a turning in of individuals on themselves which manifests itself in a multifaceted withdrawal from others. (Ibid. 85):

It is in consequence of that "turning in" that MacDiarmid's 1932 essay, "The Caledonian Antisyzygy and the Gaelic Idea," ultimately disappoints this reader; not because it doesn't explore Professor Smith's concept, but for its failure to do so deeply enough to redeem itself by fully confessing the shadow side of the antisyzygy. The bard (whose work I otherwise admire so much) starts promisingly. He speaks of:

> … Scotland's distinctive function in the world ('which partakes not of fairyland, but of the enchantment of life itself – indescribable as a sea of changing colours touching all the shores of possibility'); its essential contribution, past and potential, to civilization. A friend recently asked me to define the Scottish genius, and I answered, 'Freedom – the free development of human consciousness'…. (MacDiarmid 1969, 57)

That is wonderful stuff. As I have tried to do with some of my own magical realist work (4 – *Love Revolution;* 5 – *GalGael Peoples;* 6 – *Celtic Shamanism*), it reaches towards what C. S. Lewis in the Narnia chronicles hints at as being the "deep magic" of the world set in place when time began – Lewis's literary metaphor for the Incarnation as per John 1. Patrick Geddes would have loved the magical twist that Lewis dares to introduce in his children's writings – a Geddes who dared to write, in "Life and its

Science" in *The Evergreen* of 1895: "For each, for all, the faerie messengers are waiting; and they must ever return to Her from whom they came." But with the benefit of crushing hindsight, MacDiarmid's failure at that Communist stage in his life to push deeply enough into his own and the cultural shadow is revealed with catastrophic effect in the selfsame essay. His hatred of the English, whilst understandable in certain respects both historical and ongoing, is rabid to the point that the reader must suspect an inner splitting and projection onto the "auld enemy". It is in his essay's confounding of race with culture that he comes finally unstuck. We find it in his passage headed *Blutsgefühl* – the German term that Hitler used for "blood feeling" Writing before the full impact of what Hitler stood for had become evident, the bard unfortunately opines that:

> Scottish nationalists … ought to consider carefully the principle which Hitler and his National Socialists in Germany oppose to Marxism…. Class-consciousness is anathema to them, and in contradistinction to it they set up the principle of race-consciousness (ibid. 70).

Here we see the importance of one particular expression of ego identity – "race-consciousness" affirmed. (And let nobody try telling, say, a black American that "blackness" is unimportant!) And yet, with hindsight we also see the dangerous limitations of that viewpoint when inadequately held within some higher constellating epistemological reference point.

We all need our ego identities. To deny them is to deny an ontological reality. As even some Buddhist teachers will say, "You cannot talk about giving it up until you've got one," and as transpersonal (or spiritual) psychology recognises, for many people the spiritual challenge is not to shed their ego identities – any such attempt would be, at the very least, premature - but to try and construct a stable one, a well-grounded one, out of the twisted fragments of early life trauma and ongoing vicissitude (Groff & Groff 1989). What matters is the bedrock on which that ego identity rests.

The same principles of identity formation and development, applies in my view at a community and, on a larger scale, at a national level (10 – *WCC Tiger;* 11 – *Saint*

Andrew; 12 – *Euro Globalisation*). As the Breton eye of Renan saw it in a celebrated sentence, a nation is more than just a state, a political construction: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle" (1882). We will explore the full significance of such a view shortly when we turn to address more fully the psychospirituality of community in relation to Walter Wink's theology, and to deepen what has been said so far about Ferrier's epistemology.

What matters for now is to recognise that it is the shadow denied that trips us up by inflating a poorly-grounded ego, and this is true both individually and collectively. Such is the terrible consequence of not actively striving to love enemies; of not always searching out the beam in our own eye. It is, as we shall see later in discussing my Eigg Trust launch address (1 – *Eigg Manifesto*), the dynamic by which oppressed becomes oppressor; a dynamic that must be tackled in tandem with any opening of the doors of our lives to freedom. MacDiarmid's foibles (like some of the racially stereotyping remarks of Renan) have been sympathetically treated by biographers as they can be when set in the context and constructs of their era. But MacDiarmid's marked stumbling, as most would see it, is a warning to us all when working with sense of identity. We come undone if we predicate blood or race as distinct from culture and soul – thus my book is called "Soil and *Soul*" in marked contrast to "blood and soil." Blood and such genetic attributes as skin colour are, to borrow from Kenneth White's ideas, a *closed worldview*. There is nothing that a human being can do about such biological characteristics. Soul and culture, by contrast, can partake of what White calls an "open world" (and thus, in close collaboration with his Scottish colleague, Norman Bissell, his "open world poetics"). A closed world is perforce exclusive of a perceived out-group and thus, intrinsically xenophobic. An open world is potentially inclusive and thus, intrinsically, internationalist – thus the much-vaunted principle of "Scots internationalism" – being about becoming (as Catherine Lockerbie who directs the Edinburgh Book Festival once put it in a newspaper comment), "more Scottish and more internationalist". The tension between the closed and open worldviews is an old one. It challenges even the best amongst humankind, as I have suggested in reflection on Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman (0 – *Soil and Soul,* 203). Ultimately as the

principle of antisyzygy implies, the two must be held in tension, but held nonetheless. The open can exist without post-modern superficiality only if the closed is also honoured – we must be global citizens, but standing on our local ground.

MacDiarmid almost gets there in his 1950 essay, "The Quality of Scots Internationalism" (ibid.). An internationalist paradigm is the way forward, but again, it is the poet's rabid anti-Englishness that lets him down. His essay sweepingly praises what he describes as "Scottish hospitality and kindness as against the snobbery and social stratification of the English" (ibid. 116). His point is, I consider, well made against a backdrop of a relatively egalitarian Scotland that, to its Presbyterian roots and beyond, largely spurns social class stratification. But MacDiarmid falls short in that his points are at best unkindly made; at worst, inaccurate. There is little evidence of listening here and of openness to reciprocal criticism from England; and therefore no adequate doorway for mutual deliverance. There is no recognition of the Scots shadow – the fact, for example, that our reputation for generosity is paired also with a paradoxical reputation for meanness! In my view, that paradox arises due to a misunderstanding of the nature of thrift – but that doesn't absolve the need to address an uncomfortable aspect of the Scottish reputation. As a result of the failure to examine itself deeply, MacDiarmid's version of internationalism starts in the right direction but falls short of a cultural vision that, particularly post-1945, can be considered adequate.

Taking Ferrier's epistemological starting point of the importance of acknowledging ego as a platform for knowing, this leaves us with a problem. If Ferrier's first proposition is correct, and I believe it is, then for an individual or a culture to have knowledge and thereby be freed from the bonds of ignorance, that person must have an identity. She or he must have a sense of who they are, what they are about and thus, be capable of entering into a dynamic engagement with the third stage of the Cycle of Belonging to which we will shortly turn – a Sense of Values. The implications of Ferrier are stark: without ego identity, *there can be no knowledge* (see the excellent entry for him under the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). The anomic person – the person caught up in deracinated nihilism – is, in this way of seeing things, literally null. He or she stands

exposed as a profoundly *ignorant* person. I have already explained the sharp edge that that word carries in Scottish culture (the point was first made to me by a Mr Mackenzie, who lectured in industrial psychology in my MBA class at Edinburgh University in 1980). The challenge "to be or not to be" thereby confronts us with the conundrum of agnoiology, thus vindicating Ferrier's neologism. That conundrum runs through the entire field of identity studies. It is the observation that to remain in denial of who we fully are results in ignorance, and yet to enter into who we really are risks setting loose demons. This is the importance of understanding the shadow. It is why Gutiérrez considers that only "liberation from sin gets to the very source of social injustice and other forms of human oppression and reconciles us with God and our fellow human beings" (1988, xxxviii). But as Ferrier saw, honest agnoiology is necessary for gnosis. We can only know if we know what we do not know. And that requires asking the question to which we are to return - whether the ego alone is sufficient, as the existentialists and humanists would seem to suggest, as the foundation on which to predicate epistemology.

Let us pause, a moment, and take stock of where we are at in this treatise. Our concern is with contributions of liberation theology to Scottish land reform that culminated in the 2003 Act. The reader might fear that I have become bizarrely adrift from that objective, but I plead otherwise. My gameplan is unfolding as follows. Land is central to the human covenant with God (0 – *Soil and Soul*; 9 – *Carbeth Hutters;* 10 – *WCC Tiger*). It matters because it is the source of grace-given Providence – *provide-ence.* As God told Jacob in Genesis 28, "The land on which you lie I will give to you … and all the families of the Earth shall be blessed." The nations proceeded from Babel – and for me this is metaphorical in a way that illuminates the deeper reality of archetypal truth - to protect humankind from the consequences of their and Nimrod's ego inflation. These nations find blessing in their relationship to the land from which all providence - every next breath of it - derives. To know how we are held in the land – to have an ecotheologically conscious epistemology of it – is, therefore, central to finding our grounding in this life. But to live with the consequences of the original sin *of consumption* in Eden, metaphorically speaking, we must confess that sin. Thus our

relationship with the land can only be redeemed through a theology of redemption. I refer to this salving process as "metaphorical" because, in my poetic theology as developed in *Soil and Soul*, metaphor has deeper implications for truth than has literal fact. Truth is metaphorical or poetic, and "fact" arises contingently from this. Before the world was created, God "*said*" – Genesis 1. It matters not a fig leaf to me whether or not Adam and Eve "actually" existed and sat and "sinned" in the Garden of Eden. (Frankly, I am an evolutionist and perfectly content with the Darwinian explanation – I have no problem with the notion that the Holy Spirit also works through monkeys and that my neighbour, at least, is an ape!) But the *metaphorical* richness of the Edenic story is of foundational importance that goes deeper than Darwin. The Greek literal mind that is our main Western intellectual inheritance may insist on asking whether the events of Eden "really" happened. But the Hebrew metaphoric mind knows that it is story, and understands the deep meaning of story as evidenced, for example, by the manifestly metaphorical extended use of Eden that we find made by the prophet in Ezekiel 28. (I explore aspects of this further in my discussion of Noah, Gilgamesh and Nimrod in Chapter 5 of my forthcoming book on climate change (McIntosh 2008a).

Redemption starts with facing the shadow and acknowledging the vulnerability of the ego to inflation by that shadow. But redemption only starts there because, at first, we see the shadow but through a glass dimly. We don't see its fullness. Ultimately, as Dostoyevsky has his Father Zosima put it in *The Brothers Karamazov*, our "sin" is the "original sin" of the whole world – that which is intrinsic to simply being human. As Gandhi said somewhere, "All life entails violence." We cannot avoid our complicity. We can only confess and seek to minimise it. We are, as the business law of partnership puts it, "jointly and severally liable" – jointly, here in arcane legal language meaning singly, as a single joint of a limb, and severally, meaning together. As such, the depth psychology of the shadow may be the starting point on the journey, but ultimately, only the spirituality of saying "yes" to the grace of God can invite full redemption.

Let me return now to identity, and to the Ferrierian implication that to refute identity - or, we might infer, to allow our identities to become homogenised as happens under

globalisation (Duchrow & Hinkelammert 2004; Ekins & Max-Neef 1992) – is to face ontological ignorance and, with it, the consequence that the shadow will, for sure, inflate and trip us up. On the one hand is the need to own and be anchored in our conscious ego identity with both its gnosis and its agnoiosis. On the other hand, if we stay stuck there we face the dangers of psychological inflation that MacDiarmid and, to a very much greater extent, Hitler, have demonstrated. This is a burning point. We must recognise that the issue of identity has tended to be embraced in both Britain and mainland Europe more by the political right than the left. Even Renan was something of an aristocrat in some of his thought. Little wonder that many on the left therefore run from questions of culture and identity out of fear of following in footsteps that can injure and kill. After all, the rump of Nazism was made up of otherwise decent ordinary Germans who went to church and loved Beethoven. Lindqvist (2002) putting flesh to Conrad (1995) suggests that Germany was merely playing out at home what other European colonial powers, particularly Belgium and Britain, were doing in some of their colonies – thus, as Iraq and Trident hint at - we in Britain should be wary in our "we won the War" jingoism that presumes ourselves to be absolved of cultural shadow. In stumbling, Hitler's Germans may have stumbled for us all including our bard, Hugh MacDiarmid! But how, in that case, can we dare to venture into the work of building our national and individual identities?

This is where the fullness of Ferrier's epistemology becomes life-giving. Agnoiosis is not a criticism of ignorance. On the contrary, it is a recognition that there can be known ignorance only of that which is potentially knowable. That sense of one's own balance of gnosis and agnoiosis is held by the ego, but to recognise that there are things potentially knowable – not about mere facts and figures but about the nature of reality, its metaphysics - that we do not know implies a source and means of ultimate knowing. That knowing must somehow and somewhere be "held". Ferrier, if I understand him correctly, saw that for knowledge to be adequately held by a human being, it has to be held *in relationship* to the underlying source of knowledge. This he calls "the theistic conclusion": human knowledge exists, he suggests, as "a synthesis" of the personal and beyond the personal (what would, today, be called the transpersonal) - a synthesis of

the human and divine egos. Ferrier's language is difficult for the contemporary reader to grasp – at least, I find it so - but these are the words by which his argument reaches its zenith:

> But speculation shows us that the universe, by itself, is the contradictory; that it is incapable of self-subsistency, that it can exist only *cum alio* … that all true and cogitable and non-contradictory existence is a synthesis of the subjective and the objective; and *then* we are compelled, by the most stringent necessity of thinking, to conceive a supreme intelligence as the ground and essence of the Universal Whole. Thus the postulation of the Deity is not only permissible, it is unavoidable. Every mind thinks, and *must* think of God (however little conscious it may be of the operation which it is performing), whenever it thinks of anything as lying beyond all human observation, or as subsisting in the absence or annihilation of all finite intelligences.
>
> To this conclusion, which is the crowning truth of the ontology, the research has been led, not by any purpose aforethought, but simply by the winding current of the speculative reason, to whose guidance it had implicitly surrendered itself.... It started with no intention of establishing this conclusion, or any conclusion which was not forced upon it by the insuperable necessities of thought. It has found what it did not seek; and it is conceived that this theistic conclusion is all the more to be depended upon on that very account, inasmuch as the desire or intention to reach a particular inference is almost sure to warp in favour of that inference the reasoning by which it is supported. Here metaphysics stop; here ontology is merged in Theology. Philosophy has accomplished her final work; she has reached by strict demonstration the central law of all reason (the necessity, namely, of thinking an infinite and eternal Ego in synthesis with all things); and that law she lays down as the basis of all religion. (Ferrier 2005, 524-5)

In short, Ferrier's answer to the problem of egotistic solipsism and thus, to the tendency towards nihilism, is that the human ego properly establishes its epistemological standpoint *in synthesis with God*. It is this metaphysical bottom line grounding of the ego in God that relates us to reality. And note, once again, the relational (communitarian?) emphasis on synthesis where Ferrier surmises as follows. And incidentally, who needs to draw upon Zen Buddhist intellectualism when we have our own home-grown James Frederick Ferrier with such articulation as this?

