

The Anticipatory Community and The Yoga of Ecology

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Introduction

We are living in an age of deep existential ecological uncertainty. Esteemed scholars, activists, farmers, and fellow advocates across the planet, each in their own way, proclaim that, due to this existential ecological crisis, human civilization is entering into a vital transitional phase in our relationship to the living processes of Mother Earth. Larry

Rasmussen suggests we are entering into the age of the *anthropocene*, in which for the first time in history's known epochs, humanity has become such a "powerful a force of nature so as to alter planetary evolution."¹ Thomas Berry centered much of his own hopeful theology in the potential development of the *ecozoic* era, in which "humans would be present to the Earth in a mutually enhancing matter."² Eco-theologian Sallie McFague, in arguing for a *kenotic* response to our crisis, insists that "we need to look at the full context of where we live if we are to discover how to live well."³ Activist/author/scientist Vandana Shiva warns us that we have now entered into an age in which the colonial impulses of exploitation and appropriation have reached the final frontier of *biopiracy*, the colonization of the substances and processes of biological production and reproduction. Of course, anyone with an ear to hear also encounters the various "doom-and-gloom" scenarios of climate scientists who warn us that we must immediately begin developing powerful and radical technological and political solutions in order to curb harmful carbon emissions. If we fail to implement these solutions, these same scientists, along with a wide spectrum of global policy-makers and enlightened citizens, declare that rising oceans, wildly unpredictable climate patterns, and massive migrations of displaced peoples will destroy the technological, industrial, and cultural foundations of our contemporary civilization. We are faced with the very question of our future presence and survival as individuals, communities, and as a civilization. It is a crisis which largely belies description and comprehension. What many of us are beginning to understand is that we have a responsibility to anticipate what is to come now and next. We have a responsibility to anticipate the shape of our own individual lives, the work of our communities, and the foundations of our civilization. We need to discover a way forward that is ecologically-sound in

1 "Larry Rasmussen on Creation Justice", <http://theunionforum.org/2013/11/21/larry-rasmussen-on-creation-justice/>

2 Thomas Berry, *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 93

3 Sallie McFague, *Blessed Are The Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 17

relation to the processes and presence of our planet. This anticipation is a visceral, urgent, and formidable call to begin now what is to come, with what needs to be.

The creation of the *anticipatory community* is firmly based in the discernment of the ecological and economical realities that underlie all of our relations to each other as individuals and as species. The creation of the *anticipatory community* also lies in the recreation and rediscovery of sources of physical and metaphysical wisdom which have been obscured but not completely lost within the strange experiment of the technological-industrial age. Anticipation is an art, especially in the ecological and economical sense, of looking forwards by looking backwards. It is not, at least in my eyes, a call to Luddite sensibilities, nor is it a romantic yearning for a simpler time before smartphones, superhighways, and supermarkets. Actual and relevant anticipation comes from an understanding that we live in a globalized world, and barring the possibility of global catastrophe, we will remain connected as such technologically and culturally. From this understanding, this anticipation insists on re-defining the mechanisms of our sustenance and well-being in the direction of an ecologically-sound localization of resource production and consumption, lessening our carbon footprint. This anticipation insists on deconstructing the tragic pillars of privilege which have entrapped our sense of community and our model of civilization in worship of profit, debt, competition, and commodification, poisoning our well-being and carrying us closer and closer to ecological apocalypse. The communities which have wrapped their praxis in this anticipation are providing diverse models and paths of transition looking forward and looking back. They are doing, as James Baldwin suggests, their *first works over*. Rasmussen, in his most recent eco-theological creation *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*, quotes Baldwin, who tells us: "Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself but

know whence you came."⁴

Thesis statement: The Anticipatory Community and the Yoga of Ecology

The *anticipatory community* focuses this broad and manifold conception of anticipation into rubrics of specific identities, practices, and frameworks, which each have their own inherent integrity and individuality, but which also all share the same fundamental concern of recreating a more ecologically-sound relation between humanity and the rest of the planet. My essential argument in this thesis is that the *anticipatory community* must have a metaphysical foundation, a foundation I define as the *yoga of ecology*. The *yoga of ecology* posits a correspondence of mutual creativity and reinforcement between transcendental, metaphysical values and practices and ecologically-sound physical values and practices. Linking, or yoking oneself, to metaphysical reality inherently creates ecologically-sound physical models of identity, community, and civilization. Ecologically-sound values and practices also allow one to move towards relation and connection with metaphysical reality. What is discovered is that the metaphysical permeates the physical, that the physical itself can be a metaphysical sacrament. Without this foundation and understanding of the *yoga of ecology* the *anticipatory community* will not be able to fulfill its potential in the face of internal obstacles of ego and selfishness and external obstacles of privilege and exploitation.

This thesis will explore the question of what defines and constitutes the *anticipatory community* in relation to the *yoga of ecology* through two primary ingredients. The first ingredient we will explore is the existential ingredient. We will examine the questions of why

⁴ Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 44

and how the internal pollution of our human nature creates the systematic pollution which defies anticipation, and also how the inner potential of our human nature creates the fierce potential to achieve anticipation. We will explore this question via rubrics considering the nature of the alienated ego from the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr along with voices in comparative concert and contrast and to Niebuhr from Hindu and other indigenous traditions of defiance against privilege and the macrocosmic constructs of turbo-capitalism. Secondly, we will connect our understanding of the existential ingredient of the *anticipatory community* and dive deeper into the spiritual ingredient of the *anticipatory community*, through the lens of the *yoga of the ecology*. This final section will frame this conception of the *yoga of ecology* through the value of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotion to the personal representation of the Divine Goddess/God, primarily represented here through the lens of the Gaudiya Vaisnava⁵ tradition, as a foundation of being and expression which inherently creates ecologically-sound values and practices. As much as possible within the rubric of this thesis, theological comparisons and dialogue between traditions will be brought to light to show how this conception of the *yoga of ecology* can be translated and applied across the spectrum of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. This final section will accentuate and unpack the fundamental argument of this thesis, that the *anticipatory community* must have a spiritual foundation in order for it to shape and offer an effectual response to our existential ecological crisis.

5 Colloquially known as the “Hare Krishnas”, the Gaudiya Vaisnava teachings and culture were brought to the Western world in 1965 by renowned Vedic scholar/teacher A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who established a global Vaisnava society during his missionary work up until his passing in 1977. The Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition connects back to previous Vaisnava traditions going back thousands of years to the roots of Vedic spiritual culture. The Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition centered around the devotional (*bhakti*) worship of Vishnu/Krishna as the Supreme Divine Person, which came of out of the Gauda region in Bengal in the 16th Century. I have been an active practitioner of the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition, having converted from Catholicism, for the last seven years.

New tools/Old tools: The Framework of Anticipation and the Anticipatory Community

At its heart, the concept of anticipation, and the *anticipatory community* where it is found, is providing the impetus of progressive evolution towards ecologically-sound models of identity, community, and civilization. The *anticipatory community* is a model of communal formation which provides a bridge away from dependence on the unsustainable economic foundations of fossil-fuel resources for sustenance and survival. The *anticipatory community* has a diversity of forms, ranging from organic and biodynamic farms, intentional communities like ashrams, convents, and temples, religious institutions such as seminaries, rural and urban churches, new monastic communities, and secular conceptions such as Transition Towns. The *anticipatory community* is a collective of like-minded and like-hearted individuals who aspire for harmonious relations with the ecology that surrounds us and sustains us. The *anticipatory community's* production of foodstuffs, disposal of waste, production of energy, socio-economic organization, and relations with other communities are based on models which aspire to be sustainable, renewable, and based on just and equitable distribution of resources. As much as possible, the *anticipatory community* aims to create economic frameworks which move beyond exploitative principles of debt and competition which cripple the integrity of social relations and cooperation that are essential to create, preserve, and make thriving any sense of community. The *anticipatory community* understands the need for radical changes in the spirit of Audre Lorde, in that “the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.” The living concept of anticipation cannot rely on the same socio-economic models of depersonalization, prejudice, privilege, and commodification which has created our existential ecological crisis in the first place. Anticipation strives to deconstruct these models

of exploitation in order to redefine and recreate how we live together in relation to ourselves, to each other, and to our planet.

Those who anticipate have a working belief that our current models of identity, community, and civilization are not sustainable and that we must recreate these models. The same methodologies, the same tools, which created this unsustainable situation must be set aside for new/old tools. At the same time the *anticipatory community* is placed firmly within a globalized framework, in which communications across cultural and geographical boundaries will still be essential, permitted, and preferred, especially to prevent mass tribalism to erupt in the wake of local and global change. Those who anticipate are striving to discover the best facets of globalization, such as the egalitarian nature of web-based communication and expression which breaks down social, racial, gender, sexual, and other cultural boundaries, while giving up the worst facets of globalization which exploit the marginalized and their resources in the name of corporate profit. The *anticipatory community* is also a community of adaptation, with the understanding that the vast scope of our existential ecological crisis has already reached a point where many effects of climate change cannot be reversed, and that essential ecological and sociological changes to the structures of our communities and our civilization can no longer be wholly prevented. As Bill McKibben posits, the planet that we live on now is different from the planet that our parents and grandparents lived on. Those who anticipate understand this reality and also understand that we have an obligation and responsibility to protect and care for those who are marginalized, vulnerable, and unable to protect themselves from being on the front lines of the powerful and unpredictable effects of climate change. Finally the core of the concept of anticipation and of the *anticipatory community* is based on a spiritual foundation of practice, theology, and belief (faith). Spiritual practices which are done individually and shared collectively create a communal

determination to work through the issues of exploitation and selfishness which naturally arise from our human nature when we attempt to commune with each other. The foundation of this theology, the *yoga of ecology*, forms, reforms, and provides a progressive, non-reductionist platform of knowledge to inform the sacred practice within the community. The element of belief (faith) gives the community a connection to the transcendent element of the Divine which calls and charges the community to confront and transcend any limitations to the potential of its anticipation.

First Works Over: The Substance of Anticipation

The *anticipatory community* is an integral part of what Thomas Berry describes as the Great Work. The Great Work is what humanity must undertake in order to correct the vast imbalances of our anthropocentric influence which threatens the existence and well-being of every living being on the Earth. Berry's conception of the Great Work demands of us to go beyond our objectification of the natural life processes of the Earth. Instead we must see our relation to the Earth as one of mutuality and reverence. In his essay "Religion in the Ecozoic Era", Berry presents this model of awareness that is one of the fundamental cornerstones of the art and practice of anticipation. He writes that "to recover such a situation where humans would be present to the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner, I believe we must return to a sense of intimacy with the Earth akin to that experienced by many indigenous peoples of earlier times...Articulating this story fully would be the supreme achievement of modern intelligence. Once we appreciate this trans-material dimension of the universe, we will be able to understand that the human story is inseparable from the universe story...Through this

sharing in a common story, we come to recognize our total intimacy with the entire natural world. An impenetrable psychic barrier is removed. We are no longer alienated objects but communing subjects...In this manner, we circumvent the problem of anthropocentrism, which is at the center of the devastation we are experiencing. We recognize that in every aspect of our being, we are a subsystem of the universe system. More immediately, we are a subsystem of the Earth system.”⁶ The art and practice of anticipation is a triumph over this diabolical presence of alienation. This alienation is both physical and metaphysical, and true and effective anticipation responds on both levels of reality and to the inherent connection between them. This response is the restoration of intimacy on both the physical and metaphysical level, with our own personal sense of identity, with each other as fellow living beings in our communities on the Earth, and with the Earth herself as the great living being who sustains us by her living processes. This intimacy is the singing, shouting, and testifying through embrace of ourselves, of each other, and of the Earth that James Baldwin exhorts as the essential practice of doing our *first works over*.

In his book *The Great Work*, Berry writes that “intimacy with the planet in its wonder and beauty and the full depth of its meaning is what enables an integral human relationship with the planet to function. It is the only possibility for humans to attain their true flourishing while honoring the other modes of earthly being. The fulfillment of the Earth community is to be caught up in the grandeur of existence itself and in admiration of those mysterious powers whence all this has emerged. Nourishment of both the outer body and the inner spirit will be achieved in intimate association with each other or not at all. That we can now understand and work toward this fulfillment is the challenging future that opens up before us in these early-years of the twenty-first century.”⁷ Our Great Work, the flourishing of our being to its

⁶ Thomas Berry, *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, 94

⁷ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way Into The Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), xi

fullest potentials, means that we must attempt to transcend the oppressive elements of our unavoidable anthropocentrism, as we understand with intelligence and compassion how we must act in a new age and new sense of civilization forever altered by this anthropocentric influence.

