religions in which nature is explicitly considered divine or worshiped but also those in which it serves as an important symbolic resource. This led to other changes in the field of religious studies—where scholars focus less on emotions such as worship and more on the way religion is integrated into everyday life and the way it promotes identity formation and serves power and material interests—have once again questioning and understandings of nature religion among religions and scholars alike.

Despite some changes as scholarly perspectives come into and fall out of fashion, there have been important continuities in both popular and scholarly conversations over nature religion. In these conversations the line between the observer and the participant often gets blurred: scholars frequently become involved in nature-related religious production as do their own religious subjects.

The most common debate has been between those who consider nature religions to be religiously or politically primitive, regressive, or dangerous and those who feel they are spiritually different or authentic and ecologically beneficial.

**Nature Religions as Primate, Regressive, or Dangerous**.

Perspectives that view nature religions as primate, regressive, or dangerous may have originated with and throughout recorded history have been influenced by the ancient anthropological religions and the pagan and polytheistic religions of the ancient Middle East. Frazer noted, for example, that the Hebrew King Josiah initiated a death penalty for those who worshipped the sun in the seventh century BC and that subsequent Ptolemaic figures, including the prophet Ezekiel, continued to battle the solar cult and other forms of what they consider nature-related idolatry. The orthodox creeds of Abrahamic religions, especially Christianity and Islam, maintained their hostility and helped push nature religions and the peoples who embodied them to extinction or marginalization through conversion, assimilation, and sometimes violence. Those actions were justified in religious terms as promoting the spiritual well-being of both believers and prospective believers.

However, criticism of nature-related religion have not been restricted to the religiously orthodox. The tendency to view nature religions as primate (though not necessarily dangerous) intensified as Occidental (Western) culture placed increasing value on reason and as many thinkers became less religiously orthodox. The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), for example, advanced an idealistic philosophy that viewed nature religions as primitive for failing to perceive the divine spirit moving through the dialectical process of history.

More important for the historical study of religion in general and scholarly reflection on nature religion in particular was the influence of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution published in *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Generations of scholars came to view nature religions as primitive misperceptions that natural forces are animated or alive. A friend of Darwin, John Lubbock, initiated that characterization in *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man* (1861), citing Darwin’s observation of the ways dogs mistake inanimate objects for living beings. Lubbock asserted that religion had its origin in a similar misperception by primitive humans. Soon E. B. Tyler, who wrote Consider the Father of anthropologists, would coin the term *animism* for this type of attribution of consciousness to inanimate objects and forces, asserting that that misperception was grounded in the human instinct and inevitably of primitive or “savage” peoples. Not long afterward Max Müller, considered by some the father of the academic study of religion, traced the origin of Indo-European religion to religious metaphors and symbols grounded in the natural environment, especially the sky and sun.

Both classical paganisms and polytheistic religions, of course, involved the application to nature of spiritual bodies and other natural entities and forces. According to Frazer, who was influenced by Tyler and Müller, belief and culture related to the sun, the earth, and the dead were especially common in the worldwide emergence and ancient history of religion. Frazer approvingly quoted Müller’s Intro- duction to the Science of Religion (1878): “The worship of the spirits of the departed is perhaps the most widely spread form of natural superstition all over the world” (Frazer 1926, p. 19).

The idea of religion as involving nature-related beliefs and practices because widely influential, as did Frazer’s “wor- ship of nature.”

*By the worship of nature, I mean... the worship of natural phenomena conceived as animated, conscious, and endowed with power and will as beneficent or injurious mankind. Considered as such they are naturally objects of human awe and fear... to the mind of primitive man these natural phenomena assume the character of formidable and dangerous spirit whose anger is his law, to avoid; and whose favour is in his interest to cultivate. To attain this desirable end he resorts to the same methods of cooptation which he employs toward human beings to whose goodwill he looks for help in his dependence; he appeals to them, and he makes them present, in other words, he prays and sacrifices to them, to these, he worships them. Thus what we may call the worship of nature is based on the personification of natural phenomena.* (Frazer, 1926, p. 17)

This early nature religion, Frazer thought, was replaced first by polytheism and then by monotheism as part of a “slow and gradual” process that was leading inevitably among civilized peoples to the “demonization” of the universe” (Frazer, 1926, p. 9). Most scholarly observers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seemed to agree that the nature spirituality characteristic of early peoples and the world’s remaining “primitive” essentially would be supplanted by higher, monotheistic forms of no religion at all.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION, SECOND EDITION
They assumed that although such religion might be regres-
sive, it could not be considered dangerous or threatening at least to cultural and material progress.

More recently, however, a chorus of voices has suggested that some forms of nature religions have been or can be per-
nicious or at least not as ecologically beneficial as they may seem upon cursory observation.

