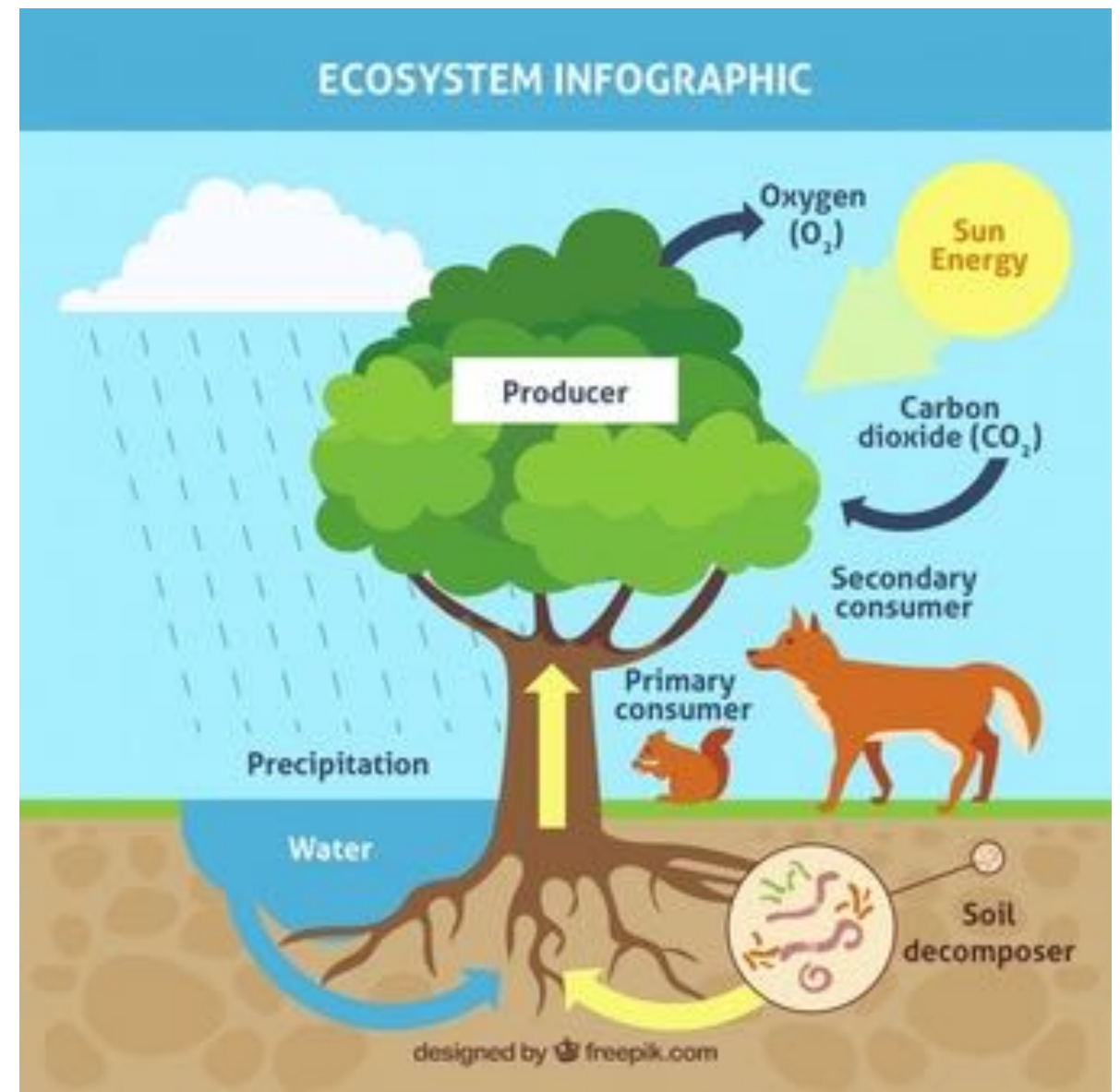


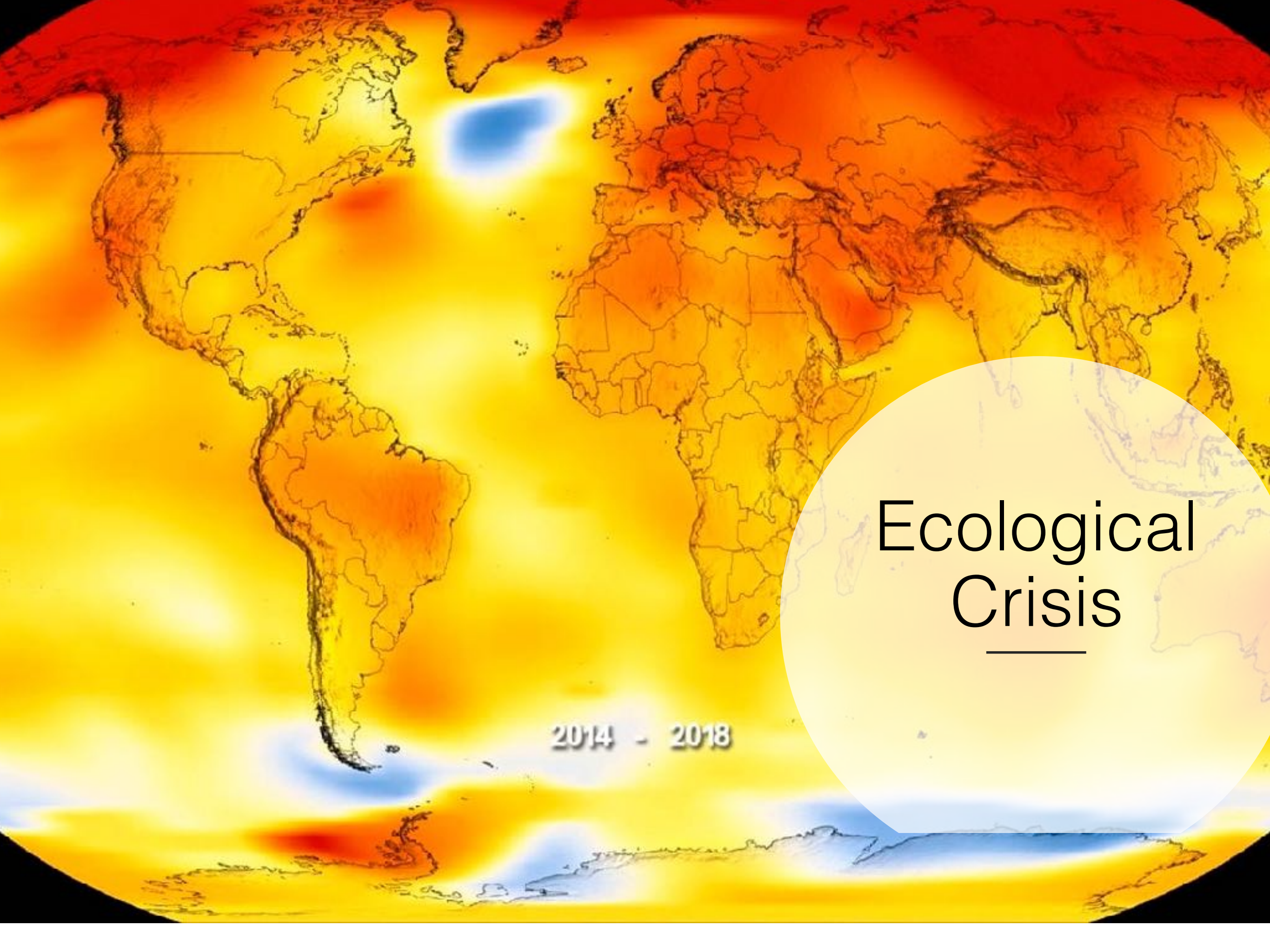
Sacred Geography: Introducing Ecology and Spirituality



Ecology

- Derived from Greek:
oikos = house/home
logos = study
- Study of our home.
- The science of the relationships between living organisms and their environment.
- Emphasises interconnection and interdependence of all life on Earth.
- Forces us to reposition ourselves within the 'ecosystem.'
- To understand that we are not separate from the world that surrounds us.





