

as condors) do their job, we bury the carcass, taking away the meals of these “large undertakers” (p. 91). Worse, Heinrich shows us how we are poisoning these animals, even if inadvertently, via our chemical war on rodents.

The author’s inquisitive eye does not stop at mammals; he is equally curious about what kills the trees in his forest—and what organisms (insects, fungi, bacteria) dismantle them. A similar cycle plays out in rivers—“salmon not only make big bears, they also help make big trees” (p. 155)—and in the oceans.

We humans can readily see the pattern. But, judging from many of our religious beliefs, it seems that a good number of us do not want to be part of nature’s recycling drama. And that is where we are mistaken, Heinrich says. In his eloquent final chapter, *Beliefs, Burials, and Life Everlasting*, he argues that we are wrong to deny that our bodies are “part of the wheel of life, part of the food chain” (p. 196). And by so doing, we may also be foregoing the greatest comfort in the face of death—the fact that we are “connected to the grandest, biggest, most real, and most beautiful thing in the universe as we know it: the life of earth’s nature” (p. 197). Although the subject matter may seem dark, Heinrich’s musings in this beautifully written and lively collection of essays and reflections are anything but.

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ECOLOGY AND RELIGION. *Foundations of Contemporary Environmental Studies*.

By John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Washington (DC): Island Press. \$35.00 (paper). x + 265 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-1-59726-708-3. 2014.

The authors seek, according to their autobiographical introductory chapter, to create an beginning textbook in the developing field of religious ecology: “we are attempting to open up a multireligious context in which the contributions of the religions can be appreciated and made more efficacious . . . based on an exploration of religions as vehicles encouraging change of attitudes and values regarding the environment” (pp. 10–11). It is an attempt to bring together in one source a truly interdisciplinary perspective on how religion, science, and politics perceive ecological matters. The volume is well researched, and provides appropriate endnotes to further research. Initial chapters (1–5) are given to clarifying terms in religious ecology through an historical and philosophical reflection of the way ecology is used throughout religion and science. Furthermore, the book conscientiously examines a wider range of religious perspectives than typically collected in one volume. Chapters 6–9 cover in detail views from the East-

ern Orthodox Church, Confucianism, the North American indigenous traditions of the Salish/Okanagan people, and Hinduism. Although this is a selective list of religions, many of the perspectives not given a chapter treatment (e.g., Judaism, Islam, Buddhism) are referenced throughout the text when appropriate. Moreover, the book is written in such a way as to synthesize the amount of resources and data drawn upon in a way that is highly readable and conveys the authors’ passion concerning the subject matter. For all of the above reasons, I highly recommend this volume for the stated purposes of filling a much-needed niche in the introductory market of religious ecology for undergraduate students. The text provides a highly accessible, broad narrative that could form the core of any class having to do with religious ecology.

One quibble I have with the book is that while the authors are correct in pointing out the potential for religious ecology to be an important aspect of the contemporary science/religion dialogue, they do not give any indication as to how the environmental aspect fits into the more traditional problems of dialogue between science and religion, nor do they point to resources that do. In fact, they inherently offer an independence model where religion speaks to values and science speaks to facts: “[r]eligious ecologies emphasize correspondences and subjective connections through symbols, whereas scientific ecology draws on empirical observation and objectivity through models” (p. 38). This is fine as far as it goes and provides excellent opportunity for in-class and out-of-class discussion. However, the ease with which the text assumes religion can fit into an age of science by being a vehicle of value is contentious, yet foundational to any further discussion of the authors’ stated goals. Students should be made aware of such tensions, even at the introductory level, if religion is to be more than a utilitarian attitude corrective to issues about environment.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THEORETICAL ECOLOGY. *Encyclopedias of the Natural World, Number 4*.

Edited by Alan Hastings and Louis J. Gross. Berkeley (California): University of California Press. \$150.00. xxiv + 823 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-520-26965-1. 2012.

