



Reclaiming Enchantment: The Transformational Possibilities of Immanence

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The notion of enchantment has been largely imagined as relating to religion, broadly defined, including magic, sorcery, and the transcendental. The idea that the world has largely become disenchanting has been associated with science, modernity, and rationality, among other things. Along with others such as William E. Connolly, Jason A. Josephson-Storm, and Jane Bennett, I challenge the dominant configuration and narrative of (dis)enchantment. Building on their work, I argue that a reclaimed notion of enchantment is pivotal for the reconceptualization of human/non-human animal relations and sustainable life on earth.

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The etymology of enchantment is as complex as its history in the social sciences. Originating in Latin, *incantare* – ‘in’ (upon) plus ‘cantare’ (to sing) meant to chant a spell upon someone. Late Middle English uses *inchant* in the sense of “to put under a spell” and “delude”. It comes from the Old French *encantement*, “Magical spell, song, concert, chorus”.¹ Making someone’s acquaintance in French often involves a response of ‘*enchantée*’.

A Google search gives enchantment two meanings:

1. a feeling of great pleasure, delight
example: the enchantment of the mountains²
2. the state of being under a spell, magic
“a world of mystery and enchantment”

Wikipedia (2019) notes enchantment as referring to “the sense of wonder or delight”. Webster’s includes both “to delude” and “to delight to a high degree; to charm”. The Oxford English Dictionary: “Alluring or overpowering charm; enraptured condition”. Enchantment has taken on a life of its own in the social sciences and humanities. In this paper I consider enchantment both as a conceptual tool of academics and as something that is experienced by people in day-to-day life in particular circumstances.³ My focus is on nature and interactions with non-human animals. But first, a brief review of the history of enchantment will situate the discussion in its broader context. I then propose a reclaiming of enchantment and the steps necessary for that to happen. Finally, by way of illustration, I introduce an empirical example drawn from fieldwork with humans engaged in helping non-human animals.

TALES OF (DIS)ENCHANTMENT

The most enduring tale of (dis)enchantment is that by Max Weber. Of enchantment, Weber (1958a: 117) stated that increased intellectualization and rationalization meant that:

[T]here are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform this service. This above all is what intellectualization means.⁴

Weber had no empirical data beyond his own observations to support his declaration of the disenchanted world,⁵ but this did not temper an enthusiastic embracing of his idea and the devolution of enchantment to religion. This devolution supported a pervasive science/religion binary which I will return to shortly.

Weber’s idea of disenchantment has two aspects: the first is “secularization and the decline of magic”, in which “in principle at least, the world is embarked on a path at the end of which there will be no more mysteries” (Jenkins 2000: 12, 15).⁶ The second aspect of disenchantment is the “increasing scale, scope, and power of the formal means-ends rationalities of science, bureaucracy, the law, and policy-making”, the effect of which was to render everything explicable, controllable and predictable under the domain of rationality and science (Jenkins 2000: 15).⁷ Jane Bennett (2001: 8) argues that the tales of enchantment “all posit some kind of absence or loss in the modern condition”. This narrative of loss is endemic in the religious versions of disenchantment such as that told by Charles Taylor (2007). Along with Bennett, William E. Connolly, Richard Jenkins, and Jason A. Josephson-Storm, I argue: that enchantment has never been lost; that it has a continued and vibrant presence in social life; and that its reclaiming is vital to addressing the deeply damaged relationship between humans and the planet we co-exist on with other non-human beings.⁸

If we understand Weber’s concern as related to increasing human arrogance about our ability to control the world around us, he was clearly prescient about what was to come. We live in the era of the Anthropocene, which references the current geological age where, for the first time in history, human activity is the dominant influence on climate and the environment. We are also living in the sixth mass extinction (Pievani 2014; Barnosky et al. 2011; National Geographic 2019). In May 2019, the UN reported on the summary findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity Services (IPBES). The report found among other things that: 1 million plant and animal species are now threatened with extinction; greenhouse gas emissions have doubled since the 1980s, raising average global temperatures by at least 0.7 degrees Celsius; 75% of “land-based” and 66% of “marine” based environments “have been significantly altered by human actions”; more than 85% of “wetlands present in 1700 had been lost by 2000 – loss of wetlands is currently three times faster, in percentage terms, than forest loss”; and 60 billion tons of renewable and non-renewable resources are “extracted globally each year” from the Earth, a figure that has risen “nearly 100% since 1980” (United Nations 2019).⁹ In January 2021, Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, warned that the impacts of climate change “will intensify and hit vulnerable countries and communities the hardest – even if we meet the Paris Agreement goals of holding global warming this century to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C” (United Nations 2021). In short, humans are destroying the earth through our activities. In the face of this litany of destruction it might seem odd to suggest that enchantment is possible or even desirable.