2014 - 2018

Ecological Crisis

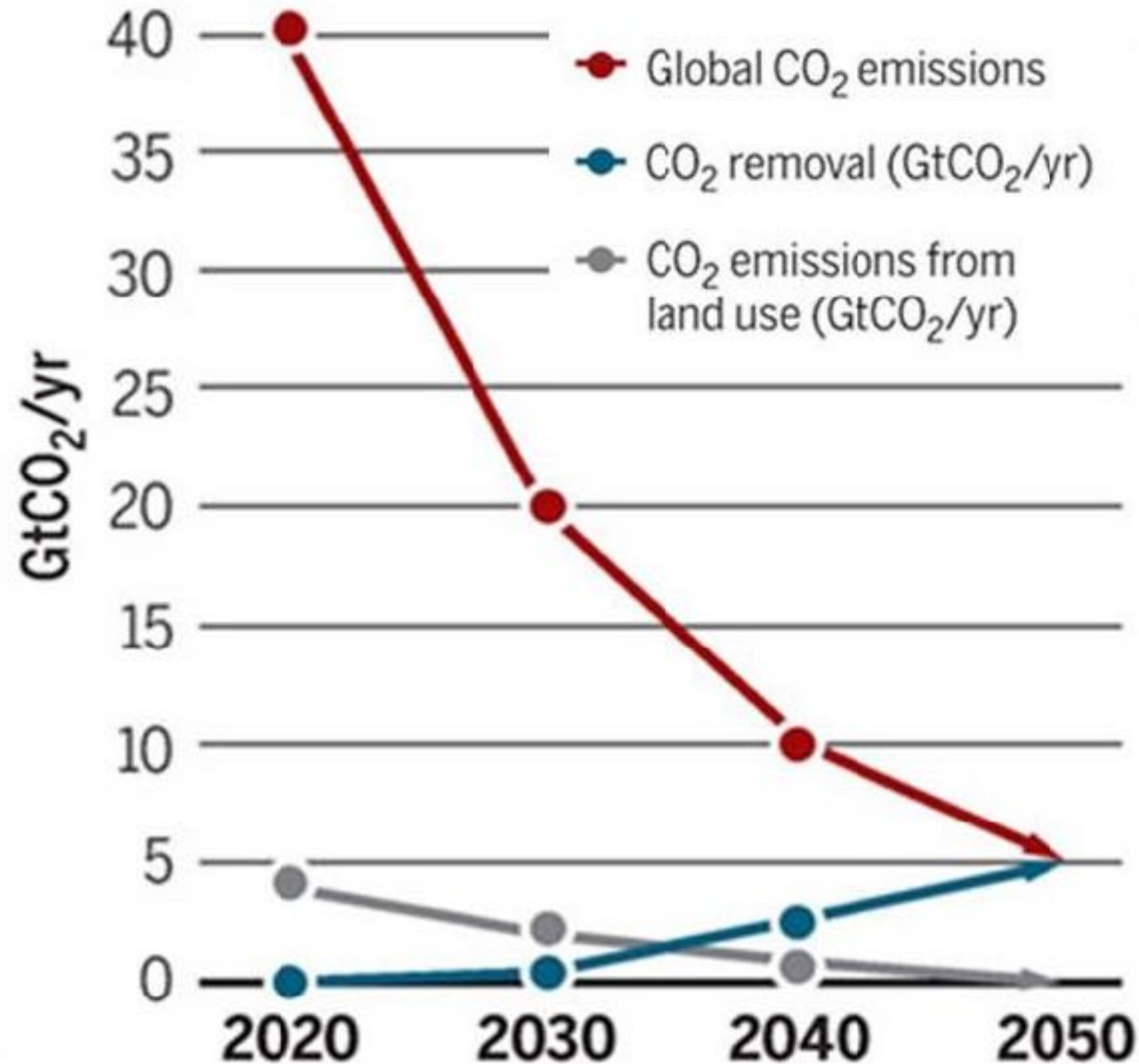
Top-down and bottom-up responses.



Waking to the Crisis

Paris Agreement

Global carbon law guiding decadal pathways



Responding to the Crisis

“We scientists don’t know how to do that”

“I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change.

I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems.

But I was wrong.
The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy...

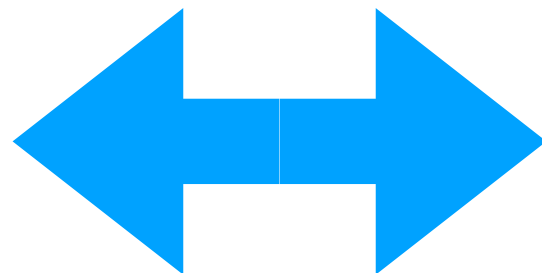
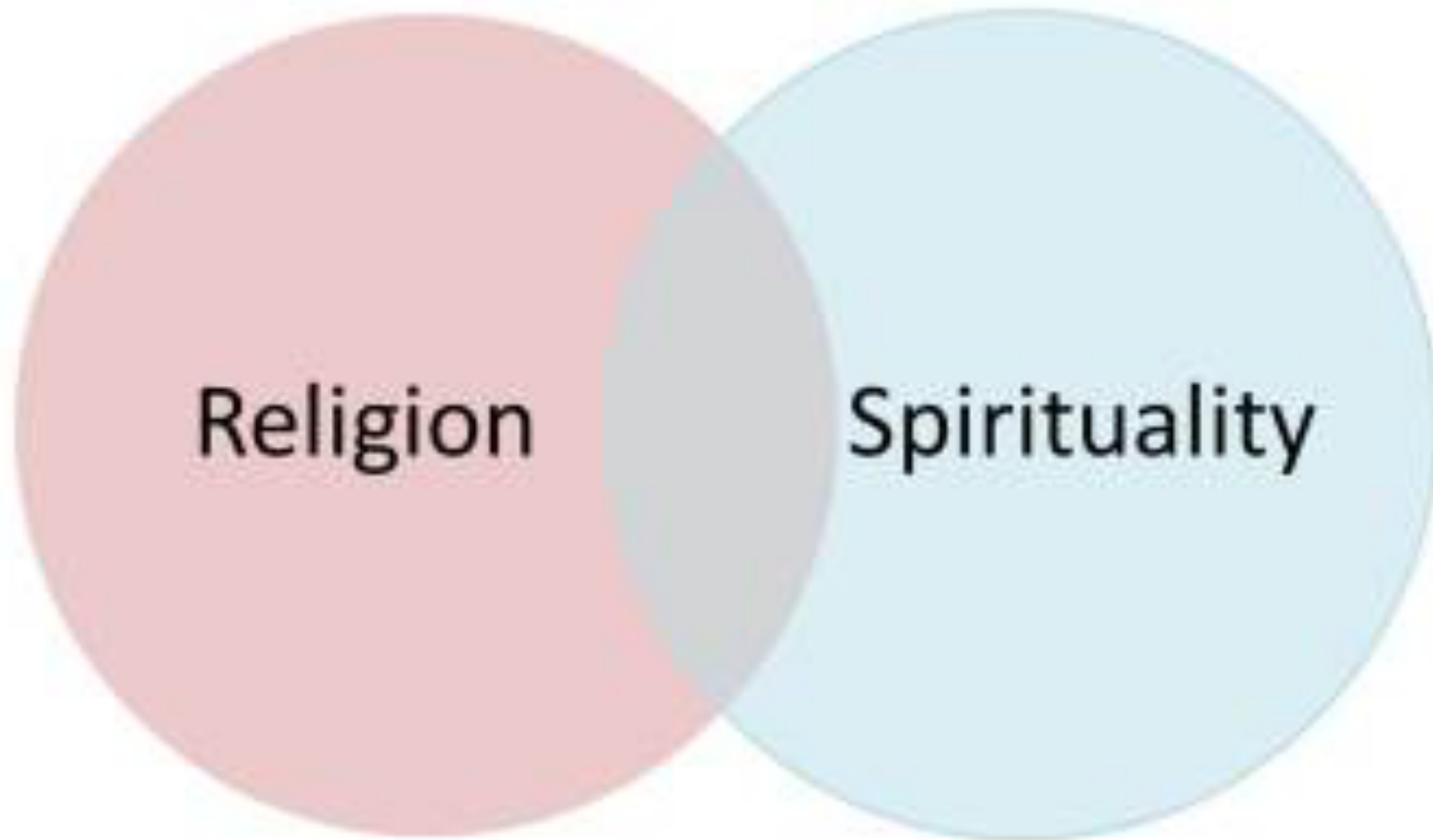
...and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation

- and we scientists don’t know how to do that.”

Gus Speth



Religion and Spirituality



The Greening of Religion

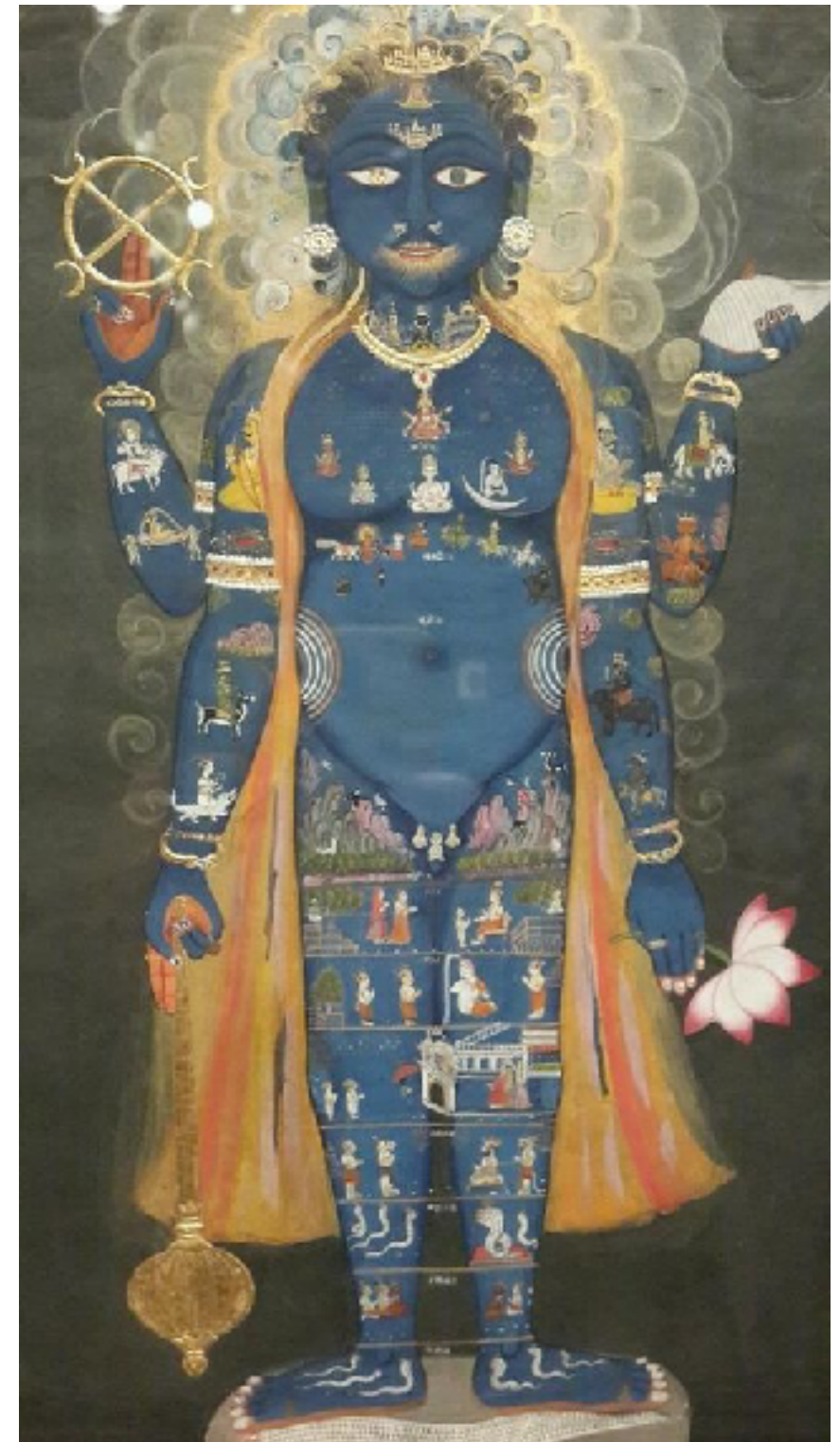
- “I urgently appeal...for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all”

(Pope Francis, 2015).