Turning in Harmony: The Praxis of Anticipation

The praxis of anticipation centers around the combination of ecologically-sound methods of lifestyle, behavior, and habit, and the sacred metaphysical conceptions which define and give substance to these methods. Wendell Berry insists that the “little” economy of our lifestyles and our communities must turn in tandem and harmony with the Great Economy of sacred principles. In his essay “Two Economies”, he writes that “when we make our economy a little wheel turning in opposition to what we call 'nature', then we set up competitiveness as the ruling principle in our explanation of reality and in our understanding of economy...competitiveness, as a ruling principle and a virtue, imposes a logic that is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to control...it explains why it is so difficult for us to draw the line between 'free enterprise' and crime.”⁸ While I do not want to make the assertion that competitiveness is in and of itself unethical, when it is cut and established according to free-market principles of profit and exploitation of resources, when it is permeated with the worst of the selfish instincts of human ego and nature, such as greed and hatred, it becomes the very root cause of our contemporary alienation and of our existential ecological crisis. This alienation then becomes manifest in the macrocosmic perversion of the Great Economy, the *turbo-capitalism* that Rob Nixon describes in *Slow Violence: The Environmentalism of the*

⁸ Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 72

Poor. It is only when the wheel of our personal and communal economics turn in conjunction with the wheel of the Great Economy that we can begin to overcome the internal and external alienation created by *turbo-capitalism*. Berry writes that when “we see ourselves as living within the Great Economy, under the necessity of making our little human economy within it, according to its own terms, the smaller wheel turning in sympathy with the greater, receiving its being and its motion from it, then we see that the traditional virtues are necessary and are practically justifiable...We see that we cannot afford maximum profit or power with minimum responsibility because, in the Great Economy, the loser's losses finally afflict the winner. Now the ideal must be '*the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption*', which both defines and requires neighborly love. Competitiveness cannot be the ruling principle, for the Great Economy is not a 'side' that we can join nor are there such 'sides' within it. Thus, it is not the 'sum of its parts' but a *membership* of parts inextricably joined to each other, indebted to each other, receiving significance and worth from each other and from the whole. One is obliged to consider 'the lilies of the field' not because they are lilies or because they are exemplary, but because they are fellow members and because, as fellow members, we and the lilies are in certain critical ways alike.”⁹ If the pragmatic nature of anticipation could be boiled down to a succinct definition, it would be “*the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption.*” To insist on the minimum of consumption as the root grounding principle which creates the maximum of well-being is a highly revolutionary declaration in our *turbo-capitalist* age. For many people, especially people of economic privilege, it is a counter-intuitive statement due to their own sociological and psychological conditioning, a conditioning that insists that the commodified object is the root source of pleasure, self-esteem, and identity. To undo this conditioning, we must look back to indigenous sources of physical and

9 Ibid, 72-73

metaphysical wisdom which remind us that it is our relationship to each other, in love and mutuality, in compassion and the giving of self, which defines our well-being and gives to us our most sacred sense of understanding. The most profound desire of those who are anticipators is to recover this sense of sacred relationship which can cure our deepest alienation. This can only be done when the small but always significant wheel of our lives turn in conjunction with the great wheel of the Great Economy.

The Feminine Principle: The Liberation of Anticipation

Those who anticipate are also those who understand that the issue of privilege, whether it is based in gender, race, class, or sexuality, has no place in the art and practice of anticipation. One of the most important responsibilities of the anticipator is to break down the walls of privilege that are at the heart of the engine of exploitation which has created our existential ecological crisis. Those who identify as *eco-feminist* are at the vanguard in this deconstruction of privilege and in the reconstruction of identity, community, and civilization based on the mutuality of love in which the content of one's character is the primary variable of relation. The work and thought of Vandana Shiva has been most inspiring for my own understanding of how eco-feminism develops the most thoroughgoing understanding of anticipation. Shiva's activism has centered around the recovery of the *feminine principle* as essential to the recovery of our humanity and the recovery of our connection to our ecological integrity. She writes that “the feminine principle becomes an oppositional category of non-violent ways of conceiving the world, and of acting in it to sustain all life by maintaining the interconnectedness and diversity of nature. It allows an ecological transition from violence to

non-violence, from destruction to creativity, from anti-life to life-giving processes, from uniformity to diversity and from fragmentation and reductionism to holism and complexity.”¹⁰ At the core of Shiva's contribution to anticipation is her crusade against the reductionist, materialist paradigms of colonialism and the patriarchy which is its main patron. The fervor of her activism lies in the recovery of cultural and ecological diversity which is one of the integral substances of anticipation. Shiva describes the *feminine principle*, from the rubric of her Hindu cultural traditions, as *prakrti*, or the divine feminine manifestation of the primordial energy of the universe. *Prakrti*, working in conjunction with the masculine principle known as *purusa*, creates all manifest and un-manifest substances and energies which constitute our physical reality. The cosmology that Shiva presents reminds us that the masculine and feminine energies must depend on each other for creation to work the way it is supposed to work. Still, for Shiva, it is necessary, in response to the permeation of systematic patriarchy, to highlight the efficacy of the *feminine principle* as something to be remembered and recovered, a missing and obscured puzzle piece to the recovery of our sense of identity, community, and civilization that is needed for anticipation to truly occur. The active presence of *prakrti* as represented by women, from their hands, minds, and hearts, in different cultural settings across the planet, provides the living substance of anticipation. Shiva writes that “Maria Mies has called women's work in producing sustenance the *production of life* and views it as a truly productive relationship to nature, because 'women not only collected and consumed what they grew in nature but they *made things grow*.’”¹¹ Shiva's insistence on the deep organic intellectual prowess of indigenous women in non-reductionist cultural settings helps us to understand that their wisdom is an essential ingredient of anticipation. She writes that

“women of the Third World have been dispossessed of their base for sustenance, but not of

10 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1989), 14

11 Ibid, 42-43

their minds, and in their uncolonized minds are conserved the oppositional categories that make the sustenance of life possible for all. The producers of life alone can be its real protectors. Women embedded in nature, producing life in nature, are therefore taking the initiative in the recovery of nature.”¹² Finally from Shiva we can understand that the deconstruction of privilege in the art and practice of anticipation should never lead to any kind of essentialist reconstruction in response. The deconstruction of privilege must always lead to unity-in-diversity. Shiva writes that “there is no limiting relationship between feminist values and being a woman. In this non-gender based philosophy the feminine principle is not exclusively embodied in women, but is the principle of activity and creativity in nature, women, and men. One cannot really distinguish the masculine from the feminine, person from nature, *purusa* from *prakrti*. Though distinct, they remain inseparable in dialectical unity, as two aspects of one being. The recovery of the feminine principle is thus associated with the non-patriarchal, non-gendered category of creative non-violence, or 'creative power in peaceful form...’”¹³

The roots of our existential ecological crisis are deeply connected to all of the roots of prejudice and discrimination that exist in our civilization. Anticipation is not just an attempt at restoration of our external ecology. It is also an attempt at restoration of our internal ecology. It is an attempt to confront, in our personal and collective realities, all unnecessary dualisms which inherently create a sense of *othering*. Eco-feminist voices are at the vanguard of attempting to disable this *othering* so that we can recreate, redefine, and restore our connection to each other and to the planet. Eco-feminists recognize that the restoration of our external ecology is all but impossible without a deep deconstruction and reconstruction of our internal ecology. As Rosemary Radford Reuther writes: “We need a foundation for ethical

¹² Ibid, 47

¹³ Ibid, 52

theory that is not based on a dualistic negation of the 'other', whether woman or animal or body, pagans, gentiles or barbarians...as the bearers of our 'shadow'...Rather, evil lives in 'wrong relationship.' All beings live in community, both with members of their own species and with others for which they depend on food, breath, materials for construction, and affective feedback. Yet there is a tendency in the life drive itself in each species to maximize its own existence and hence to proliferate in a cancerous way and destroy its own biotic support...Eventually the whole system collapses...The difference today is that the system of exploitation is global, and the possibility of destruction correspondingly global."¹⁴ Reuther and Shiva are calling us back to indigenous, organic, and original sources of wisdom which have not been destroyed in the onslaught of the *turbo-capitalist* age. These sources of wisdom are rooted in the active recognition of the metaphysical potency of compassion, humility, and mutuality. Because of this, they cannot be completely destroyed by the physical pollution of our external ecology and the psychological pollution of our internal ecology. Reuther adds that "civilizations have not only created domination and cultures of deceit that justified domination. They have also created critical cultures designed to unmask deceit and spiritualities that awakened compassion for others, thus rebuilding culturally the balances of self-limitation and respect for the lives of others that make for good community. We inherit in our Christian traditions (as do others in their traditions) both cultures of domination and deceit and cultures of critique and compassion. We need to build on and develop the second culture to unmask and check the power of the first culture."¹⁵

14 Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 256-258

15 Ibid, 258

The Existential Ingredient of Anticipation: Introduction

The grand mystery of the living human being, in our physical, mental, and metaphysical aspects, is the ingredient in the stew of anticipation which provides both the greatest frustration and the greatest inspiration. Ecology is understood to be, in the colloquial sense, a conceptual framework which defines the relationship between the living processes of the Earth and the living beings who reside under the shelter of her living processes. In the internal, existential sense we can understand and use the framework of ecology to refer to the complex combination of the physical, mental, and metaphysical networks of impressions and conceptions which make up our sense of individual identity, or our ego. Our communal relations as living beings within the micro and macrocosmic structures of the planet's life systems is formed and defined in the cauldron of our inner ecology. It is within the imbalances of our human nature that the external ecological imbalances in our models of community and civilization are created and unleashed. *If we are polluted within, this will naturally manifest as pollution in our external environment.* Rasmussen writes, of one particular example of a specific potentiality of corruption within our human nature, that “nothing whatsoever can happen apart from power. Power is the energy inherent in being itself, the animation of every creature, and the means of construction as well as destruction. Power forms, reforms, and deforms...Dominating power, power 'over', isolates its wielder from others and fractures mutuality, the only kind of rationality that can achieve the common good. Or, to say it differently, the power of the dominating ego isolates the other from love as the way all are bound together in Christ through the interdependence inherent in creation itself.”¹⁶ What our ego wants, what it thinks it needs, and what it actually needs are often wholly different things,

¹⁶ Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*, 313

and the results of this miscommunication and misunderstanding are devastating for the individual being and for the being of the Earth herself.

This existential exploration of human nature in relation to anticipation and the *anticipatory community* must point us towards an urgency that makes us genuinely care for our internal and external ecology, and the essential relation between these two facets of our existence. The eminent Brazilian eco-liberation theologian Leonardo Boff asks “from where are we to derive this new ethos for our civilization? It must emerge from the innermost part of human nature...If it is not born out of the very kernel of the human being, it will not possess sufficient sap to sustain the new blossoming of human beings, and as such it will not bear vigorous fruits for prosperity. We all must drink out of the same fountain. We must hear our inner nature. We must consult our true heart. Our drinking from the same fountain will overcome the halting feeling of hopelessness and bitter resignation...In other words, drinking from the same fountain will be the basis of a new religious feeling. It will create a new ethical and moral direction. It will build a new rationality that is instrumental, emotional and spiritual, a new rationality that will transform the sciences, technology and research into medicine for the Earth and for humanity.”¹⁷ In order to begin the awesome task of defining this new ethic and rediscovering this new (and original) understanding of our nature, we must look deeply within ourselves, with contrition, humility, determination and defiance, towards all obstacles in the way of the restoration of our inner ecological integrity.

¹⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Essential Care: An Ethics of Human Nature* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 13

Internal Ecology as Obstacle of Anticipation: A Comparative Dialogue Between Reinhold Niebuhr and Gaudiya Vaisnava theology

It is thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr who insist that theology, and by extension eco-theology, must begin with a confrontation with our human nature. This confrontation is first and foremost a confrontation with the obstacles our human nature place in the way of truly understanding the proper relationship between our physical and metaphysical identity. This confrontation is the most basic and fundamental step towards community-building, and once a community is in the process of formation and visioning as to what it would like to be, this confrontation must perpetually continue. The existential theology and ontological anthropology of Reinhold Niebuhr provides a compelling lens for us to enter into the existential ingredient of the *anticipatory community* and the *yoga of ecology*. What I would like to do here is a bit unique in two facets. First of all, I want to bind some of Niebuhr's primary conclusions on the nature and destiny of human beings and the nature of the ego to eco-theological concerns. Niebuhr is far from the first thinker one goes to when attempting to define the frameworks of eco-theology, but I want to argue that his meditations on human nature are very potent tools which we can use to deconstruct why our nature and ego can emanate so many polluting influences. Niebuhr's meditations on nature and ego can be taken as all-inclusive ontological conclusions that transcend the different dividing lines of social location and psycho-physical identity, but I will primarily examine his conclusions from their application upon peoples of sociological, economic, and cultural privilege.

The second unique facet I want to apply to Niebuhr's thought is a comparative theological dialogue with Gaudiya Vaisnava theological conceptions of the false ego, or the

ahankara as translated into Sanskrit. One of the fundamental teachings of the classical Hindu/Vedic scripture the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is one of the primary texts of the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition, is that our existential identity must be fundamentally understood by our existence as eternal individual spirit soul. Our true identity as spirit soul is what animates, through the presence of personality and consciousness, the temporary material bodies we inhabit lifetime after lifetime through the process of reincarnation. When we identify ourselves as eternal spirit soul, we are said to be in proper understanding of the relationship between our physical and metaphysical reality. It is when we instead primarily identify as whatever temporary body we currently inhabit that it is said we are polluted by a sense of false ego, or *ahankara*. When we are entrapped in the conception of the *ahankara* we are compelled to forget our right identity and our right relation to Goddess/God and to all other living beings and life processes. Contemporary Vaisnava scholar/teacher A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, in his translation on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, explains the reality of the *ahankara*. He writes that “the person in material consciousness is convinced by false ego that he is the doer of everything. He does not know that the mechanism of the body is produced by material nature, which works under the supervision of the Supreme Lord. The person in false ego takes all credit for doing everything independently, and that is the symptom of his nescience...The ignorant man forgets that the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Krishna) is known as Hṛṣīkeśa, or the master of the senses of the material body, for due to his long misuse of the senses...he is factually bewildered by the false ego, which makes him forget his eternal relationship with Kṛiṣṇa.”¹⁸ This false conception of identity and the factual bewilderment that results, the pollution of our internal ecology which invariably leads on to the pollution of our external ecology, echoes the primary concerns and conclusions of Niebuhr's

18 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is (Revised Edition)*, (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1997), Chapter 3, Verse 27

explorations of human nature and ego. The comparative threads that run between Niebuhr's conceptions of human nature and ego and the Vaisnava conception of the *ahankara* create a necessary and integral perspective on the art and practice of anticipation.