> All absolute existences are contingent *except one*; in other words, there is One, but only one, Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary*; and that existence is a

> supreme and infinite, and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things. (Ferrier 2005, 522)

I had not studied Ferrier's thought on these matters prior to embarking upon this thesis. However, in Scotland one grows up implicitly touched by past philosophers and theologians, especially where their philosophy bears a relationship to reality. Our poets are our popular intellectuals and, often, not afraid of showing it, as in Burns' reference to reading such luminaries as Boston that I have already mentioned (albeit, he implies, with a struggle for such a "saint or sinner" and self-proclaimed "Ranter" as he!). Today Ferrier is not a fashionable philosopher. The Academy now generally teaches a secular philosophy. But ideas like these mould the culture in which we are shaped just as they were, in turn sprouted, as Ferrier tells us from that cultural soil. I am therefore not surprised to have discovered Ferrier and to find his thoughts already implicit to what I feel to be true. The issue that faces us in the world today, and the deepest challenge of land theology and its soil and soul epistemology, is the question of cultural and ecological healing. I do not believe that this can be undertaken from an ego level alone. This is the problem with the "world's" way of approaching things. Rather, it requires a deeper epistemology such as we find expressed in Ferrier's theistic conclusion; something that can relate the wounded ego, including its alter ego in the shadow to a much more complete and healing cosmological framework.

This healing was the challenge that I attempted to address poetically in 1996 (5 – *GalGael Peoples*) at the request of my colleagues in the GalGael Trust and they, at the request of a convention of Native Americans who had written to them. The whole poem is about healing – about what I call "cultural psychotherapy" – but here is a key fragment of it (ibid. 186):

> Culloden - last battle mainland British soil 1746
> internal colonial conquest
> blood mingling inseparably soaked through moss Drumossie moor
> friend and foe and which is 'us' and which is 'them' now?

> Where the 'Gaeltachd' whither 'Galltachd'
> Unavoidably mingled
> for a' that and a' that
> sacrificing, sanctifying, down to an ice-age cleans'ed strata
> that is both cultural and in depth, archaeological
> long stinking but now compost-rendered for new growth
> Something poised
> . . . both psychic and somatic
> . . . genetic and prophetic
> Remnant sprig from taproot of antiquity
> awaiting spring to bud re-formed
> and Blossom as is needed in our agitated times
> . . . a cultural cultivation . . .
> Indeed! Let us observe that
> the capacity of nature and of human nature
> to be hurt
> is exceeded
> in the fullness of time
> only
> by the capacity to heal . . .
> And that must be joy's greatest cause for hope

For the challenge is to take the sewage of our lives that stinks, and to turn it into compost from which new life can grow. The challenge is to reconcile ego and shadow and to ground these in the arms of the deep Self (cf. Matthew 11:28:30). The transformative power unleashed in commencing so to do is literally mindblowing. As Jung expresses it in his essay, “Psychology and Religion”:

> If you imagine someone who is brave enough to withdraw all his projections, then you get an individual who is conscious of a pretty thick shadow. Such a man has saddled himself with new problems and conflicts. He has become a serious problem to himself, as he is now unable to say that they do this or that,

> they are wrong, and they must be fought against. He lives in the "House of the Gathering." Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world is in himself, and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow he has done something real for the world. He has succeeded in shouldering at least an infinitesimal part of the gigantic, unsolved social problems of our day. (1958, 140)

And the point made by Ferrier, the point that Jung develops, the point of everything that Dostoyevsky's Father Zosima bore testimony to on his deathbed, is that that challenge can be met only by this grounding of both the ego self and the shadow self progressively into the "theistic conclusion" of a deeper being where, as in John 15, we recognise that we are interconnected branches on the vine of Life.

This fullness of our being can be modelled as tripartite – for, underlying both ego and the shadow is this deep Self, God Self, Christ Self, Buddha Nature or Hinduism's Atman (individual self) as Brahman (universal Self). My view is that these are all different manifestations of the same ground of being. I realise that such fusion is a contested viewpoint. To justify this I need but refer my reader to the writings of the great Indian-Spanish cross-cultural scholar, Raimon Panikkar. Ordained as a Roman Catholic priest but continuing to hold fast to his Hinduism, Panikkar describes himself as "Wholly Indian and wholly Spanish" (pers. com., "No Life Without Roots" conference, SCAWD, Govan, 1989). In writing of "the Cosmotheandric Christ" Panikkarji says of the interfaith imperative: "Since the circumcision of the body has been done away with, why not also do away with that of the mind?" (Panikkar 1993, 153). The parallel will be plain with the "Wisdom Christianity" of the Benedictine monk, Fr. Bede Griffiths (a.k.a. Swami Dayananda), who also synthesised the religions of East and West. This is, of course, syncretism; and personally, I have yet to understand why, whenever pleading "guilty as charged" as has frequently been necessary, the prosecutor has bothered to raise the allegation of heresy. I do not see why the Holy Spirit can not have spoken in different languages through different cultures throughout time, and why such "tongues" may not now find a synthesising interpretation. We must be careful of making of the Bible, or any other sacred text, a

cage in which to imprison the Holy Spirit. And we might at times do well to consider that the Spirit was left to us not without reason (John 14 – 16, various verses).

This tripartite and triune ontology that I express here is modelled in Figure 3. It is a simplified model, derived from more complex renditions developed from Jung's psychology as represented, with Jung's blessing, by Jacobi (1968). Jung makes it clear that psyche is, in his understanding, ultimately grounded in cosmos as theistically configured. We are, as MacDiarmid echoes, reconciled to the stones. We are of the same matter quickened by the power of the Spirit. Such is the very carnality of incarnation. It follows that human development work – what Roman Catholic social teaching has referred to, since the 1960s, as being "integral human development" – requires the creation of psychospiritual literacy in our communities. (See discussion of "integral human development" as "collaboration in the development of the whole person and of every human being." in the Papal encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Social Concern), section 32 under the chapter headed, "Authentic Human Development", 1987, on the Vatican website. See also the exploration of "the ecological question" and, specifically, an exegesis of "human ecology", in the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, sections 37 – 39 also on the Vatican site. Ian Linden (1997) of CIIR provides an excellent short review of the evolution of liberation theology within Roman Catholicism. I have not otherwise felt it necessary to explore formal theological approaches to liberation theology in this thesis, though references to it are scattered through my published work.)

Psychospiritual literacy is one of the things that I try to engender in all my work. I use the expression, "psychospiritual", to allow others to take it as either psychological and/or spiritual. But for me, the two amount to the same – the psyche is the soul notwithstanding the appropriation of the prefix "psych" by modern secular so-called "psychology". The proper study of psychology ought not be "the study of human behaviour," but "the study of the psyche" – the soul. The study of behaviour should accept the constraints of its proper designation - behaviourism.

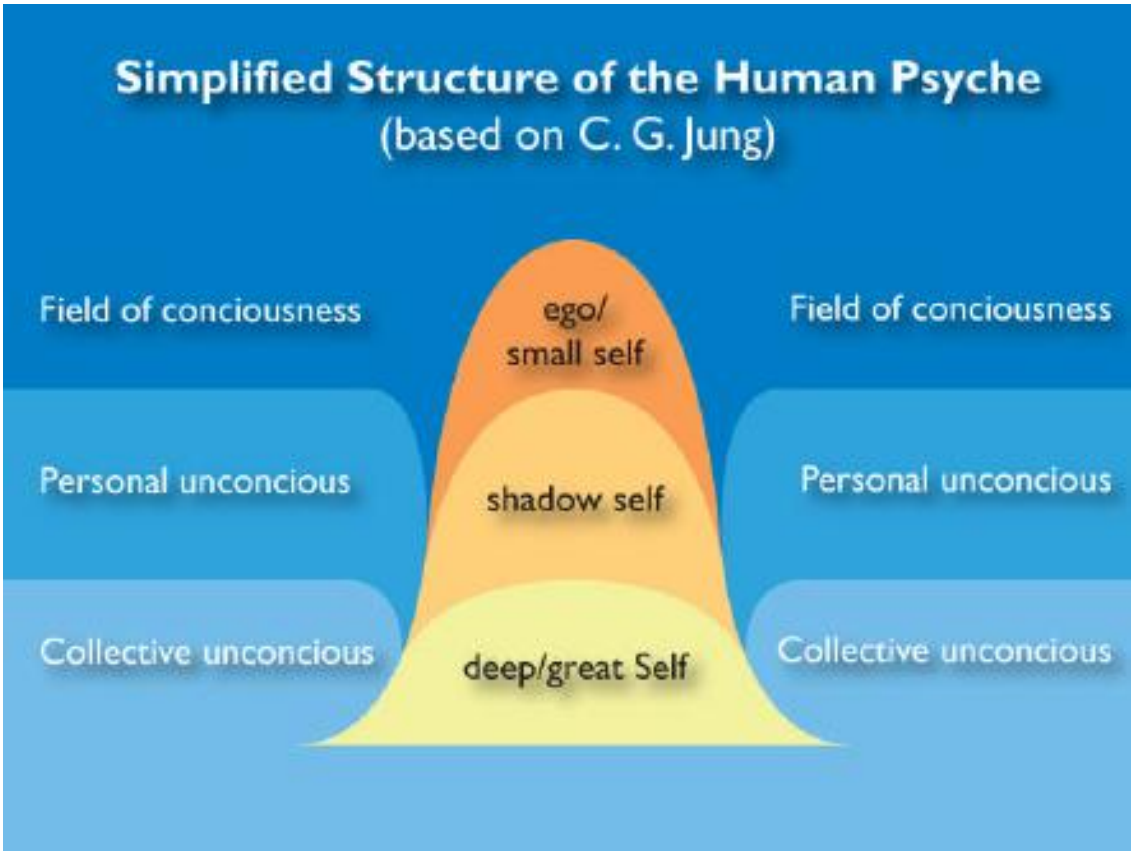


Figure 3: The Jungian Psyche

It will be seen that the model presented above, drawing intrinsically from Jung, is also deeply (but not exclusively) Christian. If Jesus was the ego self of a man who came among us and died, Christ can be understood as the eternal Godself in a totality that, in the pleroma (i.e. beyond the limitations of space and time), is *Jesus Christ* – the *Pantocrator* as Orthodoxy would have it. As Paul put it in a moment of brilliant psychological acuity, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20 KJV) – and with that, a strong sense also of the need to face the shadow self as Adam of the meteorically metaphorical Fall.

If we believe, as I do or Iain Crichton Smith when alive did, that we are working in a world where the sense of humanness has lost its "holiness" (as Smith put it, in speaking of the old woman), and become culturally shrivelled and shrunken, then psychospiritual literacy must be a starting point to rekindle both individual and communal humanity. This is something that we work with all the time at the GalGael Trust in Govan – a project that stimulated my GalGael poem. The ideas that I am presenting here in an academic context are therefore coming filtered through the testbed of a hard-pressed real-life context; one in which participants can come out with statements like, "Heroin took away my pain, Alastair, but it also took away my soul," and where poetry is inspired from contexts of real-life transfiguration (4- *Love Revolution*,41, 49, 57-9).

Let me bring this subsection to conclusion. We have explored a triune ontology of the human being that leads us away from nihilistic solipsism and towards a relationship between ego and shadow aspects of the Self grounded in God. I have not attempted to "prove" the existence of God. My bottom line is an empirical mystical epistemology. It is captured by the Mandukya Upanishad: "In the union with Him is the supreme proof of His reality. He is peace and love" (Mascaró trans. 1965, 83). Indeed, the whole of what is being said here is summed up in these closing lines from the Mundaka Upanishad:

> As rivers flowing into the ocean find their final peace and their name and form disappear, even so the wise become free from name and form and enter into the

> radiance of the Supreme Spirit who is greater than all greatness. In truth who knows God becomes God. (Ibid. 81)

3.3 Sense of Values - Soul

It is the fire of the Spirit that brings us to this burning essence of what it means to be a human being; one grounded in this body that is on and of this Earth and yet connected to Heaven. At stake in the big picture of life is not the reform of land ownership on Eigg, or trying to halt a superquarry in a National Scenic Area of Harris, or the work of the GalGael Trust tackling the roots of poverty in Govan through reconnection with place, or teaching human ecology the better to address planetary depletion, or fighting Trident in seeking peace on Earth. All of these things are but outward forms of a single inner spiritual concern. As campaigns they may or may not succeed. The whole point of liberation theology is to achieve more than just engagement in campaigns. The point of liberation theology is to become opened to the flow of nothing less than the Spirit which is to say, in Christian language, the Holy Spirit; and, in this way, to participate in the ongoing creation and redemption of the world. We care called to become nothing less than "participants in the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). As we have just seen, Hinduism and Christianity make the same point.

This is why we misunderstand liberation theology if we think it is about "priests doing politics" or, worse still, "priests with guns." Firstly, *we* – which is to say, all "believers" - are the "priests" in question. And I would quibble with the word "believers" as commonly used in contexts such as this. We are not speaking about "belief" as such: we are speaking, as the challenge of Matthew 5:8 makes clear, about becoming able to "see God"; about *spiritually empirical reality*. Secondly, politics may be a means of standing in the community – a means of interaction with others. But it is not *the* end. Thus, when I talk about *values* in the Cycle of Belonging, I do not mean merely the cultivation of a sense of ethics that find social expression. Ethics, or the moral law as E.

P. Thomson shows in his exegesis of William Blake, desiccates the soul if it becomes separated from the source that informs it. In contrast, as Thomson also shows, the Ranter (cf. Burns' self-identification as "Rob the Ranter" in counterpoint to the austere Boston in the *Epistle to James Tennant* op. cit.), the Digger and the Leveller end of the seventeenth century Quaker spectrum (on which my work draws heavily as a pattern and example of British liberationist praxis) taught an "Everlasting Gospel" which was the Power of Love (Thompson 1994). It is the Spirit, not the letter alone, that giveth life – thus the importance of developing, as one of today's environmental philosophers puts it, "an ecology of emotion" comprising "a full recognition of the emotional basis of all our actions [that] might … give non-market interests a chance of being heard and reflected" (Milton 2002, 151). For emotion and especially the emotion of love is the ebb and flow of the soul.

It follows that to campaign on land reform only because landlordism is "bad" and community ownership "good" would not be a sufficient basis on which to predicate the mission of land reform. On its own, such a political analysis would become desiccating. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalms 127:1 KJV). We must, in addition to the political and other practical work, reach to the fountain of value that lies behind "values", just as in "worship" we must return to the Old English etymology of that word and seek out that which is "of worth". This is why, in the Cycle of Belonging, I use the expression "Sense of Values" in a way that is deeper than usual: I equate it with soul as being that which is resourced from the innermost divine core of Being. My aim here is to get to the heart of the poetic fire that is the core of liberationist praxis – for as Bruggemann constantly reminds us:

> The very art of poetic speech establishes new reality…. The practice of such *poetic imagination* is the most subversive, redemptive act that a leader of a faith community can undertake in the midst of exiles…. The outcome of such poetry is hope. It is hope which makes community possible on the way out of the empire. (Bruggemann 1986, 95-7)

And such, poetic fire is the language of the Spirit. I would suggest that the values that define and sustain Sense of Place in the Cycle of Belonging arise poetically from the

inner Spirit that animates that place and the life it holds. However, in my applied work I find that it is not always possible or desirable to take an overly evangelical stand in the language that is used. As I have discussed in *Soil and Soul*, there is an issue here of the "cringe factor", especially where people have been spiritually abused in their past run-ins with some expressions of religion. Most people, however, can connect with "values" even if "Spirit" would be further than they would be willing to go. One can start with discourse about values and then, as Larkin puts it in his 1971 poem, *This Be the Verse*, let the matter "deepen like a coastal shelf." In digging from where I/we stand, I therefore want to use language with which the mass of people can more readily connect, and draw them in not so much to outer values, as to the fire of their spiritual source and thus, to their deepest values. My personal view is that these values are what connects people to the "Godspace", as I call it, within – the deep Self or the great Self. Values can therefore be the start of a spiritual journey, but whether others choose to see it like that or not lies beyond my determination. As such, the process that is stimulated in such conscientising reflection is one of the emergence of values rather than the imposition of them, and I consider this to be of the essence of community empowerment work that is *sustainable*.