The Greening of Religion

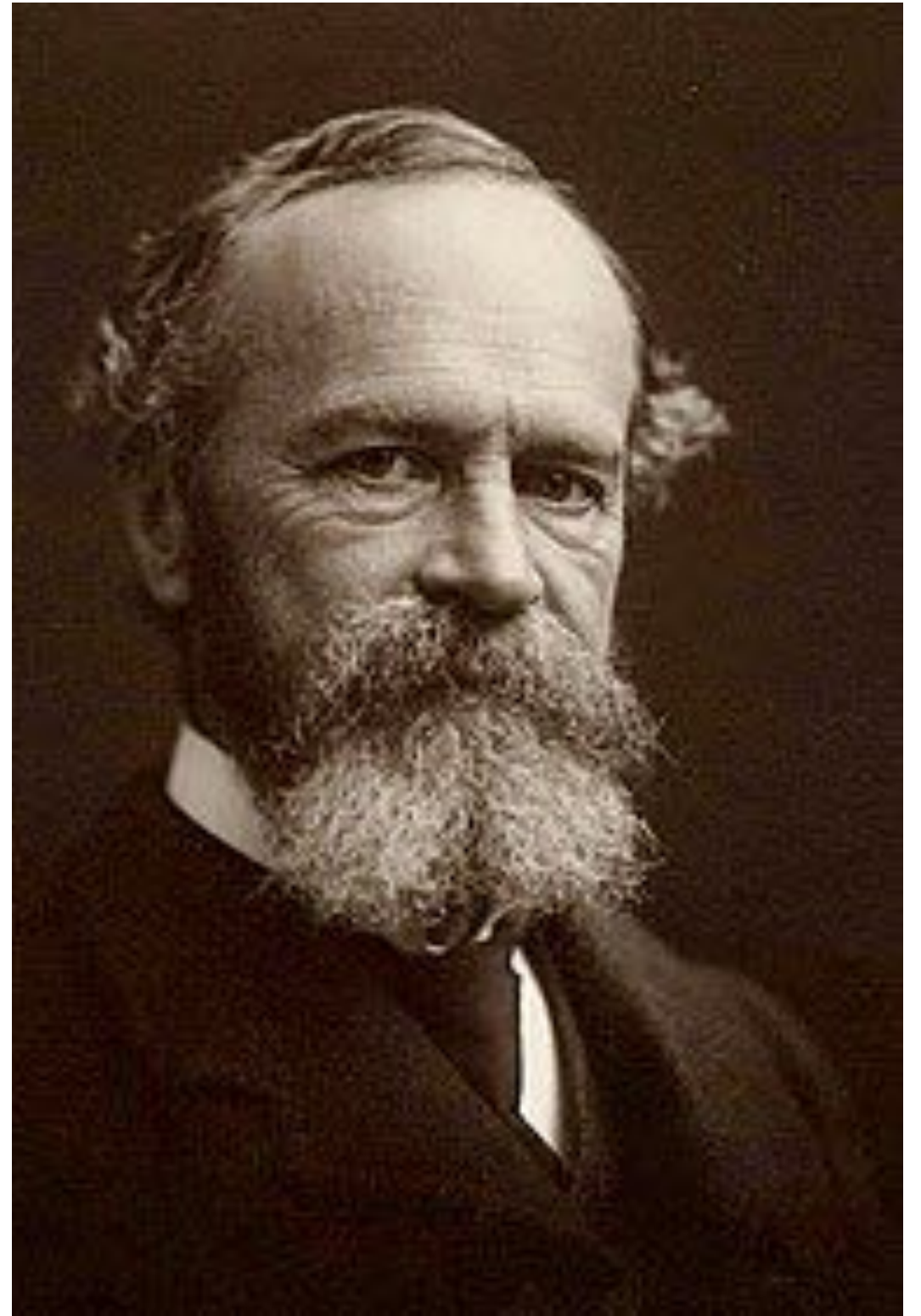
- From the Hindu declaration on climate change:
 - “all elements of reality are ‘organs of God’s body...the entire universe is to be looked upon as the energy of the Lord’”
- (cited in Chaplin, 2016, p. 3).



Personal Religion

- “...the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual[s] in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine”

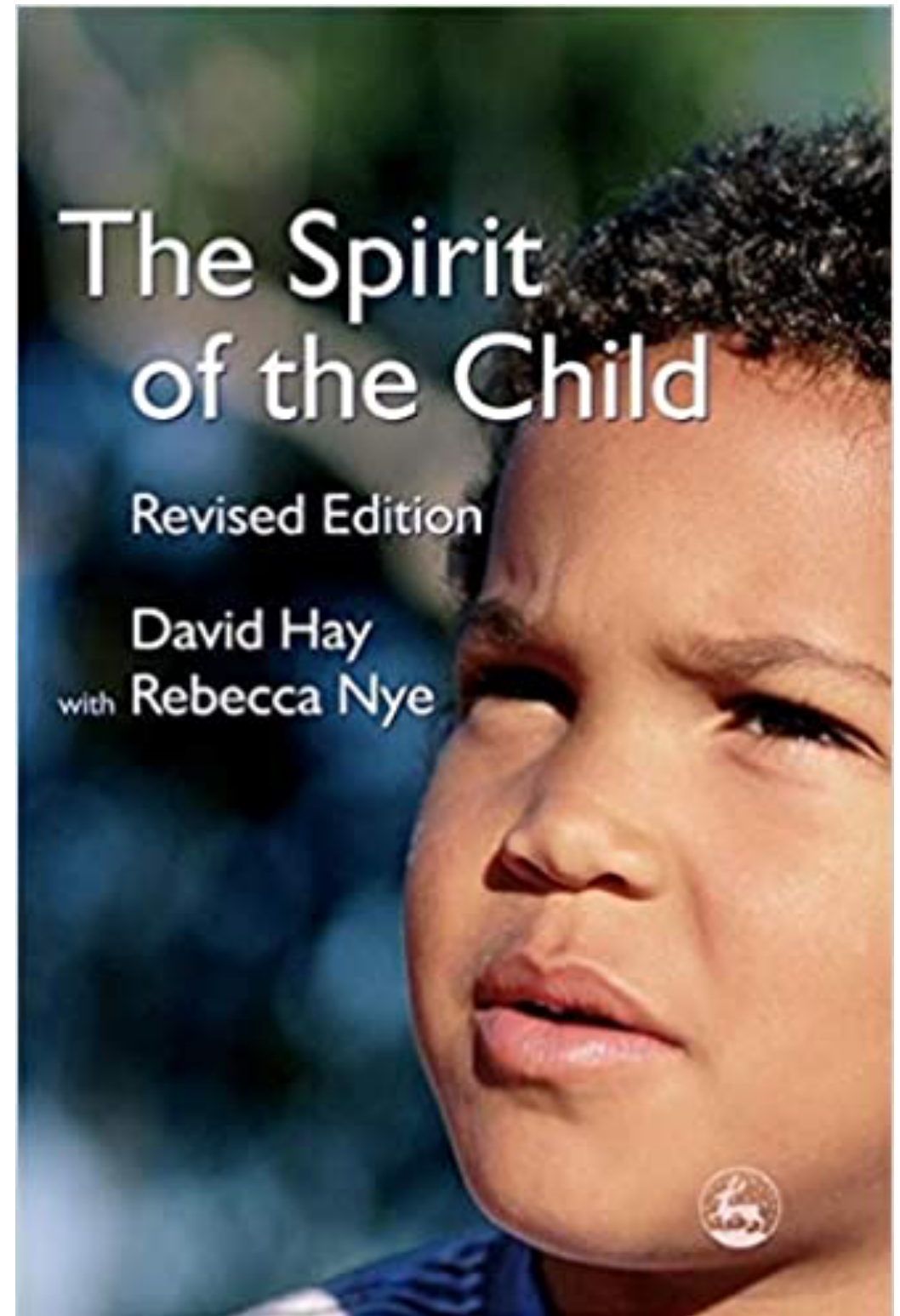
(James, 2004, p. 39).



