

The Archetypal, Twenty First Century Resurrection of the Ancient Image of the Green Man

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Abstract

The Green Man is an artistic and iconic representation, part human, part plant. History is filled with Green Man images in architecture, stained glass, sculpture, painting, mythology, literature and folklore. It is a recurrent visual phenomenon in Western art practice, appearing and disappearing consistently across numerous time periods, cultures and geographic locations. Evidence shows that these emergences are often linked to times of upheaval, change or environmental crisis. Currently, the image is reappearing in a wide range of artistic and cultural manifestations. This article analyses the meanings and messages, along with the futures potential, underlying this contemporary explosion of the Green Man phenomenon.

Keywords: Green Man, archetype, sculpture, art, art forms, artworks, environment, deep ecology, eco, gender, phenomenon, myth, legend, history, environmental crisis, conservator, hero, messenger, guardian, trickster, metamorphic, regenerative, incarnations.

The Green Man image is so much a part of the collective consciousness of Western civilization that the continual manifestation of the character can be viewed as being essentially the expression of a fundamental archetype. Using Carl Jung's two part definition of an archetype (in Kryder, 1994, p.14) we can fully understand how the Green Man image can be identified as an archetype. First he is primarily an inherited mental image that has the effect of creating a deeply individual response throughout the course of a person's life and secondly, his continual resurgence in myths, legends and artworks throughout history is so regular and recognisable as to appear almost preordained. Indeed,

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the more one looks into the Green Man character and the more complex his persona appears superficially, the more recognisable it in fact becomes. Although the intention of this article is to discuss and decipher the meanings and messages of the contemporary resurgence of this ancient image and its potential future impact, the author feels a brief discussion of past appearances is appropriate and necessary. Consider the following six figures from the past millennium, illustrating different Green Man incarnations and archetypes.



Figure 1. Green Man as a guardian archetype

This sculptural example of a Green Man image casts a watchful eye from a foliated cornice of a larger sculpture known as *The Rider of Bamberg*.

Note. From *Green Man, the Archetype of Our Oneness with the Earth* (p.114), by William Anderson, photography by Clive Hicks, 1990, London and San Francisco, Harpercollins Publishers.

In Figure 1 we find the immensely popular acanthus-leaf-masked *Green Man of Bamberg*. This Green Man image is found carved into a console which supports the famous *Rider of Bamberg* sculpture in the Bamberg Cathedral, Germany (Anderson, 1990). Basford (1978) considered the Bamberg mask to be the work of a master:

The magnificent...leaf mask—the most beautiful foliate head of the thirteenth century, and perhaps of all time...is a dark counterpart [to the Rider]. All the darkness and power and mystery of a vast forest seem concentrated in this majestic head of leaves. The Bamberg leaf mask is a Prince of Darkness. (Basford, 1978, p. 17)

In relation to this particular acanthus-leaf-masked Green Man, Anderson (1990) picks up where Basford left off, and acknowledges that the figure imparts a lasting feeling of terror on the viewer. Anderson refers to the unmasking of the Bamberg Green Man in this way:

The most you could hope for in any dealings with him is that he should be on your side...The ferocity of his expression is one of warning against neglect of Natural Law. (Anderson, 1990, p.115)

Interestingly, the archetypal characterization of guardian or protector is a recurrent theme found when decoding the Green Man phenomenon. The Green Man of Bamberg marks a rise in the usage of Green Man imagery during the middle ages, reflecting the change in that society's relationship with nature. This Green Man's gaze strongly reflects the mood of thirteenth century Germany. During this time which pre-dates the Renaissance Period, the dark mysteries of the forest were largely unresolved (one cannot help but think of the popular German dessert the *Black Forest Cake!*).



Figure 2. Green Man as a messenger archetype

Art historian William Anderson states this delicately carved Green Man's message pertains to humanity's harmony with nature.

Note. From *A Little Book of the Green Man* (p.20), by Mike Harding, 1998, London, Aurum Press.

Next, Figure 2 presents an example of a messenger archetype. A thicket of Hawthorne grows out of, or is it growing into the mouth of the *Sutton Benger Green Man*, evoking a sense of commune between man and the natural world in a most profound way. Symmetrical in design, and highly detailed in workmanship, this Green Man image is also embellished with birds pecking at the berries in the thicket. It is interesting to compare the modernity of the Sutton Benger face with that of the Bamberg carving as well as the expression on the faces. Once again, we are tempted to decode the message—this time from the Gothic period of architecture. In the Sutton Benger example it is hard to see a warning, or a condemnation as was apparent in the Bamberg example. Green Man scholar William Anderson's view is that the Sutton Benger Green Man's message has a different meaning and intention:

...the greater the sophistication of his carving and the deeper the sense of individuality...points...to the new understanding of the relationship between man and

Nature brought about by the architects and sculptors of the Gothic style. (Anderson, 1990, p.121)

Given the different ways in which the Green Man is portrayed in these two examples, it may be suggested that these images reflect differing ways that the societies felt in terms of their relationship with nature during the time of the creation of the work. The time period of the middle ages (approximately 1000AD through 1450AD), when over 9,000 parish churches, abbeys, monasteries and cathedrals were built in Europe, was marked by the fact that the world had not ceased at the end of the first millennium (Cragoe, 1998). The Sutton Benger Green Man was created towards the end of this period, (also known as the "disease of building"), and expresses a confident and agreeable impression, reflecting a perception of society's harmony and comfort with and in nature.



