

The Carob Pod

An Anthropological Guide to Permaculture

Volume 1



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The Carob Pod

An Anthropological Guide to Permaculture

Dedicated to the environmental
movement as an act of God



*Knowing the end of one cycle and the beginning
of another, that is what makes for success*

Special thanks to all my supporters, not least
my girlfriend who gave me the impetus in those
last few hours

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Tarraco

If I would be a stone block beneath your city
Do you think to keep me here forever
Time will tell when your walls tumble down
I'd still be there reminding you of past glory

Better to build strong from the bottom upwards
Upon my shoulders will rise an empire
Anything less, then count your days, one for each year
For you would disappear into the empty spaces

I can stand for millennia but you must understand my substance
Drawn from the earth I embody its whole strength
One after the other we join in greater unity
Then if we all stood alone clinging to each other's distant looks

If the earth moves I move with it
Such is my permanence I merely extend from her womb
Like a baby crying out for her mother
I nestled amongst the forts of her bosom

Rivers carved courses through me
Earth mounted hills upon me
Wind left me exposed to drying
The sun bore me an internal radiance

I shined to the sound of soldiers clashing
Worn out to the tune of wailing women
Lined the burials of the fallen victorious
Drank their blood in votive remembrance

Though root and leaf will pass me by
There remains a figment of industrial life
Sweat and labour no sooner availed
I stand as the embodiment of prevailing time

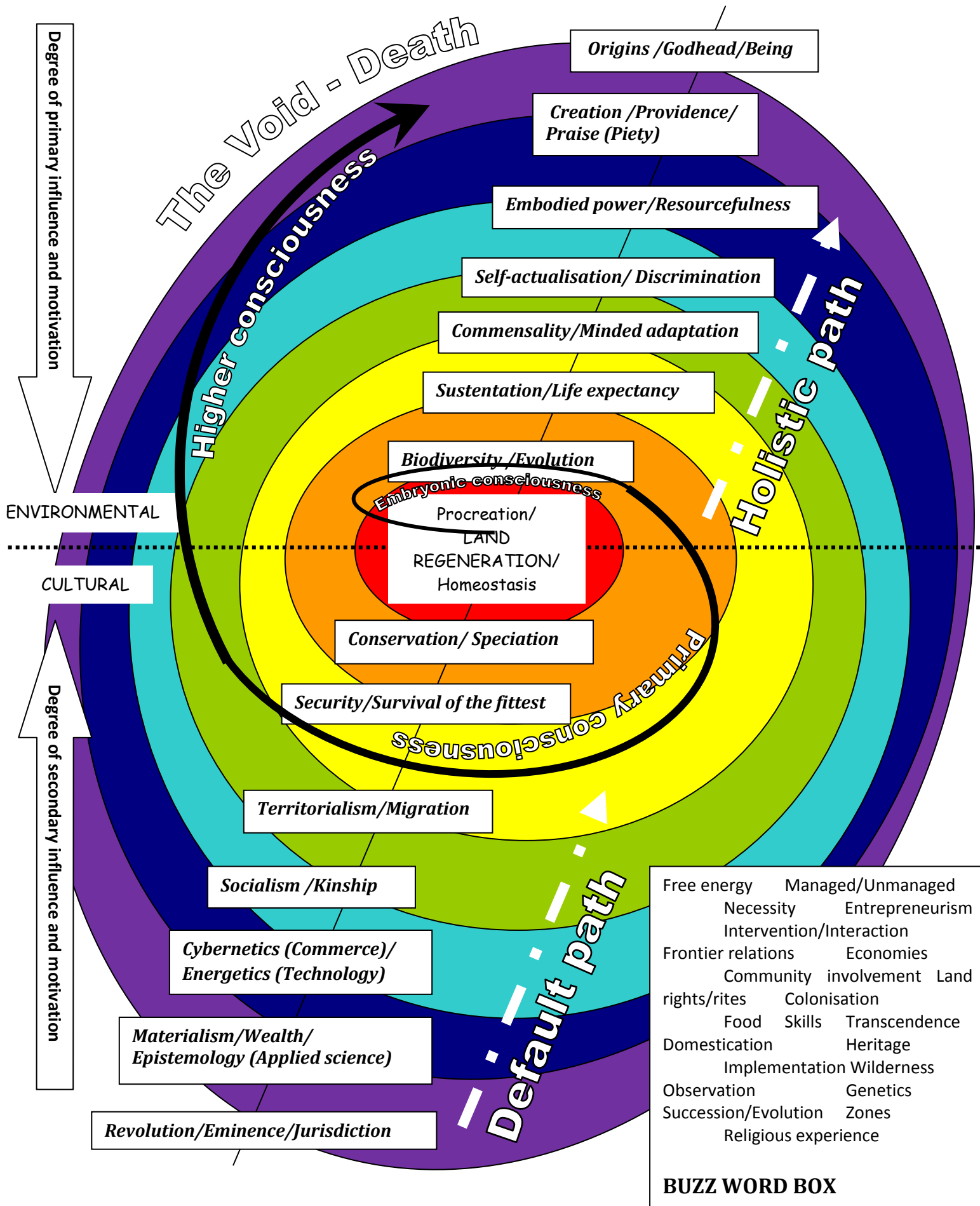
The fading inscriptions all but hasten the end
They read something of a great man
Who came, who saw, who conquered
Who nevertheless resided in God's name