Personal Religion

- “the potential to be much more deeply aware of ourselves and our intimate relationship with everything that is not ourselves”

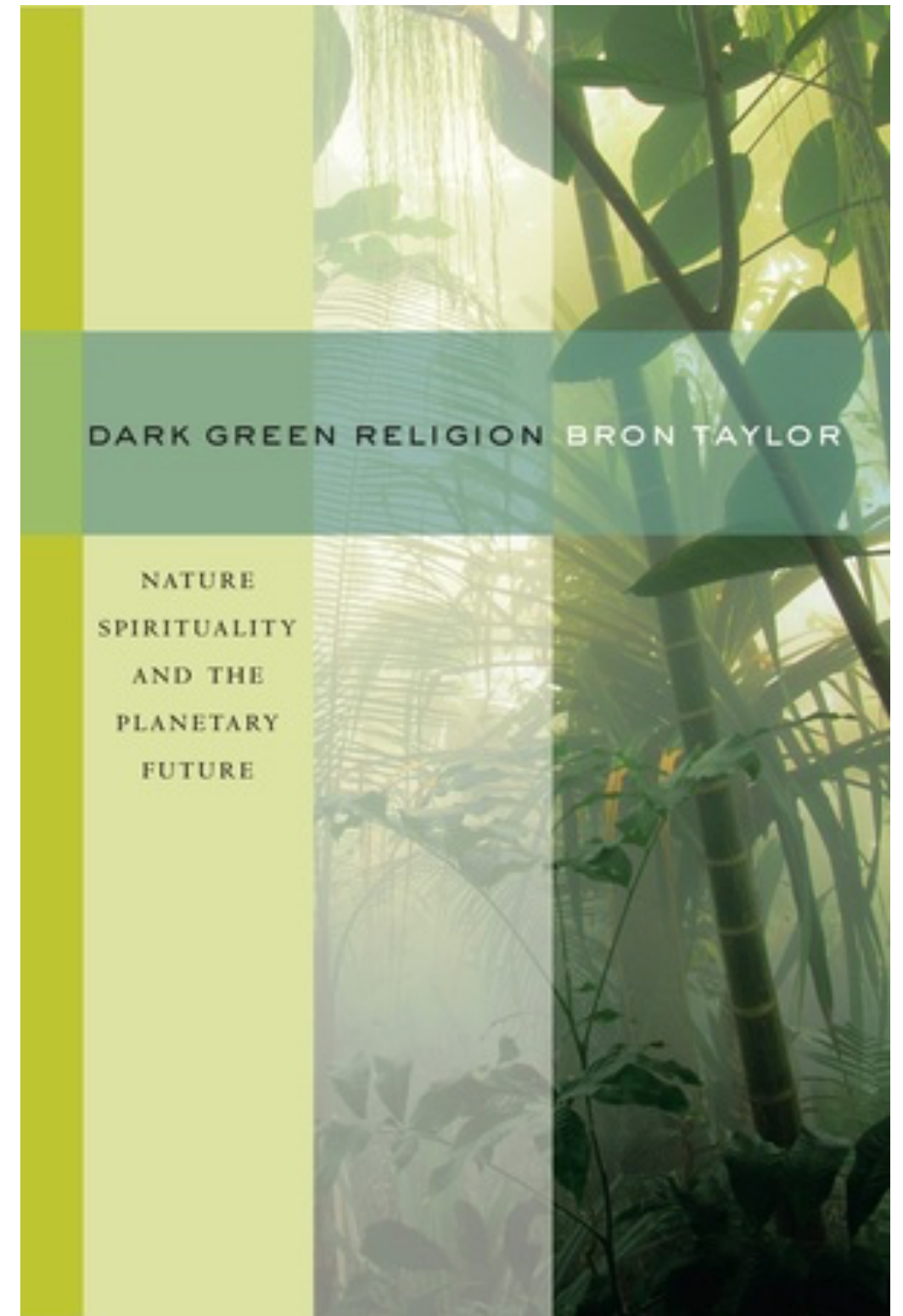
(Hay & Nye, 2006,
p. 22)



Dark Green Religion

- “This value system is generally (1) based on a felt kinship with the rest of life, often derived from a Darwinian understanding that all forms of life have evolved from a common ancestor and are therefore related; (2) accompanied by feelings of humility and a corresponding critique of human moral superiority, often inspired or reinforced by a science-based cosmology that reveals how tiny human beings are in the universe; and (3) reinforced by a metaphysics of interconnection and the idea of interdependence (mutual influence and reciprocal dependence) found in the sciences, especially in ecology and physics”

(Taylor, 2010, p. 13).



Mysticism and the Numinous

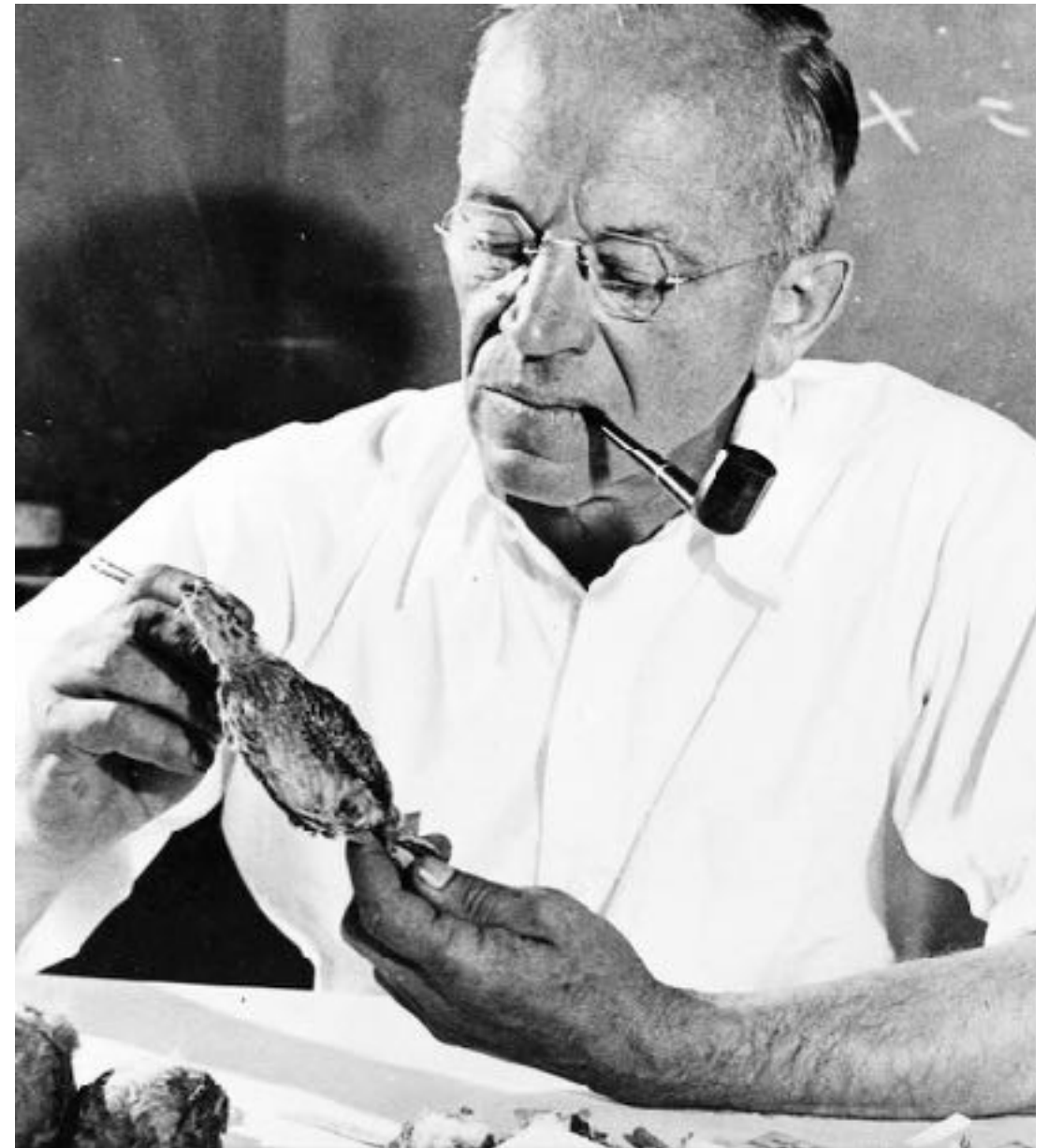
- German theologian Rudolf Otto.
- *The Idea of the Holy* (1917).
- Numinous - the wholly other.
- The non-rational component of religion - experience.
- *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans*.