Figure 3. Green Man as a metamorphic archetype
Note. From *Vertumnus, Rudolf II*, by artist, Guiseppe Arcimboldo, c.1590. Oil on panel, 70.5cm x 57.5cm, Sweden. Retrieved December 1, 2003, from <http://www.illumination.co.uk/svank/biog/arcio.com>

In Figure 3 we find another Green Man image consisting of a head and bust of a man. This work is an allegorical portrait by Sixteenth Century court painter, Guiseppe Arcimboldo. Archimboldo creates the features of his patron with vegetative matter. The painting entitled *Vertumnus*, depicts the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II, as the God of Metamorphoses in nature and life. The use of fruit and flowers in the portrait symbolizes the abundance and balance between nature and humanity that the reign of Rudolf II apparently represented to the artist (Illuminations Media, 2003). The success of the portrait to communicate this concept may never be known to us, however, one thing is certain—once again, we have the recurrent theme of man's relationship with nature reflected in Green Man imagery.



Figure 4. Green Man as a trickster archetype

Note. From J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. This illustrative example of a Green Man image is from the animated Walt Disney 1953 movie, *Peter Pan*. Retrieved May 1, 2008, from http://www.dellorcoart.com/portfolio/animation/images/peter_pan.jpg

As with many archetypes, just when we think we understand them, they change. The Green Man morphs and changes constantly—confusing us much like the character Peter Pan (Figure 4)—another personality of the Green Man archetype. Flitting from here to there, always just out of reach, Green Man as Peter Pan amuses us with his presence, while embodying the trickster archetype.

It is imperative to interject at this point that given his classical representation in the masculine form, the fact remains that the Green Man is typically represented as being in or of elements of nature as well, strongly suggesting that the archetype actively combines aspects of both masculine and feminine genders, since plants and foliage are seen to be key characteristics of Gaia, the mother Earth. That the Green Man archetypes often appear in the guise of the Trickster, the Guardian and the Regenerator—all of which encompass the feminine characteristics of empathy and acceptance—as opposed to the more masculine characteristic of rigid control and power over suggested by the *Warrior* archetype (Absher, 1990)—further suggests the inherent gender duality of the Green Man figure.

The Green Man is an archetype for an androgynous, regenerative spirit connected with the earth and its vegetation... (he) underscores the tension between masculine and feminine ways of knowing and being – the former characterized by single-mindedness and rigid control, and the later by expansiveness and acceptance. (Absher, 1990, p. 6)

Author and teacher Jesse Hardin agrees. In his paper, *An Ecology of Maleness: Masculinity, Pan and the Green Man*, Hardin uses the Pan character to illustrate how Green Man archetypes possess feminine traits within the male figure:

...men's groups have brought back the pan-cultural archetype of the Green Man...True, Pan is a male god, but he is associated with female values. Male empowerment compliments and contributes to the expression of female empowerment. Male and female energies touch and mingle without losing either the artistic subtleties of contrast, or the kinesis fuelled by dissimilarity. The alchemy of Gaian evolution requires the distinct elements of both sexes in balanced measure... (Hardin, 2004, p.2)

Interestingly, futurist philosopher Sohail Inayatullah names similar values of ecology, spirituality, gender partnership, and a concern for future generations as inherent characteristics of Aboriginal Culture that will be central in a rise of a caring culture in futuristic Australia (Inayatullah, 2007, p.93).



Figure 5. Green Man as a regenerative archetype

Note. From *The Quest for the Green Man* (p.132), by John Matthews, 2001, Wheaton, Theosophical Publishing House.

Thinking back to childhood, many readers from a North American background may remember the *Jolly Green Giant*, shown in Figure 5. A relatively contemporary incarnation of the Green Man, this character extolled the virtues of eating vegetables (Matthews, 2001). It is interesting to note how this friendly regenerative archetype

acts as corporate spokesperson who helps us to make the connection between things green and a healthy state of body and mind. This general theme gains momentum and urgency in our post industrial society as we find our economically structured corporate systems providing insufficient answers to our escalating global problems, such as environmental pollution, hunger, poverty and social dislocation (Eisler, 2000, p.165).



Figure 6. Green Man as a hero archetype

Note. From image of the *Wrath of the Ents* based on the 2002 movie *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Retrieved July 1, 2003, from <http://www.collecttolkien.com/images/ArtWrathoftheEnts.html>

Finally, Figure 6 illustrates the living breathing *Tree Ents*, from the contemporary film *Lord of the Rings; The Two Towers*, (2002). In the movie, the Green Man has many incarnations, most notably the long living tree men known as the Ents. Who could sit still in their cinema seats when this hero archetype finally rose to battle? It was the Green Man, having had enough of the destruction of the natural world, who impelled the trees to take action in the age old struggle of good over evil.