I believe permaculture literature severely lacks on the religious front and most of the time the spiritual is implicit in its writing. This book was generated out of my personal response to plug a hole in the movement and to show something of the contextual roots of our mentalities and thinking behind it. The concept needs to evolve beyond Mollison and Holmgren even though I extensively use the latter in reference to his modern principles of ecology and sociology.

In the face of the early energy crisis the world experienced in the 70's the Church were also there promoting their own kind of environmental awareness. Unfortunately we rarely hear much of their meaningful directives because in secular societies they are just not taken seriously enough. There needs to be more than a renaissance of spirituality, we need to understand our psycho-religious roots if we are ever to deal with the problem of the environmental crisis towards a fuller perspective. In this book I am showing how the academic sciences throw light on sustainable practice and how in particular through biological and ecological processes they define a genetic memory that needs to be addressed in light of our personal and cultural histories. I believe I come up with some ground-breaking ideas with scientific backing for evolutionary theories that may explain more on where we are heading towards. In elucidation of these points I use historical examples from Mediterranean and Western milieus intertwined with my own subjective and pragmatic approach to life. Underlying it all is a *modern* belief in God, and scope for redefining our religious viewpoints. Hence I travel into metaphysical realms in order to show that science does not have all the answers towards mitigating the human condition. I likewise allude to some interesting visions concerning our future. The culmination of all my thinking extends beyond the bounds of this book, since I believe evolution is measurable through language definition, the very process of which on the upper levels of consciousness is dynamic and interactive. Fundamental though higher states of mind are, they represent culture only at the fringes, albeit culture is a consolidated phenomenon. The great achievement of individuals has to be consummated in natural biological relations for evolution to be stored in genetic memory. It requires the mixing of the gene pool for speciation to be actively grounded, and sometimes this process may take hundreds of years to see fruition. The very act of procreation begins as a spiritual process and correlates with an expansion of the mind. The union of individuals and continued reproduction of life-forms is the basis for material manifestation. Through consummation our sense-scapes define a given consciousness, evolving as it does back into spiritual actualisation. It is a process of the self moving into the higher realms of omniscience and omnipotence coupled as it is with the maturity of the individual to understand the needs of his or her society. This individuation is sympathetic of a religious mindset, hence procreation, as the basis for life in this universe, is experienced in multiple levels of engagement and points towards the nurturing of the individual towards enlightenment and Oneness. Problems in society to operate as a collective manifest when spiritual engagement is sacrificed at the expense of the natural checks that would normally serve to mitigate excesses of behaviour. As a race the religious mind-frame that cultivated our reverence for Creation, and through extension environmental determinism, has been misunderstood and misappropriated in the cultural milieus of time immemorial, for it is here that the true value of the religious experience has lost ground to convention and bigotry. At the extreme of culture though, one finds that responsible individuals continue to carry the flag of enlightenment, leaving society to no more than a phenomenon of static ideals by which the repressed individual falters on a default path. The natural result of this is a loss of spirituality and the healthy, dynamic lifestyle that raises the individual into Godhead. The culmination of all this thinking generated the following mind map found at the end of chapter 7.