Aldo Leopold

- “We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes —something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view”

(Leopold, 1949).



The Paranormal



UFOs



Psi



Faeries



Cryptids



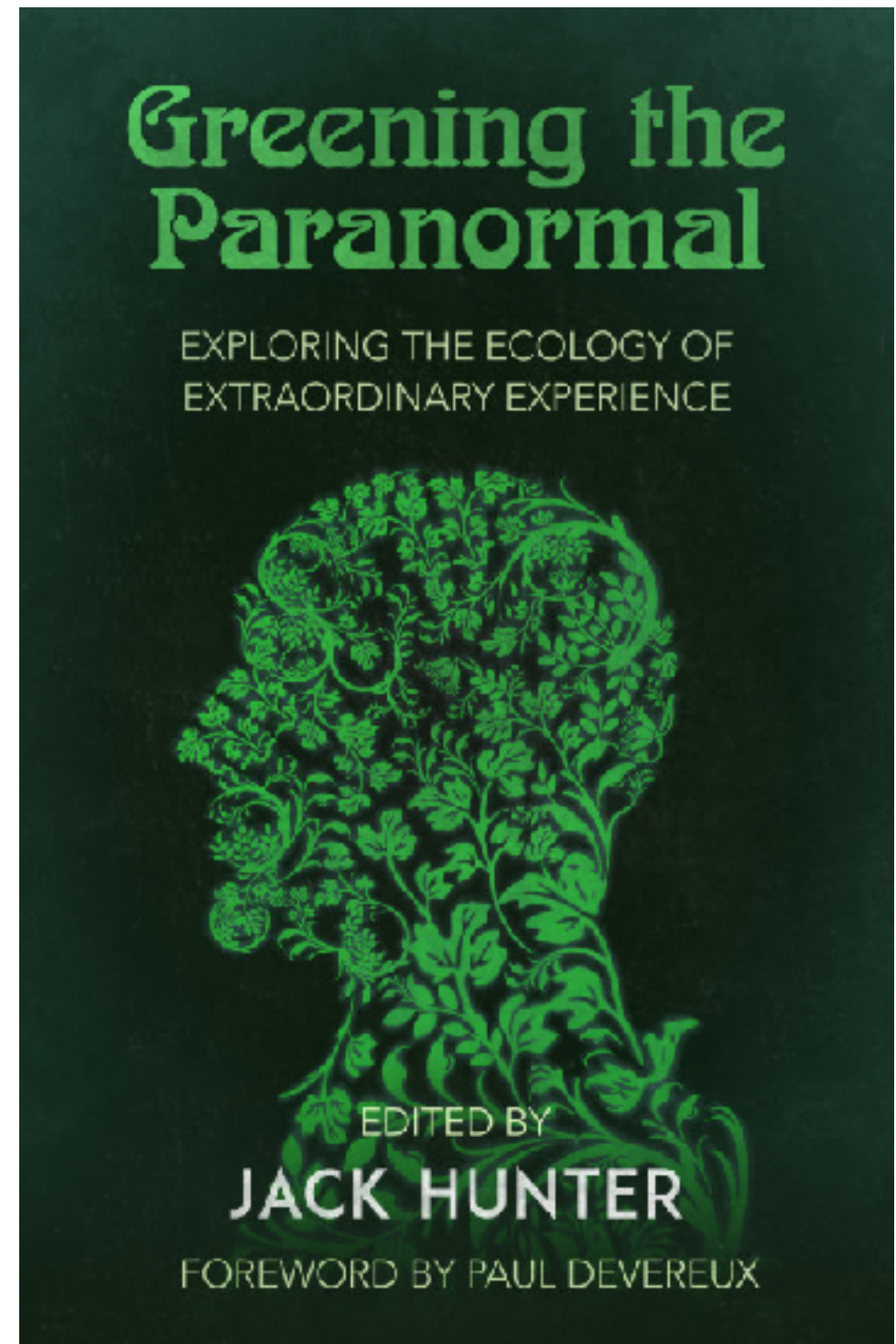
Ghosts and Spirits



NDEs/OBEs

Other ecological dimensions to the paranormal...

- Ecological themes in extraordinary experiences.
- The non-human and animism.
- Observe and Interact - Engagement with the natural world, extraordinary experience and nature connection.





Monica Gagliano

Plant Consciousness

- “The study of plant intelligence points up a very interesting aspect of research on intelligence in general: how difficult it is for us humans to understand living systems that think differently from us. Indeed, we only seem able to appreciate intelligences very similar to ours”

(Mancuso & Viola, 2015, p. 146)



Plant Consciousness

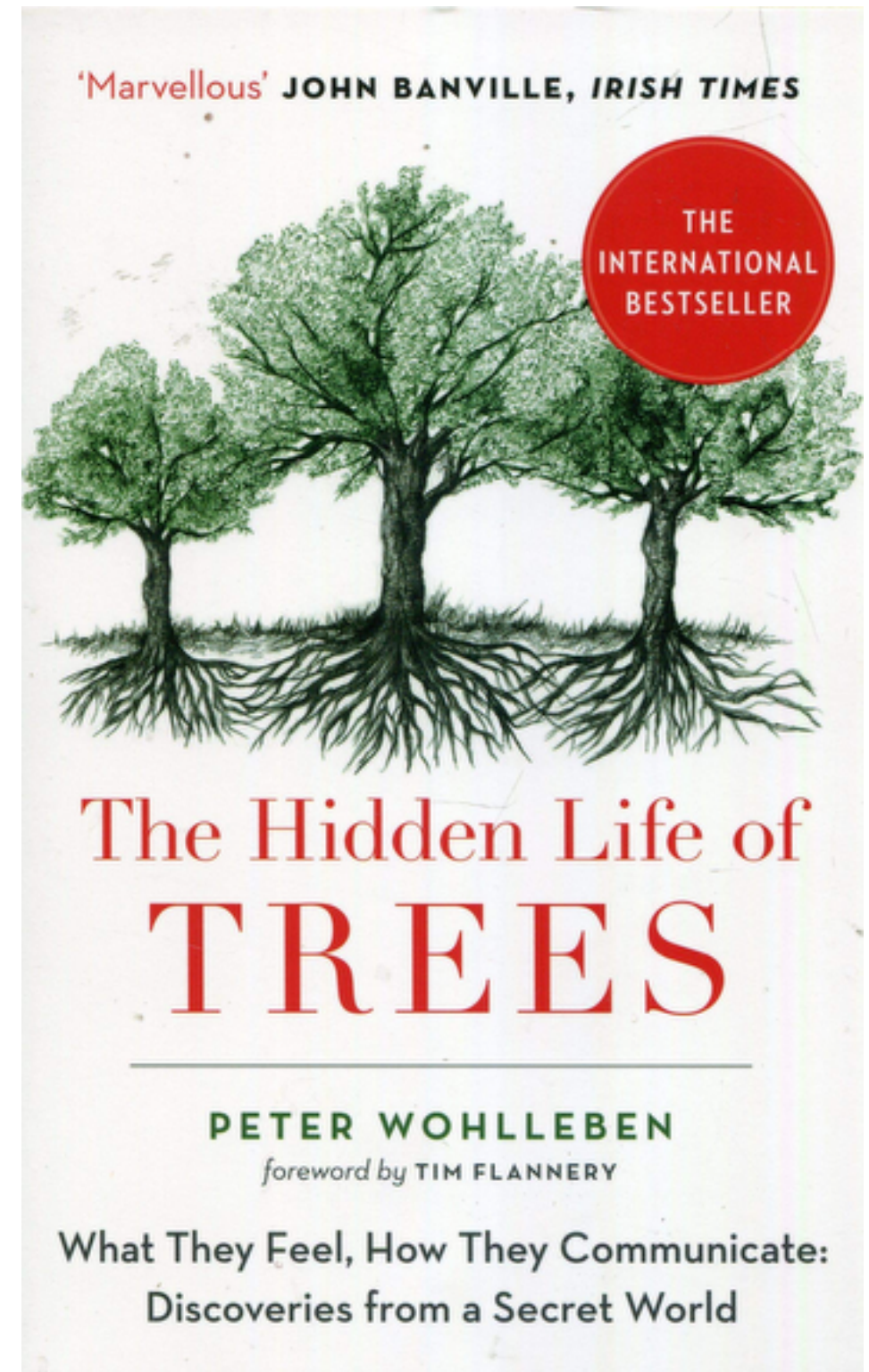
- “...a compelling body of research shows that higher-order plants really are “intelligent”: able to receive signals from their environment, process the information, and devise solutions adaptive to their own survival. What’s more they manifest a kind of “swarm intelligence” that enables them to behave not as an individual but as a multitude”