A transformative archetype

As is evident, *all* of the above Green Man incarnations can be identified as expressions of a common archetype. As we attempt to examine the role and meaning the current resurgence of the Green Man visual phenomenon brings to contemporary life, it is important to develop an understanding of how an archetypal presence in general can help shape our existing reality. Kryder (1994) argues that an archetype carries empowering qualities for all individuals:

Archetypes are universal "first types", primary patterns that reach across the boundaries of specific application. The invisible archetype is the source of the visible type. (Kryder, 1994, p.14)

According to Kryder, identifying with mythological archetypes through the use of stories and associated art forms enables an individual to fulfil his or her destiny by allowing them to shape their lives using the archetypal character as a template for reality. She states:

The great mytholog[ies] and art of the world reconnect us to the source of the archetypal realm...the emanations that come into the everyday world through sacred art, rite, myth, music, poetry, dance, and architecture transmit the patterns and essences of the archetypal... As we respond to the sacred, either through epiphanies or through nature herself, we begin to awaken our own imaginal faculty. Nothing less than the awakening of the imaginal will redeem the de-sacralization of our world. (Kryder, 1994, p.16)

Kryder argues here that accessing the transformative influence of an archetype, or connecting with nature is a "sacred" process that may lead to "sacred" outcomes. Referring to this process as 'the awakening of the imaginal', she states that the absence of, or loss of connection with, our subconscious imagination is at the root of the de-sacralization of our relationship to the world which can translate to one of the causes of our current environmental crisis. Kryder's belief that a person's holistic development requires specific identification with an archetype and/or a strong connection with nature, positions the Green Man image—an established archetype that is representative of our relationship to the natural environment—as a potent element, essential to both the physical and psychological well-being of contemporary society.

The Green Man's transformative influence as an archetype can be viewed through Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) theory and method that analyses history, while considering the present in order to allow the possibility of alternative futures to emerge. (Inayatullah in Anthony, 2005, p.34). According to Anthony's explanation of CLA (2005, p.34) this iconic image fits neatly into the third level or layer (which explores texts for deeper social and cultural meanings) and the fourth level (pertaining to the symbolic, mythical and archetypal). As well, the study of the meanings and messages of the iconic image can give insight into the first two levels of CLA (the rational/scientific and the economic/political). *Interestingly, the author cannot help but relate the levels or layers of CLA to gender based characteristics, the first two being noticeably male, the last two female.* Furthermore this article addresses how embracing and embodying the archetype offered in Green Man's contemporary resurgence can lead to what Slaughter (in Anthony, 1999, p.359) refers to as "transformative" futures.

Currently a widespread and highly visible resurgence of interest in the Green Man phenomenon is manifesting throughout the entire world—an interest no longer confined mainly to the West—and no longer just amongst artists, writers and other cultural creative (Ray & Anderson, 2001), as can be seen in Figure 7, which shows a sample of return on a typical search of the Green Man theme undertaken by the author in mid 2006.



Figure 7. A sample of returns from the *Google Search Engine* made by the Author in mid 2006. The returns illustrate the diversity of interest in the Green Man phenomenon.

Given that manifestations of the Green Man archetype take on such a diversity of forms and that the creation of Green Man imagery has long been (and continues to be) an instinctive expression of our relationship with nature, it is necessary to ask a number of questions in order to explore the resurgence of the Green Man in greater depth and to place it within some meaningful context. For example, what are some of the guises in which the archetype is presently being represented? What message or messages does the image bring with it today? What kind of futures do they presage? Are such representations homogenous? (ie. are some explicitly transformative while others are 'degraded' ie. stripped of deeper meaning and commercialized like Shrek) into feel good but politically and personally benign? Where and how do representations of the Green Man fit into life in this twenty-first century and which gender (if any at all) may they be taking on?

Green man's increasing familiarity—the conservator emerges

The rising interest in the Green Man phenomenon during the past few years is illustrated in Table 1, which summarises the number of results returned by the author's preferred search engine (*Google*) during the period September 2003 to March 2006.

Table 1
Green Man Returns from the *Google Search Engine* by Author

Date	Search Engine	Number of Results
September 2003	<i>Google</i>	5,000,000
August 24, 2004	<i>Google</i>	9,140,000
December 1, 2004	<i>Google</i>	18,200,000
May 17, 2005	<i>Google</i>	56,900,000
March 7, 2006	<i>Google</i>	141,000,000

Multiple factors, in particular the increased use of the Internet in general and the increasing efficiency of search engines as time passes, may be responsible for the increase in numbers shown in Table 1, but even so, the rise in curiosity about the Green Man is apparent. Numerous individuals, groups and organizations are beginning to express interest in or embrace the Green Man image, as the archetype takes on its new role in the twenty first century. What this role will be in the long term remains to be seen, although it is the author's contention that one of the key functions is a repeat of what has happened in the past—reminding humanity of its symbiotic connection with the earth and nature—however at this point in our existence his presence is strongly associated with warning and awakening society to the need of maintaining environmental equilibrium as we progress further into the future aware of the consequences should we continue our current *modus operandi*.