Existential Limitation and Liberation for the Sake of Anticipation

Niebuhr's theological and anthropological understanding of human nature centers around his reasoning that the roots of our inner pollution (sin) results from the anxiety of the paradox of our conditioned sense of self in this world. This anxiety is rooted in our dependency on the temporary and finite contingencies of our external ecology in relation to the infinite and eternal sense of being that permeates and that is the essence of our internal ecology. We are constantly in confrontation with our limitations as eternal beings in a temporary world. This anxiety compels us to attempt to overcome our limitations by making the temporary conditions we encounter in this world infinite or eternal. These anxious attempts to make the finite infinite are the portals by which the pollution of our internal ecology becomes manifest in our external ecology. Niebuhr's primary treatise on human nature and ego, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, is where we find certain elements of his ontological understanding that directly connects to the understanding of how we pollute and exploit our internal and external ecology. Niebuhr writes that "the pride of power is more obviously prompted by the sense of insecurity. It is the sin of those, who knowing themselves to be insecure, seek sufficient power to guarantee their security, inevitably of course at the expense of other life...Sometimes this lust for power expresses itself in terms of man's conquest of nature, in which the legitimate freedom and mastery of man in the world of nature is corrupted

into a mere exploitation of nature. Man's sense of dependence on nature and his reverent gratitude toward the miracle of nature's perennial abundance is destroyed by his arrogant sense of independence and his greedy effort to overcome the insecurity of nature's rhythms and seasons by garnering her stores with excessive zeal and beyond natural requirements.”¹⁹

Our relation of mutuality with other living beings and other life processes on this planet has been spoiled because we misunderstand the concept of dominion. So many of us understand dominion to be a kind of freedom as a form of mastery based in exploitation rather than the true definition of dominion, which is real and actual freedom based in a relationship of mutuality, care, compassion, and responsibility. When we have a deep and profound sense of our spiritual identity, we can truly begin to imagine and anticipate a different way of being on and for the Earth. We no longer carry the pollution of undue anxiety because we understand, as Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, that we should not be attached to the fruits of our actions, knowing that they do not belong to us solely for our selfish benefit. In the *Sri Isopanisad*, a classical text from the Upanisads, Swami Prabhupada translates the opening mantra as such: *“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.”*²⁰ Living within one's quota or allocation given by Goddess/God does not mean that we only just have the bare necessities of survival, but that we have everything we need to live in right relation with ourselves and with all other living entities and life processes. To acknowledge that all the substances of the universe belongs to Goddess/God is not an easy admittance in our turbo-capitalist age, but it is exactly the kind of broader perspective that is indispensable to the art and practice of anticipation. In his commentary to the first

19 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953) 190-191

20 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans, *Sri Isopanisad* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1985), Mantra 1

mantra of the *Isopanisad*, Swami Prabhupada writes that “one should therefore be intelligent enough to know that except for the Lord no one is a proprietor of anything. One should accept only those things that are set aside by the Lord as his quota. The cow, for instance, gives milk, but she does not drink that milk: she eats grass and straw, and her milk is designated as food for human beings. Such is the arrangement of the Lord. Thus we should be satisfied with those things He has kindly set aside for us, and we should always consider to whom those things we possess actually belong...The root of sin is deliberate disobedience of the laws of nature through disregarding the proprietorship of the Lord.”²¹ Anticipation is thus the ability to recognize and live within the limitations of our temporary and finite existence in this world. This recognition does not lead to nihilism, apathy, or anomie, but should lead instead to humility, compassion, and devotion. Most of all it leads to gratitude for Goddess/God's good graces for our sustenance and the desire to offer the fruits of our labor back to Goddess/God in devotion and love. To acknowledge our deep dependence and gratitude for Goddess/God's embedded presence in both our internal and external ecology is a radical and revolutionary step in the art and practice of anticipation. Niebuhr's further thoughts on the redemption of our human nature directly echo what we have encountered in Vaisnava scriptures about the potency of dependence and devotion to Goddess/God. He writes that “it will be noted that the Christian sentiment of the ideal possibility does not involve self-negation but self-realization. The self is, in other words, not evil by reason of being a particular self...The Christian view of the self is only possible from the standpoint of Christian theism in which God is not merely the x of the unconditioned self or the undifferentiated eternal. God is revealed as loving will; and His will is active in creation, judgment and redemption. The highest self-realization for the self is therefore not the destruction of its particularity but the subjection of its particular will to the

²¹ Ibid.,

universal will...*If man knew, loved and obeyed God as the author and end of his existence, a proper limit would be set for his desires including the natural impulse of survival.*"²² Mutuality with our very own self, and with each other in the formation of *anticipatory community* and an anticipatory civilization, can only be properly accomplished if we are in the mood of mutuality with Goddess/God, when the height of our desires and actions are striving to reach to match the desires of Goddess/God for us and the actions they take to sustain us.

Ecological Alienation as Economical Alienation

This understanding and acceptance of our existential limitations is organically connected to the question of economic limitations, for our existential ecological crisis is also an existential economic crisis. Many peoples across the Earth understand that the free-market *turbo-capitalist* model must be altered in a significant way if we are going to be able to anticipate a more ecologically-sound reality for all living beings on the Earth. Peoples of economic privilege can find it very difficult to imagine radical changes to our economic models. This is where theological and ontological-anthropological perspectives on our human nature from Niebuhr and from the Hindu tradition can act as foundations of proper ecological and economic anticipation for all peoples, but especially for those caught in the trap of the alienation of privilege. As I look forward to expanding on the foundations of this thesis, a deeper consideration of the relationship between the frameworks of ecology and economy clearly needs to be unpacked and established. For now, briefly, as we cannot separate the existential from the economical as we also cannot separate the existential from the ecological, let us examine what a few anticipatory thinkers have to say about the relation of ecology and

²² Ibid., 251-253

economy.

Larry Rasmussen, in *Earth-Honoring Faith*, remarks on how Big Economics, in correlation with Big Politics, “have become proxies for the moral work that traditionally fell to civil society,”²³ leaving us with cultural models in which we participate in “thinking without thanking”²⁴, leaving us alienated from our sacred responsibility as living beings. This alienation, which is one of the primary pumps of the *turbo-capitalist* machine, has broken down the very fabric and spirit of our personal identities and communal bonds. Rasmussen writes further that “with telling insight Tibor Scitovsky calls this 'mature' consumerist economy 'the joyless economy.' While sages have long said that money cannot buy happiness, the additional surprise for affluent societies is that some have actually experienced a decline in social well-being even as consumerism continues to rise...Companionship, that telltale sign of committed relationships, is external to market economics and accumulated goods. It cannot be priced, bought, or sold. To continue, then, to look for happiness and fulfillment in getting, spending, and having is delusional...The primary good that we distribute to one another is membership in some human community.”²⁵ To confront and attempt a deconstruction of the exact pistons of the *turbo-capitalist* machine so that we may understand how to create new economic models is profoundly complex. The popular contemporary image of the octopus wrapping its arms around the Earth, representing the rabid and defiantly uncontrollable onslaught of oligarchical corporate free-market influence and interests, is a powerful representation of how all-encompassing and all-pervasive the religion of the free market is. Anticipation requires bold, courageous, and compassionate thinkers who are not cowed or awed by this apparent omniscience. These thinkers, a few of which we will examine here now

23 Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith*, 175.

24 *Ibid.*, 179

25 *Ibid.*, 165

briefly, understand that the spiritual wisdom that is indigenous to the living being is actually much more powerful than the long but fallible arms of this oligarchical octopus.

The Antidote of Kenosis/Tapas

We have already briefly touched upon the idea of *kenosis*, or self-emptying/self-restraint, presented by Sallie McFague in her most recent publication *Blessed Are The Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*. *Kenosis* is, as McFague professes, an emptying and restraining of one's self so that one may move, in thought and deed, towards connection, towards *yoga*, with God. She writes that our religious and spiritual sensibilities “suggest we try the 'other way'-the way of extravagant generosity, of willed sacrifice for the vulnerable, of recognizing radical interdependence, of self-emptying-since it is no more absurd (in fact, less so) than the selfish, individualistic model of human existence behind market capitalism.”²⁶ This practice of *kenosis* has echoes in the Hindu/Vedic conception and practice of *tapas*, which can also be translated as self-control or self-restraint. This practice of emptying or restraining one's being from what is not truly necessary for one well's being, from aspects of one's lifestyle which fall outside of the Upanisadic understanding of one's quota of sustenance given by Goddess/God, is not to be considered nihilistic, fatalistic, or repressive. To live by this kind of *yogic* practice, for *yoga* can also be defined as a praxis of discipline which enhances one's self-realization and well-being, is truly affirmative. Vaisnava scholar Ranchor Prime instructs that *tapas* is that “which replenishes the soul, your own spiritual environment. You must not only make a sacrifice for nature and give back to society, but you must replenish your own inner environment. If you fast or take a vow of

²⁶ McFague, *Blessed Are The Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*, 137-138

silence, that is *tapas*. Gandhi was silent every Friday. No matter how busy he was or however many important political matters he had to attend to, he had enough time to have a whole day of silence...Meditation is *tapas*. Because of all the things you do in this world there is a tremendous amount of wear and tear of the soul and it has to be replenished. That replenishment can only happen when you are engaged in *tapas*.²⁷ Conditioned and surrounded as we are by the values of maximum consumerism, nevertheless the radical empowerment of *kenosis* and *tapas* remains ever-present within the existential capabilities of our being. The practice of self-restraint in the simplicity of such tasks of riding one's bicycle to work or committing to a Meatless Monday has profound effects which resonate widely and which can create a kind of snowball effect towards a further personal and communal commitment to *kenosis* or *tapas*. We, those of us as peoples of economic privilege, cannot come to understand, imbibe, and embody the kind of urgency we need to respond humanely to our existential ecological crisis unless we have begun the process of self-restraint. To live life fully means to give up this false part of our self which is solely concerned with the temporary fruits and jewels of this world. This is not to say that wealth itself is inherently wrong, but we must understand the true utility and purpose of material wealth, of who it belongs to and who and what it is for. One of the fundamental teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is that "you have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty."²⁸ By renouncing the false part of our identity which is solely attached to the fruits of our efforts for our own exclusively selfish benefit, we can thus enter into anticipation. We can thus begin to live life as it actually is and supposed to be by

27 Ranchor Prime, *Vedic Ecology: Practical Wisdom for Surviving the 21st Century*, (Novato: Mandala Publishing, 2002), 99

28 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is (Revised Edition)*, Chapter 2, Verse 47

losing what is not life. We can begin to understand our ecological and economical relation to all other living beings and to the Earth herself not in the linear mentality of the machine but in the circular mentality of the Wheel of Life.

McFague, quoting Wendell Berry in her meditations on *kenosis*, writes that “at one level, it is as simple as exchanging the metaphor of a road for a wheel, acknowledging that life on planet earth is not linear, but circular, that we do not have a store of energy that is given to each user until it runs out, but an exchange of energy that must circulate and recirculate in all its myriad forms that sustain all the users. Energy is not a 'store' extractable by machinery with no limit: 'Let loose from any moral standard or limit, the machine was also let loose in another way: it replaced the Wheel of Life as the governing cultural metaphor. Life came to be seen as a road, to be traveled as fast as possible, never to return.' The moral order of biological energy consists of production, consumption, and *return*, but the linear pattern disregards this third and crucial step. Hence, creating stores of energy, hoarding at the expense of others, is contrary to the complex, indissoluble patterns of exchange that actually govern energy use on our planet. The users 'die into each other's life and live into each other's death,' and 'this exchange goes on and on, round and round, the Wheel of Life rising out of the soil, descending into it, through the bodies of creatures.'...Berry finds 'restraint' inescapable. 'It is more likely that we will have to live within our limits...or not live at all.'...The sciences and simple farmers are telling us the same things the religions have been saying for centuries: one cannot have life except by losing it.”²⁹ One could say that the heart of anticipation is not the discovery of anything particularly new, but the rediscovery and recreation of our place in the Wheel of Life. This rediscovery and recreation in anticipation can only happen from a grounding and perspective which understand the unifying thread

29 Sallie McFague, *Blessed Are The Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*, 148

underneath it all, of the presence and desires of Goddess/God and our relationship to them. To assert the spiritual element of anticipation, the *yoga of ecology*, can be a keenly controversial assertion in some circles and contexts of the global environmental movement, but this assertion is absolutely necessary if anticipation is to ever reach its potential to guide the inhabitants of this planet through this period of transition. Of course our most challenging task as anticipators is to develop the grace to properly communicate this spiritual insistence without reinforcing prejudices of those who have experienced the abuse of extremist spiritual/religious values. Yet we must have strength in our conviction. An example of this conviction, and of the spiritual and ethical foundations that underlies the ecological and economical foundations of the *anticipatory community* and the *yoga of ecology*, comes from Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr in their epochal work *Toward The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*. They write that “ethicists who do not believe in God sometimes say that what we really ought to do in each situation is what an impartial and omniscient spectator would favor. They often deny that this is what religious people mean by 'God' because it does not correspond to the idolatrous images of 'God' against which they have reacted. But the true God is the omniscient and impartial unifying source of all. What we should really should do in each situation is what will correspond to God's purposes and enrich God's life. People can to some extent live 'as if'. They can make their decisions as if there were such a being while believing that it does not exist. *But to believe that God does exist makes the ethical life more authentic.* Belief heightens sensitivity to aspects of reality that are otherwise neglected. It gives real importance to what happens in the world, especially to the despised...belief elicits committedness and directs commitment...God is everlasting, and future lives are as important to God as present lives. To serve God cannot call for sacrifice of future lives for the sake of

satisfying the extravagant appetites of the present. Believers in God know that the community to which they belong extends through time. One cannot discount a future that will be immediate to God.”³⁰