(Mancuso & Viola, 2015, p. 5).



The Hidden Life of Trees

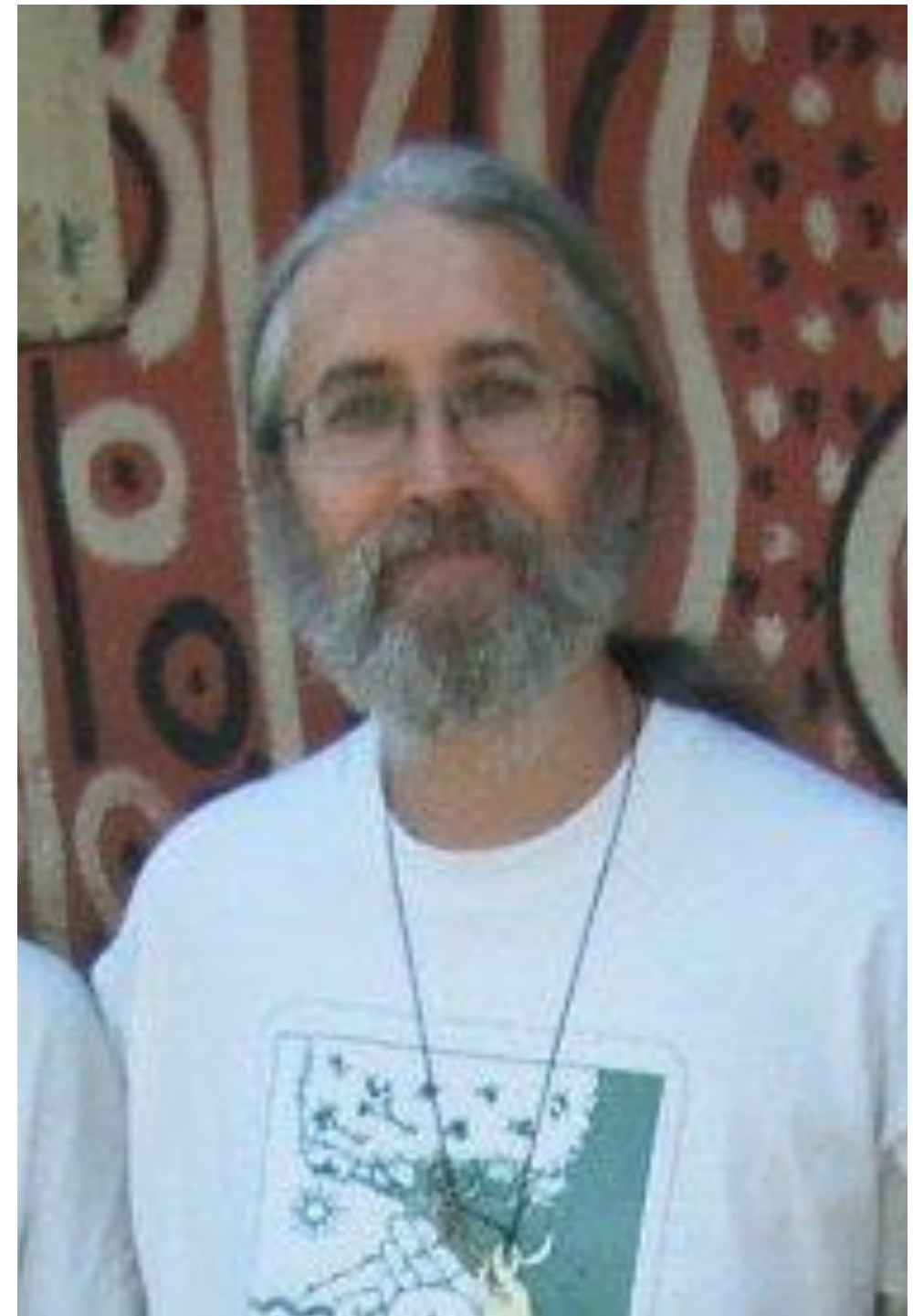
- Trees also display behaviours that we have traditionally reserved for the 'higher animals'.
- Peter Wohlleben's book contains numerous examples, including the way in which trees support old tree stumps with nutrients via mycorrhizal networks.