The search results reveal more than just the sheer number of queries about the Green Man that are being made. They tell us, for example, that visual artists (including painters, sculptors, photographers) as well as musicians, jewellers, environmental groups, historians, folklorists, theatre groups, advertising agencies, engravers, gardeners, conservation groups, writers and even home-ware and furnishing companies (to name just a few) all identify with or seek to identify themselves with the Green Man image and/or the Green Man archetype. The returns also suggest that there is an ever-growing number of individuals, groups, organizations and even commercial enterprises that are looking for greater meaning in our relationship with life and nature—meaning that goes well beyond the short-term exploitation of the planet for material gain. Whilst there is a significant amount of commercial and marketing hyperbole evident throughout the searches—as well as noticeable "new age" sentimentality, it is clear that the return of the archetype is a reflection of a deeper desire to regain a sense of balance and harmony. The increasing popularity of the Green Man image at the present moment is highly suggestive of a key shift in the ordinary person's view of the natural environment, especially since more and more people are coming to realise that many

of the lifestyles encouraged by the modern, affluent economy are increasingly unsustainable.

As part of the research into how the Green Man is perceived amongst contemporary artists and designers working with the theme as a key part of their creative practice, the author interviewed a cross section of people working in a full-time professional capacity both in Australia and overseas. On the basis of these interviews, it has become the contention of the author that the most predominant guise in which the Green Man has appeared in the past few years is that of the *Conservator* archetype—a persona through which we are warned of our increasing disconnection with Gaia, both in the sense of the ancient Greek concept of *Mother Earth* and in the Biospheric context proposed in the late 1970s by James Lovelock (2000)—and thus of the dire consequences of that disconnect for both the individual (humanity) and for the whole (the planet). It is the Green Man's recent re-emergence from within the human subconscious in the role of Conservator that suggests to the author that the almost universal resurgence of interest in the Green Man archetype represents an urgent warning as to the probable outcome of our increasingly unsustainable Western lifestyle (Meadows, Randers, & Meadows, 2004).

Interestingly, as well as referring to the more conventional understanding of the term Conservator as one who conserves and protects things of value—such as artworks or the natural environment—the term also has a specific legal definition in that it refers to a guardian or protector appointed by a court to manage the affairs of an individual incapable of managing his or her own affairs. On a more positive note however, it is the author's belief that the present personification of the archetype in the role of Conservator may be interpreted as a messenger of hope, a figure that urges responsible stewardship of the planet and the need to take responsibility for guiding all of humanity towards the creation of a holistic and sustainable environmental equilibrium.

Gaia and whole systems thinking

A very condensed overview of the Gaia hypothesis as proposed by James Lovelock (2000), states that through the actions of the micro (i.e., a single life or single event) the status of the macro system is influenced (i.e., planetary events or functions) and vice versa. As a logical outcome of this complex interconnectivity (sometimes referred to as the "web of life") it is argued by Lovelock (2000) that every event occurring within the planetary environment will impact in some way on the system in its entirety. However, the Gaia hypothesis is neither new nor unique in analysing living or functioning systems in terms of the whole rather than in terms of the individual components. The Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination, Pratitya-samutpada, which describes the interdependent and complex web of cause and effect to which all living beings are subject can be traced back over two thousand years, whilst Systems Thinking as an analytical tool for investigating business and social systems became particularly popular in the mid to late 1980s, in part as a response to the classical reductionist view popularised by Descartes almost 400 years previously. As explained by Nicholas (2004), Systems Thinking can be described as a critical and analytical strategy that considers the functioning of any given system in any given situation in its

entirety rather than through an analysis of its individual parts. This strategy provides users with the ability to take an apparently confused, chaotic situation and perceive a degree of order and interrelationship by focussing on the bigger picture, rather than on the details (Nicholas, 2004, p.51).

In considering Green Man in the role of Conservator, it is relatively easy to interpret the present day incarnation of the archetype as being that of custodian of the Gaia system, seeking to maintain the equilibrium of not only the environment, but of the individual as well. However, if we broaden our interpretation to consider the Green Man from the perspective of Systems Thinking, a system perhaps more familiar to those of a business or scientific bent, the Conservator archetype again informs us that if an individual part is dysfunctional, then the whole system is potentially at risk. No matter which interpretation, the message remains the same. By empowering the individual to take on a proactive role in the bigger picture, it seems that once again the archetype has changed and adapted to suit the times—in particular to keep the message accessible to those divorced from the natural environment by their contemporary lifestyle. There is clearly a need for balance.

Given the diversification of the Green Man's message reminding us of what Anderson (1990) calls "our oneness with the earth," Kryder (1994) seeks to remind us that it is our on-going and fundamental disconnection with nature and/or the archetypal realm that brings about an imbalance or state of dysfunction within the individual:

All addictions, phobias, and attachments can be seen as misdirected longings for the ecstasy attainable through the theophanic vision of the archetypal realm. (Kryder, 1994, p.16)

Arguing that many of the ills endemic in contemporary society are due to the loss of divinity within the individual, Kryder suggests that it is through the effective use of the creative process inherent in everyone that we can find an outcome conducive to reconnecting with the divine. Furthermore, it is the very process of mental creativity and its physical expression (in whatever form) which in itself brings about a state of equilibrium or balance. For example, consider the predicament of the artist, who, when faced with the dilemma of a "creative block" or lack of inspiration, resorts to unhealthy addictions or habits. Contemporary North American artist, Fred Tomaselli, suffered from such creative blocks and a lack of direction in his work:

