

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature

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assistance in community forestry as well as credit for agriculture and small businesses which would help to diversify the rural economy.

Since 1997, Floresta has developed a more holistic approach to its work, recognizing that there are many factors that contribute to deforestation and poverty. In combating deforestation, Floresta uses four principal tools:

1) Community Development - Floresta works to empower the local communities, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own problems and build confidence in their own ability to change their situation. This provides long-term sustainability.

2) Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry - Floresta assists communities in sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest management and reforestation, helping farmers to move away from slash-and-burn agriculture.

3) Microcredit - Floresta provides economic alternatives to destructive forest practices. Loans may be used to implement new agricultural techniques or to diversify wood-based economies.

4) Discipleship - To interested participants, Floresta offers Christian discipleship programs, sharing Christ's love and developing a biblically-based ethic of stewardship for God's creation.

As Floresta has grown, an essentially pragmatic concern for the health of forest ecosystems has developed into a better understanding of the role of stewardship and the importance of restored relationships between humankind and creation in God's ultimate plan.

Floresta has also found that the rural poor have a tremendous amount to offer in solving their own problems. When provided with economic opportunity and agricultural alternatives, subsistence farmers can prosper, live sustainably and contribute to the regeneration of their environment. As of 2003, farmers working with Floresta had planted approximately two million trees, received nearly 2000 small business loans and established ongoing community-based reforestation projects in over seventy villages in Haiti, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Scott C. Sabin

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See also: Biblical Foundations for Christian Stewardship; Stewardship.

Fly Fishing

In the autobiographical story, turned 1992 Academy Award-winning motion picture, *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean's family centered their lives around (two) sacred practices: religion and fly fishing:

In our family, there was no clear line between fly fishing and religion. We lived at the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana, and our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others. He told us about Christ's disciples being fishermen, and we were left to assume, as my brother and I did, that all first-class fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were fly fishermen and that John, the favorite, was a dry-fly fisherman (Maclean 1967: 1).

For many fly fishers, fly fishing itself is a religious practice. Just as any religious person approaches his/her respective tradition, the devout fly fisher approaches fly fishing with the same discipline and respect. It is not unusual to hear people speaking of fly fishing in ways that invoke the religious dimensions of life, as they commonly deploy terms like religious or spiritual, the sacred or divine, ritual, pilgrimage, meditation, priests, community, or notions like the sanctuary of religious space, to describe the experience.

As I reflect more deeply on the fish's history as a mythic symbol and religious icon, I begin to wonder if having fish shapes around me is a way to stay in touch with the ideas of Jesus without having to go near people who do business in his name (Duncan 2001: 14).

Reflecting on the relationship of his fishing passion to his Christian heritage, Oregon-born author and fly fisher David James Duncan turns to the words of Howell Raines in *Fly Fishing Through a Midlife Crisis*. These words recall the mysterious and divine symbolism surrounding the fish itself, referencing Jesus' miraculous act of turning two loaves of bread and two fishes into enough food to feed a large crowd in Matthew 14:17, Luke 9:13, and John 6:9, which made the fish into a divine symbol of God's provisions for humanity in the natural world. While many fly fishers are not Christian, fly fishing spirituality resonates with the sacredness of the fish in the Christian tradition.

In the quest for experience with the divine, religious persons often embark on a journey or pilgrimage. For the fly fisher this is the journey to a new fishing spot, or an old favorite. The American fly fishing writer Nick Lyons, for example, has written in a way that views the pilgrimage to rivers, streams, and their sources as a quest for life's deeper meanings.

A lot of people have been tracking rivers to their sources lately; it's surely a desire to find some further meaning in all this sloshing around in streams. People seem to be saying, "There must be more to it than catching of fish - and perhaps those meanings are to be found in the headwaters" (Lyons 1992: 139).