Animism

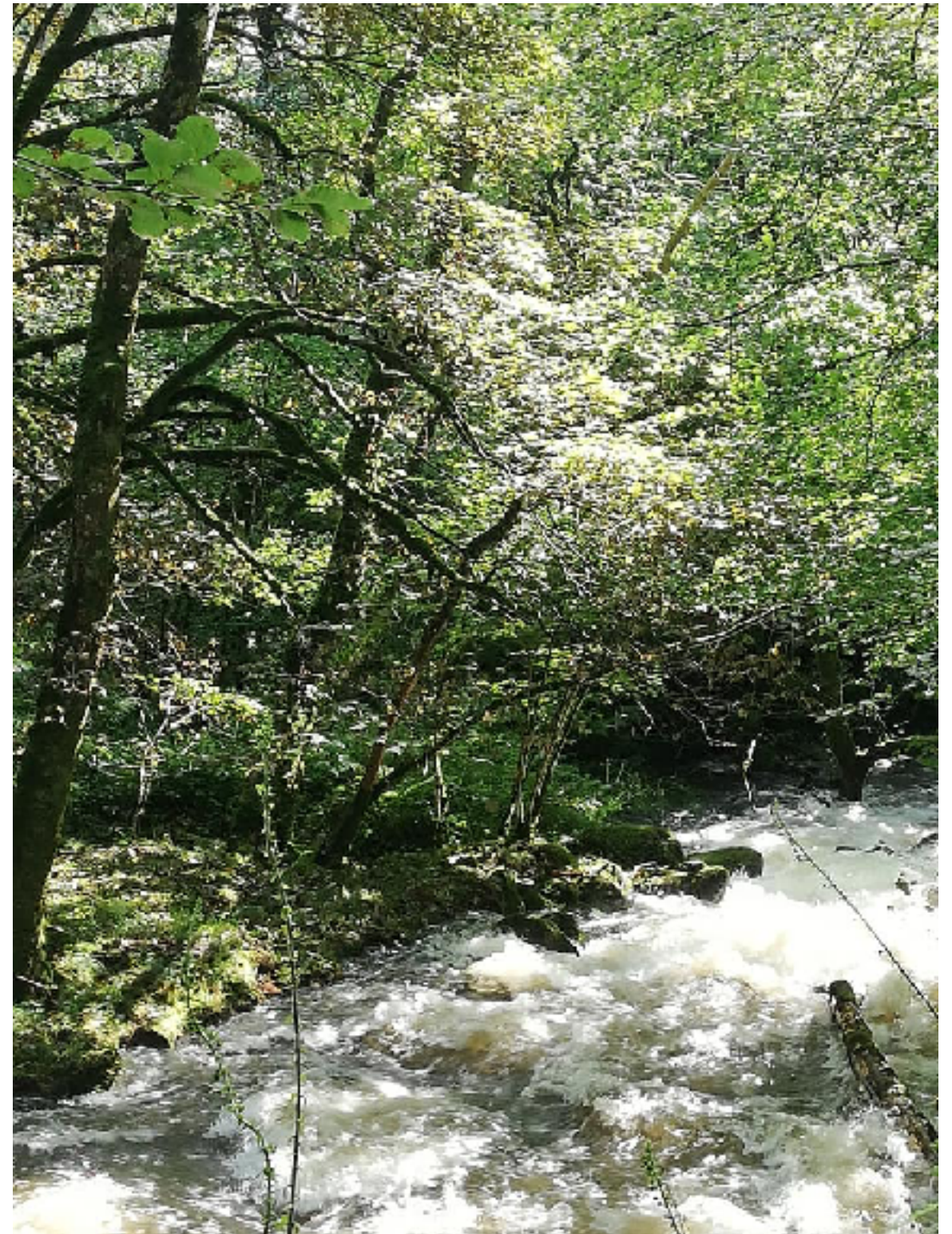
- “Animists are people who recognise that the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others. Animism is lived out in various ways that are all about learning to act respectfully (carefully and constructively) towards and among other persons. Persons are beings, rather than objects, who are animated and social towards others (even if they are not always sociable). Animism...is more accurately understood as being concerned with learning how to be a good person in respectful relationships with other persons”

(Harvey, 2005, p. xi).



Fostering Psychodiversity

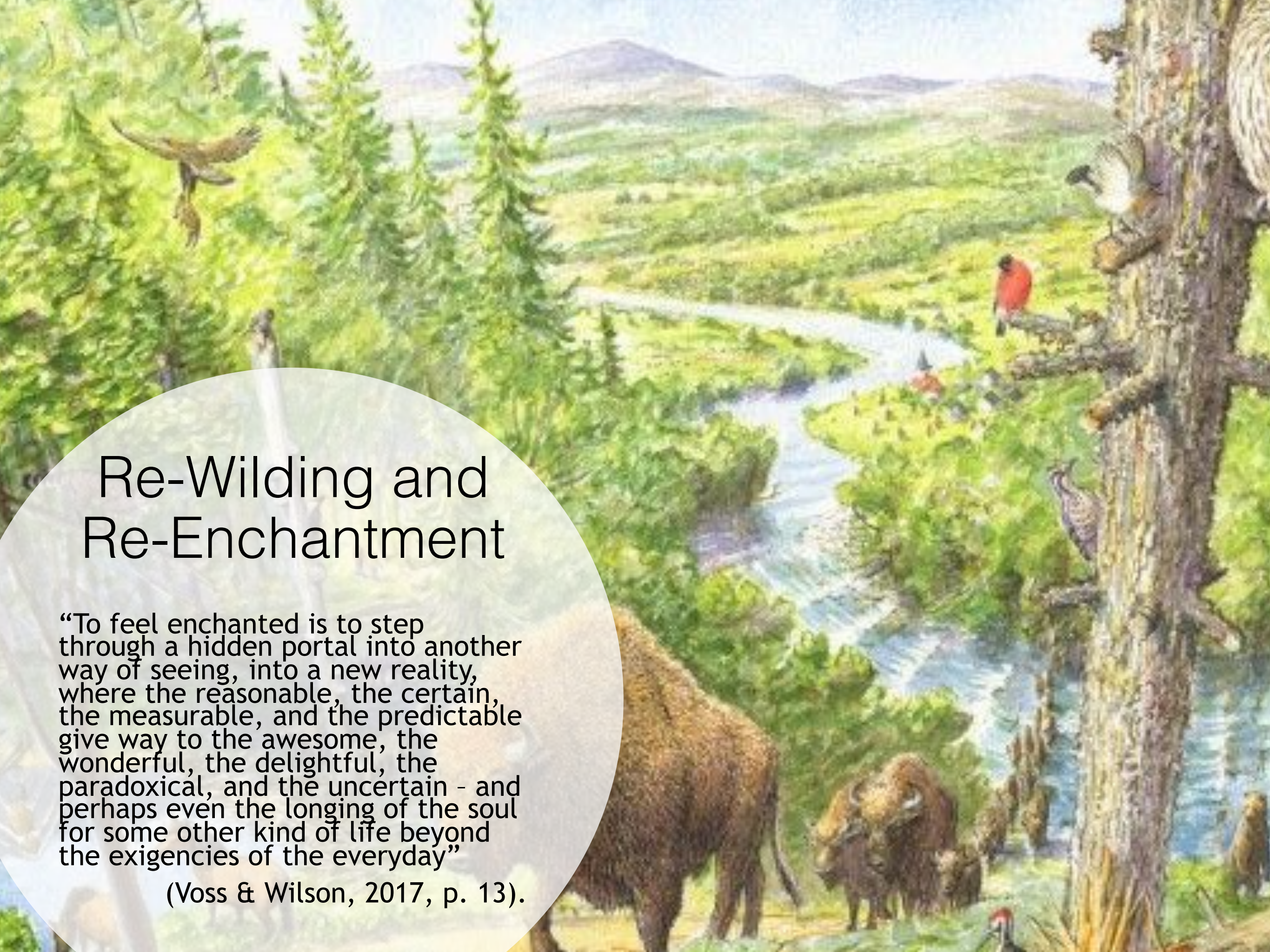
- If plants, animals and spirits are 'persons' too, then they are also minds.
- The biodiversity crisis is also, therefore, a psychodiversity crisis - different ways of living, thinking and being are being lost at an unprecedented rate.
- We have a responsibility to promote biodiversity and psychodiversity.



Gardens

- Gardens are the ideal place to foster psychodiversity and engage in relationships with nature.
- There are long traditions around the world of using gardens as a 'ante-chambers to the netherworld' (Conan, 2007).
- Ancient Greeks worshipped in Groves, for Assyrians and Egyptians gardens were ritual spaces for interacting with the gods (Naydler, 2011).
- Gardens can be conceived as 'hybrid' places (Cooper, 2018) - where nature and culture meet - liminal zones where interactions take place.
- The Fairy Census (Young, 2018) reveals a high proportion of fairy experiences take place in gardens or woodland areas - are these interactions with spirits or place? Imaginal engagement with plant spirits?.





Re-Wilding and Re-Enchantment

“To feel enchanted is to step through a hidden portal into another way of seeing, into a new reality, where the reasonable, the certain, the measurable, and the predictable give way to the awesome, the wonderful, the delightful, the paradoxical, and the uncertain - and perhaps even the longing of the soul for some other kind of life beyond the exigencies of the everyday”

(Voss & Wilson, 2017, p. 13).

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