One might ask, are these values "created", or is it that they get "recognised"? Where do they emerge from and what authority do they carry? These are all very fair questions, and mostly unanswerable without resort to either the theoretical basis of doctrine, on the one hand, or the empirical basis of mystic experience, on the other. But to answer them from doctrine, even within contexts where there is agreement about that doctrine, raises questions about the possibly misplaced concreteness of formulaic theorising. As a Quaker, an adherent of a non-credal church, and one of the Ranter tendency at that, I am not inclined to resort to doctrine. At the same time, doctrine, like the scripture on which it is usually based, often encapsulates insights that can, with the Spirit's guiding, lead to spiritual deepening. The Quaker position on this is plainly stated right at the start of "Advices and Queries" in *Quaker Faith and Practice*.

> As Friends we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love: all our testimonies grow from this leading.
>
> Although the corporate use of advices and queries is governed by more flexible regulations (1.05-1.07) than in the past, they should continue to be a challenge and inspiration to Friends in their personal lives and in their life as a religious community which knows the guidance of the universal spirit of Christ, witnessed to in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth….
>
> Our diversity invites us both to speak what we know to be true in our lives and to learn from others. Friends are encouraged to listen to each other in humility and understanding, trusting in the Spirit that goes beyond our human effort and comprehension. So it is for the comfort and discomfort of Friends that these advices and queries are offered, with the hope that we may all be more faithful and find deeper joy in God's service.
>
> > Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.
> >
> > Postscript to an epistle to 'the bretheren of the north' issued by a meeting of elders at Balby, 1656.
>
> (Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995, 1.01)

My work is dotted with examples of when the individual spirit is quickened by what I would see as the Holy Spirit to transfiguring epiphanies (see, most recently, the chapter "Journey into the Soul" in McIntosh 2008a). These are rare happenings, but they have happened sufficiently often, especially when up against challenge, for me to be convinced that spiritual consciousness is real, and that the realities of everyday life are underpinned by a power of love that makes the sun and other stars go round. It is this love, this articulation of the Holy Spirit, that liberationist praxis is most fundamentally engaged with. In work that connects culture and environment – the work of recreating and sustaining "place" - we get glimpses of it all the time. For example, today (and it hardly matters which day) I read in the *West Highland Free Press* a profile of the

Glasgow-originated but Isle of Harris-based artist, Willie Fulton. Fulton describes a connection with spirit of place that I profoundly recognise. I would describe it as "connection with the essence". He tells his interviewer:

> What I paint is remembered light: moments in time. But I also try to go beyond the landscape. It's not just a representation or view of the landscape, there's the history and the whole ethos of the island, the sense of presence and maybe a spirituality – though not in the religious sense. When I'm away and walking down Sauchiehall Street, it's the feeling that I have internally for the island – that's what I'm trying to capture. That sounds high-fallutin', but it's not meant to be. (Macleod, 2007)

This sense of the presence of place hints at deepening layers of the collective psyche embedded in place and the culture of such constructs as "nation". From within the Jungian schema, such "transpersonal" dimensions of community can be expressed as in Figure 4.

As one whose sense of connection with the Isle of Lewis feels visceral, umbilical, I'm completely with Willie Fulton in every respect in what he says here except for his cautious qualification of the spirituality as a "maybe". I outrageously use the expression, "Holy Spirit", in some of my work – "outrageously" because, to a secular world, it is a scandal to imagine that there is anything beyond ego; anything bigger than our own small selves and the materiality of this world. But I insist on so doing for a number of reasons. Doing so honours and seeks to learn from the spirituality of the Highland church of our forebears and many of our contemporaries as well as the entire raft of historical Christian experience. As my chapter in *Soil and Soul* on "The Womanhood of God" indicates, I have major issues with the doctrinal expression of the Highland Church. I consider that the blood atonement theory of the crucifixion needs reinterpretation, and in this, I am not alone in contemporary Christian theology (Weaver 2001). However, the contemporary generic Highland Church is what my own forebears – both Highland in Maclennan of Strathconon and Lowland in Boston of Ettrick - helped to create. An important part of my work is therefore to challenge

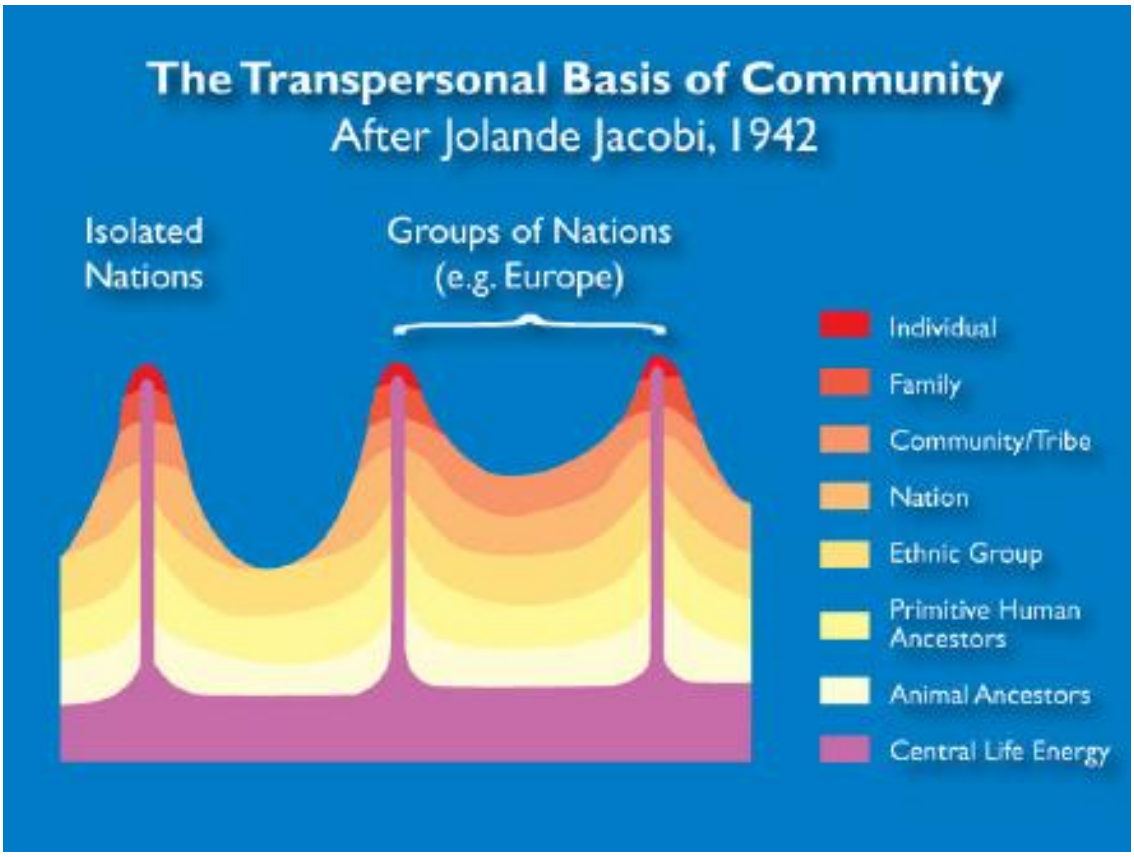


Figure 4: The Transpersonal Basis of Community

sympathetically and seek to broaden the culture on such issues. Such is the approach that seeks to engage through empathy, even if not in agreement.

But for all that organised Highland and Hebridean religion might, in places, be upright and uptight, I think that the power of the people's spirituality as a whole speaks for itself. It is an expression of their Godliness; their being filled, perhaps more than many are aware, with the presence of the Holy Spirit. You feel it and are given its benefit in moving amongst the people; in being held as a child is held in their community. I have grown up in this and continue to be cradled in it, ranting Quaker heretic though I may be! There is an understanding here, in this tradition and amongst this branch of substantially "Irish," "Gaelic" or "Celtic" cultural heritage, that life is holy, the person is holy, the Creation is holy. Here the usual sense of "holiness" as being in Otto's sense of being "set aside" disappears. There is no, "aside"! Such is the "realised eschatology" that renders Quakerism heretical in the eyes of some other denominations. The "Kingdom" is both coming – it is something we have yet "like a child" to receive (Luke 18), and it has already arrived if we would but have eyes to see (Luke 17; John 1).

To the logician of the head this is unacceptable paradox; to the poet of the heart it is, as the Quaker George Fox put it, "truth of the heart". Here lies the age-old dispute between rational religion and a-rational mysticism. As Rex Ambler puts it in an authoritative commentary on George Fox:

> So it is natural for us, as it was indeed for the Puritans of his own day, to expect Fox, if he must speak about the truth, to state what he believed the truth to be so that we in turn can consider whether to believe it…. But if we read Fox this way we will soon find it difficult to make sense of him, and may well conclude that it is Fox himself who is confused, as has often been said. A typical example of his 'confusion' would be an injunction such as the following: "Take heed of knowledge, for it puffeth up, but dwell in the truth, and be what ye speak" (2.75). How can you 'dwell in the truth' and at the same time disregard 'knowledge'? Perhaps he was thinking of the vaunted knowledge of the dons of Oxford and Cambridge, and proffering his own 'truth' as an alternative, in which case we might have to dismiss him as a bigot and an obscurantist! But consider another text in which he seems to be getting into the same confusion: 'Take heed of words without life, for they tend to draw you out of the power to

> live above the truth, and out of your conditions; which nature will not have peace, except it have words' (2:68). Again, we are being asked to make a choice between 'words' and 'the truth', as if the two could be separated! But perhaps Fox seriously thought they could be and should be separated. Perhaps he meant something else by 'truth' than what could be formulated in words. This is the suspicion raised by these texts….The suspicion raised by these examples is that for Fox 'truth' does not mean in the first place a representation of reality, whether in words or images, but reality itself. (Ambler 2001, 181-2)

And so the Creation is holy, but only purity of heart can reveal this to us and truth is what renders the heart pure. The Lewis-born Professor Donald Macleod, principal of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, expressed this holiness of place very bluntly in his newspaper column as I worked on this thesis. He said, "Land is sacred" (Macleod 2007). He said it as starkly and remarkably as that! In a secular newspaper! That sacredness takes us, in my view, beyond merely "spirit"; beyond geopoetics alone as an environmental poetics: it takes us into a realm of experience that is *holy*: into the realm of love that is very flesh and blood; *incarnate*. In such visceral ways a connection with *community of place* thereby takes us beyond the Decalogue and into its fulfilment as the Everlasting Gospel that transcends Pharisaic legalism. Such is the Sense of Values that, I believe, is kindled by a liberation theology of the land. Land and its peoples are the grounding in which our lives awaken to 'truth' as Fox understands it – truth where the knowing of the head is built from a foundation in the heart – for the heart is, above all, the organ of spiritual perception. This is why, as Jean Vanier has repeatedly shown, even those who are profoundly disabled in the "head" or body are not cut off from spiritual development. There is an epistemological asymmetry here: it is the heart, as MacDiarmid reminds us, that pumps blood to the head; not vice versa (MacDiarmid 1939, xiv):

> Out from your melancholy moping, your impotence, Gaels!
> You stir the heart, you think? … but surely
> One of the heart's main functions is to supply the brain!

And in the full version of this poem, "Goodbye Twilight", that we find with albeit less dramatic punctuation in MacDiarmid 1985, 1124-6, the bard accuses Gaeldom of getting nowhere "Because your sub-conscious nature, which apparently / You know

nothing about, is manipulating you from the start." In other words, MacDiarmid perceived a deficit of psychodynamic literacy and insight, thus his prescription in the same piece: "Back to the great music, Scottish Gaels. Too long / You have wallowed as in the music of Delius." In other words, we have lost our grounding, and this, I consider, is what Iain Crichton Smith touches on in another of his essays in *Towards the Human*, "The Feeling Intelligence". Smith wrote:

> The intelligence in Scotland has been par excellence the intelligence of the practical.... It is possible that if we were to search out how our great scientists made their discoveries, we might find that even they had made them in a Lawrentian manner, that is to say, by feeling and intuition. But our Scottish education does not work like that. It must explain everything, as in the questions and answers of the Shorter Catechism. It will not allow the intelligence to be other than that of the relentless logician. Everything must be explained and nothing is explained. And that is possibly why in our Scottish schools there has been such a terrible failure with the children, with their intuitions, their unpredictabilities. It is because the feelings have been lost, it is because we are afraid of our feelings, and we have substituted a dead intelligence in their place.... For the poet in Scotland there awaits logic, scholarship, metaphysics, but there also awaits, if he has the patience of the feeling intelligence, the living quick of life itself. (Op. cit. 152-3)

Here again we see the fire that runs in the "living quick." Such poesis exists not as an alternative to logic, scholarship and metaphysics, but, as Smith carefully expresses it, "as well as." His operative word above is "also". For Jesus did not teach asceticism. Jesus was a man who partied and feasted and let amazing things happen with precious oil. His birth was celebrated with gold, myrrh and frankincense. His detractors accused him of being a drunkard and a glutton. He enjoyed the fruits of divine Providence, but never tried to grasp or hold on to them. His philosophy of material things could be summed up by the old evangelical poster, "If God gives you lemons, make lemonade." Or, as he put it himself, "seek ye first" the things of Heaven, and then, only then, can "all else be yours."