The Existential Obstacles of Anticipation: Conclusion

Like Reinhold Niebuhr and thinkers in his ilk, we must understand that the viewpoint of our complex history, our conflicted present, and our uncertain future does not have to be, and is not inherently, a tragic viewpoint. Niebuhr and his resonant fellow thinkers understand that we cannot completely stifle the power and potential of the existential human spirit. It is only that we must learn how to harness this spirit. We understand from Niebuhr's thoughts that creation herself was never to be considered inherently evil or flawed. If we are to discover right relation to ourselves and to each other, we must not see the limitations of our identity and our reality as demonic, even if ultimately we are trying to transcend them. To be spiritual beings we must first learn to be human beings living in harmony with all other living beings and life processes of the Earth herself. A final meditation from Niebuhr himself, from Rebekah Miles' critique of Niebuhr's thought *The Bonds of Freedom: Feminist Theology and Christian Realism*. There she quotes a prayer from Niebuhr in which he is at his most eco-theological and most relatable to our concerns. She quotes this prayer from Niebuhr: “We thank you for this good earth and for all the dependable rhythms in this our natural home, which speaks to us of the constance of your love: for the alternations of day and night, of seed time and harvest; for the fruits of the earth and every miracle of abundance by which our life is

³⁰ Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Toward The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 397-398

sustained; for the daily round of our duties and the discipline of our responsibilities; for the rest which come after toil at the end of the day and also at the end of our day of life.”³¹

The Existential Opportunities of Anticipation: The Anticipation of the “Sinned Against”

If, from the Niebuhrian lens, we have made an attempt to understand the nature of ego, the nature of our fallibility or sin, and the necessary contrition and humility that must result, especially in an ecological and economical sense, for those who are privileged, those who are the *sinner*s, how do we understand the same for the “disposable”, for those who have been *sinned against*? Rebekah Miles, in her own critique of the Niebuhrian worldview, has said that demanding contrition from the sinned against is a kind of foolishness. Miles also expresses that pride is not the primary existential corruption of the sinned against as it is for the privileged. For the sinned against this primary existential corruption is the loss of self and identity, the denial of their integrity and of being honored and included as made in the image of Goddess/God. How then do we reconcile visions and practices of anticipation from those moved by contrition in reaction to their privilege with visions and practices of anticipation from those moved by the urgent needs of physical survival and existential reclamation of their identity and integrity? The answer to this question, which I hope this thesis may in some small way hint at, is an answer which will determine so much of our future as a species on this planet. Anticipation must somehow work within the paradox of the contextual, of the highly specific cultural experiences that must be honored and protected, and the overarch of the

³¹ Rebekah L. Miles, *The Bonds of Freedom: Feminist Thought and Christian Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69

broad ecological relation which binds us all to each other. We can only come to understand our relation to this overarching ecological relationship by understanding the nature of our own context and how it relates to the nature of contexts outside our existential location. We can only step into these other locations and contexts by understanding the nature of our own location and context. This requires, for the privileged, the courage to understand their place on the spectrum of the sinned and the sinned against.

An entire lifetime of study and experience could be spent in immersion with the anticipation of the *resource rebels* described by Rob Nixon, who “have mobilized repeatedly against memory loss, refusing to see their long-term livelihoods abstracted into oblivion, be it through state violence, transnational corporate rapacity, or some combination of the two. The resource rebels who rise up (or dig in for the long haul) express ambitions that may be difficult to achieve but, in the scheme of things, are typically not grand: some shelter from the uncertainties of hunger; some basic honoring of established patterns of agroforestry, fishing, hunting, planting, and harvesting; access to clean water; some prospects for their children, some respect for the cultural (and therefore environmental) presence of the guiding dead.”³² Vandana Shiva, speaking with and for women of the 2/3 world, writes that “those facing the biggest threat offer the best promise for survival because they have two kinds of knowledge that are not accessible to dominant and privileged groups. First, they have the knowledge of what it means to be victims of progress, to be the ones who bear the costs and burdens. Second, they have the holistic and ecological knowledge of what the production and protection of life is all about...Women of the Third World have been dispossessed of their base for sustenance, but not of their minds, and in their uncolonized minds are conserved the oppositional categories that make the sustenance of life possible for all. *The producers of life*

32 Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011) 41

alone can be its real protectors. Women embedded in nature, producing life in nature, are therefore taking the initiative in the recovery nature.³³ The accusatory yet compassionate gaze of these women and their fellow *resource rebels*, a gaze which in its sharpness reveals the alienation of the privileged and calls for the embrace of mutuality, reveals how far we have fallen. We have fallen far enough to have lost the value of protecting those who are the producers and holders of the sustenance of life, and because of this, we find ourselves in a existential crisis where the questions of how we will produce and protect our life today and going forward is terrifyingly uncertain.

Anticipation as Recreation of Nurture

These *resource rebels* hold within them, naturally and in an unforced sense which is so difficult for those conditioned by the consumerist mentality, the practice of *kenosis*. The ability to understand the practical limitations of one's lifestyle and resources, and still be able to live with a sense of abundance and well-being, is the gift of the *feminine principle* we encountered previously in the thought of Vandana Shiva. This rediscovery and keeping of the *feminine principle* at the heart of anticipation can guide us to shape our communities by the standard of the nurturer. The standard of the nurturer comes from our ability to *care*. Wendell Berry, in his essay "The Unsettling of America", contrasts this model of care with the model of exploitation. He writes that "I conceive a strip-miner to be a model exploiter, and as a model nurturer I take the old-fashioned idea or ideal of a farmer. The exploiter is a specialist, an expert; the nurturer is not. *The standard of the exploiter is efficiency; the standard of the nurturer is care...*Whereas the exploiter asks of a piece of land how much and how quickly it can be

33 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*, 46-47

made to produce, the nurturer asks a question that is much more complex and difficult: What is its carrying capacity? (That is: How much can be taken from it without diminishing it? What can it produce dependably for an indefinite time?)...The competence of the exploiter is in organization; that of the nurturer is in order—a human order, that is accommodates itself both to other order and to mystery.”³⁴ We should understand, and not try to naively romanticize or avoid, the fact that creation is full of resources that we need for our own physical survival. The use of these resources will come at the expense of the life of others, for that is the natural cycle of the Earth. One who lives by the standard of exploitation will not understand or dare to venerate this process, this Wheel of Life, this *yoga of ecology*, this cycle of production, consumption, and return, this way in which “we die into each other's life and live into each other's death” as Berry has so eloquently put. One who lives by the standard of nurture and care understands how closely life and death intersect to undergird the processes of existential, ecological, and economical harmony. This embrace of the perpetual standard of the nurturer echoes the Upanisadic and Niebuhrian understanding of living well and whole within our limitations. It also echoes Hindu/Vedic ideas of reincarnation, in that actions we partake of in this life not only shape the nature of our present and future existence, but also shape the present and future existence of all living beings and life processes we live in ecological relation to. There are also echoes of understanding a truer and more expansive understanding of the ideal and practice of *ahimsa*, or non-violence. Hindu/Vedic scholars and teachers such as Swami Prabhupada acknowledge that total non-violence in our physical sphere is not possible. They define *ahimsa* as ultimately refraining from harm of the spiritual integrity of another living being. The nature of the physical world is that one living entity can be food for another, but this giving of one's physical self for the sustenance of another can be

34 Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 8

the living being's *dharma*, or duty, in this world. Their metaphysical essence as spirit soul is not harmed by such *dharma*, and the evolution of the spirit soul towards higher and higher life forms is not interrupted when the natural cycle of give-and-take is respected. The standard of the exploiter objectifies other living beings because he has no true understanding of his own metaphysical essence as internally related to Goddess/God. Without this understanding one objectifies one's self and therefore cannot help to objectify others. The standard of the nurturer, the mentality of *care*, always understands the integrity, the subject-hood and the personality of another living entity. They understand with intimacy, perspective, and right relation the context and essence of every living entity they encounter and are related to. Leonardo Boff describes this as the way of *being-in-the-world*. He writes that “to take care of things implies having intimacy, feeling these things inside, welcoming and sheltering them, and giving these things rest and peace. To take care is to enter into synchronicity with them; it is to listen to their rhythm and tune oneself into this rhythm...Centre stage is no longer occupied by logos rationality; it is rather occupied by pathos sentiment. This way of being-in-the-world, in the form of care, allows the human being to live the fundamental experience of value, of that which has importance and fundamentally counts...From this substantive value emerges the dimensions of otherness, of respect, of sacredness, of reciprocity and of complementarity. We all feel ourselves connected and re-connected to each other, forming an organic and unique whole that is diverse and always inclusive. This whole has an ultimate link that re-connects, supports and animates everything...This Mystery does not cause fear; it fascinates and attracts like a sun. It lets itself be experienced as a great welcoming Womb that fulfills us completely. It is also called God.”³⁵

The values of care and nurturing provide yet another progressive, *yogic* element in the

35 Leonardo Boff, *Essential Care: An Ethics of Human Nature*, 63-64

art and our practice of anticipation. The standard of the nurturer is what reveals the deep opportunities and capabilities of our human nature and inner spirit which can only be put into praxis when the obstacles also inherent in our nature are revealed and confronted. Care and nurturing must be understood as values of living and being which are eternally more powerful than greed and selfishness, and as capable of shaping a model of civilization as any *turbo-capitalist* set of machinations.

The Existential Opportunities of Anticipation: Conclusion

Anticipation is ecological not just because it is concerned with “green” living. The process of anticipation does not primarily belong environmental activists or eco-theologians. It is not even exclusively a human concern or issue. Anticipation is ecological in the sense that ecology means the very nature of *all* of our relations. Discrimination, prejudice, and injustice of any kind must be seen as an ecological concern, for the mentality of the objectification of the other is a direct and paramount cause for the objectification of the Earth herself.

Anticipation therefore implies radical political action, radical cultural de-construction and reconstruction, and radical economic critique. I understand that as I develop my calling and career in active participation and study of the *anticipatory community*, I must also actively participate in the radical cultural and economic critiques that anticipation implies, even outside of the primarily environmental or “green” or spheres. I am challenged by the thoughts of one of my dearest professors, James Cone, in his essay “Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?” Cone writes that “what is absent from much of the talk about the environment in First World countries is a truly radical critique of the culture most responsible for the ecological crisis. This

is especially true among white ethicists and theologians in the United States. In most of the essays and books I have read, there is hardly a hint that perhaps whites could learn something of how we got into this ecological mess from those who have been the victims of white world supremacy. White ethicists and theologians sometimes refer to the disproportionate impact of hazardous waste on blacks and other people of color in the United States and Third World, and even cite an author to two, here and there throughout the development of their discourse on ecology. They often include a token black or Indian in anthologies on eco-theology, eco-justice, and eco-feminism. It is 'politically correct' to demonstrate a knowledge of and concern for people of color in progressive theological circles. But people of color are not treated *seriously*, that is, as if they have something *essential* to contribute to the conversation. Environmental justice concerns of poor people of color hardly ever merit serious attention, not to mention organized resistance. How can we create a genuinely mutual ecological dialogue between whites and people of color if one party acts as if they have all the power and knowledge?"³⁶ This is a critique I take sharply and personally. Much of my own understanding of our ecological relationships is shaped by my own conscious and unconscious preferences and assumptions, some of which are in line with values of nurture and mutuality, but many of which remain blind spots which stifle my commitment and urgency in relation to anticipation. Anticipation, for me, can never be a mere academic or theological enterprise. It must be a process of getting my hands dirty by becoming more learned and capable in the agricultural arts of care and cultivation of the land, which become more necessary to learn as we face the unsustainable nature of our systems of food production and distribution, but also in the funk, stink, and mud of serving the various movements of justice for all living beings that is at the heart and core of anticipation. There is

36 James H. Cone, "Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?", *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation 1968-1998* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 142-143

much I need to learn, from people more joyful and committed, about the right kind of consciousness to become an anticipator. This is a consciousness which understands and is deeply embedded in both the sorrow necessary to be urgent and the hope, faith, and happiness needed to make that urgency innovative and enlightening. A final word on this existential exploration comes in this vein from Jacqueline Bussie's remarkable volume *The Laughter of the Oppressed*. She gives voice to the hope that comes from existential crisis and the courage we need within us to face the new sense of being we must answer to together. She writes that "a theology of laughter reminds us that for every testimony to the power of evil, we must in the same breath testify to the power of resistance in the face of that evil. Such a reading of history transforms history into a place of hope...the only thing as incredible as the atrocities committed by human beings...are the selfless, kenotic acts of resistance committed by human beings on behalf of one another. Such is the mystery of human life...Comprehending the fragility of goodness, promise, and justice in the face of radical negativity need not fill us with resignation. Such an understanding can just as surely make us more, and not less, willing to strive for the fulfillment of these longings for God and God's justice. Indeed, a genuine understanding of radical contingency summons us to an even greater consciousness of ethical and moral responsibility and accountability. As (Jurgen) Moltmann has said: 'This may sound like a contradiction but is in fact an inescapable correlation. Only those who are capable of joy can feel pain of their own and other people's suffering. A man who can laugh can also weep...Where freedom is near, the chains begin to hurt. Where the Kingdom of God is at hand, we feel the abyss of God-forsakenness.'"³⁷

³⁷ Jacqueline A. Bussie, *The Laughter of the Oppressed: Ethical and Theological Resistance in Wiesel, Morrison, and Endo* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 190-91

The Spiritual Ingredient of Anticipation: Introduction

As I have been writing, and as I have been describing this thesis to friends, family, and colleagues, I have now reached a point where I am actually becoming less certain what I mean by the term *spiritual*. Yet I think there can be, and there is, a clear underlying thread to what I mean by this spiritual ingredient, or this conception of the *yoga of ecology*. As I can only speak best from my own grounding in spiritual practice and faith, let me offer an example of the understanding of the fabric and structure of this *yoga of ecology* from Vaisnava theology which can act as a framework to our further systematic and comparative understanding. In the Vaisnava tradition our relationship with metaphysical reality, with the Divine, with the personal form of the Goddess/God known as the Divine Couple, or Radha/Krishna, is one of inconceivable oneness and difference, or what is known in Sanskrit as *acintya bhedabheda-tattva*. This *tattva* is a bridging of the polarities between overt dualism and overt non-dualism. In oneness we, as eternal spirit soul, exist with the same substance as Radha/Krishna, a substance made up of eternality (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and bliss (*ananda*). The metaphysical substance of the Divine permeates and is part of the physical substance of reality, and anyone with a truly enlightened vision can realize this permeation and presence of the metaphysical in the physical. One of the most famous verses of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is where Krishna teaches that “the humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and one who has been outcast.”³⁸ One with this vision, a vision that is an integral aspect of the *yoga of ecology*, sees the personal presence of the Divine, the *paramatma*, or the Supersoul, sitting in the heart not just of all living beings, but in the existence of every atom of creation. Yet this

38 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is (Revised Edition)*, Chapter 5, Verse 18

oneness of permeation and presence is, in an inconceivable sense beyond the power of human rationality to completely understand, also a difference. The vision of the humble sage of the *Gita* is never a primarily monistic or non-dualist vision. She/he sees that each living being, each particle of creation, has its own distinct individual existence and integrity, and that this remains eternally so. The relationship of Goddess/God to every living being, in Gaudiya Vaisnava theology, is always framed in this *tattva* of oneness and difference. Without the oneness, the mutual interest needed for a loving relationship would not exist, and without the difference the ability of two or more distinct beings to exchange loving sentiments, feelings, emotions, and embraces would not exist. We are one with the reality and the personal presence of the Divine, yet we are different from so we may eternally have a personal relationship with them. It is this relationship, which is the etymological origin of the term *yoga* itself, which means to yolk, or connect, to the Divine reality, which is one of the essential components as to how we may understand the *yoga of ecology*.