His record collection was a plummet into addiction. He'd boarded a carousel of infinite un-satisfaction. (Lethem, 2004, p.69)

For many years before becoming a successful artist, Tomaselli dabbled in drugs (Lethem, 2004, p.73) and was an avid collector of everything from sea-shells to popular music—describing his passion for collecting as not merely an addiction, but an insatiable compulsion. In recent years Tomaselli has redirected this compulsion into a more creative direction and now uses many of these collected items, along with photography, prescription drugs, natural objects and paint, in his highly individual collage-based style. For example, in Figure 8, Tomaselli uses the head of a man as the centre focal point of the piece, surrounded by streams of natural and manufactured items from his collection, to produce what can be seen as a modern day Green Man

image. Through the production of complex works such as this, Tomaselli has established a personal degree of balance and fulfilment in his life that sustains him in a positive manner. In terms of the whole systems thinking strategy suggested by the Conservator, Tomaselli's work is refocussed—contributing to the solution, instead of being part of the original problem.

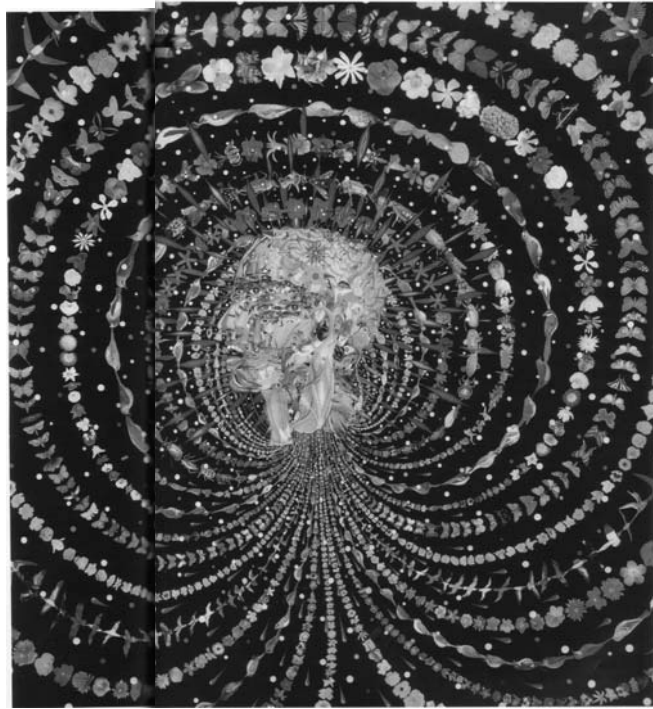


Figure 8. Breathing head, 2002, by Fred Tomaselli. Leaves, photocollage, acrylic, gouache and resin on wood panel. 152.4cm x 152.4cm. (Letham, 2004).

Note. From "The Collector", by Jonathan Letham, 2004, *Art Review International Art & Style*, 2(7), p.68-75.

A profound shift towards a green consciousness

A similar approach to Kryder's theory—that self-healing may be achieved, or at least enhanced through interaction with nature—is propounded by a number of natural therapy groups, as well as established scientists and philosophers. An example of the alternative therapies approach is the *Natural Systems Thinking Process* (NSTP), an applied Eco-psychology philosophy and lifestyle option taught by the Institute of Global Education, based in Washington State, USA (see Figure 9).

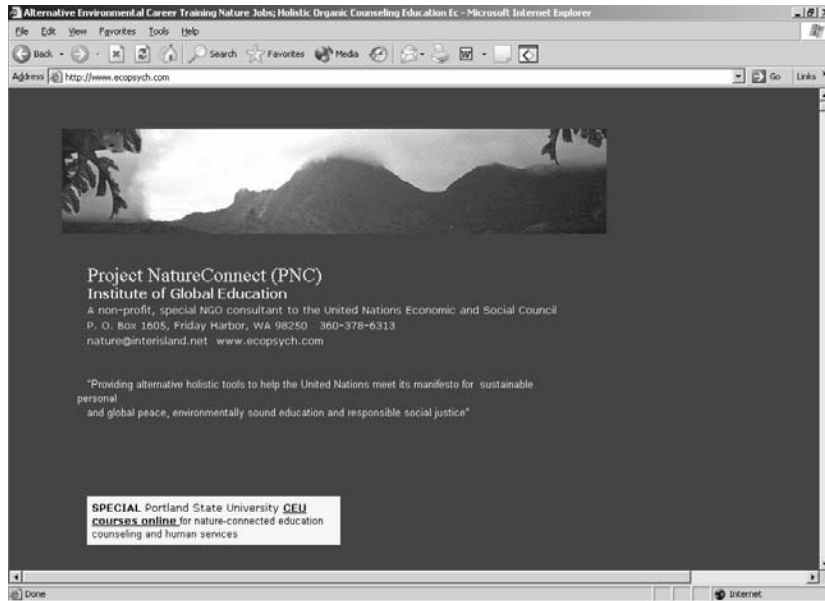


Figure 9. Home page image from the Institute of Global Education's website.
Note. From Michael Cohen. cn.d.,. Institute of Global Education Website. Retrieved November 4, 2004, from <http://www.ecopsych.com> (n.d.)