These words suggest that the pursuit of fish is not the only reason for fishing - that journey or pilgrimage itself can be as powerful an experience as the catching of fish. Indeed, for some fishers, fly fishing facilitates spiritual perception; it is a way to apprehend one's connections with something greater than one's self. As David James Duncan put it,

When the trout are happening, I can kneel on merciless stones /appily, for hours and hours; I can stare into blinding glare, withstand heat or cold, be chased by bears, cow moose with calves, or redder necks than my own, and still rush gratefully back for more. I don't understand the why of all this. I don't try to understand. I just pull on my waders and merge via a spirituality so thrashing, splashing, cursing, casting, and Earth-engaged it doesn't feel spiritual at all: it just feeds the spirit (Duncan 2002: 303).

There is something about being out on a stream in the mountains or in the plains that draws some people to pursue experiences in such places with great passion, and I think it has something to do with the desire to directly experience and engage the Earth. The solitude and sounds of a stream, the careful turning over of rocks so as to see what bugs the fish are eating, and many other aspects of fly fishing, easily, indeed naturally, seem to foster a sense of connection with and belonging to nature.

Such feelings are not uncommon in nature-oriented religion. They are emphasized, for example, in movements such as deep ecology, as well as in a wide variety of nature-related activities not always recognized as "religious." Religion scholar Bron Taylor, for example, argues that Earth- and nature-based spiritualities generally involve experiences and perceptions of connection and belonging to a living, sacred Earth. Quoting Alan Drengson, he asserts that people and groups often turn to nature "for wisdom, for strength, for maturation, for spiritual comradeship, and for lessons in devotion and humility," creating thereby a spirituality or religious practice based upon "being-in-nature" (in Taylor 2001: 181).

fly fishing is an example of such spirituality, a form of Earth engagement that takes place through a meditative, ritual practice. The sounds of the stream and the rhythmic casting facilitate the meditative experience of the fly

fisher. As Norman Maclean put it, fly Fishing "is an art that is performed on a four-count ihythm between and two o'clock" (Maclean 1967: 2-3). Maclean's Point is in part, that like any other form of meditation, fly casting requires discipline and practice. "Fly fishing teaches patience and attentiveness in the most literal way imaginable: without both, you get skunked" (Duncan 2002: 302).

Like other forms of religious and spiritual practice, there is an important material aspect to fly fishing - the "gear" matters. Flies, reels, waders, vests, and ideally an old, worn oil-cloth raincoat affect the fly fisher sensually - they become more than tools of the art. The sensuality of the experience, in a way, its earthiness, is found in the aroma wafting upward upon the opening of the storage tube to a bamboo cane rod, or in the packing and unpacking of the coat and clothes, as one's memory recalls moments on the stream in past trips. These smells function similarly to the use of incense in ritual and meditation; they focus the mind on the sacred.

Fly fishers often advise one another, especially novices, to seek out spiritual guides to lead them properly, even reverently, into the practice. Indeed, the best fly fishing guides are ritual specialists who are eagerly sought when learning the art of pilgrimaging to unknown waters. Fly fishers generally believe such guides hold secret knowledge of specific streams and their inhabitants. But beyond this, they are figures with whom they can identify, sharing sacred experiences, and reflecting on life. And this is not only of interest to the one who has sought out the guide. Once on the San Juan River in New Mexico, a guide told me how nice it is to guide someone who already knows the river and how to fish, for "this leaves room for contemplating and discussing life, philosophy/ and religion."

Such activity with guides and other practitioners fosters community in a way similar to most religions. Attending the fly fishing store and patronizing guide- and other fishing-focused businesses provides concrete material support for the religious community, resembling the providing financial support congregants give to a local church or shrine. Local communities arise surrounding the practice, from hanging out at the local fly shop or bar to sharing information or stories of the day. The local fly-tying group is comparable to a Bible study, meeting regularly to sit around, tie flies, and discuss fish life and life's deeper mysteries.