The Conception of the Yoga of Ecology

The conception and practice of the *yoga of ecology* is meant to lead to a re-enchantment with our own sense of identity, of being, our relationship to Mother Earth, and to our relationship with the Divine. Living in a *turbo-capitalist* world means that we have all been to varying degrees affected by a dis-enchantment with ourselves, with the Earth, and with the Divine. We must confront and attempt to transcend this dis-enchantment. The *yoga of ecology* is a process of *re-skilling* ourselves within and without, in practices and behaviors which are ecologically-sound, which lead to the process of *re-souling*. This *re-souling* is a

defiant response to how market forces and its concurrent alienated relations have led to a de-souling in our relations to ourselves and to each other. The *yoga of ecology* is a discipline which can gradually lead us to a sense of liberation from that which alienates us from ourselves and from each other. We have seen so far in our exploration that this discipline manifests itself not only in our physical, external efforts, but in the internal confrontation with who we are, where we are, who we want to be, where we want to go, and how we can get there. This discipline of the *yoga of ecology* is a kind of divestment from everything which alienates us from our responsibilities. It is a reinvestment in practices, ideas, ideals, liturgies, meditations, and embraces which lead us back to the ground of our being. Our discernment of right ecological and economical action and relation is itself a sacred practice which can lead to the liberation of our being from the chains of its illusions, which is the goal of all *yoga* practices and traditions.

Hindu scholar Edwin Bryant, in his contemporary translation of the classical text *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, writes that “the means to liberation is uninterrupted, discriminative discernment.”³⁹ This discernment, like the process of anticipation itself, is dependent for its efficacy upon a metaphysical foundation, upon the wisdom and the wisdom traditions which have shaped the experience of humanity throughout our history. Bryant adds that “the commentators state that discriminating discernment is initially awakened by listening to the *sastras*, the sacred texts, and becomes strengthened by contemplation on their content, pursued with reverence, for a long time. It then develops further by the practice of *yoga*...This discrimination exposes and undermines one's attachments...In time, discrimination becomes so powerful that the possibility of falling into illusion again becomes completely eradicated, all wrong notions remaining like parched seeds deprived of their potency...With discrimination in

³⁹ Edwin Bryant trans., *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (New York: North Point Press, 2009), Chapter 2, Verse 26, 234

absolute control, the *citta* (mind) is no longer disturbed...The *yogi* thus approaches liberation.”⁴⁰ The conception and the practice of the *yoga of ecology* is what draws us beyond our attachments to *unnecessary necessities*, towards something greater than we are, whether its a conception of the Universe, a trans-personal conception of the Whole, or a personal relationship with Goddess/God. Without this magnetic and organic compulsion to something greater than ourselves, something which is greater than us but which is nevertheless also an intimate part of our existential being and existence, we will never be able to develop the urgency and courage to anticipate. The *yoga of ecology* draws us not only into the grounding of our existence but also into the centering of our existence. This grounding and centering can, in a pragmatic example, have immediate implications in our methodologies of social organization. Niebuhr writes that “there must be an organizing centre within a given field of social vitalities. This centre must arbitrate conflicts from a more impartial perspective than is available to any party of a given conflict; it must manage and manipulate the processes of mutual support so that the tensions inherent in them will not erupt into conflict; it must coerce submission to the social process by superior power whenever the instruments of arbitrating and composing conflict do not suffice; and finally it must seek to redress the disproportions of power by conscious shifts of the balances whenever they make for injustice.”⁴¹ The conscious shifts of this social and political centering must not be a cynical or relativistic “house of cards” kind of motion, simply shifting elements of power, politic and profit. It must instead reflect the selfless, mutual, and compassionate presence and values of the Whole, of the Divine.

We sell ourselves short, and we sell our aspirations of a more ecologically-sound relationship with the Earth short, if we think that the sources of religious/spiritual/metaphysical wisdom have nothing to offer or to contribute to the way forward. There is no way forward

⁴⁰ Ibid., 236

⁴¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: Human Destiny*, 266

without these resources of wisdom. It is up to the eco-theologian, and to any person of faith concerned with our ecological future, to learn how to communicate this wisdom to all others so that they may listen and understand and feel free and inspired to incorporate this wisdom into their own visions of anticipation. It is also up to all people of faith to learn how to listen as well, as Thomas Berry so expertly provided an example, to the wisdom of the secular sciences which are also an essential piece of the puzzle going forward. How we create these bridges of communication determines the very fundamental shape of our anticipation.

The Elements of the Yoga of Ecology

Every spiritual tradition has core values which inherently create ecologically-sound conceptions of identity, community, and civilization. When these values are then cultivated in the creation of ecologically-sound community, the *anticipatory community* is participating in the *yoga of ecology*. The nature of the *yoga of ecology* which exists in the *anticipatory community* has three primary elements. First, there is the communal foundation of mutual practices and types of worship which, when done together with consistency and determination, helps to overcome the inner pollution of our being, of our *ahankara*, our false ego. In the Vaisnava tradition this process, done individually and collectively, is known as *anartha-nrvitti*. This process is metaphorically described in a very ecological sense. Our hearts, the center of our being, the seat of our soul as described in Gaudiya Vaisnava theology, is described as a garden where we are cultivating the *bhakti-lata bija*, or the seed or creeper of love and devotion. In this garden, as in any garden, there are numerous weeds, which result from the seeds planted by the *ahankara*. If these weeds are allowed to flower,

then the worst aspects of our being, our selfishness and alienation, will choke our creeper of devotion. Our commitment in the *anticipatory community* to spiritual practice allows us to uproot these weeds. This difficult process of finding the right touch and torque to remove these weeds properly, as anyone who is a gardener understands, so that we do not leave any roots behind, becomes more and more palatable in the mutuality of our practice and worship together. The second element of the *yoga of ecology* which shapes anticipation is the foundation of theological wisdom which forms, reforms, and provides a progressive, non-reductionist platform of knowledge to inform the processes of sacred practice and work within the community. This foundation helps us to understand that while our bodies come from dust and to dust will return, and that as we are embodied, we are always in a sense physically embodied in the Earth, there is something more to us, something beyond the dust, which must guide us and help us to cherish our responsibilities as citizens of this planet. This foundation gives us the complete picture of self-realization. In *Earth-Honoring Faith*, Larry Rasmussen writes of Mahatma Gandhi's understanding of self-realization: "The Vedantic Hindu cosmology that Gandhi embraced conceived all reality as unified and interconnected in such a way that no sharp ontological boundaries separate animate and inanimate. Rocks and rivers as well as trees are powerful beings that bear the intrinsic value accorded being itself. Gandhi, from his youth onward, internalized this and gave it expression in a life committed to nonviolence and 'respectful justice toward all beings.' He would speak of the goal as 'self-realization,' but it was self-realization of a sort foreign to that of Western cultures (with the exception of some mystics). Self-realization is identification with the totality of life. 'My doctrine means I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majority of life in the presence of God. The sum-total of this life is God.'...His ethics, he went on to say, 'not only permits me to claim, but requires me to own kinship with not merely the ape, but the

horse and the sheep, the lion and the leopard, the snake and the scorpion...with all life...We claim descent from the same God.'...Self-realization in Gandhi's religious ethic thus understood the realized person to see the cosmic Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. From there the realized person regards all beings, not with the arrogant eye, but with the equal eye."⁴² The third element of the *yoga of ecology* in the formation of anticipation is the element of faith. It is yet another incomprehensible mystery of the Divine that she/he is ever-present in every being and in every atom yet also hidden to our empirical sense. The wisdom of the Divine is always with us, yet we are required to reach for it, to yearn for it, to prove to ourselves and to each other how much we desire and need this wisdom. The gift of this wisdom is never a cheap grace. We must, by that inscrutable element of faith, make ourselves worthy and ready for the guidance of the Divine so that we may understand how to live properly within the realm of creation.

The intrinsic presence of the personality of the Divine in every atom and living being is part of the foundational core of the *yoga of ecology*. The self-realized vision of the humble sage of the *Gita* sees not separation between Goddess/God and every living being, nor does she/he see simply a monistic unity between Goddess/God and every living being. I have mentioned the influence of *bhakti-yoga*, the devotional relationship to the personal conception of the Divine, which is one of the primary *yoga* traditions of the Hindu/Vedic tradition as mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and other primary texts of the Hindu/Vedic canon. *Bhakti-yoga*, because it focuses one's habits, behaviors, beliefs, and consciousness on a devotional relationship with Goddess/God, inherently creates ecologically-sound frameworks of anticipation on both the personal and communal levels. We have already encountered the call from the *Isopanisad* to live within the gifts and bounties that Goddess/God have provided for

42 Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*, 322-323

us, being careful not to step outside this arrangement lest we objectify and exploit other living beings and life processes. There is an understanding that Goddess/God, as personalities, are not going to encourage, guide, or teach us in such a way that would be compromising and insensitive to our natural environment. One example of this comes from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in which Krishna tells Arjuna, and by extension all who consider themselves devotees of Krishna, that “if one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.”⁴³ Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioners take this expression of Krishna as the spiritual grounding of their ethic of growing, producing, and consuming foodstuffs. Whether in temples, in households, or on a personal level, as an expression of devotion, Gaudiya Vaisnava devotees always prepare foodstuffs primarily for the pleasure of Radha/Krishna, the Divine Couple. The foodstuffs are ideally seeded and cultivated with this intention, the devotee cooks with this intention, not even tasting the food as it is being prepared, and then the foodstuffs are offered, through ritualistic prayers, to Radha/Krishna in a visualized form, whether as temple deity, pictorial representation, or mental image, as long as their personal presence is established for the offering. The devotee always prepares foodstuffs for the Divine Couple with the mood and intention that the Couple are loving, central members of the household, of the family, of the community. This very personal meditation allows the devotee to make their relationship with the Divine Couple one that is instinctual, emotional, and intimate. This meditation is designed to remove any sense of abstraction or alienation in the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. Once the foodstuffs have been ritualistically offered in the mood of love and devotion, the foodstuffs become, in a eucharistic sense, sanctified. Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioners call these sanctified foodstuffs *prasadam*, which is translated as “mercy” or “grace.” By eating this *prasadam*, the devotee's consciousness is also sanctified. The process

43 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is (Revised Edition)*, Chapter 9, Verse 26

of preparing and eating foodstuffs, through this intention and meditation, is itself an essential element of the *yoga of ecology*. In his commentary on this verse, Swami Prabhupada writes that Krishna “is not in need of anything from anyone, because He is self-sufficient, and yet He accepts the offering of His devotee in an exchange of love and affection...*Bhakti* is mentioned twice in this verse in order to declare more emphatically that *bhakti*, or devotional service, is the only means to approach Kṛiṣṇa. No other condition, such as becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, a learned scholar, a very rich man or a great philosopher, can induce Kṛiṣṇa to accept some offering. Without the basic principle of *bhakti*, nothing can induce the Lord to agree to accept anything from anyone. *Bhakti* is never causal. The process is eternal. It is direct action in service to the absolute whole.”⁴⁴ The efficacy of *bhakti-yoga* is in this element of direct action and intimate personal connection to the presence of the Divine which is manifest in every aspect of both physical and metaphysical reality. The practical frameworks of *bhakti-yoga* allow the vision of the devotee to be broadened beyond the selfish and exploitative demands of the *ahankara*, of the false ego.