Drawing on analyses of dominance and power in the work of the philosopher Michel Foucault and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in Nature Religion in America (1990) Cath-

erine Albanese argued that native religion, although it is commonly thought to promote social and ecological well-

being, often masks an impulse to dominate nature as well as other people. Specifically, she analyzed how some religions of nature that were prominent during the period of the na-

tion's invention justified the subjugation of both the natural world and the continent's indigenous peoples. She also wide-

ned the field of view in regard to religion by including in it her own definition of religious phenomena in which nature was "a compelling religious context" and "culture broker" even if it was not considered sacred. The study of nature reli-


gion, including, broadly "the natural dimension of religion," Albanese concluded, can illuminate "persistent patterns in past and present American life" (Albanese, 1990, pp. 200, 13).

Albanese's analyses of nature religion caused consterna-
tion among many scholars and religionists who had a positive attitude toward nature religion. By broadening the subject and complicating the understanding of its consequences, Al-

banese's study precipitated significant shifts and a more com-

plicated discussion of the nature variable in religion among practitioners of nature religions and scholars. A number of scholars concluded that there had been worldwide affinities and historic connections among some nature religions (es-

pecially northern European paganism and various pagan re-

vival movements) and racist worldviews as well as between nature religions and radical environmental movements, which some viewed as possible to violence.

Perhaps the most influential among these critics was Anna Bramwell, whose Blood and Soil: Walter Damrosch and His-

ler's Green Party (1985) was followed by Ecology in the Twentieth Century (1989). Bramwell's main argument has been that the environmental movement, which can be traced roughly to the middle of the nineteenth century, represents an "entirely new" "nature worshiping" ideology in which "a pantheistic religious feeling is the norm" (Bramwell, 1989, p. 17, cf. p. 13). This religious ideology, which she called "Ecolo-

gism," can be fused into many ideologies, she acknowledged. However, she argued that it has had its strongest affinities and historical connections to racist programs (such as essen-


cial and political movements (such as Nazism) that rejected Enlightenment rationality, often in favor of an negation cited.

Bramwell's discussion of Earnest Haackel (1834–1919), who coined the term ecology in General Morphology in

1866, is noteworthy. She was careful to point out that Haackel did not promote Nazi ideology. He did, however, promote an ecologic spirituality that would be grafted to racist worldviews, according to Bramwell. Although Haackel was atheistic and hostile to traditional monotheism, Bram-

well believes he strongly advocated monistic pantheism, the belief that there is no supernatural realm and no spiritual substance distinct from matter but that nature in all its forms is divine. According to Bramwell, "Haackel's most important legacy was his worship of nature, the belief that man and nature were one, and that to damage one was to damage the other" (Bramwell, 1989, p. 53). To the extent that she was correct, the analysis of environmentalism as a new religious form would become important to religious studies.

Other books followed that explored connections be-

tween what some have called right-wing ecology and nature religion, including several by Nichola Goodrick-Clarke that found occult and pagan roots in Nazism (Goodrick-Clarke, 1994, 1998, 2002). Richard Steigmann-Gall's The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity 1919-1945 (2005), however, argues largely to the contrary that Christianity, at least an unorthodox strain of it, was far more important to Nazi ideology than were the few Nazis who were thinking romantically about the revival of a pre-Christian, Aryan na-

ture religion that probably never existed.

Those studies of the Nazi period should be compared to fieldwork-based studies of contemporary movements. For example, the Swedish anthropologist Marius Gardell, in Gods of the Blind: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism (2003), found significant affinities between contemporary nature religion, environmental ideals, and racist ideologies in Europe and North America. Another important work that took a fieldwork-based approach was edited by Jeffrey Ka-

plan and Helen Lins and titled The Cosmic Milieu (2002), after an influential article by the sociologist Colin Campbell (1972). Several of its articles analyzed whether oppositional nature religions and environmental movements had devel-

oped or were likely to develop racist and violent characteristics. Although the connotations varied with the specific sub-

ject matter, the h-c-c represented a turn toward field research in the effort to discern how nature religions are fused to po-

litcal ideologies.

NATURE RELIGIONS AS SPIRITUALLY PERCEPTIVE, AUTHEN-

TIC, AND ECOLOGICALLY BENEFICIAL. Two historical works that bring the reader from ancient times nearly up to the present age of historical ideas, Clarence Glacken's Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1967) and Donald Worster's Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas (1977), demonstrate both the marginaliza-

tion of nature religion and its persistence as a religious force.