As with many other lifestyle philosophies, Natural Systems Thinking seeks to effect positive change in a person by healing on a deeper, more profound level through re-establishing a reconnection with nature. Michael J. Cohen, founder and lead faculty member of the institute explains:

The pain or frustration from our excessive severance from nature makes us want—and when we want there is never enough. This irritation underlies most of our discontents and disorders. NSTP enables us to reverse this process by choosing to occasionally reconnect our thinking with nature. (Cohen, 2000a, p.10)

A brief search of the Internet brings up dozens of private Institutes, Ashrams and Healing Centres offering courses associated with Nature Therapy and holistic, nature based healing processes, all of which advocate direct contact with nature as a key part of their philosophy. Given the widespread interest in using contact with nature as a part of the healing process within society at large and evidence that many of those who undertake such courses of therapy do, in fact, benefit, it is understandable that researchers from within the scientific and academic community are beginning to take an interest. In the past thirty years researchers, including health workers, scientists and philosophers, have begun to gradually move the so-called "Nature Therapies" from the "alternative" fringes of science and medicine into the mainstream of conventional practice—in much the same way that acupuncture has moved from alternative therapy into conventional medical practice.

Eco-therapy and biophilia

A similar, but more academically focussed view of our interconnectedness with nature and natural systems is outlined in the emerging field of *Eco-therapy*. Eco-therapy is a therapeutic approach born out of the *Biophilia* hypothesis (Burls & Caan, 2005). The Biophilia theory was first proposed by Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson in 1984 and asserts that humans have an 'evolutionarily crafted, aesthetic and spiritual affinity for nature' (Levy, 2003). Literally meaning "love of life or living systems" Wilson's Biophilia hypothesis suggests that our affiliation with nature is, in fact, rooted in our biology and, as a consequence, disruption to this connection will eventually lead to a disturbance in our overall psychological well-being. Eco-therapy, therefore, involves incorporating or re-establishing a connection with nature back into our lives and, in particular, our sense of bonding with the earth. Research deriving from the Biophilia theory is beginning to make significant inroads into professions as diverse as contemporary medicine and city planning. Howard Frumkin (2001), writing in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* puts forward evidence that interaction with any of the four aspects of the natural environment (animals, plants, landscapes, and wilderness) can be positively shown to promote beneficial physical and mental health benefits on people and thus should be considered in all 'collaboration[s]' among professionals in a range of disciplines from public health to landscape architecture to city planning.' (Frumkin, 2001, p.234). A significant outcome of this growing recognition of Eco-therapy and Biophilia theory, from the author's point of view, is that any recognition of the depth of our emotional attachment to nature must reinforce our motivation to refrain from destroying it, our own lives, and the lives of those around us—clearly a profound statement of the Green Man message.

Psychologist Rebecca Clay (2001) cites the work of Rachel and Stephen Kaplan into restorative environments, which they advocate as a means of addressing 'directed attention fatigue' and the 'impulsivity, distractibility and irritability that accompany it' (Kaplan in Clay, 2001). Directed attention, such as is required by long periods of work in front of a computer—or any task requiring total concentration on a single purpose—can normally be sustained only for short intervals and can be detrimental to health if sustained over very long periods. Fascination, the alternative and more normal state which occurs when people are engaging with a natural environment is readily created when the attention of the individual is removed from focusing on an enforced, linear task and is allowed to engage with the randomness and spontaneity of the natural environment. This does not necessarily require a trip to the wilderness—a better view may be all it takes. Kaplan, for example, found that 'office workers with a view of nature liked their jobs more, enjoyed better health and reported greater life satisfaction' (Kaplan in Clay, 2001). As with Frumkin (2001), Clay goes on to note that there is sufficient evidence into the therapeutic effects of nature, natural views and engagement with plants and other natural forms that there needs to come about a change in the way we design our health care systems, create our architecture and structure our education.

Bringing the Biophilia hypothesis closer to home (for the author) an honours research project undertaken at her own University of the Sunshine Coast, entitled *Influences of a Wilderness Experience on Individual Health and Wellbeing: A Case*

Study on Fraser Island, was conducted in 2005 by Science honours candidate Belinda Warren. The project aimed to assess the influences of a wilderness experience on the health and well-being of tourists to Fraser Island, a major environmental reserve off the southern Queensland coast. In assessing the overall impressions of their experience of the island, respondents were asked to describe the most positive and most negative aspects of their visit. Warren found that few people consciously made a link between the natural environment, their emotions and their health. Yet when respondents were asked to state how specific constructs of the island made them feel, it was the 'natural' aspects of the island experience that made them feel the most positive. Warren observed:

[The findings were] consistent with the Attention Restoration Theory (Irvine & Warber, 2002; Kaplan, 1995) in that we feel most at ease when surrounded by natural elements—thereby enhancing our mental functioning (Warren, 2006).