The Eucharistic Universe

This sanctified food ethic has a distinct resonance with the conception of a Eucharistic universe that I have encountered in my experiences with Christian *anticipatory community*. One of these communities is Bluestone Farm of the Episcopalian Community of the Holy Spirit (CHS), located in Brewster, NY. In 2003, four sisters of the CHS order began the process of turning their retreat house in Brewster into a biodynamic, organic farm based on permacultural principles and fired with the cosmological and theological inspiration of Thomas

⁴⁴ Ibid.,

Berry. Over the last decade, the Sisters have developed an earth-honoring ministry and faith which allows them to re-imagine what it means to be a human being in relation to the universe, to the physical and metaphysical whole. Through their agricultural knowledge and spiritual practices grounded in the Psalms and Offices of the Episcopalian tradition, along with a willingness to be open to inter-religious elements and influences, they have developed a Eucharistic understanding of the universe and of creation as a whole. Their everyday practice awakens them to the mysteries of creation, allowing them to constantly rediscover their participation, mindfulness, and awareness in and of these mysteries. This participation, mindfulness, and awareness of the flow of creation is an essential element of the *yoga of ecology*. Sr. Catherine Grace, one of the founding members and current residents of Bluestone Farm, echoing the call to live within the circular mentality of the Wheel of Life, remarks that “this particular universe is grounded for us in this understanding of its Eucharistic nature. It is a matter of taking in energy, holding it so that it contributes to our awareness of a ever more deepening wisdom and beauty of this universe, and then releasing it, so that it is free again to be taken in or absorbed somewhere else. The only way this can work is to exchange it, to take it in, to use it, to change it in someway, to enhance it in many ways, and then send it back out. For us, food is how we primarily experience this sacred exchange of energy.”⁴⁵ This expression by Sr. Catherine Grace of the sacred exchange of food, in relation to the understanding of the sacred nature of *prasadam* from the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition, brings to mind what Jennifer R. Ayers describes as a *grounded practical theology of food*. She writes to Christians and to all people of faith that “within every meal...is embedded an invitation to both divine encounter and moral responsibility. In the food itself, the earth that yields it, the labor that prepares it, and the social relationships formed around it, Christians

45 Interview with Sr. Catherine Grace, Bluestone Farm, Brewster, NY, conducted June 27, 2013

are confronted with both God's presence and God's demand. It is an embodied conversation, with multiple layers of meaning, and it refuses both theological abstraction and simplistic responses. Instead, what is needed is a grounded practical theology of food. A grounded practical theology of food requires a willingness to wade through and respond to these ambiguities, identifying within them pressing theological and moral questions, and opportunities for embodied and meaningful practices of faith...a grounded practical theology of food makes its home in the mundane, excavating theological and moral significance in each bite taken, each hour labored, and each seed planted.”⁴⁶ Sr. Catherine Grace has created a Celebration of Life eucharist liturgy as an expression of the community's understanding of the sacred presence of the land they live on, care for, and are sustained by. The Celebration of Life ceremony uses foodstuffs from the Farm itself, like raspberries and buttermilk, as the eucharistic offering of the presence of the Divine to be taken into one's body and soul. In the liturgy for the Celebration of Life, Sr. Catherine Grace writes that “ as time continued to unfurl, life stirred in the depths of Earth’s steaming oceans, and with the astounding development of photosynthesis, Earth learned to eat the sun — our first eucharist. Plants, insects, animals, fish, humans, rocks, waterfalls, lizards, rain —the power of life appeared in boundless form and with ever-deepening abilities. Together the burgeoning Earth communities give face and voice to the Divine Creator. Today we continue to participate in this dance of life, taking in and releasing energy just as our ancestors the first particles learned to do. Our duty and our joy is twofold: to speak the glad celebration of all creation as it takes part in the glorious, primary revelation of the Sacred One, and to participate in the evolutionary journey of consciousness with mindfulness and awe. Let us name and honor the triune nature of this holy place:

46 Jennifer R. Ayers, *Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 5

Everything in the Universe is in deep communion.

Everything in the Universe is unique.

Everything in the Universe contains its own valuable interiority.

We celebrate our own place in the community of Mother Earth, giving praise to the Holy Dream that transformed a cloud of hydrogen into stars, otters, rosebushes, mountains, eagles and people. We remember that this miracle of transformation occurs because the journey of life in this Universe is itself holy, powerful, and beautiful.” The sharing of the bounties of the Farm, in offering to each member of the community, sanctified as *prasadam* with the grateful acknowledgment of the sustaining role of the Whole, of the Divine, is a joyful and fully life-giving manifestation of the *yoga of ecology*.

Sr. Catherine Grace has intended for the Celebration of Life liturgy to be shared widely, and interpreted as each community sees fit.⁴⁷ The Celebration of Life liturgy is but one example of the great abundance of resources which each *anticipatory community* shares in shaping our understanding of the *yoga of ecology*. It is the responsibility not just of theologians, but of all those practitioners concerned with the state and health of our external and internal ecologies to become conscious of their own gifts that allow them to access the presence of the Divine in creation, to hold those gifts securely so that their potential may be fully drawn out, and then to share those gifts with all, with the like-minded and the like-

⁴⁷ To that end the Celebration of Life liturgy is available here online at <http://holyspirit.squarespace.com/storage/Celebration%20of%20Life%2008-26-11.pdf>

hearted, and with every living being, regardless of who they are, where they stand, and what they may think.

The Dharma of Mutuality in the Yoga of Ecology

In returning to Krishna's call in the *Gita* for an offering of “a leaf, a fruit, a flower or water,” we see this is also a fundamental teaching of Gaudiya Vaisnava theology which requires all practitioners to follow a primarily plant-based diet, either as a vegetarian or as a vegan. Devotees do not eat animal-flesh foodstuffs because Krishna does not affirm, in the *Gita* or anywhere else in the canon, that these foodstuffs are suitable for offering. On the devotional level, the devotee only wants to offer the Divine Couple what they desire, and on the level which connects the metaphysical and the physical, Krishna's call for plant-based foodstuffs which can be sacralized reflects an understanding, from Krishna's end, as the Divine architect and maintainer of creation, of the intrinsic sustainability of a plant-based diet. While there are subsidiary ritualistic concessions within the Hindu/Vedic cultural canon for those who want to consume animal meats, there is no allowance for what we now see within the industrial factory-farm system of meat production and distribution. Numerous studies and reports have established that this industrialized system of meat production and distribution is one of the primary sources of carbon emissions.⁴⁸ Krishna's assertion that his devotees only

48 The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' report *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options* remains one of the most influential and authoritative sources on the ecologically insensitive and compromised practice of industrialized meat production and distribution. Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM>

cultivate, cook, offer, and consume plant-based foodstuffs, as well as dairy products which have been produced from sustainable sources, including farms where cows are protected from being sold to slaughterhouses, is a primary example of how the metaphysics of *bhakti-yoga* inherently lead to ecologically-sound physical practices and behaviors. The increased viability and acceptance of a vegetarian/vegan diet, and increased awareness of its benefits to our physical health and to the health of the Earth, have been inspired in part by the spread of Gaudiya Vaisnava theology and culture around the world over the last fifty years. Physical health is metaphysical health, and the *yoga* of the food ethic of Gaudiya Vaisnava theology and culture is meant to clarify both one's physical and metaphysical vision of right relation. When Gaudiya Vaisnava devotees consume *prasadam*, they are participating in and insuring their progress on the path of self-realization. Self-realization, or the realization of one's *dharma*, one's nature and one's duty, leads to, and is synonymous with, the realization of how to live in harmony with other beings in *sanatana-dharma*. *Sanatana-dharma* is described by the Hindu scholar Ranchor Prime as “the eternal essence of life. This essence is not limited only to humans. It is the essential quality that unites all beings-human, animal, or plant-with the universe that surrounds them and ultimately with the original source of their existence, the Godhead. This perception of underlying unity is what causes Hindus to steadfastly refuse to separate their religion from their daily life, or to separate their own faith from the other great traditions of the world. To them all religions are part of the processes of discovering the unity of God, humanity, and nature.”⁴⁹ Vaisnava author/scholar Steven Rosen writes that “the *Mahabharata*, in defining religious duty (*dharma*), acknowledges that in its best form, religion takes into account all of God's creatures: 'Dharma exists for the general welfare (*abhyudaya*) of all living beings. Thus, that by which the welfare of the greatest number of living beings in

49 Ranchor Prime, *Vedic Ecology: Practical Wisdom for Surviving the 21st Century*, 11-12

sustained, that for certain is Dharma' (*Shanti*, 109.10) This idea is echoed throughout the tradition, which divides ethical consideration into two distinct categories: *sarva-bhuta-hita* ('devotion to the good of all creatures') and *loka-hita* ('devotion to the good of humanity'). The first ethical system...includes the second. If one cares for all living creatures, then one naturally cares for humanity as well...The Vaisnava viewpoint is that a person should see the same life force in all living entities-regardless of 'outer dress' (the body)...Since those who are wise see the same essence in all beings...then how could one with equal vision treat any living creature inequitably?...Eating any of God's creatures would be a form of inequitable treatment...the *Bhagavad-Gita* gives us its own vision of the Golden Rule: 'The perfect yogi is one who considers all beings as dear as his own self.' (6.32) The true follower of the *Gita*, then, would uphold the principle of nonviolence in all its forms."⁵⁰ The Gaudiya Vaisnava devotee is attempting to share with others a living understanding that the principle of *bhakti*, of devotion, is to be offered to everyone. First and foremost, one's expression of *bhakti* must be centered in the metaphysical source of creation, in the Divine Couple, which gives one the broadest possible vision and understanding of one's *dharma*. With this foundation, one can express love and devotion in mutuality, care, and compassion with all creatures and with all humanity. The foundation of *bhakti*, when centered and grounded for the pleasure of the Divine Couple, gives the devotee access to the original source and storehouse of divine love. The power of this experience of divine love shatters all attachments to the ephemeral and to the narcissistic elements of our nature and being. Swami Prabhupada writes that "Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī⁵¹ has explained very simply how we should be attached to God. He says, 'My dear

50 Steven J. Rosen, *Holy Cow: The Hare Krishna Contribution to Vegetarianism and Animal Rights* (New York: Lantern Books, 2004), 29-30

51 Srila Rupa Goswami (1489-1564) was a Vaisnava ascetic, philosopher, poet, and playwright who is one of the Six Goswamis of Vrndavana, or the primary students of Caitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534), the Vaisnava *acarya* (teacher) who is considered a combined incarnation (*avatar*) of the Divine Couple. Rupa Goswami's theological teachings and written works codified the contemporary Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition as it is understood and practiced in contemporary

Lord, as a young man awakens his attachment immediately upon seeing a young girl, or as a young girl becomes attracted as soon as she sees a young boy, let me become attached to You.' This kind of attachment is natural. Nobody has to go to the university to learn it. Simply by seeing a young girl, a young boy thinks, 'Oh, here is a nice, beautiful girl.' And a young girl thinks, 'Oh, here is a nice, beautiful boy.' Similarly, we should think, 'Oh, here is Kṛiṣṇa, here are topics about Kṛiṣṇa, here is Kṛiṣṇa's temple.' Another example is that our attachment should flow toward Kṛiṣṇa like the current of a river. A river automatically flows down to the sea. Just as the river is flowing toward the sea spontaneously, without any artificial attempt, our love should spontaneously flow toward Kṛiṣṇa, or God. That is the perfection of yoga."⁵²

The Personality of the Divine in the Yoga of Ecology

The vibrant personalities of the Divine Couple, of Radha and Krishna, as understood in Gaudiya Vaisnava theology, culture, and practice, adds a deep and fundamental aspect to the understanding of the *yoga of ecology*. There are numerous facets of their personalities which contribute to this understanding, but I would like to focus on an aspect of each of their personalities which are most relevant to the eco-theological apprehension of the *yoga of ecology* we are trying to develop and express. Gaudiya Vaisnava conceptions and understandings of Goddess/God have a distinctness which makes them ever-relevant to the human condition and to the challenges of humanity living in the physical form. All of our emotional and relational foundations, and the nature of our own personalities, have their

times.

52 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, "The Yoga of Pure Attachment" *The Quest for Enlightenment* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1997)

original source and most profound reflection in the personalities of Radha and Krishna. One can certainly argue that may be an anthropomorphizing of Goddess/God, but in general Gaudiya Vaisnava theologians and practitioners, myself included, while respectful and aware of this criticism, do not believe that our conceptions of Goddess/God are limited by claiming the source of our humanity in the original personalities of Radha and Krishna. Certainly any cursory examination of the Gaudiya Vaisnava scriptural canon will reveal the vastness of forms that the Divine choose to incarnate in as *avatar*. Any comprehensive understanding of these *avatars* will show that there is no limitation to the forms of the Divine, and the focus of most Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioners on their most human like forms and personalities is, in the understanding of the practitioner, simply a matter of common sense facilitation of the mood and practices of genuine *bhakti-yoga*. With that in mind, I lay claim, as a Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioner, that my own participation in the *yoga of ecology* depends on my personal relationship with a personal form/s of the Divine who can facilitate, by their example, the understanding of how I should carry myself, as Leonardo Boff expressed earlier, as a *being-in-the-world*. This does not preclude or exclude those who have a trans-personal connection or relationship with the Divine, or those who have an agnostic or atheistic relationship with the metaphysical realm, from participating in the *yoga of ecology*. The question of how a comparative and collaborative dialogue between the secular and spiritual elements of the global environmental movement can shape our understanding of the *yoga of ecology* is an element of this study I have honestly yet to discover. For now, let me remain in the grounding of my own faith and practice as a Gaudiya Vaisnava and suggest where I can possible directions of dialogue and collaboration.