American author Tom McGuane writes, "If you fish, there is an implied responsibility to care for the environment" (Lyons 1998: 120). Like all religions, there are ethical implications and dimensions to fly fishing, and specific groups have been invented as ethical expressions of them. Trout Unlimited, for example, is one of the most effective conservation and education groups in North America. Their mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their

-watersheds. As stated in their literature, Trout Unlimited accomplishes this mission on local, state and national levels with an extensive and dedicated volunteer network. Trout Unlimited's national office, based just outside of Washington, D.C., and its regional offices employ professionals who testify before Congress, publish a quarterly magazine, intervene in federal legal proceedings, and work with the organization's 125,000 volunteers in 500 chapters nationwide to keep them active and involved in conservation issues. Groups like Trout Unlimited seek to educate the wider public on conservation and environmental issues at least in part so that generations to come can continue to have the spiritual experiences and perceptions that accompany the practice of fly fishing.

It may be that I can see the religious dimensions of the practice of fly fishing because it has long been my own practice. Like Maclean, I was taught at a very young age the importance of patience, discipline, and respect that are necessary to be a successful fly fisher. My father had me stand in the long driveway beside our house to practice my cast before we could make the journey to a stream in New Mexico or Colorado. He would tell me to be patient and feel the cast, allowing the rod to be an extension of my arm and self. On journeys to various waters he would tell me stories from his many years fly fishing, teaching me lessons on how to read the structure of a stretch of water and all its surroundings, how to approach rivers, and most importantly to fish with quiet calm, subtlety, and respect.

I was also taught, and have learned more deeply with each year of fishing, that it is not the catching of fish that is the chief objective of the practice. My cousin once remarked, for example, that he realized that he had reached a special place in his fly fishing practice when he could walk away from rising fish without feeling a desire or pressure to catch them. This seems to resemble the ideal of non-attachment associated with religions originating in Asia. What was important to him at that moment was simply to sit, watch, and lose himself in the sounds of the river, in watching the fish in their own belonging to it, sipping flies off of the surface of the water.

Fly fishing brings to many such Earth-engaged spirituality. I have often felt similarly, as the sounds of the stream and the rhythm of casting blend me into a reality so much greater than my own self. On one occasion on the Flying Pan River in Basalt, Colorado, I became so enraptured with the pursuit of a certain trout that I hardly noticed two elk who had moved into the stream not more than a few yards away. There was a moment in which we seemed to acknowledge each other's presence, neither of us spooking or running away. That day it was not the fish caught which made the day special, but the sudden realization, sharing a space on that stream with those magnificent elk, that I was a part in something more. In agreement with

McGuane, who stated "fly fishing is a road to nature based spirituality," these are among the spiritual meanings I and many others have found in the pursuit of the wonderful and mysterious trout. And like many others, these moments of engagement with nature lead me to conservation work, seeking to defend and improve the natural living habitat of all of the Earth's creatures (Lyons 1998: 12).

Samuel D. Snyder

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- See also: Fishers; Mongolian Buddhism and Taimen Conservation; Mountaineering; Nile Perch; Surfing; Whales and Whaling.

Foreman, Dave - See Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Ferality; Radical Environmentalism.

Forum on Religion and Ecology - See Religious Studies and Environmental Concern.

Fox, Matthew (1940-)

Matthew Fox is known for being the founder of the University of Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California and for authoring 24 books, including *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, *Original Blessing*, *Passion for Creation: The Earth-Honoring Spirituality of Meister Eckhart* and his most recent, *One River, Many Wells*. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Original Blessing* and hosts Techno Cosmic Masses: events intended to reinvent

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See also: Devils Tower, Matn Tipi, or Bear's Lodge; Manifest Destiny; National Parks and Monuments (United States); Nature Religion in the United States.