On an almost daily basis, we are presented with evidence that it is our profound and growing disconnection with nature that is at the core of humankind's many misfortunes—whether political, social or environmental. In an article entitled, *Materialophilia, Biophilia, and Sustainable Use of the Planet*, John Cairns (2003) calls for a much-needed shift to a new paradigm:

Excessive...consumerism [does] not preserve the integrity of the planet's ecological life support system, [and] must be replaced by an eco-centric point of view in which humans are a component of the interdependent web of life, rather than apart from it. (Cairns, 2003, p.4)

Cairns believes that with the correct application of our current scientific and technical knowledge and a paradigmatic shift in humanity's belief systems, ecological recovery and long-term sustainability is completely possible. He argues that human society must choose between Biophilia and Biophobia as expeditiously as possible and it is only through the transition towards Biophilia that humanity will be led towards a new vision of reality based on an ethical foundation.

Expanding on the Biophilia hypothesis is eco-therapy researcher and author Andrew Rothery who, in his 2004 paper *The Science of the Green Man*, explains that it is widely recognised that spending time amongst trees or having potted plants in indoor environments can have a positive effect on human mental health. Indeed, many people keep and display plants in their homes and offices and fresh flowers are often brought to patients in hospital or who are suffering illness or loss. He also notes that the human mind can influence the size and strength of plant auras as documented through the use of Kirlian photography (Rothery, 2004)—although it must be noted that there is significant debate as to the veracity of claims that Kirlian photography is in some way recording the "life energy" or "aura" of living things. Rothery explains that human communication with plants has increased the size and yield of crops in experiments undertaken in Scotland and that similar research is now being done with seeds. He attempts to define the causes behind this phenomenon as follows:

Such mental interaction between humans and plants may also play a part in the creation of our innate affinity with other forms of life known as "Biophilia". This could explain why the cutting down of whole forests is such an emotive subject for so many people. (Rothery, 2004, p.3).

Newspaper stories about people becoming extremely upset when trees are cut down in their neighbourhoods or in natural reserves and forests are common. It would be difficult to find anyone who is favour of the clearing of the Amazonian rainforests or clear felling in Tasmania who is not making a direct financial profit from it. Journalist J. Morrison (2006) points out that people often experience negative emotions because they feel a profound connection with trees and plants that they can't explain logically, emotions which often, in fact, spill over into outrage and even violence (Morrison, 2006). Margaret Bates, a student of Social and Sacred Ecology at Monash University, wrote in her text *Sacred is a Tree*:

Whenever a tree is cut down near where I live I get upset. I have an immediate emotional reaction, bypassing my brain. (Bates, 2000, p.5)

Bates goes on to ask why it is that we continue to treat the environment the way we do when we once had a great reverence for nature. In her quest for answers she contends that the process began with the discrediting of older religions:

These beliefs were replaced with that of science in which humans are the rulers and catalysts. Science cannot fill the void left by love of the spiritual around us and in us. It cannot replace connection or reverence...In breaking the bond with nature it makes it that much easier for people to exploit it. (Bates, 2000, p.9)

It is clear that a paradigmatic shift is occurring in our understanding of the complex relationship that exists between humanity, health and the environment. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century world-view, the existence of an intimate connection between the natural world and our own mental state would have been thought of as slightly preposterous if not entirely unscientific. However, today, there are increasing numbers of studies becoming available showing that psychological and environmental factors can (and do) affect physiological systems and overall health status (Waldholz, 2003). Rothery, like author and physician Larry Dossey (2001), refers to this shift in thinking as a *Green Consciousness* or a *Green Intelligence*:

The face or head element of the Green Man suggests a significant meaning for the archetype. The head is traditionally seen as the seat of consciousness by many cultures and in the West it is seen as the domain of our intellect or intelligence. Heads were also specifically revered by...the Celts, as the source of inspiration, foreknowledge and prophecy. The Green Man therefore points to a relationship between our mind or consciousness and the green world of plants and trees—a kind of "green intelligence" or "green consciousness". (Rothery, 2004, p.2)

As we can see, the increased popularity of the Green Man image is a reflection of the paradigmatic shift in thinking occurring throughout Western culture. However, the opening up of a broader understanding of our interconnectedness with the planet can

only have real meaning if the concepts discovered (or more correctly *rediscovered*) bring about positive change in the thinking of the individual—change which ripples out into action, such as healthier lifestyles, more fulfilling interpersonal relationships and, ultimately, into a more sustainable interaction with the natural environment. It is the author's sentiment that emotion has the word motion in it for a reason. Emotions, which are generally understood to be a feminine character trait, exist to help guide our actions. In a healthy individual, free of addictions (prescribed or illegal) one can readily experience emotions and discern appropriate action, pertaining to themselves and the world around them, enabling the Conservator archetype to manifest. This brings us, naturally, to the work of the Deep Ecologists.

