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WHO GUARDS THE GUARDIANS? THE PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CRITERIA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GUARDIANSHIP

A thesis
presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Geography
at Massey University

PETER ANTHONY RAINE
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ABSTRACT

In the modern era, solutions to many environmental problems appear to be beyond the reach of a dialogue based solely on argumentation, dialectics, and the presentation of 'evidence'. The purpose of this study is to construct a bridge between incommensurable ways of perceiving reality, a bridge which can facilitate dialogue across worldview boundaries on environmental issues. The methodological framework underlying this study is derived from the work of Raimon Panikkar, who in a search for a means to encourage interreligious dialogue, developed a three-step interpretative method. Panikkar's hermeneutic model was originally designed to overcome the limitations imposed by a single approach to ascertaining truth, i.e., the secular rational approach espoused by the Western tradition. The framework outlined in Panikkar's diatopical model can be used as a basis for the conceptualisation of a new theoretical model which can provide for complex environmental issues to be approached from the perspective of differing traditions. Both practical and theoretical considerations are presented in two major case studies; the question of time and timing, and forests as sacred places. The model provides a pathway to link theological, philosophical, and ecological aspects of environmental issues as they are presented to different peoples. Using the three-step model, a symbolic discourse is arrived at which shows how an exchange of ecological wisdom can be facilitated. If the views of 'others' can be validated as being equally intelligible as one's own, then meaningful dialogue can proceed. From meaningful dialogue, practical and theoretical criteria for environmental guardianship can be elucidated. The question of who will guard the guardians can then be answered.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Kalaveti Batibasaga willingly donated his time to explain the essence of Fijian attitudes towards, and values for forests on his home island of Viti Levu. I am also greatly indebted to Kalaveti and his wife Sera for their hospitality during my visit to their home in Navola village. I also wish to thank Peter Schouls for his contribution on the philosophy of John Locke, and Stuart Lawrence for his help on the interpretation of certain early Greek terms. Thanks also to my friends Charlotte Sunde, who willingly edited my final copy, and Adrian Heays for his many suggestions on certain chapters. Many thanks to you both for many inspiring conversations and discussions over numerous dinners and coffee breaks.
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Errata

Because of the need to use different word processing software programmes for printing purposes, default printer settings resulted in some unintended formatting changes. Some footnote texts thus appear on the page following the footnote reference number. Associated changes have also resulted in missing paragraph breaks on page 31 [at the end of line 2], page 87, and page 315.