Mountaineering

Mountaineering can be generally addressed as an encounter of humans and nature, as a relationship between human and mountain. Although this relationship can take on quite different qualities - from domination to sacralization - there is an implicit tendency to personalize and thus to ontologize the mountain as an individual entity. The climbing of a mountain has always been part of religious devotion, but it is only in early modern times that our coming to the difficulties related to high mountain walking became a symbol either of controlling the power of nature or of connecting spiritually with the transcendent realms high mountain areas stand for. A watershed in this regard was Petrarca's climbing the Mont Ventoux (France) on 26 April 1336, which he described as an overwhelming experience that felt like being carried from space into time. He was the first in recorded Western history to have climbed a mountain for the mere longing to see the land from above and - as he told in his report - from a new perspective.

"Mountain," like "nature" in general, is not a neutral term. Its aesthetic perception is fundamentally prefigured by mental dispositions and ideas that generate the object of experience in the first place. The mountains can be personalized as enemies, representing the dangerous and threatening aspects of nature that humans are about to conquer in a risky fight, or as a revealer of spiritual world. The latter personalization talks of mountains as "father" or "mother" that come for their children on their spiritual path. Often mountaineering connects both forms of relationship.

The dominating aspect of climbing is of paramount importance for the Western relationship to mountains. This can be proven by a cornucopia of documents from the sixteenth century through today. But one has to point at the ambivalence of this engagement with mountains. On the one hand nature is the degraded "wild," and the mountains symbolize the purest and most powerful manifestations of nature's threatening that man struggles to overcome (one may think, for instance, of the mythical

descriptions of expeditions to K2, Mount Everest, or the Elger north face). On the other hand climbing a mountain means to overcome the dangers and weaknesses inside a person, thus mountaineering is a means to transcend the borders of bodily exhaustion in order to gain a full awareness of one's own psychological or spiritual capacities. Reinhold Messner, who climbed the 8000-meter Juncos and experienced a lot of emotionally touching situations (like cutting off his dead brother from the rope), himself again makes sure that climbing is a way to the inner self. Here, outer domination is mirrored by an internal conflict. This sheds light on the discussion of Messner's mediating the "Yeti" or "Big Foot." Whether or not this giant animal exists in the Himalayas, this story is definitely a transference of "the hero's journey" (on which the climber meets the "dragon") from internal into material realms.

Another aspect of mountaineering is its being depicted as revelation. Romantic authors often describe their meeting with mountains as an epiphany of nature's sacred dimensions. Many nineteenth-century authors both from North America and from Europe could be mentioned here, from Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Novalis to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In this perspective, the mountain reveals the living beauty of nature and initiates a feeling of universal connectedness in the human climbing it. In modern environmentalism and the U.S. National Park movement, it was especially the mountains that (contradictorily) symbolized both the unconquered wilderness and the American project of universal salvation.

In the last three decades, mountaineering has been closely related to new developments within the "outdoor" scene. Although the disparate free-climbing movement is difficult to address generally and many climbers are still interested in ecological or even spiritual aspects of their sport, there is an undeniable relation between deep-ecological activities and the romanticized picture of free-climbing. A number of mountain climber-intellectuals are drawn to deep ecology because of spiritual experiences they have made outdoors, many of them being influenced by Arne Naess' earliest environmental philosophy. Naess himself was an experienced climber and the first to ascend Tirich Mir (7690 meters; 25,230 feet), the highest peak in the Hindu Kush, in 1950.

Founders of intentionally successful outdoor and climbing companies participate in grassroots deep ecological activities not only for advertisement reasons, but also as a consequence of their personal experiences that are often spiritually colored. This is true in particular for Doug Thompkins (founder of "The North Face" and "Esprit"), who funded the "Foundation for Deep Ecology," the "EcoForestry Institute," and the "El Pumalín Bosque Foundation," which ambitiously supports the idea of Pumalín National Park in Chile ("Pumalín" means "where Pumas live"). Yvonne Chouinard (founder of "Patagonia"

Messner on Everest and Cosmos

Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler were the first two climbers to ascend Mount Everest without the use of oxygen. In his report of the expedition Messner wrote:

I have not come here to ascend Everest at any price. I wished to get to know it, in all its might, difficulty, and severity. And I was resolute to renounce the peak, should I not be able to climb it without a breathing mask: With that modern oxygen apparatus one simulates at the Everest a level of 6,000 meters. But to experience that level, I need not go to Everest. To acknowledge, to sense, and to feel the Everest's power, I have to climb it without technical tricks. Only then I know what a man undergoes there, which new dimensions will open before him, and if he can arrive at a new relationship to the cosmos (1978: 162).