In the work presented here I have described mini-epiphanies that touch on connection with this "living quick" (0- *Soil and Soul*, 185; 4 – *Love Revolution* 41, 67, 69; 6 – *Celtic Shamanism*). My aim is to show these not just as "evidence" for spirituality, but

more importantly, as a reminder that when we become active, alive, engaged, quickened, we participate in this flow of the essence of life. Let me illustrate with a story from an article that I wrote on spiritual activism for both the Christian magazine *Third Way* and the progressive Jewish magazine, *Tikkun*. Hold in mind that what I'm trying to communicate here is spirituality not just as a means of such activism for land reform, but, simultaneously, as its end: and with that, an opening upon people's "sense of values" as more than an ethical framework, but as the quickening of the human spirit. For what matters in a liberation theology of land reform is not "to get the land". What matters, and the whole point of it all as we have been seeing, is that the people living on the land shall come to know the fullness of God with one another and on this Earth. That process can be a tortured one, but a transfiguring one:

> The thrust of Jeremiah's testimony is simultaneously social, ecological and religious (12:1-13). He bears uncomfortable witness not out of masochism or spiritual glory seeking, but from divine imperative. Speaking of God, he explains, "If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' then within me there is something *like a burning fire shut up in my bones*; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot" (20:9).
>
> And there's a hallmark of the spiritual activist. The "fire" in question is God-centred passion. In shamanistic literatures of the world this viscerally emerges from the belly, the head or even the very bones. Jeremiah's burden is crushing, yes, but he bears it because it is a *precious burden*. God, no less, tells him that this is so. "God", the deep Spirit of Life, instructs him, "If you utter what is *precious*, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth" (15:19).
>
> What is the nature of this spiritual fire? Let me offer a suggestion. I remember once being on an Ignatian-style retreat near Inverness. We'd be given short scripture passages upon which to meditate for hours. One day mine really bugged me: "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:49). All day long I wrestled with a muscular notion I'd gained, doubtless from too many Hebridean fundamentalist sermons as a child, of Christ the Victor angrily drawing hellfire down on his wayward vassals. The passage seemed to sum up the whole problem of spiritual abuse within a particular strain of Christianity. What was particularly troubling is that this was coming neither from Paul, nor Churchianity, but from words attributed to Jesus himself.
>
> Suddenly, late in the afternoon after four days in contemplative silence, a kind of illumination broke in. I found my consciousness viscerally entering what old hippies would fondly call a "trippy" state! Through my mind's eye, the whole world started to quicken with an inwardly visible perception of the animating

> love that moves “the sun and other stars”. And I saw, with epiphanic wonder, that the “fire” in question - the fire that Christ would have us kindle - is none other than *the fire of love*!
>
> The story is told of the Desert Fathers that Abba Lot asked Abba Joseph what more he could do over and above observing his monastic rule. Abba Joseph replied, his hands lifted to heaven with fingers that looked like lighted candles, “Why not become wholly fire?”
>
> In his commentary on such texts the French Orthodox theologian, Olivier Clément, magnificently squares the theological circle as to the nature of spiritual fire. He surmises: “The fire of hell is the fire of love that gives remorse a terrible clarity.” Such was the nature of Jeremiah’s fire, for such were the leadings of the love to which he placed himself in service. This is why prophetic witness so often forces activists to stand and take a stand in Hell on Earth. Sometimes this is where God most needs the “angels”. (McIntosh 2006/2007)

Returning to our Jungian model of the psyche (Figures 3 & 4), we can see now how the three primary aspects of what it means to be a human being – ego, shadow and Self – are grounded in the poetic fire of love that is the *poesis*, the divine *autopoesis*, of the ongoing cutting edge of the process that is Creation unfolding through time. The ego and its counterpart in the shadow are vital parts of who we are, but if not grounded in the deep Self – the living fountain of the Spirit of God that animates the soul - they take on Hellish proportions. When we work with power we can only escape, as Walter Wink puts it, “taking on the likeness of the Beast”, if we ground our ego/shadow in the Godspace. This is a function of prayer. It marks the deepest distinction between power and empowerment, for true empowerment is power from within, and power from within, if it is to be sustainable, must be God-given. It is a gift of Grace that perhaps comes to the heart that opens itself to Grace. This is why “empowerment” is so little understood in secular public discourse. I believe that this grounding in the Godspace … this recognition that we are interconnected as “fingers of God” in walking this Earth together … is the ultimate and the only meaningful sense of the word *community*. At heart, then, community is communion. Without making any claim to originality in the matter, here is how I expressed it in *Soil and Soul* (p. 118):

> In my experience it is not possible to engage fully with the world without a growing understanding of spirituality. Yes, we can run from God, but we cannot run away. If we do, we’re like the two fleas on the back of a collie. One day the

> first turns to the second and says, 'You know, I don't think that I believe in the dog anymore.'
>
> Such is our relationship to God. Spirituality is interconnection, and that's hard to see because, like Moloch, it's everywhere. It's like looking at the back of a hand. Normally, we're only aware of ourselves as separate entities, like the distinct nails on each finger. But as we enter into that wrestling-match engagement with love in the company of others, we slide down the finger. The psycho-spiritual distance between each finger gets less. Ultimately, we arrive at the body of the hand and look upwards. We then see that each finger, each life, is a part of the whole. Well, that's God-consciousness. We are, as Jesus said, all branches on the vine of life; as St Paul says, 'members one of another' in the Body of Christ. I'm expressing these things in a Christian framework because that's what's most relevant to where I'm digging from culturally. But equally, the same thing can be said from within any faith based on love: we are also all parts of the 'Body of Islam'; expressions of the 'Buddha nature'; children of the Goddess, or, in the Sanskrit of Hinduism, Tat tvam asi – 'That thou art'– meaning individual soul (Atman) is ultimately at one with universal soul (Brahma).

Such community, as I have earlier proposed, expresses itself in relationship one with another ("society"), in relationship with the Earth ("soil") and relationship with the divine ("soul"). And as I attempt to demonstrate in my paper for the World Council of Churches (10 – *WCC Tiger*), this understanding offers a framework for right relationship in the world – a framework for the articulation of a Sense of Values. It links theology, human ontology and the Creation, but the values in question are autopoetic – they arise out of the Spirit's articulation through the continuous process of the Creation that is the light of all things (John 1:3-4).

In my work with land reform this transpersonal sense of community is what has evolved, progressively, as the structure of reality in which I conceptualise and attempt to teach the values or value that underlies all community; values that have the power to challenge the amorality of globalisation's advanced capitalism (12 – *Euro Globalisation*). My implication is that land reform in the way that I have contributed to development of the debate is really a Trojan horse for a much deeper agenda – spiritual community development – connecting soil, soul and society. Such is the deep nature of human ecology (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, op. cit.).

3.4 Sense of Responsibility – Action

It is perhaps unnecessary now to repeat that this framework … this sense of poetic fire unfolding at the heart of God and articulating itself as "Word" through the world … is my understanding of what the action of spiritually-resourced *activism* means. It does not imply "pantheism" in the narrow sense such as would constrain the divine only to immanent expression, but consistent with process theology, it is very much an expression of "panentheism" – the idea that God is present in the world and in nature; immanent *as well as* transcendent. It is also, as we have seen, consistent with the human destiny that we are invited to "become participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) - a passage which so astonished John Calvin that he remarked, "it is, so to speak, a kind of deification" (cited in Macleod 1998, 198). And we might imagine an Orthodox theologian or a Hindu Brahmin up there in Heaven telling Calvin, "you can just leave out the 'so to speak'"!

Responsibility – the ability to *respond* – to be as an alive empathic human being – thereby follows as a natural completion and ongoing source of fresh impetus for the Cycle of Belonging. The "Belonging" in question is belonging to that which, in Quakerism, we call "that of God within". This can only grow fully into consciousness when in dynamic relationship with our Sense of Place, Sense of Identity and Sense of Values – that is to say, our grounding, head and heart. It may be objected from some Christian perspectives this is a rigid framework. It locks people in to their place, identity and values, and therefore should have no part in an aspiring Christian universalism. I would reply that the operative word there is "aspiring". We shouldn't pretend to run before we walk. In the Bible we see, for example, that identity and place were of huge importance for the prophets and Jesus. Perhaps the most interesting example is in Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician or Canaanite woman in Mark 7:28. Here he holds fast to his own ethnic identity in contrast to hers, but her humour and faith succeeds in drawing him out into a wider inclusiveness. As such, the boundaries of his Sense of Responsibility start local, but extend universally. Ultimately it is the universe

that we must care for, but as finite beings we must start with that part of it that is right beneath our feet.

A theology of liberation of the land, and of Creation generally is, we can now perhaps see, of an importance much greater than simply being free from political oppression and having a place on Earth to live with and from. Fully understood it becomes nothing less than integral to soteriology. We see this hinted at very clearly in the John Martin quote that will be given below: here we will see a man who was not prepared to serve the "laird" – the self-appointed "lord" of the land – as a false local god. Like Jesus in the temptations on the mountain, he could see quite clearly that the question of landed power is nothing less than the question of idolatry. And it remains only for us to seek constantly to ensure that where land reform is achieved, we do not turn it into a fresh manifestations of idolatry! We should keep in mind the Jubilee provisions of redistribution every couple of generations (Leviticus 25:10). To borrow from the Protestant credo: "The reformed land must be the land that is continually being reformed."

I have come to see land ultimately as an issue that contextualises soteriology not as a great act of original thinking, but merely as a synthesis and articulation of liberationist praxis by which I include process, contextual, feminist and ecological theologies. It is my observation that when people start to come alive at a God-connected level (even though they might not name it as such) - *their ability to respond becomes activated in a Lazarus-like manner*. What was dead comes alive. The apathy of disempowerment gives way to pathos – the capacity to feel and thus, to become more fully human. This happens because the empowerment process affirms people in their humanity. No longer does it become acceptable for them to see themselves as "vassals", or worse, to a "laird" who controls their lives. They now become, instead, communicants in full community of place. Such affirmation chips away at the lack of a sense of legitimacy that is, so often, the main blockage to community regeneration and the friend of apathy.

I believe that this empowerment process is not necessarily spiritual, but in modern Scottish land reform it has very often been so. In particular, on each of the successful iconic modern Scottish land reform campaigns - Assynt, Eigg and Gigha – some of the key community leaders were spiritually motivated and informed. This is apparent in the interviews carried out under my guidance by Rutger Henneman who was an MSc student of International Development Studies at Wageningen University and was seconded to me while researching his thesis during the latter part of 2007. Appendix 1 to this thesis is an interim research paper in which he presents a summary of his work, and Appendix 2 comprises a sampling of indicative statements from his interviewees testifying to the motivation that a theology of the land provided, both in these local contexts and on the national stage that led to the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

These players, and especially church figures of national stature such as Professor Donald Macleod, Dr Alison Eliot, and another socially prominent interviewee (who is anonymous until he gives permission for his quote to be attributed in public), played an important political legitimising role leading up to the passing of the 2003 Act and associated legislation such as The Abolition of Feudal Tenure etc. (Scotland) Act 2000. I do not have direct evidence that this spiritual role was "heard" politically, but we are speaking here about Scotland where many politicians have connections with the churches, or with spiritual expressions of the arts, and so the linkages are "understood". Indeed, I have been privately told by several politicians from several parties that they use *Soil and Soul* to "tell people what land reform is really about." These include the leader of one of Scotland's main political parties and other front benchers. One even told me that she sent a copy to Gordon Brown who replied, "very interesting" – though I suspect he had other things on his mind to be that interested!

Others players cited in Appendix 2 such as Dr Ian Fraser, Professor Michael Northcott and myself contributed academic perspectives to the debate through both scholarly and mass media outlets. And at a local level, prominent spiritually-informed players on the ground included the following:

1. On Assynt, the leading light was John Mackenzie, a prominent Free Presbyterian, who sees right relationship with land as being grounded in the imperatives that follow from Genesis. Also on Assynt, Alan Macrae often expressed through the media a profound sense of what it means to be an indigenous or, as he would often word it, "native" people. This was important as it helped start to legitimise the construct of indigeniety in a Scottish context – a principle now being explored by the Scottish Crofters' Foundation (MacKinnon 2008).

2. On Eigg – the first of the modern land reform trusts to be set up and the first to achieve a full community buy-out (as distinct from Assynt's *crofter* buyout, i.e., limited only to those with formal crofting status) – all four founders of the original trust saw land reform as being a spiritual or, at the very least, a poetic process. Amongst resident islanders key figures who subsequently became Trust directors include Karen Helliwell, an Episcopalian of strong Christian convictions, and Marie Mackinnon (formerly Kirk), an anchoress of the island's indigenous Roman Catholic faith. Both during and after the buy-out campaign these women, amongst others, have met most Sundays and prayed that "the best would come about" for Eigg, including praying for the land, its people and its erstwhile "laird". Visitors who I have taken to their tiny Sunday services have found them profoundly moving – even though those visitors, often my students, have not necessarily been religious. As I have touched on in *Soil and Soul*, Marie's profound Hebridean spirituality was an important legitimising factor for what we undertook in the early days of the Eigg Trust. My own initial address for the Trust as delivered on Eigg and worked out in my mind mainly while sitting in her house is explicit about the liberationist praxis that we saw ourselves as being engaged with (0 – *Soil and Soul;* 1 – *Eigg Manifesto*). The spiritual perspective of Tom Forsyth, the Trust's founder, has also been inspirational to me – he has been a mentor figure since he first came to see me

about Eigg - and this perspective is briefly captured in the quote that Rutger collected from him as given in Appendix 2.

3. On Gigha there is a very strong Church of Scotland community - this being the state-Established Presbyterian church. Key players at the time of the buyout such as John Martin and, especially, Willie MacSporran, hold spiritual values that have led to, as Martin puts it in the poetry journal, *Daemon* 5 (Survivors' Press, 2004):

> A transformed life in Gigha!
> A star that seemed to have lost its sparkle.
> It's now a Guiding Light.
> It is quite amazing what people can do if they are given the opportunity to reveal themselves.

In the same volume a Gigha incomer, the artist Vie Tulloch, expresses a church perspective in her retrospective on the island's buyout celebrations:

> The wind blew, squalls splattered,
> Nothing could dampen our New Dawn
> Our flag danced, our spirits soared
> The Minister blessed this much-sought day
> A Gaelic prayer rejoiced.

Martin's verbal communications (pers. com.) and writing frequently draws out the idolatry of landlordism. A grassroots man of the soil like himself might rarely articulate his strongly-felt spirituality in theological language, but that does not prevent him from encoding the theology into colloquial language. We see this in the following passage, and note how it closes in a manner resonant with the Lord's Prayer (in *Daemon*, op. cit.):

> I have been very much aware of feudalism – for most of my life…. There were numerous estates and lairds who seemed to expect worship and adoration as if they were Lord God Almighty…. I refused to kiss their backsides – or run to their "big house" with tales which were designed to gain favouritism – no thank you. It also bred suspicion and social injustice. You will understand why there is a song in my heart, knowing that feudalism has left Gigha forever. Amen.

If the Cycle of Belonging has evolved as an overall framework for a liberationist praxis in my work with Scottish land reform, an important sub-model, one that deepens understanding of how a sense of responsibility is arrived at, was something that I articulated early on at the time of the Eigg Trust address on Eigg, 25 October 1991.

'What can we in Scotland do about landlordism?' I asked at that public meeting (1 – *Eigg Manifesto*):

> First, I suggest, we must re-member. We must remember in the way that those erecting cairns on Knoydart, or at the sites of land grabs in Lewis are presently helping us to do. As with personal psychological health, repression of a culture's past only turns anger and sadness inwards to deaden the soul. No cultural carcinogen is more powerful than oppression internalised to the point that a community blames itself alone for disempowerment, dysfunction and underachievement. So let us start by remembering. But let us do so mindful of the curative role which forgiveness must eventually play. Only forgiveness breaks the knock-on effects of oppression re-perpetuating itself.
>
> Then we can engage in re-visioning. We must envision what our communities could become... sorting out the realistic from the fantasy and asking what kind of a people we want to be. Are our values primarily those of market forces, or Are our values primarily those of market forces, or do we stand for values to do with place, culture and relationship?
>
> Finally, dare we re-claim? Can we, as in the words communicated by Moses in Leviticus 25, 'Proclaim the liberation of all the inhabitants of the land... a jubilee for you; each of you will return to his ancestral home.... Land must not be sold in perpetuity, for the land belongs to me'?

Here we see laid out the *Rubric of Regeneration* as I earlier called it (Figure 2) - the framework of re-membering, re-visioning and re-claiming. The hyphens are deliberate, though we should keep in mind that the membering, visioning and claiming may never

ever have happened in the first place: we are at times dealing with processes that may be very new in social evolution. The Rubric reveals a practical sequence that runs as an internal dynamic through much of my community empowerment work. I use it in my mind and actions as a framework to apply and bring into consciousness at every stage in the Cycle of Belonging. I literally ask myself of a process, "What are we re-membering, what are we re-visioning, what must we re-claim?"

Again, this approach is not unique to myself. I cannot claim originality except, perhaps, in the style and terminology of articulation. What is presented here is intrinsic to the great land liberation theologians of 17th century England and especially the Ranters, Diggers and Levellers and early Quakers (Hill 1991; Gorringe 1994; Gwyn 1995; Bradstock 1997)), of 19th century Highland Scotland (especially Murdoch and MacCallum, as I have shown (0 – *Soil and Soul*)), those from modern Latin America, the world Church as a whole, and from expressions from other faiths such as "engaged" Buddhism and Hinduism.

