
Anne Primavesi's latest work, *Exploring Earthiness: The Reality and Perception of Being Human Today* joins the impressive body of work in the field of religion and ecology that seeks to illuminate the roots of our contemporary ecological crisis. A widespread and profound rejection of our own human "earthiness," she argues, combined with our perceived superiority to other Earth creatures, has resulted in the "appropriation, colonization, industrialization, monetization, marketization, and militarization of Earth's resources" (125)—in short, an epic desacralization of Earth's Gaian glory. Primavesi seeks to explore the mental categories that comprise this assumption of human superiority and urges their dismantling. The net is cast wide: this book examines centuries of Western religious, cultural and intellectual axiomatic assumptions, and calls for a new way of thinking about Christianity.

While the scope of the book's content is indeed formidable, and the dissection of axiomatic assumptions familiar, Primavesi distinguishes her work from many similar inquiries in this field by offering both a creative thematic organization to the text and by honing in on some particularly influential developments. Thirteen 10-page chapters with titles such as “Appropriated Earth,” “Reformed Earth,” “Devalued Earth” and “Marketized Earth” each explore the origins and development of a particular way that humans relate to the earth. Several crucial themes link the chapters and underscore the text's purpose: Platonic dualisms, the militarist character of Christian Empire, John Locke's writings, and the evolving concept of wealth. These themes each resurface throughout the chapters, reinforcing one another and overlapping just enough to create cohesion.

Primavesi argues that advancements in science have neither displaced the “mythic and religious strength” of the pillars of classical logic and their Mani-
chean dualisms, nor resulted in increased respect for the Earth and its diverse species. In fact, scientific findings strongly support the Gaia hypothesis, Earth's oneness, but this has not altered our idea of human superiority or our supposed divine right to treat Earth like property.

The “Colonized Earth” chapter, for example, incorporates several of the book’s overarching themes and illustrates Primavesi’s nuanced insights and robust scholarship. It begins, as does each chapter, with a quotation to introduce the theme; in this case juxtaposed excerpts on the concept of private property from a First Nations commentary and John Locke’s Second Treatise. While pre-colonized peoples recognized their interdependence with the natural world, the colonizers’ worldview is one that legitimated extreme violence, enslavement, genocide, and unbridled resource extraction to serve the golden calves of money and property acquisition. Primavesi explores and unpacks the emergence of this worldview that has so profoundly impacted the entire earth community.

Ancient Greece saw economies shift from barter to acquisition-based, but later in Medieval Christian Europe, she argues, an underlying desire for eternal life transcended the desire for objects. This matters because “just as accumulating more property meant more money ‘saved’ for future generations, the colonizing process was categorized as accumulating moral, ‘heavenly’ capital in terms of ‘souls saved,’” (58) which allowed the church to bless and endorse the colonial enterprise. The souls that needed saving were assumed to be inherently unearthly and immaterial, manifesting in an “implicit and sometimes explicit disdain of earth, of [pagan] ‘earthy’ peoples” (58).

Certainly some prophetic voices objected to the colonial process and Primavesi honors the contributions of figures such as Bartolome De Las Casas and John Wesley, but the idea of Earth as human property, advanced powerfully by Locke and enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, made itself at home in the discourse of colonialism. In striving to possess more of Earth as property or money, she argues, individuals and corporate bodies are “blind to the community of earthly life,” resulting in the “gradual destruction of Gaia/Earth though the weapons of war, commerce, and industrialization” (63, 64).

Other chapters proceed in a similar fashion. “Monetized Earth,” for example, argues that when wealth is made intangible, separate from any direct relationship to the land, marketeers are kept at a “physical, mental, and moral distance from the effects of their exploitation of land and its inhabitants” with no concern for its “spoilage” (67). The “Peaceable Earth” chapter explores the close links in Christianity between finance, trade, and violence, and how the “spiritualization” of continuous warfare and Christianity’s theology of conquest have had devastating effects on people and the earth. Here Primavesi presented one