Land Regeneration – The Ecological/Spiritual Imperative

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- BUZZ WORD BOX**
- Free energy
 - Managed/Unmanaged
 - Necessity
 - Entrepreneurism
 - Intervention/Interaction
 - Frontier relations
 - Economies
 - Community involvement
 - Land rights/rites
 - Colonisation
 - Food
 - Skills
 - Transcendence
 - Domestication
 - Heritage
 - Implementation
 - Wilderness
 - Observation
 - Genetics
 - Succession/Evolution
 - Zones
 - Religious experience

There is no doubt that the original inspiration for this mind mapping was my ground-up activities in both London and Spain. In fact everything I was doing seem to be detaching myself from the jural British system as I swayed to and fro between legal authorities. No doubt in my four years of celibacy and complete abstention from sexual activity I was becoming spiritually influential, pushing myself further and further into Godhead whilst the reinforcement of my ecological activities were beginning to gain a following. At times I could draw up to 15 volunteers all busily working away on the allotment whilst I spread my wings further afield and travelled back and forth to Cardiff and Coed Hills, probably one of the most active permaculture environmental projects in the country. I was increasing my production of educational courses centred on craft and ecological awareness and I also joined the Board of the Permaculture Association where I considered myself influential in the instigation of children's activities and the move towards greater legal accountability. I made it quite obvious to them that permaculture needed a personality in London and at the time the two biggest groups were Naturewise in the north and my own group, South London Permaculture. The hub of all my activities was the back garden and over a period of just under 10 years I extended out into the railway embankment exercising my lawful right to grow food for myself. The name of this project and original website was called *Soteriologic Garden* and emphasized the spiritual dimension of ecology as a death-rebirth cycle and the means to emancipation. When I first started running introductory courses in permaculture I brought students to this space in order to educate them on the necessity of wilderness in our environments. At times this area took on biblical themes in its personal meaning to me - I saw it as a God-given right to colonise it and a natural extension to my home and garden. In retrospect it was the corridor to the re-identification of my psyche with the greater landscape, rooted as it were in the indigenous acts of the ancestors and the tribal peoples of old. My first responsibility was to improve the area and in this I took over from where my father left off by maintaining the bramble scrub and eating the blackberries. In fact my father had cut a fox's trail through it and made detachable three railings in the old iron fencing so that they could easily be removed. I worked on the area immediately adjoining my garden and eventuated to dismantle that part of the fence altogether to allow for direct access. In between the railings of the flattened fence I grew vegetables. As I continued to expand outwards I started clearing the buried junk of decades of fly-tipping. After a few years of planting and maintenance I had an area about the size of an allotment. On one occasion I built a cob oven using clay excavated from the front of the house during the gas works (my first ever cob oven) and it looked like a long barrow. My friend came down the day before to help out and we lit it to see how well it would bake. No joke, it was like being in the cloud of Mount Sinai, we had completely lost the railway line and the opposite embankment. But we persevered and as it continued to glow during the night the clay cured to a dry consistency.

And this brings me kindly back to my original mind map, the Holistic Design chart. At the centre lies our spiritual vocation - land regeneration - the spiritual abode of matter. The simplicity of the original scheme tried to relate cause with effect, but after long deliberations I realised this to be quite spurious. It would eventually be substituted with environmental and cultural determinism, respectively. With its development came multi-dimensionality. Working outwards one begins with the understanding of natural responsibility in order to fulfil ecological roles. In time the complexity of my thinking could not allow this simple appreciation of nature for it did not express my dynamic mind. My celibacy creates a psychological awareness of pattern thinking and engulfs every discipline I engage with. So with this I looked at what truly constitutes the fundamental drive to life in general that this human mind shares as an embryonic consciousness with other organisms. I knew that the self-perpetuating success of nature was rooted in its own preservation and divisibility, the latter reflected in the social need towards creating ethnic diversity; but where to place these synonyms as an influence of the environmental or the cultural. The word 'evolution' joggled back and forth; was I talking about evolution in a cultural sense for surely that is how it is measured? Actually not, it is just the way evolution is discovered and contextualised but the nuances of biological make-up would

suggest that there is a fine line between members of the same species. What I understood about evolution is that it is an individual phenomenon. As I say, our success in nature as individuals is consolidated through the act of procreation but evolution first happens on the genetic level through consciousness expansion and refinement. It is here that we evolve through genetic pre-adaptation what Schauberger indirectly related to as the materialisation of spirit. The basis of life on this planet is this Mind/Spirit, hence in both the environmental and cultural planes there is an evolution towards spiritual enlightenment. But the other great revelation I had concerning society is that as a consolidation of individual experiences it is in fact a (de)volution - it simply is. It can only develop on its fringes whence its pioneers push the boundaries of by a collective of individual minds. History recounts the record. I symbolically refer to them later as the brooks and tributaries that give rise to great masses of water, aggregated into rivers, seas and oceans. When you can grasp this concept you will understand that humanity has little changed in the last few thousand years of recorded history but the potential of individualism increases dramatically. The normal picture that is painted remains one of consolidated experiences; our leaders, élites, eccentric scientists and philosophers, magicians and sages, mystics and prophets, are earnestly pursued by the masses like salmon returning upstream to its breeding grounds. It is the great emancipation of the human soul. (Chapter 8 explores in greater detail this characterisation between the individual and society and will be available as a separate publication.)