Deep ecology and the face in the leaves

The *Deep Ecology* movement is based on the belief that profound changes in the way humans relate to the environment are needed in order to sustain viable and healthy life on the planet. According to the *Wikipedia* site:

Deep Ecology offers a philosophical basis for environmental advocacy [which] may, in turn, guide human activity against perceived self-destruction. Deep ecology and environmentalism hold that the science of ecology shows that ecosystems can absorb only limited change by humans or other external influences. Further, both hold that the actions of modern civilization threaten global ecological well-being. (Wikipedia, 2006)

Founded on work by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who outlined his ecologically based personal philosophy *Ecosophy T* in the late 1970s/early 1980s, *Deep Ecology* philosophy has set 'a new pace for change with its systematic contrasting of both shallow and deep ecological views' (Fox, 1990, p.37). (The philosophies of *Deep* and *Shallow Ecology*—and the ideas associated with them—are sometimes referred to in academic discussion as *Ecosophy*, a shortened variation of Ecological Philosophy). Fox outlines the division between the two approaches as follows—*Shallow Ecology* and its attendant environmental philosophies essentially involve developing strategies which exercise more efficient control and management over the natural environment, whereas *Deep Ecology* requires a much more profound change in the perception of the role of human beings in the overall planetary ecosystem (Fox, 1990). Ecologists and environmentalists actively supporting the shallow approach, or what Inayatullah's CLA would describe as the litany of conservation, can be seen as the *avant-garde* of the green movement—thus activists working with organizations such as *Greenpeace*, who for example, chain themselves to old growth forest in an effort to stop the clear cutting—are representative of this front-line approach. (Interestingly enough, Naess tied himself beside a waterfall in a Norwegian fjord in 1970 as a protest against the building of a dam—indirectly a homage to an earlier environmental activist Mahatma Gandhi, about whom he has written extensively). According to Naess, however, the philosophy of *Shallow Ecology* remains embedded in maintaining the interests of humanity over the larger interests of life and nature itself and, therefore, does not go far enough in addressing the fundamental problems being created by human interfer-

ence with the greater system. Herein lies the key criticism of the Deep Ecology philosophy—that it is largely misanthropic and denies that the work of the majority of environmentalists has sufficient merit (*i.e.*, that it is, by definition, *shallow*).

Increasingly however, ecosophies and political philosophies are beginning to converge. There are few political parties or politicians in the world today that do not advocate or acknowledge some degree of support for environmental issues, no matter how superficially. The increasingly frequent addition of the prefix *eco* to the names of academic disciplines, social movements and even industries of all types highlights the fact that we are experiencing an increased awareness of how our actions are affecting the natural world. Thus, as the ancient image of the Green Man resurfaces to remind us of our connection with nature, our language is evolving to encompass the growing awareness that our actions have global consequences—new words, terms and concepts constantly remind us of our oneness with *Gaia*. Table 2 illustrates a few of the ways that recognition of our dependence on our relationship with the environment is creeping in to our daily language—just one more expression of the "green phenomenon".

Table 2

Some of the ways contemporary language is evolving to accommodate shifting views.

EXISTING PERSPECTIVE / PHILOSOPHY	ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE / PHILOSOPHY
Activism	Eco-warrior
Anthropocentric	Eco-centric
Architecture	Eco-architecture
Art	Eco-art
Feminism	Eco-feminism
Journalism	Eco-journalism
Philosophy	Eco-philosophy
Psychology	Eco-psychology
	NSTP (Natural Systems Thinking Processes)
	Wilderness Therapy
	Educating via Nature
Science	Ecology
	Gaia & Biophilia Hypothesis
	Whole Systems Approach (Ecoliteracy)
Terrorism	Eco-terrorism
Tourism	Eco-tourism

Regardless of the anthropocentricity debate, shallow and deep ecologists, naturalists and environmentalists agree that the cumulative outcomes of human activity change not only the planet and our physical world, they influence our individual health and our personal relationships as well (Brennan, 1993; Cairns, 2003; Cohen, 2000; Dossey, 2001; Fox, 1990; Frumkin, 2001; McGaa, 2004; Rothery, 2004; Waldholz, 2003; Warren, 2005). Adding to the list of highly regarded academics in agreement with the philosophy of the Green Man phenomenon are futurists D. M. and G. M. Taylor of *best futures* who write:

Our health and survival is dependent on the health and survival of the complex ecosystems that support life on our planet. (Taylor & Taylor, 2007, p. 31)

Given our ever-growing understanding of humanity's inextricable connection with the environment and the ways in which we both influence it and are influenced by it, the allocation of responsibility for both the individual and the collective well-being has shifted rapidly from the theological (fatalistic, pre-determined) to the ecological (self-directed, humanistic) in western philosophy, daily life and is also reflected in our entertainment. For example, Steven Baxter, the Son of God (played by actor Christopher Eccleston) in the 2003 Granada Television telemovie *The Second Coming* sums up the shift in responsibility from God to humanity thus:

You lot are becoming Gods. There's a new master of creation, and it's you! [You've] unravelled DNA and at the same time you're cultivating bacteria strong enough to kill every living thing! Do you think you are ready for that much power? You lot? You lot? You cheeky bastards... . (Shergold & Davies, 2003)

Even given the challenge of accepting total self-responsibility for our own existence, it is only through a paradigmatic shift in our thinking that ultimately—according to Deep Ecologists—the global environment (and with it the human race) will be sustained. The Green Man re-emergence calls on us to be more integrated and healthy and reminds us that we are part of something bigger, grander, greater than our own air-conditioned homes and cars. Green Man's current resurrection as the archetypal Conservator, is a reminder that there are within our reach greener and more harmonious futures for us all.

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