My Cycle of Belonging was inspired particularly by Gutiérrez's insistence on "the power of the poor in history" – his insistence that Christianity is a historical religion and that a central part of liberation theology is the "doing" of history "from the underside" – in solidarity with the poor (Gutiérrez 1983). In an urban setting I have applied the Cycle of Belonging and the Rubric of Regeneration in my work with the GalGael Trust in Govan, Glasgow, both in a practical sense (I am a founding board member of the Trust) and through poetic work with them (5 – *GalGael Peoples*). It has similarly been applied with the Harris superquarry campaign (0 – *Soil and Soul*; 8 – *Public Inquiry*) and with the attempted (media-effective if legally dismissed) defence of the Carbeth Hutters (9 – *Carbeth Hutters*). I have found the Rubric of Regeneration to be a powerful dynamic for moving people from re-connection with the issues of their lives ("conscientisation" in Freire's sense), to vision, and from there to action. It develops their ability to respond and thus, to take responsibility that can then further their community of place. Re-membering is simply a question of recovering lost social history in ways that speak to the people's present condition. Re-visioning entails

kindling deep values in the ways such as we have already discussed, and re-claiming requires taking practical steps of organisation to effect political change.

It is appropriate at this point to say a little more about the "how" of this type of conscientisation work. A large part of it is simply about getting involved and being of service – running the original Eigg Trust, serving as honorary treasurer of the GalGael Trust, going to Stirling Sheriff Court in defence of the Carbeth Hutters, and so on. These are outwardly visible forms of engagement. But while doing all that, the really important thing is to work with people in ways that help to open their minds, learning to see the eternal as the backdrop to the temporal. This is articulated in much of my poetry, for example, in *Sithean an Airgid* (*4 – Love Revolution, 20*) as is quoted in full above, where the flickering of a lovers brow morphs to the running of a wild deer, to a mountain and to the cosmic Dharma. In many ways I think that is how one "does" spirituality: one takes the ordinary, and poetically draws out its metaphysic – that which is behind and beyond the ordinary.

The work of empowerment takes so many different forms. For me, some of it is with my students. Sometimes it is about getting material resources for people or finding helpers. Some of it through the media or in giving a rousing talk. A lot of the time I will try and leave with people or in their minds potentially transformative literature and images. For example, I will normally try to weave into my presentations visual images that help people to see the spiritual, and to contextualise ancient stories in modern times. An example would be how I often use slides of Stations of the Cross by the Argentinean liberation theologian and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. I have posted the full set of slides and their history to the web at http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/1992-stations-cross-esquivel.htm. The three that I most commonly use are shown in figures 5, 6 and 7. These can have a breathtaking effect on people who have never previously considered reading the gospels in such a relevant way:

- The power of Figure 5 is that the Roman soldiers have guns. Without having to utter a word about contextual theology, the meaning of it is conveyed to the audience.

- The power of Figure 6, which parallels the murder of Chico Mendez (a Brazilian environmental and trades union activist) with the murder of Christ, is that it invites the viewer to see Christ in the oppressed today, and to read scripture poetically as metaphor. As such, the stripping of Christ's clothes and the Roman soldiers' gambling with them parallels the stripping of the natural environment by today's great casino economy in the "empire" of globalisation.

- The power of Figure 7 is that Jesus here, consistent with his proclamation of Jubilee - Luke 4:19 based on Leviticus 25:10 and all else that that entails from the "Old Testament" or Hebrew Bible - leads a protest march of land reformers. These comprise key Latin American figures who have died while advancing the liberation theology of their struggles. In the background on the right are the colonising ships of the conquistadors, and in synonymy opposite them are the factories of contemporary globalisation. The message that I communicate with this slide reminds those present that, before preaching, Jesus would often ask if the people were fed. As such, we see how care for the soul incorporates care for the body. It implies that spirituality is not just transcendental; it is also about immanent cares. This is one of the ways in which spiritually-informed land reform can reconnect people's everyday lives with divine Providence.

Some Christians might object that Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). They might argue that such politicisation of a spiritual message misses the point, and that we should be taking distance from this world and its concerns. Personally I don't accept such transcendentalism. It overlooks the imminence of God. Walter Wink addresses this in his exegesis of the Greek word *kosmos* for "world". He says:

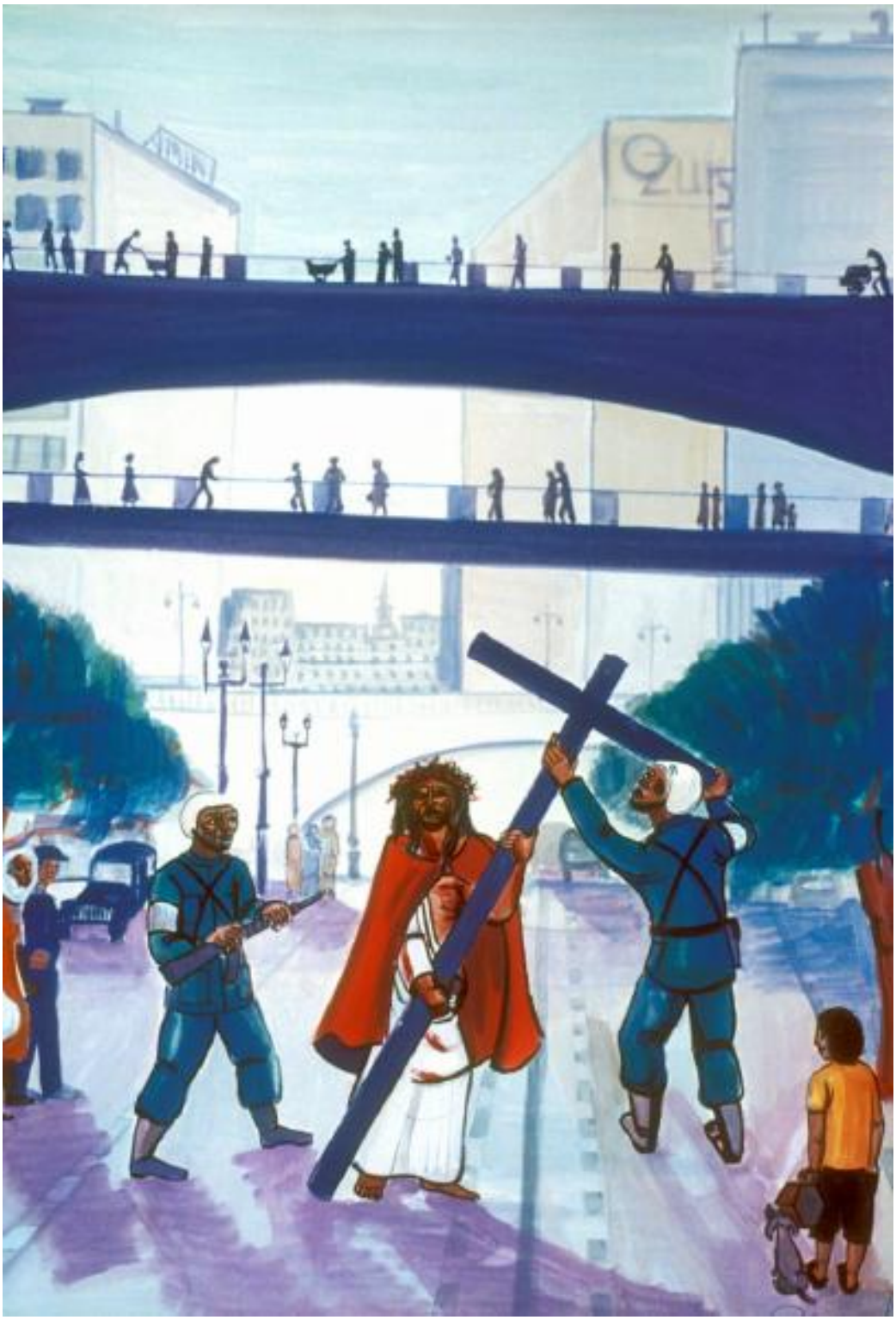


Figure 5: Esquivel's 2nd Station – Rejected and Abandoned
"And carrying his own cross he went out of the city." (John 19:17)

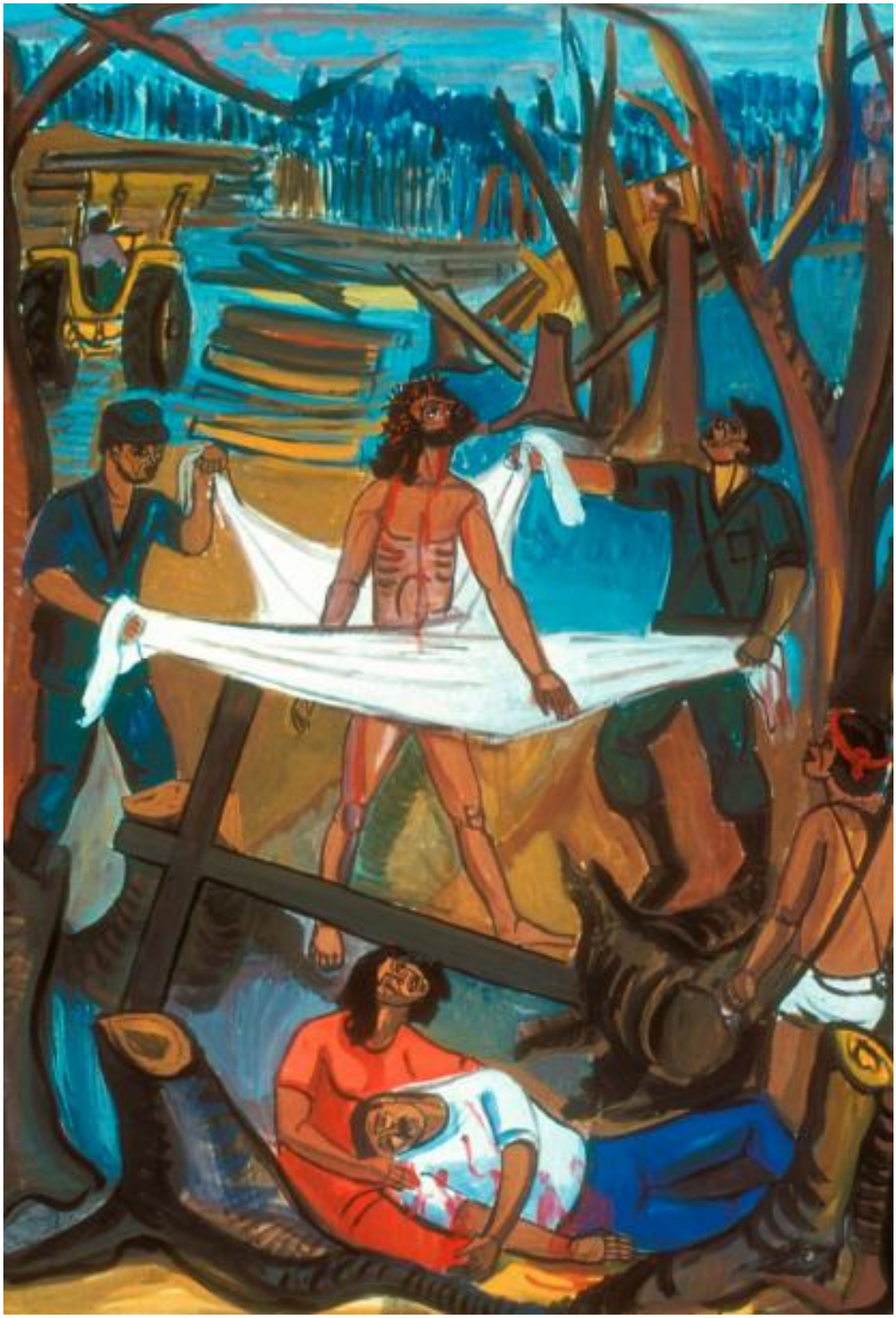


Figure 6: Esquivel's 10th Station - Destruction of the Rainforests
"They divided his garments among them." (Matthew 27:35)

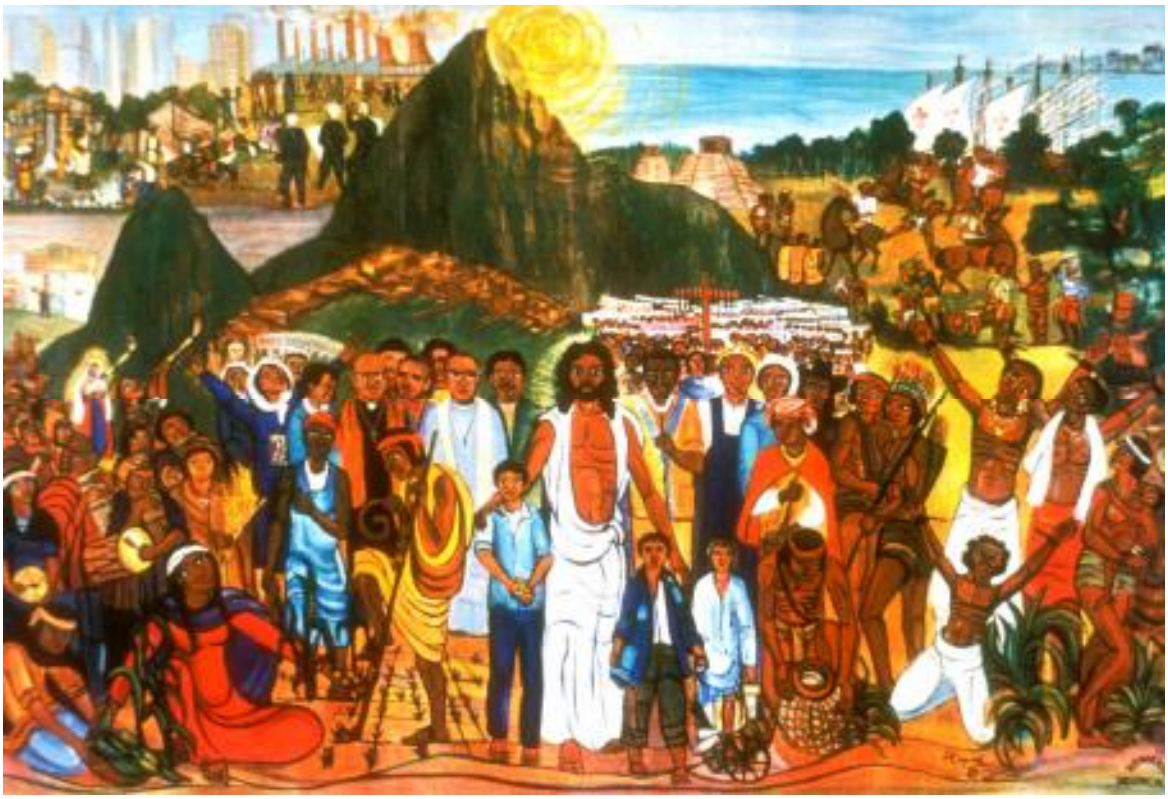


Figure 7: Esquivel's 15th Station - Triumph of Life
"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen" (Luke 24:5)

> … there is in the New Testament another usage that is quite unique to the period. It refers to *the human sociological realm that exists in estrangement from God.* "World" in the New Testament has this apparently contradictory range of meanings because it refers to the totality of human social existence. It is the good creation of a good Creator (John1:10ab), it is estranged or fallen existence (John 1:10c and the vast majority of other references), and it is capable of redemption (John 12:47). (Wink 1992, 51)

As such, our calling is not to disengage from this world, but to *name* the powers that Be within it, *unmask* the psychospiritual dynamics by which they serve what Wink calls the "domination system", and then nonviolently to *engage* those powers, helping to call them back to a higher, God-given vocation (Figure 8). This dynamic of Wink's (1992 etc.) has been of huge importance in my work. It has helped to develop a robust and effective approach to land reform that doesn't involve the use of a rifle. It works by seeking the moral high ground; ultimately, by the power of love over the love of power. I see it as facilitating processes that help to heal the psyche of communities of place. Within myself, though rarely until recently in public discourse (McIntosh 2008a), I think of this as being cultural psychotherapy.