Finally standing at the peak of Everest, Messner described his feelings thus:

Standing in the diffuse light, with the wind in the back, I suddenly have a feeling of all-inclusiveness (Allrlefihi/) - not the feeling of success and of being stronger than all those who came here before us, not a feeling of reaching the ultimate point, not omnipotence. Just a touch of happiness deep inside my head and breast. The peak that suddenly seemed to me like a resting place. As if I hadn't expected a resting place up

here. At the sight of those steep, sharp ridges beneath us [we experience] the imagination that later we really would have come too late. Every thing we say to each other now, we say in mere embarrassment. I don't think any more. While in a trance-like state I get the tape out of the backpack, switch it on, and try to speak a few reasonable sentences, my eyes are immediately filled with tears. "Now we are at Everest's peak; it is so cold that we cannot take photos," I later start the conversation with the tape recorder switched on. But right away crying again shakes me. I neither can talk nor think, but I feel this deep emotional commotion which throws me into a new balance. Only a few meters below the peak the exhaustion would have been the same, also the anxiety and the pain suffered; such a burst open of emotions, though, is only possible at the peak.

Everything that is, everything I am, is marked by the knowledge that I reached the final destination. 'The peak - at least temporarily - as naive, intuitive answer to the question of being' (1978: 180).

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and "Black Diamond") spends a fixed part of the company's budget on grassroots environmental projects, many with a biocentric, radical environmental approach. Reinhold Messner (affiliated with "Salewa") is a member of the European Parliament for the Green Party; and "Jack Wolfskin" (founded by the German Wolfgang Dausien) supports environmental projects around the world. Many of those brands explicitly refer to U.S. climbing romanticism (especially Yosemite Park), even when such relations are artificial, like in the "Think Pink" case, which was founded in Italy.

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See also: Deep Ecology; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Fly Fishing; Naess, Arne; Radical Environmentalism; Rock Climbing; Sacred Mountains; Surfing.

Mountains and Rivers Sutra by Japanese Zen Master Dogen Kigen (1200-1253)

The Sanskrit term *sutra* has been reserved throughout the Buddhist tradition for what is taught by a Buddha. Its use in the title of this text immediately suggests the extraordinary nature of Dogen's 1240 address to a monastic assembly, written as a powerful attempt to combine the broad rhetorical sweep and spiritual depth of Chinese

nest in an earthly way. It can also fly up into the sky where the cloud-beings live, its path so easy, so natural. And, most magically of all, not only can it swim and float on water, it can also dive under the water - and come back up again! To a people who likely saw puddles and ponds as an entryway to the underworld, this must have seemed the epitome of magic.

Other water birds such as cranes or coots or herons (or their footprints) are also widely represented in the prehistoric rock art of the desert Southwest, not surprising in cultures that were trying to eke out an existence in places where the rainfall was often far below the prerequisite 14 inches a year that are considered minimum for human survival. With the idea of supplication for rain, it is no wonder that water birds images are so prevalent, as are those of clouds, frogs, tadpoles, and fish. Images of turkeys are often associated with rain also, as these birds tended to reside in the mountains where there was more water, next to springs and streams, just as they do today.

It is a logical extension of bird imagery that bird feathers and bird parts served as a metaphor for the whole bird, and there is a long tradition brought forward into the present of using bird feathers in connection with sacred ceremonies, altars, prayer bundles, dances and rituals, and shamanic costumes. "Of all life forms found as decorative motifs in Pueblo art, no bird has undoubtedly enjoyed the most widespread use. Bird designs occur abundantly on prehistoric and historic culture materials from the Pueblo region" (Wellman 1976: 97).

