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Peer reviewed

Review: *Ecologies of the Heart: emotion, belief, and the environment.*

By E.N. Anderson

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Anderson, E.N. *Ecologies of the Heart: emotion, belief, and the environment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 256pp. US \$25.00 hardbound ISBN: 0-19-509010-1.

It is human choice, not technology, greed, or population explosion, that has led us to ecological disaster. Human choice, including economic action, is based on strong emotions. Choices are made according to information that is viewed through the eyes of culture. Thus, is E.N. Anderson's basic theme in *Ecologies of the Heart*.

Anderson calls for a system of environmental management that includes ethics and a moral code which builds upon strong human emotions. The author develops his theory by using examples of how culture informs human treatment of the environment. The ancient Chinese art of Feng-shui is a form of landscape planning that views nature as, "a society of subtle beings--mystic dragons and tigers in the hills--whose bodies are literally the landscape." (p. 16) Anderson uses Feng-shui as an example of a cosmology, which combines folk belief with empirical observation. This combination becomes a powerful motivator of communities to follow the orderly guidance of Feng-shui in managing landscapes.

Northwest Coast Indians incorporate a deep reverence for trees, animals, water, mountains and plants in environmental management. The bark from a cedar is carefully and reverently stripped in one long piece--a cedar tree is never cut for its bark. The spiritual belief of the Northwest Coast Indians is a compelling model for environmental conservation and economic sustainability.

Anderson uses these examples, and others, to lead the reader towards a common theme of resource management as a meaningful and emotional interaction with real landscapes. Ancient cultures view nature with respect and an enduring protection. These cultural beliefs serve to conserve and sustain resources for human consumption and, thus,

become economically viable.

Anderson believes modern environmentalism must acknowledge and incorporate the emotional with social institutions, laws, and economies. Humans do not act according to rational self-interest. If we did, we would consider the long-term effects of our actions. The rational person realizes that depletion of natural resources in the short-term precludes future abundance.

As an anthropologist specializing in cultural ecology, Anderson studies how cultures manage their environment. His principal focus has been Asian cultures with a sprinkling of Northwest Coast and Mayan Indians. The work is treated as a scientific piece. However, it is written in a style that will appeal to a general audience. The book is well documented with extensive notes and bibliography and includes a comprehensive index.

Deep ecologists might view this work as slightly anthropocentric. Anderson acknowledges his views towards utilitarianism and describes himself as, "not...a hard-core environmentalist or animal rights activist." (p. ix) To his credit, he states that the utilitarian ethic of, "the greatest good to the greatest number over the greatest time" (p. ix) has problems and limits.

This was an enjoyable and informative read. I recommend it to both general and scientific audiences.

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