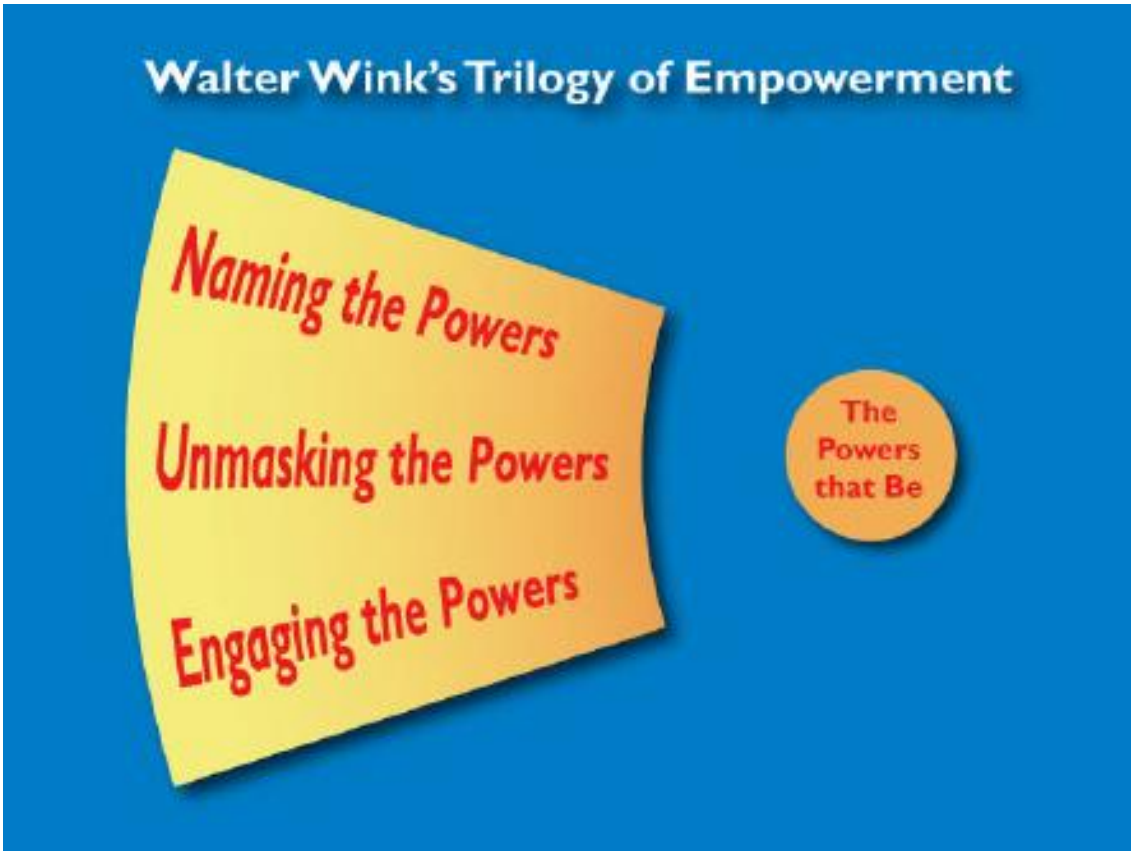


Figure 8: Walter Wink's Trilogy of Empowerment

4. Conclusion: Towards a Cultural Psychotherapy

Having now outlined the outer work of the Cycle of Belonging as animated by the inner iterative sequences of the Rubric of Regeneration, I want to conclude – first by setting this in a context that I call "cultural psychotherapy", and then with a summary of this thesis.

I do not know if the term "cultural psychotherapy" is original. If Googled (as of 28 April 2008), a 1996 paper of mine – an essay of magical realism - is the first item to come up (6 – *Celtic Shamanism*). Most of the other web links are to pages where "cultural psychotherapy" is used as shorthand for "cross-cultural psychotherapy" – that is, the psychological "treatment" of patients from "other cultures", which is not the sense in which I use the expression. I use it more in a sense that sees our Western culture as being the one that needs the "treatment".

I think that my own earliest published use of the term is in the bilingual Canadian journal of transdisciplinary cultural studies, *Interculture*, from 1994. At that time *Interculture* (which is published by the Intercultural Institute of Montreal and closely associated with the intellectual circle of Raimon Panikkar) were running a series on "Endogenous & Vernacular Alternatives" to mainstream Western culture. I was the lead author of an article (co-authored with my land reforming colleague Andy Wightman and my then-student, Daniel Morgan) that took up the whole of Volume XXVII:3. It was entitled, "The Scottish Highlands in Colonial and Psychodynamic Perspective." I did not use the expression "cultural psychotherapy" directly in the article. That would have felt too "way out" at the time. But the journal did refer to it in my correspondence with its editor, Robert Vachon. In his editorial leader, he quotes my letter and other items to him received 4th February 1994. Here I had apparently said:

> In short, what is happening is that our people are waking up to the issue of Scottish land rights, inspired by the activities of Native Americans, Aboriginals, etc., this accompanied and informed by a cultural and historical renewal. It has direct

> consequences for the people of Canada, because many of the people who were cleared from the land over the past two hundred years, emigrated to your nation. The close bond we feel with the Canadians (and also the "Auld Alliance" with the French) is the reason why Interculture is the first journal I am approaching for consideration of publication of this text….
>
> Are we ready to 'unpack' our history? To re-read history: re-membering, re-visioning, re-claiming the people that we are; learning how, for instance, half a million Scots have been forced off the land in the nineteenth century Highland Clearances, to make way for commercial sheep farms and playboy sporting estates? Seeing how many who had gone to the New World, to Australia and elsewhere, perpetuated and reperpetuated their oppression against other native peoples?...
>
> A question I want to put is whether we actually need a transatlantic cultural psychotherapy: a movement towards healing wounds of the broken and to this day laird-ridden disempowered communities left behind in the Old World, and also those of the sometimes brash breaking un-communities of the New World. (Ibid. 2)

To these quoted remarks, Vachon concluded his leader by replying:

> Yes, Alastair! Scots, French and Native peoples, coming together and remembering the resistance of their respective ancestors. But awakening also to the contemporary ongoing resistance of these three peoples to the same cultural colonialism which is being perpetrated today against them, even by some of their own people sometimes, in the name of modernity.
>
> Yes, "reclaiming the peoples that we are and recovering wellsprings of cultural renewal, together." (Ibid. 2)

At that time I was still respectably ensconced teaching human ecology within the Division of Biological Sciences at the Faculty of Science and Engineering of Edinburgh University. Their move to close down our Centre for Human Ecology did not emerge until the following year. The internet had not yet taken off, and so I was publishing my most radical work in Canada – through *Interculture* and *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*. It felt too risky, too culturally premature, to be widely laid out on the stall at home. I wanted to concentrate on actually doing the work in the Hebrides rather than talking too loudly about it. Sometimes one has to let a seedling simply grow rather than

continuously pull it up to see how the roots are doing. It was a time more for action than public reflection.

However, being a *public* event, the Harris superquarry inquiry of November 1994 was to bring the intellectual rationale for my work more out into the open. The pro-quarry *West Highland Free Press* reported on the appearance of Chief Stone Eagle, Professor Macleod and myself at the public inquiry with a perhaps unprecedented full front page article which carried the banner headline, "Media out in force for 'transatlantic cultural psychotherapy session'" (11 November 1994).

Manifestly bemused, this headline reflected their pro-quarry editorial position. But the article itself reported fairly on the event. It displayed the grasp on deeper issues that I'd previously found while campaigning about Eigg from the journalist who had been placed on the story, Jason Allardyce (now with the *Sunday Times*).

The principles of cultural psychotherapy are still being unpacked in my work. Indeed, "Towards Cultural Psychotherapy" is the title of the final chapter in my forthcoming book about climate change, *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition* (due June 2008 from Birlinn). In proposing in that chapter a "12-Step Programme" for cultural regeneration, I state:

> Just as psychotherapy with individuals usually tries to help people to understand their own history – what has made them how they are and how they are not – so cultural psychotherapy does the same at collective levels. It is what any psychologically aware teaching of social history ought to express, though it rarely happens because the implications can be explosive. (Ibid. 218)

I have already explained how I understand "psyche" and thus "psychology" as being concerned with the dynamics of the soul and, thus, as being germane to soteriology – the "salvation" or deep (thus, spiritual) *healing* of the soul. By "cultural psychotherapy" I mean this process at a collective rather than just an individual level. The need for this is particularly important in communities that really are communities – that is to say,

where the meaning of being an individual is strongly held within a wider social framework as in the African *Ubuntu* principle, “I am because you are.”

Working with psychodynamic principles within communities is invariably sensitive. It is usually not appropriate to go into a community gathering and presume to give a set lecture on how it might go about addressing painful issues in its collective soul! Rather, it is necessary to communicate in ways that get people talking and sharing with one another, and which show them that psychodynamic insight can deepen their understanding of the power dynamics within which they live in ways that can be extremely useful.

One way that my colleagues in the Centre for Human Ecology and I use to do this is to work with Manfred Max-Neef’s matrix of fundamental human needs (Max-Neef in Ekins & Max-Neef, 1992). Combining this with a concentric approach to ontology that is used by the *Training for Transformation* derived from Africa (see www.trainingfortransformation.net), my wife, Vérène Nicolas, has re-cast and slightly modified Max-Neef’s matrix into a circular form such as I present in Figure 9. One way to use this with a group is to ask them to shade in the segments, reflecting how much each need is met. This can be done both for themselves as individuals and from a community point of view. The result then provides a very powerful snapshot of the community psyche for discussion. It can also be used as a “past/present/future” exercise to compare different the satisfaction of differing fundamental needs across time. If the segments are scored out of ten before the shading commences, it would even be possible to produce a statistical analysis measuring, for example, standard deviation amongst the members of differing groups across differing needs.

Another approach in such psychological conscientisation work is to stimulate discussion around evocative images. I have already provided illustrations from Esquivel’s *Stations of the Cross* showing how I do this in explaining the meanings of liberation theology. At a more psychodynamic level, the approach that I often take is, for example, to invite an audience to look at and to discuss the image shown in Figure

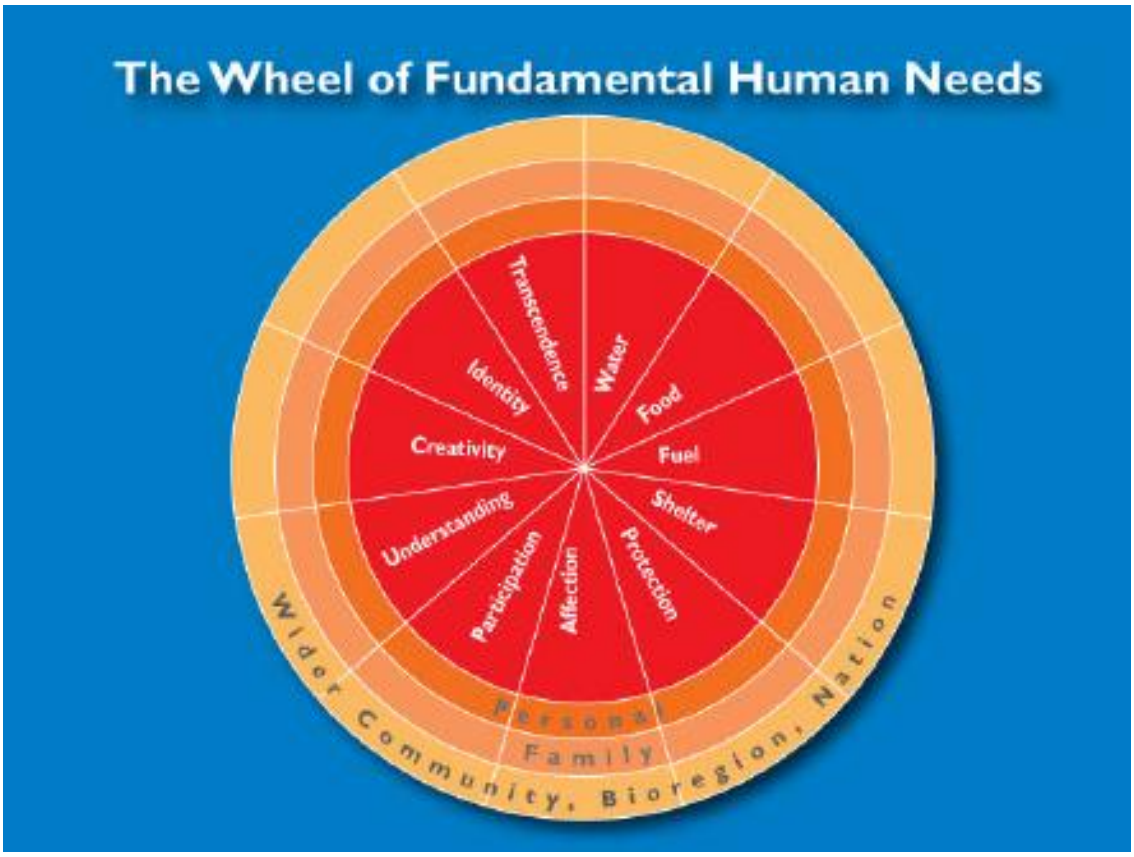
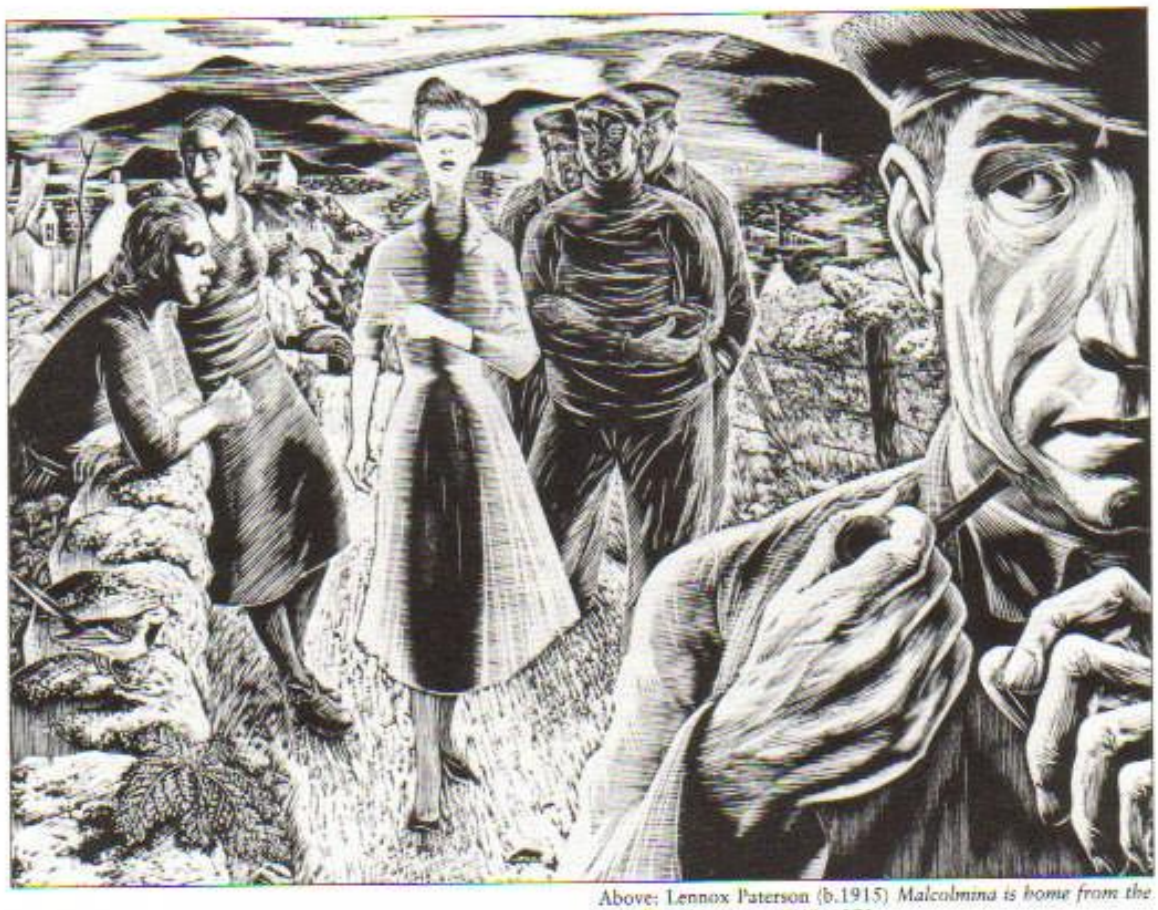