My original thinking also gave priority of healing over wilderness preservation. I played with these epithets. In the above model I looked at the basis of human existence extended from its animalistic roots and saw healing as a natural outcome of sustenance. It was my first glimpse into what I would later term as self-actualisation. With one's basic salient needs met one need not actively pursue social modes of healing because from here onwards healthy individualism is cultivated as a spiritual act of transcending man's evolutionary disposition from nature. Hence Maslow detached self-actualisation from homeostatic integrity and this was tied in with the basic acquisition of re-integration with the landscape, or providence. In the design chart after playing with multiple combinations I took out 'healing' completely and related it in general to the path that one must take in actualising the outer spheres of influence. However, I would soon come to the reasoning that if there was a holistic path to life there must also be a correlative development of default operations fragmented from it. It is important then, to view both environmental and cultural planes as experiencing both holistic and default motivations towards system integrity.

Dimensions of interpretation began to grow then, and I wondered where spirituality and religion came into all this as opposed to materialism. The final model avoided this appositional delineation and in fact what I generated instead was an organic diagram that expressed matter as central to biological actuality whilst spirit/energy is apparent more towards its outer edges. It was only then that I fully understood the diagram to represent evolution on one level and (de)volution on another. I naturally equated this with individualism and social repression respectively, which is not to say that societies as a whole cannot express the same dynamic organic development as individuals do. I reiterate, societies are constituted of individuals expressing freedom of will; it is culture that takes a static appraisal of developments. The analogy is that of a football team or in more recent times the development of the British Olympic Games which had much the same effect on the general public as would a very charismatic leader. At the end of all of it there was an incredible feel-good factor. The reality of the matter is that what made the Games so successful were the hordes of prominent individuals including artists and sportsmen who promoted them from beginning to end. It bound the city into a social cohesion that was vindicated by sell-out events. A clearer representation of this phenomenon is elicited by national election campaigns. One charismatic leader is not enough but a leader in the true sense of the word sets off a chain reaction and rears everybody up onto a level of genetic fulfilment (self-actualisation). It hits the button so to speak and permeates throughout the populace not as any top-down experience but rather a collaborative effort towards

shared and identifiable success. The more self-empowered the populace the more citizen control ("ownership") there is through participation. It is democracy in the true sense of the word. As I say, what occurs beyond that dynamic stage generally is a consolidation process and individual dynamics are subsumed into rules and regulations conducive to hierarchical management structures. Much of the problems of society start here especially when that dynamic process of nurturing individual spirits is suppressed.

Thus as my book unfolded so did my conceptual framework and I searched through my dictionary locating words that could encumber multiple meanings. This, ultimately, is the measure of higher consciousness, the ability to amalgamate and grasp multiple concepts into new refined language patterns. Ultimately I realised that one-word epithets did not do justice to the broader interpretation of each sphere. For instance I group 'materialism' with 'wealth' and 'applied science' because I am recounting the nature of resource management towards social aspiration. In effect I am contextualising a passive framework in which its excessive exploitation will destroy its holistic application, but it does not negate the fact that these material interchanges must go on. All of these aspects can be gauged under a positive light and seen purely from humanity's vocation to collectively manage what is given freely in this world. As I say, the balance of power lies within the individual. But because of the tendency to greed and corruption of many aspiring individuals I nearly replaced the term 'materialism' with 'physics', closer in meaning to the need to elucidate the materialisation of spirit. As such this alternative term can conceptually move beyond the mundane interaction of matter and energy and refer more completely to cultural modes of healing practice, in response to the individual's experience of piety and reverence of nature. In fact, there was a word that could convey the quality of meaning I was looking for to saddle Creation and Providence, and that word is 'worship', even 'praise'. Originally I even used the phrase 'coming-to-knowledge' because I wanted to express indigenous modes of behaviour but then I decided upon the cultural aspect of applied science as being more generally encompassing in respect to the necessity of the establishment of social values.