Through his incarnations in the physical realm, as the demigod personalities Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, Krishna creates, maintains, and destroys the manifest elements of the

physical realm, yet as the transcendent Godhead, he always maintains a degree of separation or difference from the physical elements, while remaining embedded in oneness with his living and personal presence within these physical elements. In his original metaphysical form, the personality of Krishna, as understood and worshipped in the most realized sense of the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition, is of a young cowherd tender who resides eternally in the spiritual realm of Goloka Vrndavana. Ranchor Prime writes that “unlike Visnu, who is God in the city of opulence, adored and served with reverence and awe by thousands of servants, Krishna dances with the peacocks, splashes in the river, plays the bamboo flute and spends his time with his friends in the forest herding cows. At the very beginning of his life, Krishna left the city of Mathura in order to live in the forest with the cowherds. *Krishna is God living in simplicity in the forest.* There are no stories of Krishna creating. In order to create, Krishna becomes Vishnu. They are both the same God, but Krishna does not personally involve himself in controlling the affairs of the universe—he prefers to stay in the forest as a cowherd. For this reason, one who is devoted to Krishna could never be callous toward the environment, because Krishna himself loves nature. *What Krishna loves his devotee also loves.* Shrivatsa Goswami, a Vaisnava scholar and devotee...has a fascinating explanation of the role of Krishna, whose life Shrivatsa considers 'the greatest chapter in environmental history'...According to him, Krishna, by his own example, rejected ritualistic worship in favor of a practical religion that recognizes the sacred in the everyday relationships between human beings and their environment. To live in harmony with nature, to show love to all creatures, never to harm any living being, to rejoice in the beauty of a natural life of simplicity: *this was Krishna's practice of religion.* Shrivatsa concludes: 'The best way to teach environmental concern is through Krishna's life. Krishna is the savior of the environment—that

is the sum total (of his life and teachings).”⁵³ Yet, a truly sophisticated understanding of Gaudiya Vaisnava theology only comes when we understand Krishna's place within the Divine Couple. The feminine aspect of the personality of the Divine, known as Radharani, or Radha, is non-different from Krishna in the essential arrangement of the Godhead, yet she is her own distinct personality. The loving relation of the Divine Couple is understood in Gaudiya Vaisnava theology to be the source of all loving relationships between living entities, and this emanation and example of love is the emotional core of the *yoga of ecology*. The qualities of this love, including mercy, compassion, forgiveness, tenderness, yet also strength, conviction, courage, and tenacity form what Gaudiya Vaisnava theology call *rasa*, which can be roughly translated as the sweet taste of personal expression and affection in loving relation. Shrivatsa Goswami writes that “when one claims such a fullness of love for the Krishna *avatar*, of course, it is not only Krishna about whom one is speaking. Without the highest *sakti* (power, presence, vibe), Radha, it would all be impossible, for she is love's potency. Without the round dance that magnetizes the two of them—the *rasa* in which they equally participate—there would be no experience of *rasa*. There the divine grandeur plays a limited role at best: all melts away in the intensity of love. If it were not so the human seeker would remain far from the divine presence: there would be no common meeting ground...The play between Krishna and Radha...is no ordinary play. It is rather the spontaneous play that generates itself between the two aspects of the ultimate reality...it is *alaukika*, not of this world. *Indeed, it is what animates creation itself*...As the phenomenal world resonates to this supernal game, it becomes known as the gesture of grace, and the hearts of devotees are attracted into the play.”⁵⁴

53 Ranchor Prime, *Vedic Ecology: Practical Wisdom for Surviving the 21st Century*, 70-71, 75

54 Shrivatsa Goswami, “Radha: The Play and Perfection of *Rasa*”, *The Divine Consort: Radha and The Goddesses of India* Ed. John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff (Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1982), 76-77

Beyond Exploitation of Cow and Caste in the Yoga of Ecology

The immediate and most relevant question here to our study of the *anticipatory community* concerns the implications of Krishna's preference for such a pastoral setting. \Through the example of his original form and his subsequent incarnations he is drawing us not only back to this original and ideal setting in the metaphysical realm, or the spiritual world, but he is also drawing us back to this simplicity of lifestyle in the physical realm. This once again brings up the difficulty of expecting our current civilizational model, especially with the incredibly uncertain variables of massive population growth and climate change affecting us more and more as we move into the 21st Century, to return to a largely village-based model. This is another province of this study which needs to be unpacked and confronted in a more acute fashion. Nevertheless there is an eternal and ever-relevant lesson Krishna is trying to teach us through his personality as a pastoral cowherd. To begin our understanding we need to break through our misconceptions about the cow and bull as an old-fashioned, exotic Hindu/Vedic religious symbol to understand the deep physical and metaphysical importance of the cow not just to Hindu/Vedic culture, but to the culture of life on the Earth herself. The cow is understood in Hindu/Vedic culture as one of the seven mothers⁵⁵ who care for us and provide us love and sustenance during our sojourn on this planet. Rosen writes that “this profound respect for the natural world is crystallized in human interaction with the bovine world. As Gandhi says, 'cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in

⁵⁵ These seven mothers are (1) adau mata: the first mother, to whom we are born (2) guru-patni: the wife of the spiritual master (3) brahmani: the wife of a brahmana (4) raja-patnika: the wife of the king (5) dhenu: the cow (6) dhatri: the nurse (7) prthvi: the earth.

human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species...Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives...' In other words, through the cow, humans may learn to have greater regard for all of creation. More, they may become sensitive to the truth that hurting cows, or exploiting nature, means hurting and exploiting ourselves. Though in the West the karmic consequences of hurting cows might seem like little more than philosophical abstraction, in India the idea is brought home in day-to-day life. As Barbara Powell writes, 'cows, of course, are revered in India, being a universal Mother Goddess symbol. This is not strictly a psychological phenomenon; cattle are the mainstay of Indian rural life and, as far as we know, always have been. Milk and milk products are a staple element of the Indian diet, and dung is used as fuel for cooking and heating. Bulls are work animals which pull plows and grindstones. In the Indian economy the cow is literally life itself. Dead cows mean dead humans. The bull is a father who works the land while the cow is a mother who feeds her hungry human children along with her calves.' Thus, we are introduced to the grassroots reasons for 'cow worship' in India. Mother cow adds to the longevity and life cycle of Indian people. Simply put, cattle are more valuable to farmers when grazing than when put on their plate. Since the protection of cattle also means protection of the farmer's lifeblood and the nation's economy, the living cow is understandably revered in Indian culture. Mahatma Gandhi confirmed this pragmatic reading of the cow's divinity: 'Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was, in India, the best companion. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible.'⁵⁶ Human beings lived for centuries, in India and elsewhere, in varying degrees of reverence and understanding of the true value and integrity of the cow and bull, and something has to be said that our near-total loss of this reverence and understanding, especially with the rise and spread of the slaughterhouse and

56 Steven J. Rosen, *Holy Cow: The Hare Krishna Contribution to Vegetarianism and Animal Rights*, 48-49

the factory-farm, is so damaging to our physical and metaphysical health.

Swami Prabhupada, inspired by the example of Mahatma Gandhi as well as the wider teachings of sustainable physical and metaphysical culture in the Hindu/Vedic canon, popularized a saying for his students and his movement: “Simple Living and High Thinking”. For those of his students who took up, and take up, his charge to create a rurally-based, ecologically-sound ministry of community-building, this mantra inspired them to throw off their attachments to the *unnecessary necessities* of the *turbo-capitalist* lifestyle to free up physical, mental, and spiritual space for self-realization through the practices of *bhakti-yoga*. Swami Prabhupada envisioned this lifestyle set under the social infrastructure of what the Hindu/Vedic canon describes as *daiva-varnasrama*. Any collective of peoples can be arranged into *daivi-varnasrama*, or vocations and stations of life which encourage the material and spiritual development of the living entity. These vocations are the four *varnas*, which consists of the *brahmanas*, the wisdom gatherers and principal worshippers, ritual-makers, priests and priestesses who spiritually guide by principle and example, the *ksatriyas*, or those who civically, socially, politically, and martially lead and protect, the *vaisyas*, who are the merchants, tradespeople, and agriculturalists who make a society's economic engine run, and finally the *sudras*, or artisans, craftspeople, and laborers who create and maintain a society's physical infrastructure. The stations of life consist of four *asramas* which mark an individual's spiritual progression throughout life. First is *brahmacarya*, or renounced, celibate student life under the guidance of a qualified *guru*, or spiritual teacher, beginning when the practitioner is a young child up to early adulthood. At that point, a rare soul may decide to remain in the *brahmacarya* station for the rest of their life. Most others will instead enter the *grhastha* station, or householder life, where they will get married, cultivate a family, and actively participate in the economic, social, and religious life of the wider community. Coming into retirement age,

once their dependents can fully support themselves as independent individuals, the practitioner will enter into *vanaprastha*, in which they gradually begin to renounce all of the trappings of householder life to gradually reengage with the station of spiritual absorption in the renunciate mood. Finally, the practitioner, whether they have remained in *brahmacarya* their entire life or whether they have travelled through the other two stations, will enter into the final stage, known as *sannyasa*, in which they are called and charged to renounce all unnecessary attachments except that which allows them to cultivate spiritual knowledge and travel widely teaching and sharing that knowledge to all who are receptive. The prefix of *daiva* in *daiva-varnasrama* refers to the devotional core and guiding principle of the step-by-step development of *bhakti* for the Divine Couple that identification with a certain *varna* and progression through the stations of *asrama* life are meant to encourage and cultivate. Boldly, Swami Prabhupada, having himself taken *sannyasa* after a long career in householder life, insisted to his students that this system of social arrangement was not an antiquated Hindu relic or prejudiced caste arrangement but instead a timeless way instead to allow human and planetary society to flourish both materially and spiritually. Towards the end of his life and ministry, he remarked often that only 50% of his work was finished, and it would be up to the generations of his followers to come to anticipate and to create a model of *daivi-varnasrama* as an example of a materially and spiritually sustainable model of community and civilization. The society of contemporary Vaisnavas that Swami Prabhupada created and which followed in his wake have indeed been able to recreate a number of the fundamental elements of *daiva-varnasrama*, including first and foremost the criterion that it is not by birth in a particular family, sect, or caste which defines which what *varna* or vocation one falls into. Traditionally, and especially in an overtly radical assertion both culturally and theologically over the last five hundred years, Gaudiya Vaisnava teachers such as Swami Prabhupada and teachers before

him in the line of knowledge transmission or disciplic succession, known as *parampara*, have pushed back against the hierarchical arrangement of caste as being a perversion of the original arrangement of *daiva-varnasrama*. Contemporary Gaudiya Vaisnava scholars and practitioners are attempting to restore the science of understanding a person's inner nature, reflected in their natural talents and proclivities, as a way of understanding what *varna* and what *asrama* would best draw out and enhance their natural and organic potential for material and spiritual development. Some progressive Gaudiya Vaisnavas are also pushing back against other hegemonic elements, such as patriarchy and racial and sexual prejudice, which have also corrupted the original understanding of *daiva-varnasrama*.⁵⁷ These progressive Gaudiya Vaisnavas are attempting to remove any element of world-denying dualism, probing, questioning, and insisting that, for example, women can enter into and prosper within the stations of renounced, celibate student/teacher life, and that same-sex oriented individuals can participate fully and genuinely in the station of householder life.

Pragmatic Gaudiya Vaisnava Anticipation in the Yoga of Ecology

The framework of *daiva-varnasrama* fits neatly into the wider conception of the *yoga of ecology* because it is also a framework which encourages the development of a localized and self-sufficient ecological and economical way of life. Swami Prabhupada writes in his translation of the classical Hindu/Vedic text *Srimad-Bhagavatam (Bhagavat Purana)* that “the

⁵⁷ As I've begun to explore certain critiques of caste from the perspective of such thinkers/activists as B.R Ambedkar, I am beginning to understand the tremendous amount of cultural and theological baggage and assumptions of prejudice and marginalization which comes along with the assertion of *varnasrama*. Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioners face a tremendous challenge in excavating the frameworks of *varnasrama* from the perversions of caste and any other hegemonic elements. Arundhati Roy's book-length introduction to the recent reissue of B.R Ambedkar's *The Annihilation of Caste*, entitled “The Doctor and the Saint” (excerpted here <http://caravanmagazine.in/reportage/doctor-and-saint>), comparing the attitudes of Ambedkar and Mohandas Gandhi on caste, is one revealing and provocative exploration of the deeply embedded presence of caste in traditional Hindu/Vedic social and cultural arrangements.

sufferings of human society are due to a polluted aim of life, namely lording it over the material resources. The more human society engages in the exploitation of undeveloped material resources for sense gratification, the more it will be entrapped by the illusory, material energy of the Lord, and thus the distress of the world will be intensified instead of diminished. The human necessities of life are fully supplied by the Lord in the shape of food grains, milk, fruit, wood, stone, sugar, silk, jewels, cotton, salt, water, vegetables, etc., in sufficient quantity to feed and care for the human race of the world as well as the living beings on each and every planet within the universe. The supply source is complete, and only a little energy by the human being is required to get his necessities into the proper channel. There is no need of machines and tools or huge steel plants for artificially creating comforts of life. Life is never made comfortable by artificial needs, but by plain living and high thinking.”⁵⁸ *Daiva-varnasrama* is meant to encourage this practice of ecologically-sound *yoga* by two primary components: the protection and encouragement of *brahminical* culture, or the cultivation of metaphysical wisdom, and the protection and encouragement of the culture of the cow and bull, or the cultivation of physical/agricultural wisdom. As Swami Prabhupada also wrote in his translation of the *Bhagavat Purana*: “Progressive human civilization is based on brahminical culture, God consciousness and protection of cows. All economic development of the state by trade, commerce, agriculture and industries must be fully utilized in relation to the above principles, otherwise all so-called economic development becomes a source of degradation. Cow protection means feeding the brahminical culture, which leads towards God consciousness, and thus perfection of human civilization is achieved.”⁵⁹ He also adds that “Protection and grazing ground for the cows are among the essential needs for society and

58 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., *Srimad-Bhagavatam (Bhagavat Purana)*, (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1987), Canto 2, Chapter 2, Verse 37