Figure 9: Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs (after Max-Neef)



Above: Lennox Paterson (b.1915) *Malcolmina is home from the city*. Woodcut, 9" × 6½", 1970

Figure 10 – Malcolmina is Home from the City – Lennox Paterson (1970)

10 – Lennox Paterson's (1970) *Malcolmina is Home from the City*. Similarly so with the *Yours and Ours* cartoon by David Simonds, originally in the *Guardian* in 1994 (Figure 11). Another is the totemistic eagle imagery, *Shaman's Vision,* by Keith Powell (1990) shown in Figure 12. Each of these conveys potent archetypal motifs. I find, for example, that I can show "Malcolmina" to indigenous peoples from pretty much anywhere, and they immediately reply, "That's how it is in our place too!" They know those village men and women. They know Malcolmina with her embarrassingly patronymic first name who is not just "home from the city", but who represents so much else of modern as distinct from traditional mores. I have carried out this exercise many times – especially with groups of university students from India and Africa. I usually get people to discuss in pairs for about three minutes what they see in the picture, and then to share in plenary. The buzz is always intense and the insights, very rich and often disturbing for people. In privileged groups such as in the university, many realise that it is *they* who have become Malcolmina!

Sometimes a "saboteur" dynamic emerges that prevents the development of potentially transformative psychological depth (Ringer & Gillis, 1995, 1998). Where this is generalised through the group, spoiling the discussion, I have learnt the importance of backing off and not presuming to take people into territory where they are resistant. Other members of the group will usually take over if they wish to see the group go deeper, and this helps me to avoid being accused of trying to turn my class into a psychodynamic encounter group. Intriguingly, I have experienced saboteurial blocking primarily with church groups and with business people. It expresses itself in various ways, ranging from the sniping of silly comments that destroy depth, to the deadening silence of frozen awareness, and even, in one case at the Management School in Lancaster University, to a corporate executive standing up and shouting at me, "Shut up! Just shut up! I am not going to listen to this any longer!"

Dealing with such blockages and blocking behaviour is part of the work that needs to be undertaken when engaging with cultural psychotherapy. Where it comes from isolated individuals, it is often important not to dismiss them as lone saboteurs but to

Figure 11 – Yours and Ours – David Simonds in *The Guardian* (1994)

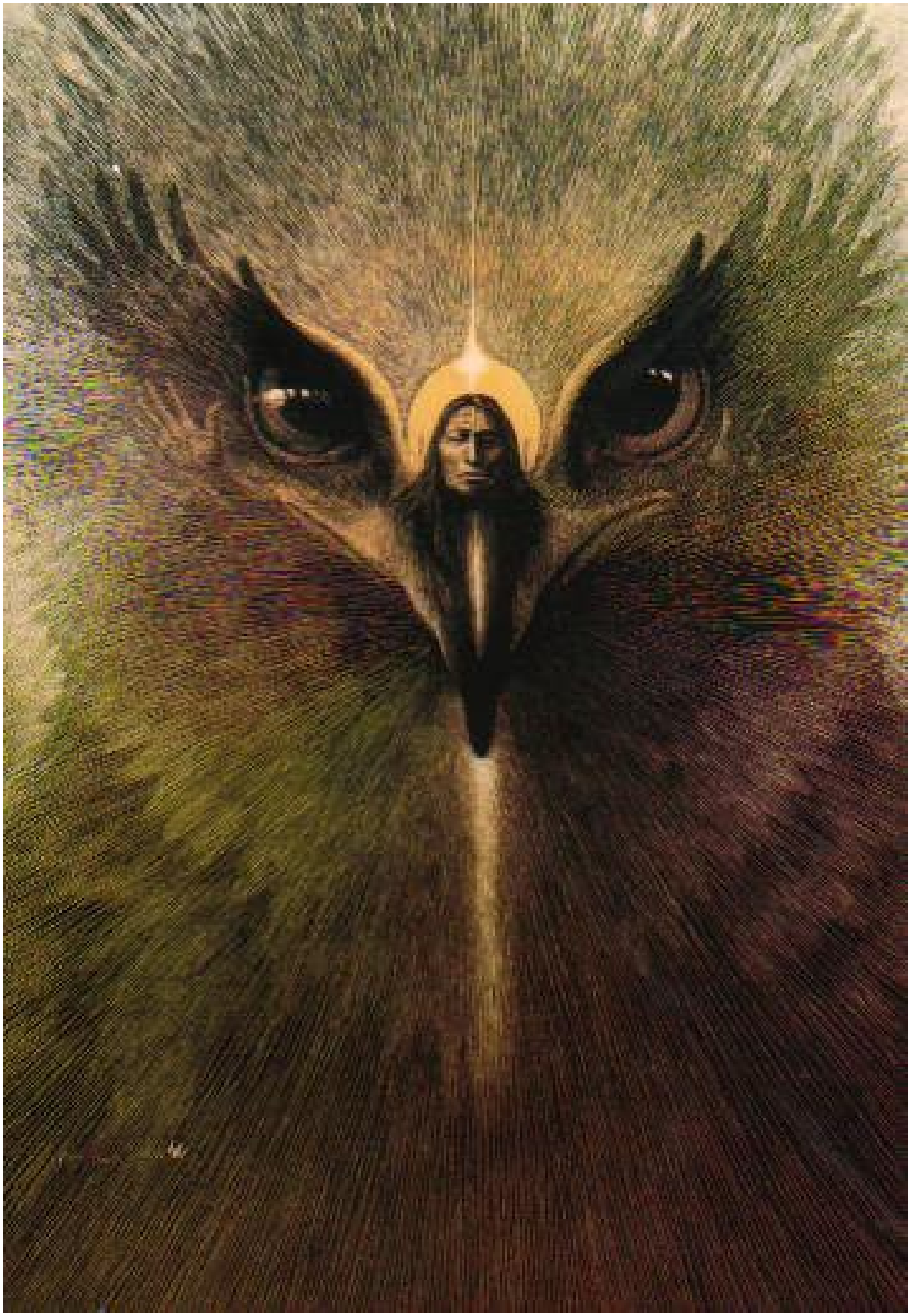


Figure 12 – Totemistic Discussion Motif – *Shaman's Vision* – Keith Powell (1990) from a greetings card by The Queen's Cards, Inc, Washington, USA

hear their inputs as a part of the voice of the group. Often such people speak not just for themselves but also for others who hide behind silence. It is important to try and address objections in ways that stimulate thought rather than argument. Argument only shifts people further into their heads and sidetracks the necessary emotional work. It wastes time and energy.

Let me give an example of how to sidestep head-centred argument. The eagle totemism of Figure 12 is readily challenged as being "pagan" in some Christian group. When using it, I am therefore ready to counter: "Then what would you say of Ezekiel's vision of the eagle, and its incorporation on many church lecterns as the Eagle of Saint John?" The focus then shifts away from the sterile argument about Christianity versus paganism. It can move to the role that totemism plays in the Bible, which may be less challenging to the insecurities of those involved. From here a discussion about ecotheology can open up, and I particularly like to round this off (wickedly!) with a reading from Job 12:6-9:

> 1 ¶ And Job answered and said …
> 4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn….
> 6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper…
> 7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:
> 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
> 9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

I believe – and it is not an issue about which I can present hard objective evidence – that by speaking, writing and teaching like this, linkages can be made that jump-start new compartments in the head and thaw the frozen crust around the heart. The name of the game is to loosen up rigid inner ground and to allow re-entry (or entry for the very first time) of the play of poetics. Thus, in my United Nations paper on Celtic geopoetics, I bring this back round to cultural psychology that is poetically grounded:

> From this follows nothing less than what I refer to as a "cultural psychotherapy" – thus, I consider that the renewal of community and the cultural spirit comes

> about in considerable degree through re-connection with the deep poetics of place - that is, with the totems and their expression of underlying psychospiritual dynamics. (3 – *UNEP Celtic*)

The passage that follows demonstrates the cultural psychotherapeutic dynamic being played out. Notice how I have interwoven such generative themes (Freire) as totemistic mythology (via the Salmon of Wisdom), the naming of specific campaigns, Scottish poetry, urban/rural transcendence, oppression, the need to forgive oppression, the psychology of addictions, the Highland Clearances, urban poverty. This is what I mean by a liberationist cultural psychotherapy, geopoetics and, arguably, soteriology (5 – *GalGael Peoples*):

> By salmon's course
> we have arrived
> long shoaling at the estuary, waiting, waiting, waiting
> but Spate now running So we leap . . .
> Protesting motorways in Glasgow
> Refuting super-quarry mountain destruction Bride's isle the He-brides
> Fighting to heat the dampened love-warm crisis-torn homes
> of those of us in urban native reservation housing schemes
> (where TV up a tower block offers nature's only window
> one fifth of Scotland's people live in poverty)
> And (resetting seeds of Eden)
> one foot venturing into Eden
> with Muir and Burns, MacDiarmid, White and mostly unnamed women's song
> pressing down 'wet desert' sod to replant native trees
> in Border dale and Highland strath
> and on the blighted bing
> Struggling to regain
> a music, dance and language
> once usurped from forebears' cradling embrace
> usurped to break the spirit

take our land
and even God and gods and saints of old
and scar the very strata deep
with alcohol soaked nicotine smoked Prozac choked
dysfunctionality
Lateral violence of unresolv'ed angst
unable to engage
with power from above
so sideways striking to and from within and all around
. . . hurting . . . hurting . . . hurting . . .
with intergenerational poverty knocking on from then to now
people disempowered in rent-racked famine days
Half a million Highland folk . . ."
(Lowlanders before like English further back in time)
. . . Cleared . . . from kindly providential clachan
. . . Cleared . . . to fact'ory or to emigrant ship
. . . dumped . . . Aotearoa . . . North America
. . . recruited . . . skirling hireling regiments of 'Queen's Owned Highlanders
Empire stitched from butcher's wounds
opp'ressed turned oppressor sprung from opp'ressed' pain
both sides the Atlantic surging with emotion
Intergenerational Transatlantic Cultural Trauma
a three-way brokenness
native peoples our side, the Ossianic Western edge
native peoples their side, the Eastern oceanic seaboard
and Everywhere that breaking dominant disembedded culture
that is in part
us too

Material like this helps people to see how they can inwardly and collectively organise their growing awareness of the forces that have historically fashioned them. As we

earlier saw Iain Crichton Smith put it in speaking about the old woman in Glasgow, such material constellates questions like: “What force made this woman what she is? What is her history?” These go beyond the personal and into the transpersonal basis of community (Figure 4). They are therefore the essence of cultural psychotherapy. Re-membering that which has been dismembered (or never brought into being in the first place) becomes akin, on a collective scale, to the process in individual psychotherapy whereby a person comes to understand their own past and embarks on the journey of coming to terms with their suffering and so, to healing spiritually.

The evidence that this really happens is entirely anecdotal, but people sometimes write and tell me so. As one indigenous woman put it after a presentation that I made in Assynt, “Your lecture helped me to understand not just how I feel, *but also why I feel it*.” Here we see the importance of Gutiérrez’s emphasis on doing history from the underside. It permits the opening up of individual and group psychodynamic process.

It is not only by writing and speaking that I have understood myself to be engaged in such work. The campaigns themselves – the so-called “publicity stunts” such as bringing Chief Stone Eagle to Scotland to address a government public inquiry (8 – *Public Inquiry*), or by addressing a court of law at the Carbeth Hutter eviction trials (9 – *Carbeth Hutters*) are, as I have seen them, *theatres* upon which to act out such cultural psychodrama.

But what are the criticisms of such an approach?

One is that it can be seen as psychologising and pathologising the land question instead of tackling it directly as a political, economic and agricultural question. Well, my quick response to that is that on Eigg we dug out the conduits into which subsequent political process flowed; not vice versa.

Another is that theologically this is closet pantheism. My quick response is that such critics usually either don’t understand the distinction between pantheism and

panentheism, or, they are so convinced that “nature” is of the Devil’s domain that they don’t want to understand it. I would urge them to start with Thomas Boston as quoted above.

An additional theological criticism is that my approach is syncretistic. My defence is simply, “So what?” What is the problem with a syncretistic spirituality galvanised around the principle of life as love made manifest? I would turn the challenge round, and ask my critics – be they Moslem, Christian, neopagan or whatever - to defend what they might see as the hegemonistic primacy of their own faith perspective.

Perhaps the most trenchant criticism of my work as presented here is that the issues are of such a deeply qualitative nature as to be unquantifiable. I have partly dealt with this earlier where I quoted from letters of support from communities with which I have worked. At the end of the day, however, it is an act of faith: one pushes on with a particular course of action because one feels deeply moved so to do. From what moral philosophers call a “deontological” perspective – one that focuses on the rightness or wrongness of actions in themselves rather than in the utility of their outcomes – it matters not whether any given approach succeeds. What matters is the intention. However, from a practical point of view – from a “teleological” moral perspective that is concerned with ends and outcomes such as relieving oppression - the outcomes matter a great deal. My own view integrates both. We create a false dichotomy if we suggest it has to be either deontology or teleology.

****

Let me finally summarise what I have tried to say in this thesis. I think that the linking theme in the papers and books submitted for this PhD by published works is a central belief or, rather, experience, that existence emanates from the living core of God expressed through the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. All is interconnected as branches on the vine, and this interconnection, grounded in the fire of love, is the common source of both wild nature – by which I mean the ongoing process of the

Creation - and also, human nature – a subset of the same. This becomes know to us by empathy of head, heart and hand (cognition, feeling and the senses). The patterning of such knowing is "mythopoetic" – and I use that word in preference to the more technically correct *mythopoeic* because its meaning is clearer to most people.

As a human ecologist, I study the interface of the natural environment and the social environment, but as a theologian too, I see these two as having a third level that is not a "dimension", but rather, an underpinning – namely, spiritual grounding. The task of realising community then becomes the task of realising our full nature. That nature is Being - in community one with another, in community with nature, and in community with God. As such, the full nature of community is *triune*. This is something that I have expressed in matrix form as follows, focussed around the three temptations of Christ as explained fully in my WCC publication (10 – *WCC Tiger*, 225).