Bird imagery in the Rio Grande style rock art is quite often generic (depending on the site); that is, the idea of birds is presented, though no effort has been made to suggest a specific kind of bird. And just as often, a specific bird image may dominate a site, such as raptors in Tenabo, New Mexico, the duck-men of the San Juan River area in southeastern Utah, the star-faced birds of prey in the Galisteo Basin in north central New Mexico, or the owl-men of Dinwoody Lakes, Wyoming.

And there are some sites that are wonderfully and inexplicably anomalous, such as the premier rock-art site of Three Rivers, in southwestern New Mexico. This remarkable site, with its many thousands of petroglyphs pecked into the basaltic lava along a hogback rising above the desert floor, hosts at least fourteen separate, identifiable species of birds, as well as birds with eggs in their bodies, bird migrations, seasonal portrayals and even a bird embryo, where the oval shape of the rock forms the egg. Most of the images are portrayed alone, and a few seem to have an overt shamanic context, though certainly the wide variety of images has generated numerous, often conflicting interpretations.

Unraveling the mystery of the many different bird species represented at Three Rivers is an appropriate metaphor for the study of the larger world of rock art. Not only by learning to live with the mystery without having 10

to explain it rationally of our own terms, but also by attempting to grasp the essence of the magical movement in rock art, and learning, each in our own way, how to celebrate (and protect) that mystery, may we come into a true contact with the many people who left them there so long ago.

Brad Draper

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- See also:* Paleolithic Religions; Rock Art (various); Shamanism (various).

Rock Climbing

Can rock climbing be understood as a religion? As a practitioner and a scholar, I think it can. Surely it entails a sensation of transcendence, an experience of raw nature, and calls forth a kind of reverence. Climbing offers a respite from the constraints of the horizontal world, reaching the *axis mundi* with each new ascent. While its experiences convey aspects of what I feel when I climb, they serve only to obscure what I see as a scholar. As a scholar, as I'm prone to romanticizing my choice of leisure pursuits, here I want to approach climbing with a critical eye, still under the broad category of religion. This entails a shift in ritual. If we view climbing as ritualized behavior, we move beyond platitudes and speculations about the "beliefs" of climbers to analyze the social processes and practices they perform.

Climbing is almost wholly ritualized. This will become readily apparent to anyone who attempts to invent the sport's deities, as I did in my hapless early teenage years.

Armed with a bike lock, leather gloves, and an old sailing line, Jilly friend Dan and I decided to "go climbing." Before we had much of an opportunity to kill ourselves, Dan and I were approached by some "real climbers" who, while chuckling the we-know-better laugh, took us under their wing and initiated us into the esoterica at the heart of the sport. In language and gestures, "meant to close the gap between our ignorance and their reality," we were taught about the acquisition and use of proper ritual paraphernalia (ropes, carabineers, and anchors), appropriate regalia (climbing boots, designer clothes), ritual speech ("on belay"), sacred texts (guide books and various "how to" texts written by "founding fathers"), ongoing revelation (climbing magazines), sacrificial rituals (leisure blood kettling by way of cuts and bruises - "badges of honor" - and the occasional involuntary corpse offering), salient ethnic distinctions (sport climbers, traditional climbers, alpine climbers), relevant ancestors and deities (local heroes), heroes (heroes from somewhere else), and most importantly, levels of salvation (grades of difficulty) and ethics (aesthetics - "good style"). More than this, we learned that "real climbing" is established around certain pilgrimage sites (Yosemite being Mecca and Jerusalem both), and only the apostate (independently minded climbers) or the visionary (sponsored climbers) venture beyond the sanctioned and sanctified cathedrals. However, meeting the needs of practitioners who can't always and everywhere engage "pure tradition" (going climbing), climbers have invented traditions to match their late capitalist predilections (climbing gyms with espresso bars and interactive websites that successfully reproduce the social milieu - which is garden-variety, pecking-order calibration - of the "really real").