Early in Traces on the Rhodian Shore, for example, Glacken urges his readers not to "forget the echoes of the pri-

mordial Mediterranean world: its age-old veneration of Mother Earth" or its "sorological paganism" (Glacken,

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION, SECOND EDITION

ECOLOGY AND RELIGION: ECOLOGY AND NATURE RELIGIONS 2663
1967; pp. 13, 15). This is an appropriate injunction for the study of nature religion. In Glacken's and other studies, including Worster's Nature's Economy, it becomes clear that whereas belief in specific earthly and celestial nature gods may have declined or disappeared, the perception that nature's places and forces are sacred, which gave rise to classical paganism, has not withered away. The presence of sacred "natural religion" at least episodically, threatens the hegemony of the non-theistic consensus and less challenging secular, scientific views.

Writing at the dawn of the "age of reason," the Jewish philosopher and theologian Baruch ș B不用Transcript) Spinoza (1632-1677) and the French social theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), provide two influential examples of such a challenge. Spinoza articulated a sophisticated modal pantheism that has directly or indirectly influenced generations of antipacism pantheistic nature religions. Those embracing of being influenced by such philosophy include some of the greatest theologists and philosophers of the modern period, including Friedrich Schleiermacher, Alfred North Whitehead, and later generations of "process" philosophers and theologians, who have been either pantheistic or panentheistic in worldview. Spinoza was also very influential on the early philosopher-architects of the deep ecology movement, such as the Norwegian Arne Naess and the American George Sessions, as well as on a number of recent thinkers who have explicitly promoted pantheist religions, including Michael Levine (1994), Robert Corrington (1997), and Donald Crosby (2002).

As at least important was Rousseau's inspirational role in the so-called Romantic movement. Rousseau rejected traditional, religious views of the divine, "natural religion" has, he believed, helps people discern God's existence in the order and harmony of nature. For Rousseau, natural religions were logical outgrowths of human observation and rational investigations of the natural world. He argued that the human experience of the sacred dimension of life represents a universal, not false consciousness, but an authentic religious perception. A generation of religious scholars and popular writers have followed his lead.

Equally important has been the work of the anthropologists who have developed several substantial specializations that have become known as ethnography, traditional ecological knowledge, and ecological anthropology or biological ecolology. In various ways these disciplines' work has understood indigenous societies and presented cultures as well in order to understand the relationships between ecosystems, livelihoods, and religions. The pioneers of these approaches, including the anthropologists Richard Schotter (1961), William Balda (1994), Ray Rappaport (1979, 1999), Gerard Belhadi-Dolaphcn (1976, 1996), Steven Lounan (1991), and F. Robert Boas (1999), concluded that indigenous societies and their spiritualities and religious practices and ethics, if not disrupted by outsiders, are usually environmentally sustainable and do not reduce biodiversity. Many of these theorists have grounded their understanding of nature religions and religions in nature in evolutionary theory, as well as religious literacy and nature religions. For Rousseau, nature religions are proper, because nature is equal to nature, as well as for imagining relations between humans and nature. The religions of nature religions have found a new voice in the modern period, and the religions of nature religions have been given a new life as a result of the work of these theorists.
ECONOMICS AND RELIGION.

To explore the recency between religion and economics, this article takes to its starting point the beginning of modern economic theory and examines the perspectives on the role that have developed within the sociology of religion since the late nineteenth century.

A sustained scholarly interest in the relationship between religion and economics crystallized in a number of Western societies in the early years of the twentieth century. Since that time it has been a topic of considerable research and debate.

DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY. The discussion of the relationship between economics and religion is plagued by a general problem having to do with how appropriate it is to speak of separate domains—such as the economic and the religious—in peoplism, especially, pluralism, societies, where such distinctions were or are not part of everyday life. Indeed, only during the last two hundred years or so have people become accustomed to speak of the economy, even though the term was used as long ago as the fourth century BCE by Aristotle to designate the relationships among members of the economic household. Anthropologists were particularly concerned to show, in the face of the commercial expansion of the time, that human wants and needs are not unlimited and that useful things are not, by their nature, scarce. In spite of the great expansion of trade, profit making, and equality, price setting by market forces and the appearance of large-scale manufacture during the centuries following Aristotle, it was not until as early as the end of the eighteenth century that “the economy” became fully theorized (and not just) in the Western world as a relatively autonomous realm of human action. That period saw the breakthrough in Great Britain of the discipline that came to be called political economy and the first use of the term government by British thinkers. The perception of the economy as a relatively autonomous realm (and, in the view of many of those who specialized in analyzing it, the most fundamental human realm) went hand in hand with the view that religion was of rapidly diminishing significance.

PRIMACY OF ECONOMIC ASPECT. The prevailing view among social scientists and historians has been that the economy took a long period to assert Greek civilization to the nineteenth century, because disseminated from the social fabric, especially in the Western world. By the late nineteenth century, however, economics was seen as...