Would it not be great if there was a volume you could pull off the shelf every time you bumped into an unfamiliar area of theoretical ecology? This seems to be the question that motivated the creation of the *Encyclopedia of Theoretical Ecology*. Alphabetically arranged but also nicely organized

into logical subject areas, this collection presents an impressive array of articles covering most of what a theory-curious ecologist might need to understand while reviewing the literature and planning scientific projects.

Although this volume does serve up à la carte information about particular areas of theoretical ecology, it is also organized to allow more deliberate exploration: nine “major theme” articles review the broad areas where theoretical ecology is created or applied, while six subject areas aggregate related articles. Four of these subject areas represent the scalar hierarchy of ecology (individual, population, community, ecosystem), while the remaining two provide background on different theoretical methods and applications of theory. Related topics listed at the end of each article make for easy, logical bouncing between essays.

True to its encyclopedic format, this collection provides few references beyond secondary “recommended readings,” so the reliability of each article hinges on the authority of its author(s). An impressive collection of experts comprise this volume’s author list: in all of the fields with which I am familiar, the choice of author seemed quite appropriate. Although the articles vary quite a bit in their approach, most define the field, lay out a history, establish a domain of importance, and point out frontiers where new research is emerging and/or needed.

Like many theoretical fields—where an abundance of hypotheses overwhelm data available to test those hypotheses—theoretical ecology includes its fair share of controversy. Different articles contend with controversy differently: some use clinical language to describe but not take sides, others try to reconcile differences in opinion, and a few offer up particular opinions. In an encyclopedia, neutrality is an asset, and this one is sufficiently neutral: novice readers do not risk being wrongly biased, but will have to look elsewhere to fully appreciate the breadth of ideas percolating through each theoretical area.

As a reader I can live with the inevitable inconsistencies in authorial voice that plague an edited volume, but this collection suffers from too much heterogeneity of accessibility. Some articles are very accessible: they read like an introductory lecture firmly aimed at the novice. Others are not accessible at all: they read like an isolated expert telling us what he knows. Based on my sampling, more of the articles lean toward the accessible side, but inconsistency lowers this collection’s overall value. Rather heavy in text given their goal of delivering conceptual basics, all of these articles could be made more accessible through better (and more consistent) use of graphic images.

Who are the target users of this large tome? That is a question that I struggled with, and one that also seems to be at question for the editors. Although they aspire to reach students as well as the interested general public, this collection is not sufficiently pedagogical to attract even the motivated everyman. More realistically, this is a usable reference for practicing ecologists, graduate students, and very advanced undergraduates with a specific interest in theoretical ecology. For these users, this collection is unprecedented and invaluable.

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CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

FREE-RANGING DOGS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

Edited by Matthew E. Gompper. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. \$98.50. xvi + 312 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-19-966321-7. 2014.

The dog is by far the most abundant carnivoran, with a worldwide population of approximately one billion. The vast majority of these dogs are free-ranging (i.e., unconfined by humans) to some degree, and thus interact with wildlife as predators, prey, competitors, and pathogen reservoirs. *Free-Ranging Dogs and Wildlife Conservation* is an outstanding and timely compilation of the ecology and evolution of dogs, not as the cuddly indoor pets as they are known in much of North America, but as the unneutered, unspayed, unvaccinated, and unconstrained animal they are across much of the globe.

The volume begins with an excellent discussion of the dog-human-wildlife interface, also summarizing the history of dog domestication and geographic spread, the controversy over dog taxonomy, and an estimate of the global dog population organized by country and geographic region. The book proceeds with 11 more chapters that review the varied ecological interactions dogs can have with sympatric wildlife, and the varied human-given roles of working dogs, such as livestock protection, scat detection, and hunting. One chapter gives a thorough treatment of the issue of hybridization between dogs and wild canids, but disappointingly omitted the recent discovery of an extensive coyote-wolf-dog hybrid swarm in northeastern North America (J. Monzón et al. 2014. *Molecular Ecology* 23:182–197). I appreciated how this edited volume covers