In retrospect though, and I may change the chart in the publication of the 8th chapter to include the following changes, I settled on the word 'piety' because it conveys a sense of duty and devotion, as well as virtue. This is the nature of consciousness at higher levels; it is a form of self-perpetuation for the express purpose of preserving its own status. It is a state of mind that praises Creation and Providence. I feel tempted to change it even now for I rack my brains over its relationship with applied science. Maybe one would prefer the term 'faith' since even science has a distant arm of theory that is premised on assumptions. But in conclusion and of recent I came across the word 'epistemology' which is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope (limitations) of knowledge, more in accord with consolidated cultural values. It addresses mainly the following questions of what is knowledge, how it is acquired, and the extent that a given subject can be known? Wikipedia explains it as the debate that focuses on analyzing the nature of knowledge and how it relates to connected notions such as truth, belief, and justification. I was stumped here for a little while and was almost tempted to produce another sphere of influence. I needed to sleep on it a little more I think. Nevertheless, it is in line with the development inherent in self-actualisation as an awareness of the greater integrity of the whole. On an individual level I try to convey these sentiments through an appreciation of augmented consciousness. This is the spiritual life and pursuing after science and physical well-being need not be the mundane affair many modern people make it out to be. The term 'materialism' then, thus coupled with the application of knowledge, generalises its understanding more and ensures that those who fall onto the default path of development need neither accept religious notions of Creation and Providence blindly.

Likewise I wrestled with the concept of power. In the original scheme I did not want to use the term because it has had too many negative connotations. I also wanted to associate the term with God or the greater mind appreciated through spiritual awareness, thus I looked to make the individual self-effacing in this evolution of consciousness; power is now rescinded to its embodiment

of success in technique, as an act of genetic un-foldment. But history shows that some individuals do attain an overwhelming influence or hold over the masses and thus power is respected as a collective phenomenon namely out of fear of loss, as a neurosis of human nature. It followed that I would have to lose the now weakened attributes of simple political and economic goals in my original thinking to represent something more of the revolutionary nature of human existence and the temporal existence of earthly leaders, more so its cyclical phenomena. History repeats itself and with it develops the laws that capture the greater scheme of life. Godhead, on the other hand, lives on as a prophetic influence even after the death of the embodied soul.

This book progresses well. From its inception of the natural appreciation I had of life in a Catalonian landscape it extended beyond cultural history and in to the realms of metaphysics and science. I took the Catalonian model and emptied it of its baggage, analysing the modern secular thinking behind its Western economics and seeing the impending financial and energy crisis affect the lifestyle of its people. All this was juxtaposed with my lifestyle in a caravan cultivating olives and carobs with a practice that extends back thousands of years but which is now under threat. Hence I looked at the natural dynamics of social structures with both the individual's relation to ecology and also the communal management of resources. I am hotly influenced by the immediate going-ons of my vicinity, including the nearby quarries and the barking and shooting sounds of the hunters and their dogs in the nearby wilderness zones. Likewise I look at the psychology of my familial upbringing and see the encroaching neurosis of their existence, the spirals of destruction that define their fragmented, inefficient behaviour, the wastefulness of resources, the high-energy required to maintain huge amounts of pets, the lack of basic resources including water and electricity, the loss of neighbourly proximity and subsequent deprivation of community. Within this context I throw up the question of tourism and what defines the indigene as opposed to a tourist. I reflect this into the application of permaculture techniques through successful projects scattered around the region, themselves located in equally isolated circumstances. Most of all though I picture the construction of my own permaculture and house under the cultural heritage of a rocky landscape that begs the question of water accessibility and the apparent success of particular species. There are many examples that inspire me but in my own development I knew that if I wanted to find a religious precedent I would have to develop my own philosophies and techniques, looking at the mistakes of past civilisations and hinting at the possible development of an eco-community. In particular I study the characteristics of wilderness communities and the sense of Godhead that was cultivated within them. Likewise I look at their relationship to nature and the providence of food. In this I focus towards my psycho-historical roots within indigenous cultures in the face of imperialist attitudes namely Roman, including those of the Essenes and early Christians. Not least I take a chunk of the Spanish civil war and the influence of my grandfather, a captain who served for General Franco, upon my mother. Scattered throughout are my poetic, if not bardic, ramblings.

It is the ultimate quest of individualism; the pedagogic attributes that one is imbued with become the rays of light that followers attune to. As a Master's student in ecotheology I hope to impart a way of life that prophesises a forthcoming scenario, one which prepares the individual to deal with the natural regenerative forces in life. Overall, it is a coming-to-terms with death and its realisation as a portal into another existence. For this I take evolution by the scruff of the neck and elicit some theories concerning the development of the human and his essential aid - the domesticated dog. The reader should find this book an eye-opener because I have not read anything of the kind before. Our companionship with the natural world is the call of wilderness. It is here where man cultivates his highest consciousness.