Now, lest my critical view be taken as cynicism, let me point out the positive attributes of climbing as ritual. There is more *communitas* in climbing circles than there are bad dissertations on liminality - which is to say heaps. Climbing is about bonding, and bonding quite beyond the structures and constraints of everyday life. If there was ever "serious play," this is it. At the level of rope mate, trust is paramount and all ascents are dually authored and doubly experienced. Beyond the sacred duty to one's partner (holding his or her rope), climbing bonds extend like fractals, taking in ever-greater numbers of people yet linking them in the most intimate ways. Moreover, the very ritualism of climbing is so explicit and marked that it constitutes the primary identity of most adherents. This makes climbers remarkably visible and sympathetic to one another (intra-ethnic strife aside). Thus, to speak personally, I am certain that I have more in common - in terms of passions, appetites, ideals - with climbers from, say, Thailand, than I do with my neighbors. So it is that climbers can travel the world and have ready-made communities waiting to accept them. So, while climbers fashion themselves as radicals, independents, and iconoclasts, what I

find revealing in our ritual analysis is that it is precisely the sub-cultural homogeneity of climbing - produced and reproduced through ritual practices - that renders climbing the *soda!* phenomenon it is.

Turning to the sharper edge of my critical knife, I want to address the relationship of climbers to nature by way of exposing one particular class of rituals to analysis: the first ascent. Climbers most often take the first ascent to be the epitome of the sport. It represents the "best and purest" form of climbing. Adventurous, bold, committed, visionary, self-kiss: these are common ways first ascensionists fashion themselves, and most climbers endorse this discourse through consumption of it. As a first ascensionist myself, I've participated in this rhetorical economy, and I think many of the claims and aspirations surrounding first ascents are sincere and harmless. However, I would insist that the quest for the perfect route (climbing's Holy Grail) by climbers as a whole and the quest for ego gratification by individuals have caused climbing to manifest itself in rather imperial ways. New climbing areas are sought with the fervor of New World explorers, and the consequences to nature (and sometimes natives, as with disputes between climbers and Indians at Devils Tower and Cave Rock attest) are similar in effect, but certainly not in scale, to those of their symbolic predecessors. Trails are cut, vegetation is removed, machinery bolts are drilled into the rock for anchors, erosion exacerbated, and litter is left by climbers "developing" new climbs.

I would also call attention to symbolic features of first ascents that strike me as dubious and revealing. These are signaled by the metaphor often chosen by climbers to describe establishing a first ascent: authorship. Climbers speak as if the act of climbing a rock somehow brings it into being - and so it does, for a certain social world. Beyond this, authorship is viewed to convey moral possession of the route to those who established it. In other words, subsequent climbers are to repeat the route by way of the standards of the first ascensionists, and any modification of the route (the addition of new anchors, for example) requires consent from its "authors." Moreover, first ascensionists very often understand their act as one that confers entitlement in another sense. Quite literally, climbers have a long tradition of claiming the right to naming based on the first ascent. Even if a rock feature had a name before an ascent, climbers will re-designate the rock upon climbing it. And, in ways reminiscent of the Reformation, climbers will, on occasion, dispute the legitimacy of an ascent, registering their view by climbing it themselves and renaming it upon success. Rock names enter climbing discourse swiftly and indelibly, eventually becoming recorded in guidebooks, often along with the "author's" name. In this way, first ascents are perhaps best viewed in terms of apotheosis - human beings reaching for the gods in order to become them. As with so many human projects to transcend our limitations, in the game

of climbing nature often becomes a means to our ends - even while we purport to be worshipping it.