The Triune Basis of Community		
1st Temptation "Soil" Turn stones into bread	**2nd Temptation** "Society" Acquire kingdoms	**3rd Temptation** "Soul" Put God to the test
Abuse nature's power, so violating community with the Earth	Abuse social power, so violating community with one another	Abuse spiritual power, so violating community with God
The protection of Poverty – living the richness of simple providential sufficiency	The protection of Chastity – living "chaste friendship" in psychological honesty	The protection of Obedience – living in accordance with the voice within

The Cycle of Belonging (Figure 1) and the Rubric of Regeneration (Figure 2) are both ways of expressing how such community finds articulation, healing and growth in the

process that I have described as cultural psychotherapy. Land is the framework of life incarnate by which this finds expression, thus land reform, where it is necessary, is a vital part of the process of deepening our common humanisation. In Christian terms, this is ultimately about the "Kingdom". Theologically, "we" today are the Remnant – described in the Anchor Bible Dictionary as being, "what is left of a community after it undergoes a catastrophe." Metaphorically, that catastrophe is the ongoing repercussion of the Fall (Genesis 3) as articulated in the profoundly liberating concept of "original sin" – liberating because it allows us to relax, as is central to the message of Christian forgiveness, into self-acceptance notwithstanding the ongoing contradictions and conflicts of our lives. And as suggested in the above passage from the GalGael poem, we are called, socially, ecologically and spiritually, to become participants in life with a God who *resets the seeds of Eden*:

> These are the words of the Lord God: When I cleanse you of all your wickedness, I will re-people the cities, and the palaces shall be rebuilt. The land now desolate shall be tilled, instead of lying waste for every passer-by to see. Men will say that this same land which was waste has become like a garden of Eden, and people will make their homes in the cities once ruined, wasted, and shattered, but now well fortified. The nations still left around you will know that it is I, the Lord, who have rebuilt the shattered cities and planted anew the waste land; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it. (Ezekiel 36:33-36, NEB)

It is God that regenerates community. This is why land reform and all that has been described in this thesis is ultimately a spiritual process. At the deepest level, I believe that is why the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Free Church of Scotland and the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office all set up commissions or similar processes to help fortify the politicians in advancing, against influential opposition from landed power, what finally came to pass in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

My student, Rutger Henneman, found that all of the theological key players were modest about the role that their impact on political processes had had. For example, following Rutger's interview with him, Professor Macleod of the Free Church College wrote in his column in the West Highland Free Press:

> My immediate reaction was that the question [about his own role in land reform] attached far too much significance to my effusions on the matter. My involvement hasn't made an iota of difference, and I'm certainly not going to feature in the Land Reformers' Hall of Fame. (26 October 2007, 12)

This may or may not be true. What I can say is that somebody like Professor Macleod, leaving aside all his academic and pastoral work, has written dozens of newspaper articles about the importance of land and has done so over many years, especially in his weekly column in the *West Highland Free Press*. As I show in *Soil and Soul*, he has publically testified on land theology in the Harris superquarry public inquiry – a matter that still surfaces from time to time in public discourse and not always to his advantage. He has, after all, theologically informed and supported an upstart like myself. And I would insist that the impact of a voice like his is considerable. I vividly recall emerging from a public lecture that he once gave in the Senate Room of Edinburgh University in the late 1990s. Stan Reaves, a well known secular community activist from Edinburgh's Adult Learning Project had been in the audience. As we came out Stan turned to me and exclaimed, in awe, "My goodness! That was like standing naked in a graveyard on a Hebridean headland in a Force 8 gale!"

In other words, whether the Professor is featured or not in any Hall of Fame, he has, without an iota of doubt, managed to reach the parts that many others have failed to touch. Such is the power of spiritual testimony, and when I consider the work of people like Professor Donald Meek (the son of a Baptist pastor), or my fellow Quaker, Tom Forsyth, it is plain that in Scotland at least the land theology of the likes of Professor Macleod is not a lone phenomenon.

In 1987 the post-modern nihilistic theologian, Don Cupitt, came out with a book called *The Long Legged Fly* (SCM Press). As I remember it, and as befits post-modern nihilism, it said very little except to suggest that people are like pond-skaters – those long-legged flies that scoot around on the surface, creating fast-moving patterns of ripples. As Professor Cupitt saw it, there's no more to life than this – scurrying around, making transient patterns on the surface of things – and that's about it.

In addressing the theology of land reform I have had to tackle the same question. For all this talk of a liberationist praxis underpinning Scottish land reform, is it nothing more than a meaningless set of patterns in our own minds?

If what we have respectively said and done comes merely from an ego level of clever posturing to manipulate a desired effect, this would undoubtedly be true. Sartre's accusation of *mauvaise foi* would stand vindicated. But I think that all of us who have bothered controversially to pin our colours to the mast of land theology believe that it comes from a very much deeper place. It comes from the heart of God, the love and life of God, and we are privileged to be witnesses and participants in the processes that this gives rise to. This is the ongoing work of the Creation. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1647 has it – a text that is germane to the witness of the Highland Church - "How doth God execute His decrees?"

It answers, and I love the solemnity of this answer: "God executeth His decrees in the works of CREATION and PROVIDENCE."

There is little else that can be said, but will close with more of Professor Macleod's words from his column in the WHFP about Rutger Henneman's research:

> The student pressed me particularly on what role religion had played in fostering my interest in land reform, and found it hard to understand that I drew inspiration from the early chapters of Genesis. Environmentalists have often blamed these chapters for our current ecological crisis. Was not the command to "subdue the earth and exercise dominion over creation" the root cause of all our problems? But Genesis portrays us not only as lords of creation, but as its servants and guardians. Ruthless exploitation of it was never on God's agenda. He put billions of years into getting it right for humans, and we were to keep it that way. That didn't mean that the earth should forever remain as it was, or that agriculture, science, art and technology should never advance. But they were to advance in sympathy with creation itself and for the good of all its creatures. Our lordship is the lordship of stewards. (Op. cit.)

In short, as we have seen the Professor say, "Land is sacred". And as we saw the Isle of Lewis poet Iain Crichton Smith imply, the very person that walks upon that land is holy.

We have been speaking here of the roots of beauty, the expression of love: in short, *what it means to be a human being*.

That is why, for me, land theology matters so much. The giants of contemporary Scottish land theology may be modest about their achievements. But personally their teaching and example fills me … sometimes with frustration … but often, with joy and gratitude!

> "For Jehovah hath prepared a new thing in the land …"
>
> (Jeremiah 31:22, YLT)

5. Appendix 1

A Preliminary Report on Rutger Henneman's Interviews With Some Key Scottish Land Reform Theologically Informed Figures

(co-supervised by Alastair McIntosh, *at press 2008* **)**

Anthropological Journal of European Cultures **17(1), 2008, forthcoming**

Research Reports

Spirituality and Theology in Scotland's Modern Land Reform

RUTGER HENNEMAN

This research project on the role of spirituality and theology in Scotland's modern land reform is part of a co-operation between the Centre for Human Ecology, Strathclyde University in Glasgow, Scotland, and International Development Studies at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. It is linked to research into the spirituality of community regeneration, supported by WWF International in Geneva.

The project is a study on the culture of an important rural movement that is unique in Europe. In local struggles with their landlords communities such as those on Eigg, in Assynt, and on Gigha have gained control over their land through community trusts. These local struggles led to the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 through the Scottish Parliament, providing communities with a 'right to buy' land from their landlords. These struggles and land reform can be said to be episodes in a relatively recent history of clearances and fierce land agitations in the nineteenth century which seems relatively alive in collective memories. In the past, these land agitations had a clear spiritual and theological dimension (Hunter 1976). Peasants who were cleared from their land by the landlords and who fought for their rights to the land, found the ground for their claims and justifications in biblical, especially Old Testament texts. In this historical context research on the spiritual and theological dimensions of Scotland's contemporary land reform digs deep into Scotland's cultural roots.

Provisional Findings

Fifteen 'key land reformers' have been interviewed, selected on the basis of our assumptions that they might have a spiritual or theological view of importance. By showing their spiritual and theological considerations and by showing who these persons are and what role they have played in Scotland's land reform, the nature and importance of the spiritual and theological dimension can be assessed. The key land reformers interviewed were, firstly, leaders of the three 'vanguard' cases of the local buy-outs of Eigg, Assynt, and Gigha which drew massive public and political attention and support, and, secondly, 'intellectuals' who fought for land reform at a public, and national political level. The project is now in the phase of data analysis and of writing an article which we hope will be published in a Scottish journal.

Many of the interviewees have a moral understanding of property and power over land that challenges the modern 'free market' conceptions of land as 'ownership' and 'commodity'. This is mostly expressed in a way that those who live and work on the land should also have the power over the land. The morality of ownership over land itself is often being questioned. Many respondents see land as a community resource, and community ownership is an emergent 'model' of land tenure, both in word and in practice. The fiercest attacks on the conception of land as ownership come from spiritual and theological understandings.

Therefore it can be said that understandings of property and power over land are 'embedded' in broader understandings of a spiritual and/or theological kind. Theological themes include references to 'the promised land'. The 'Justice of God' is referred to especially in the form of the 'jubilee justice' in the laws of the Old Testament Israel. Reference to Psalm 24, indicating that 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' (Ps 24:1), leads mostly to a rejection of the idea that land could be held in absolute ownership by individuals. Some infer that land is given for the needs of everyone and not to a privileged group of landlords, who call themselves owners, in particular. Other related theological themes in which land reform claims are embedded are those of 'stewardship', 'sin', and prophetic warnings against 'joining fields to fields'.

This project builds on a broad understanding of 'spirituality' along the lines as defined by Alastair McIntosh (2004: 118f.). As a working definition, I propose that spirituality is a mode of being and becoming ultimately good. Spirituality goes beyond Foucault's (1985) understanding of 'ethics' and 'ascetics' and of modes of being in terms of 'the self'. Our data show how 'spiritualities' might involve modes of being grounded not in the self but in 'community' or in 'the other': in God. Forms of service to the community can be seen as experiences of altruism, of modes of being altruistic, without an ego, or modes of being 'selfless'. Another spiritual theme that emerges from the data is that of a strong bond of 'belonging' of people to the land. A last example is that of freedom: Many of the respondents see land reform as a struggle for freedom which emerges as a lively experienced 'mode of being and becoming free'.

Evaluation

Our findings show that for these land reformers spiritual and theological dimensions are very important. I already indicated the role of these key land reformers in the whole movement. Together, these data tell us a lot about the role of spirituality and theology in Scotland's land reform. This project is interesting from the point of view both of (political) anthropology and sociology as well as of theology. The project touches on anthropological literature on 'property' and its 'embeddedness' as treated by Hann (1998), and builds on a rich theological database of quotes, including some from major Scottish theologians. In general it is an interesting study into the depths of the cultural roots of the culturally unique phenomenon of land reform in Scotland.

Rutger Henneman is a postgraduate student in International Development at Wageningen University, and has worked as an intern at the Centre for Human Ecology, based at the University of Strathclyde.

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6. Appendix 2

A Selection of Quotations from Scottish Land Reform Theologians Who Were Interviewed by Rutger Henneman, Co-Supervised by Alastair McIntosh, 2007-8

Dr Alison Elliot, former Convenor of Church & Nation Committee, Church of Scotland

> 'A lot of people are involved in land reform who would not have said they were religious in their commitment but there was a deep sense of connectedness with the land, a sense that the land was something that was beyond ourselves. And the theology provided a way of articulating that…. The earth belongs unto the Lord. The land itself is a gift from God. We are stewards of it and we have it in trust. And the Idea of somebody 'owning' it in the same way you own a bicycle is something that is deeply offensive to people who have that basic perspective on life and creation.

John MacKenzie, a leader of the Assynt Crofters' Trust:

> 'But that's not to say that I believe that there is no theological component. It would be right for me to say that I believe in a Creator God. I worship the God that called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans and who promised an area of land to Abraham and his successors and who, in process of time, according to that promise, led Abraham's successors through the wilderness from the land of oppression to the land of promise. That land was divided up tribe by tribe and there is a sense of empathy and ownership I suppose on the part of Israel with a specific area of land. Likewise the Highlander feels a sense of empathy with the land of his forefathers. From my point of view, there is a direct connection between the ability to manage and own a particular area of land in terms of one's genealogical identity.'

John Martin, a leader of the Isle of Gigha Trust:

> 'Easter for example, the crucifixion. The Lord gave his life to release us from the tyranny of Satan. Similarly we're released form tyrants as well. The tyrants of the landlords, the so-called Lairds.'

Rev Prof Donald MacLeod of the Free Church College, Edinburgh:

> 'Theologically, the drive comes most fundamentally from Genesis One and maybe Genesis Two, which even more specifically defines our relationship with the land very closely. And probably when I was engaged with the preparation for the Lingerbay Quarry I looked into this more thoroughly. The ideas of service and guardianship, custodianship, are very very clear. The old English translation of the Bible of Genesis Two said that Adam was put into the garden

> to till it and to keep it, but the actual language used in Hebrew is “to guard it and to serve it”. Genesis is very plain, you know, the bond between human species and soil is very, very close. Dust we are, and to dust we shall return. But at the same time, the soil produces food that sustains us. Yet it only does so if we cultivate it.’

No permission yet to attribute to name:

> This is again an Old Testament.... It’s more than once in the prophets. There are injunctions against those who add fields to fields, the accumulation, of large estates, what in an Old Testament context was probably as near as anything to the traditional crofting pattern of the Highlands of Scotland. So there is clearly a prophetic concern in the name of justice about those who accumulate large areas of land, because that, like rural Scotland today, was a situation in which the ownership of land had significant power over the lives of other people. … I think in the particular context [that the reason] why joining fields to fields is a sin is that it is in some sense a denial of the sovereignty of God, and the substitution of some kind of human power for that. But it is also a denial of the justice of God.

Rev Dr Ian Fraser of the Iona Community:

> I tell you one thing that is important in the Bible. When the Hebrew people moved into the Promised Land - and we don’t know how much of it was in fact vacant and how much it was actually fought over in the battles that are mentioned - there were different tribes. And they allocated land by lot. And that meant that the mightiest and strongest tribe might get the worst quality of land. In other words it was the fairest way you could think of dividing land. It had nothing to do with the prestige of the different tribes. And I think that was very important.

Alastair McIntosh, a leader of the original Isle of Eigg Trust:

> Well, land is a material feature but in a theology of incarnation the material is of vital importance. -I- How is that? - Because we are only able to be human by virtue of being here in the flesh. And our theology must be one that connects Heaven with Earth. Otherwise we have a transcendent theology that is not able to speak to the human condition. -I- And land is an important part of the body? - Yes. In Orthodox theology the land, the Earth, is part of the Body of Christ. In Some Buddhist thinking the land is part of Buddha nature. In Hindu thinking the land is part of the body of gods or goddesses. In short: the land is sacred. And so, to understand land means to understand that land is about matter, it’s the source of all matter. But we need to understand that matter is infused with the sacred, which is what gives it meaning as the context of life as love made manifest.

Revd Prof Michael Northcott, New College, Edinburgh University:

> Well, it's less direct, you're right. There is not a strong theology of land in the New Testament. Because the Kingdom is sort of almost beyond place. It can be the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God. It's Abraham and the apostles sitting down in Heaven. So it's less clear, the relationship to land. For me the history of monasticism is partly about recovering a relationship to land, a kind of spiritual connection to farming. From Benedict on really. Benedict's rule is partly about the recovery of the holiness of work on the land. There is potential holiness. That is very wonderful, a very powerful force in history.

Tom Forsyth of Scoraig and founder of the original Isle of Eigg Trust:

> In the Old Testament it's taken for granted that the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. We're not owners, but custodians for a period. Yeah, for me, it's just what I call natural justice. It's built into my whole spirituality, my 'being'. [It is] a right to have some claim without being ripped of by someone owning the land, or owning a right to your labour.

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