59 Ibid., Canto 1, Chapter 19, Verse 3

the welfare of people in general. The animal fat required for the human body can be well derived from cow's milk. Cow's milk is very important for human energy, and the economic development of society depends on sufficient food grains, sufficient milk, and sufficient transportation and distribution of these products. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by His personal example, taught us the importance of cow protection, which is meant not only for the Indian climate but for all human beings all over the universe...The protection of cows, therefore, is not merely a religious sentiment but a means to secure the highest benefit for human society.”⁶⁰ Some of the most vibrant contemporary Gaudiya Vaisnava *anticipatory communities* have committed themselves to the protection of the cow and bull. One such example is the International Society for Cow Protection farm (ISCOWP⁶¹) located in Moundsville, WV, which is led and guided by the husband-wife team of Balabhadra (William Dove) and Chayadevi (Irene Dove), who have been students of Swami Prabhupada and servant-leaders in his society since the 1970s. The ISCOWP project is formed by the realization that how we treat the cow/bull reflects how we treat each other and how we treat the Earth. At the core of the anticipatory vision of ISCOWP is the re-discovery of the cow and bull's great utility to the art and science of agriculture. Balabhadra insists that it is a mistake in only conceiving of the cow as primarily a producer of dairy products. In most traditional conceptions of the cow and bull/ox, milk is not foregrounded as the primary byproduct. It is considered vital and important for a community's physical health and nutrition, but traditional Hindu/Vedic culture foregrounded first and foremost the development of ox power for agricultural tilling. Balabhadra teaches that “in Vedic times, cows were not bred to produce milk. Cows were bred to produce bulls. In Vedic times there were no tractors, or Shell or Chevron...Breeding,

60 A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Light of the Bhagavata* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1988), verse 27

61 www.iscowp.org

initially, was meant to produce bulls, so that agriculture could be accomplished.”⁶² The next primary utility of breeding was the production of cow manure as fertilizer, as cooking fuel, and, when mixed with water, as a kind of household paste to create and reinforce household walls and floors. Cow manure, like cow urine, is considered antiseptic and appropriate in many different fashions for the maintenance and preservation of a community's physical infrastructure.⁶³ With the breakdown of this traditional system in India and other indigenous locales, signified by the rise of the industrialized production and distribution of foodstuffs, small-scale communities and villages can no longer steadily rely on cow manure for support of this physical infrastructure. One result of this alteration has been the rise of deforestation in many indigenous landscapes, as wood is now needed for cooking and warming fuel that previously was supplied from cow manure. Balabhadra remarks that “nowadays everything is milk, and because the tractor has come into existence, the traditional village farmer has been coerced and manipulated into using this tractor, the number of bulls has decreased dramatically. She/he now has no way to work his field if the tractor is broken, and her/his supply of fertilizer has now also been sent away.”⁶⁴ This breakdown has also created the openings for interests of global agri-business and bio-tech industries to convince indigenous farmers to move away from traditional seed systems to hybrid seed systems which also are largely reliant on petrochemical fertilizers. Balabhadra remarks “that these are expenses the farmers did not have, these economic debits”⁶⁵ in most traditional and indigenous systems of agriculture. The foundational ingredients of this traditional systems, the seeds, the tilling, and the fuel, once reliant on the community's good and free relation with the cow/bull, now has

62 Interview with Balabhadra, ISCOWP headquarters, Moundsville, WV, conducted August 9, 2013

63 Chayadevu herself has written on this understanding of the utility of cow dung/urine for the official ISKCON publication *Back to Godhead* in an article entitled “Golden Dung”, <http://backtogohead.in/golden-dung-by-chaya-devi-dasi/>

64 Interview with Balabhadra.

65 Ibid.,

become a source of economic debt and existential despair, leading to hundreds of thousands of suicides among indigenous farmers in India and elsewhere over the last few decades.

Balabhadra adds that “it’s completely dishonorable not to be able to pay your debts, so these farmers are humiliated, and their families are humiliated. They have increased their debt-load against a very small increase of production.”⁶⁶ It is from this realization that ISCOWP is giving their contribution to anticipation through their commitment to recreating harmonious ecological and economical relation with the Earth. Balabhadra and Chayadevi’s experience in their anticipation and recreation has given them a deeply spiritual realization of their place in the whole, of their intimate relation with each element and creature in the homestead of creation they are called to keep. Much like the Bluestone sisters understanding of the Eucharistic universe, of the Celebration of Life, the ISCOWP *anticipators* see themselves, the cows, and all living elements of their community as *dham-vasi*, or servants and residents (*vasi*) of the sacred landscape (*dham*). All living beings in the *dham* are in the active mood of service to each other, as servants (*das*) of the servants (*dasdasanudas*) with the understanding that the pleasure of the Divine Couple is at the center. Balabhadra shares that “all of these living entities are needed so that we may give full service to the Lord.”⁶⁷ All life in the community of the *dham* is needed to give the best offering to the Divine Couple that can be given. We, as human beings, in correct understanding of *dominion*, must be the servants of these servants, understanding that they are meant, as we are meant, to exist with the special intent of serving the Divine Couple. Balabhadra concludes by articulating that the work of the land, of the Earth, is always “*dasdasanudas*...it is a labor of love. You are taking care of so many living entities in their service, and that is where our happiness comes from. This is the perfection of their life and of ours. If one can get into that head-space and heart-space, then it changes the

⁶⁶ Ibid.,

⁶⁷ Ibid.,

whole equation, as you see that the lives of these living entities are becoming completely perfected. It is a matter of consciousness...All of the answers to our concerns will become revealed when we live this kind of agricultural lifestyle...where we want the best for Krishna. Prabhupada told us that when you love somebody, you are always thinking of them. You always want to give them the best. We are supposed to be developing love of God, where everything we do is for the love of God. This culture will set the standard."⁶⁸ The *yoga of ecology* is therefore a revolution of culture, and a revolution of consciousness. If we are to truly anticipate a way forward, then, at the risk of sounding sentimental, love must be the engine which calls us forward. This love must be grounded as deeply as possible in the spiritual wisdom which has been given to us, which is a gift we must constantly rediscover and give to each other everyday. The love at the core of the *yoga of ecology* is a hard love, and it is a tough love. It consists of a faith which is not blind. It consists of a hope that is made of humility and contrition, but also the inconceivable and seemingly impossible bonds, strong bonds, which come from the sharing of compassion. We should never be afraid to depend on our visions and conceptions of Divine reality, and we should always be prepared to ask the Divine how she/he/they anticipate with us and for us.

Conclusion

The *anticipatory community* is the place where we, no matter who we are, can belong. It is the place where the alienation which has caused our existential ecological crisis can be confronted and transcended, if not fully, at least enough to insure a future where all living

⁶⁸ Ibid.,

beings on the Earth have the opportunity to reach their physical and metaphysical potential. There is so much work to be done to define the processes of anticipation and the formation of the *anticipatory community*. I feel, in an encouraging way actually, that I have only begun to scratch the surface of this exploration, and I am eager, not only in the eco-theological academic realm, but in all domains of Earth-honoring faith, especially the most sacred work of the cultivation of the Earth herself, to go deeper and farther. Anticipation is a dirty act, not only in soil-laden fingernails and the sweet smell of cow dung, but also as a reaction against the “cleanliness” of reductionist scientific ideas and ideals, as well as the religion of the free market. We lie on the abyss of wholesale planetary uncertainty because we have lost touch with what Cornel West describes as the *funk* of life, death, and rebirth. Our re-connection to The Wheel of Life, our willingness to die to ourselves in order to give life, and also to do our *first works over* as James Baldwin call us to, is what we are anticipating, what we recreating, and what we rediscovering in our *anticipatory communities*. It is through our participation in the *yoga of ecology* by which we fully enter into this anticipation, this recreation and rediscovery. This anticipation, recreation, and rediscovery is not naively utopian, but the clear vision of a better way draws us on and on and on. McFague writes that “the philosopher Ernst Bloch said a map of the world without a 'Utopia' on it is not worth much. Indeed. Utopias are not maps as real places, but as incentives to live *as if* they were possible—at least approximations of them are possible. Since we always live within models, is it better to live within one that moves us in the direction of narrow, mean individualism or one that encourages us to think and act in ways that promote individual human fulfillment within the context of the planet's flourishing? In other words, let us endeavor to be 'saints'...”⁶⁹

As I look forward to the development of my own thought and commitment to the

69 McFague, *Blessed Are The Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*, 137-138

exploration of anticipation, I am trying to develop a keen and clear understanding of the pragmatic ingredient of anticipation. This thesis, and the experiences which have drawn me to this subject, are a rough draft in many ways for the real work ahead. I look ahead to doctoral studies on the *anticipatory community* that will be an immersive experience in some of the communities we have represented here, like Bluestone Farm and the International Society of Cow Protection, and other examples such as Navdanya, the earth-democracy and seed *satyagraha* initiative inspired by the work, thought, and action of Vandana Shiva. There is also the Green Belt Movement inspired by the late Nobel Prize laureate and eco-activist Wangari Maathai, urban farm/garden projects which are redefining the post-industrial urban landscapes of my hometown in Detroit, and the various *transition towns* which are developing in many places around the planet. To properly and pragmatically understand what constitutes anticipation requires immersion and not a kind of sterile academic detachment. The pragmatic ingredient of anticipation requires a desire to place one's hand in the sacred soil underneath your feet, wherever you may be, and to sensually experience and rediscover our dependence on the wisdom that is there. This is what we are trying to do with our small project of anticipation at Union Theological Seminary, which is known as The Edible Churchyard. By creating growing spaces not only for organic foodstuffs and native plants, but also for the cultivation of eco-theological wisdom, we are trying to help our community here at Union anticipate and progress towards a more ecologically-sound way of being together. Union Theological Seminary is well-known as the one of the preeminent religious institutions in the world connecting theological wisdom and issues of social justice. Our existential ecological crisis is, in many ways, the fundamental theological issue of our time and also the fundamental social justice issue of our time. To anticipate a response to this crisis, in the connections between justice and theology, is truly hands-on work.

Larry Rasmussen writes that “some also know the temptation of which Thomas Merton writes-‘to diddle around in the contemplative life, making itsy-bitsy statues’ rather than fall under the activists’ beatitude, ‘blessed are the organized.’ Still, ascetic gymnasts of the soul, those athletes of God who choose the simple life, powerfully expose consumerism as the deceitful sire of a diminished self who lives a life of real tinsel rather than false. People of sacramental imagination and piety cultivate critical values of humility, care, awe, respect and reverence in a world that is itself an extraordinary stanza in the ‘hymn of the universe,’ a world worthy of so much more than the ransacked storehouse modernity has made of it. The mystic’s union with all that is peels back layer upon layer of Earth-destructive, other-destructive, and self-destructive alienation and lives out another possibility quietly, resolutely, gently; a life of surpassing beauty, serenity, and solidarity. Prophets, with less patience and little quiet, expose how carefully constructed power either fractures or promotes justice for the community of life. Their is an ‘applied reverence.’ Wisdom gathers in the tried and tested ways of creation itself, as mediated by cultural and religious experience, then passes the treasures along for the edification of any and all, whatever their age, state, or credo.”⁷⁰ The pragmatic ingredient of anticipation is immersion in the very substance and sources of wisdom, experience, love, and spirit. It pushes back against escapism, hegemony, and fatalism.⁷¹ It gives us hope that is faithful, realistic, courageous, and compassionate.

To close, I offer a poem from Wendell Berry entitled “A Vision”, which I think perfectly captures the realistic hope, and the tough love, of anticipation, particularly the final two lines.

⁷⁰ Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith*, 361-62

⁷¹ An interesting thread I will leave hanging for future unpacking: The cosmology of the Vaisnava tradition, echoing similar facets of Hindu cosmology, posits, in the cyclical construct of time of the material universe, that we live in the most degraded age, the *Kali-Yuga*, loosely translated as the Iron Age, or the age of “quarrel and hypocrisy.” According to this cosmological perspective, the quality and quantity of life will gradually decrease for hundreds of thousands of years before the turn back to the most exalted age, the *Satya-Yuga*, or the Golden Age. This cosmological vision of a destiny of deterioration is the polar opposite in many ways of the Teilhardian Omega Point and/or the Berrian Universe Story. How do I, as a faithful yet critical Gaudiya Vaisnava practitioner, interpret and even push back against the inherent fatalism of my tradition’s cosmological model?

There Berry preaches to us that the possibility of anticipation, the possibility of the *anticipatory community*, and the possibility of our immersion in the *yoga of ecology*, comes from our joyous and humble detachment from what's comfortable yet false and our attachment to what's difficult yet true:

If we will have the wisdom to survive,
to stand like slow-growing trees
on a ruined place, renewing, enriching it,
if we will make our seasons welcome here,
asking not too much of earth or heaven,
then a long time after we are dead
the lives our lives prepare will live
there, their houses strongly placed
upon the valley sides, fields and gardens
rich in the windows. The river will run
clear, as we will never know it,
and over it, birdsong like a canopy.

On the levels of the hills will be
green meadows, stock bells in noon shade.

On the steeps where greed and ignorance cut down
the old forest, an old forest will stand,
its rich leaf-fall drifting on its roots.

The veins of forgotten springs will have opened.

Families will be singing in the fields.
In their voices they will hear a music
risen out of the ground. They will take
nothing from the ground they will not return,
whatever the grief at parting. Memory,

native to this valley, will spread over it
 like a grove, and memory will grow
 into legend, legend into song, song
 into sacrament. The abundance of this place,
 the songs of its people and its birds,
 will be health and wisdom and indwelling
 light. This is no paradisaal dream.
 Its hardship is its possibility⁷²

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⁷² Wendell Berry, "A Vision", *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry* (Berkeley, Counterpoint, 1998), 102

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