Yet, if we grant certain ego needs and failures to our kind, perhaps we can view climbing - and things like it - as simultaneously muddled and miraculous. On the latter side, climbing, for all of my skepticism, still affords the chance to gain a celestial view from a terrestrial perch. Doing so, climbing allows for an oceanic experience that inspires a raring rather than a conquering attitude toward the rock. And it must be said that within the climbing community there has always been a vocal environmentalist element. These climbers - from the very beginning of the sport - have maintained a "clean" ethic, seeking to leave no trace on the rocks they ascend. Moreover, their sensibilities extend to the broader context of public land use. Such climbers and the action groups they form and support have been instrumental in advancing low-impact approaches to nature.

Greg Johnson

See also: Deep Ecology; Mountaineering; Naess, Arne; Surfing.

Rolston III, Holmes (1932-)

Leading environmental philosopher, ethicist, and theologian, Holmes Rolston III is widely recognized as the "father of environmental ethics" for his central role in developing environmental ethics as a modern academic discipline. Throughout his distinguished career, he has helped make explicit the ethics of nature that have been implicit in philosophical and sacred writings since ancient times. Born in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia on 19 November 1932, Rolston's multidisciplinary educational career included a childhood spent in contact with nature, an undergraduate degree in physics (Davidson College, 1954), a divinity degree (Union Theological Seminary, 1956), a Ph.D. in theology (University of Edinburgh, 1958), and later a masters in philosophy of science (University of Pittsburgh, 1968). He wrote the acclaimed books *Philosophy Gone Wild* (1986), *Environmental Ethics* (1988), *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (1987), *Assessing Natural Value* (1994), and *Genesis, Genesis and God: Values and their Origins in Natural and Human History* (Gifford Lectures, University of Edinburgh, 1997-1998) (1999). He edited *Biology, Ethics, and their Origins* (1994), and in 1979, helped found the now-refereed professional journal *Environmental Ethics*. Additional works include 80 chapters in other books and over 100 articles, a number of which have been used in college courses and have been translated into at least a dozen languages. A founding member of the International Society for Environmental Ethics (1990) and delegate to the

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992), Rolston has lectured on all seven continents, consulted with dozens of conservation groups, received numerous awards including the 2003 Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities, and currently serves as University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University, his professorial post since 1976.

For four centuries following the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution in Europe, Western philosophy promoted an almost exclusively anthropocentric focus, perceiving nature as mechanistic and only having value in relation to human uses and preferences. In the early 1970s, Rolston acknowledged that nature had instrumental or use-values for medicine, agriculture, and industry. He went further, though, recognizing that nature had other values - aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, scientific, economic, and religious - as well as intrinsic value. Fundamentally, he argued, organisms (including plants, animals, and humans), species, ecosystems, and the Earth have intrinsic value just for the fact that they have evolved and survived for millions and billions of years. Each level also has systemic value (value associated with processes and capacity to produce) that is interwoven with instrumental and intrinsic values. Rolston posits that for all of these reasons and more, humans have ethical obligations to the environment.

An ordained Presbyterian pastor like his father and grandfather, Rolston frequently draws on the Bible, emphasizing in writing and in lectures its implied guidance on environmental ethics. He likes to think of the "swarms of living creatures" brought forth from land and sea (Gen. 1:20, 24) as early references to biodiversity and notes that when God reviewed the display of life he found it "very good." According to Rolston, the story of Noah's ark illustrates that God wills for species to continue (Gen. 6:19) and the rainbow is God's sign re-establishing "the covenant ... between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations" (Gen. 9:12-13). In addition to the ecological, intrinsic, aesthetic, instrumental, and religious values implied in Genesis and Matthew 6, Rolston highlights biblical passages that speak to economic and other values, as well as human responsibilities.

Rolston promotes the idea that ethics are for people, but not only about people. To whom much is given, much is required, and humans have a rich and ancient inheritance, the Earth and biosphere, to steward. Rolston says that, perhaps we make our deepest error "forever putting ourselves first, never putting ourselves in place in the fundamental biosphere community in which we reside" (2000: 83). Through his writings and lectures, he attempts to instill a more profound sense of civic and environmental