Weber was not lamenting a loss of the divine or god. He declared himself to be “absolutely unmusical religiously” and to “have no need or ability to erect any psychic edifices of a religious character within” himself. That being said, he stated that he was “neither anti-religious nor *irreligious*” (Weber 2017: 324; emphasis original). Weber was a sociologist (and a lawyer), a ‘none’, and a master of theorizing. He was concerned about the result of thinking that valorizes science, law and bureaucratic organization as making everything knowable and controllable. On that front, he was correct.¹⁰ On the disappearance of mystery, he was wrong.

Nonetheless, this story of disenchantment as a loss of the divine has been repeated by many social scientists, not least Peter L. Berger. Berger (1967: np) focused a great deal of energy on the unique barrenness of the protestant landscape: “At the risk of some simplification, it can be said that Protestantism divested itself as much as possible from the three most ancient and most powerful concomitants of the sacred—mystery, miracle, and magic. This process has been aptly caught in the phrase ‘disenchantment of the world’”. Berger (1967: np) summarized the situation in this way: “the radical transcendence of God confronts a universe of radical immanence, of ‘closedness’ to the sacred. Religiously speaking, the world becomes very lonely indeed”. We shall return to this notion of radical immanence below.

Charles Taylor (2008: np) continues the perpetuation of the myth of disenchantment, and a romanticized story of some enchanted others who lived before us: “Everyone can agree that one of the big differences between us and our ancestors of 500 years ago is that they lived in an ‘enchanted’ world and we do not”.¹¹ These ideas are folded into the narrative of the malaise of modernity Taylor (2007: 708) tells in *A Secular Age*, in which he equates enchantment and religion.¹² Taylor defines and positions the porous self of the enchanted world, who is vulnerable to external forces, against the disenchanting buffered self of modernity. This sharp distinction leaves little space for more ambiguous selves and nonreligious experiences of enchantment.

Yet there is a parallel track of scholarship that retains enchantment in various forms. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (2002: 1) presented a complex analysis of enchantment, which they linked to enlightenment, whose goal was “liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters”. They went on to argue that: “Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. Enlightenment’s program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge” (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 1). For Horkheimer and Adorno, fear of nature and power were core analytical touchstones.¹³

Summarizing the developments around the conceptualization of enchantment, Sizemore (2018) argues that since Horkheimer and Adorno (who noted the

irrationality of reason itself), enchantment has come to be seen as complementary rather than in opposition to rational scientific inquiry. On this point, Sizemore (2018: 9–10) draws from the work of historian Michael Saler: “In his view, modernity is an era of ‘disenchanted enchantment,’ an era in which one can be ‘delighted without being deluded’”. Sizemore (2018: 10) understands enchantment as an historically situated “contingent state of embodied cognition (or ‘mood’), wherein cognition is understood as a reciprocal relationship among body, mind, and world”. The way that enchantment is experienced is tempered and framed by factors such as “the historical metanarrative of progress from enchantment to disenchantment or by contemporary religious and spiritual belief systems” (Sizemore 2018: 10–11).

Rejecting Horkheimer and Adorno’s (2002) approach to enchantment,¹⁴ Landy and Saler (2009) construct a more oppositional approach.¹⁵ Beginning from the sacred/profane division of the world embraced by Durkheim (among others), they position religious and secular versions of enchantment against each other, with secular enchantment emerging in the role of heroic re-enchanter:

Weber’s account was, however, incomplete. What he neglected to mention is that each time religion reluctantly withdrew from a particular area of experience, a new, thoroughly secular strategy for re-enchantment cheerfully emerged to fill the void. The astonishing profusion and variety of such strategies is itself enchanting. Between them, philosophers, artists, architects, poets, stage magicians, and ordinary citizens made it possible to enjoy many of the benefits previously offered by faith, without having to subscribe to a creed; the progressive disenchantment of the world was thus accompanied, from the start and continually, by its progressive re-enchantment. (Landy and Saler 2009: 1–2)

I am sympathetic to the position of Landy and Saler, particularly in the face of the dominant position that enchantment is only possible through the divine/the religious. In this I share their reclaiming of a broader territory for enchantment. I do not, however, articulate this as a ‘secular’ enchantment. If we return to the etymology of enchantment, including its reference to singing together, the sacred/secular binary becomes less pertinent. In discussions of enchantment there is a pull toward either secular/profane/immanent or sacred/spiritual/transcendent, in part to shore up particular positions, but holding these in tension facilitates the exploration of the complex spaces in between and allows us to consider the socially constructed nature of claims to the secular, sacred and enchanted. Inasmuch as there is a will to religion (with attendant assumptions about morality and goodness), there is also a will to nonreligion. These manifest in a

triumphalist tone on both sides which occludes analytical clarity. Further, to speak of re-enchantment assumes that disenchantment occurred in the first place. This is linked to science and rationality and often to the Enlightenment, as though science and rational thought began there, a move that ignores or minimizes the many manifestations of both in human history.¹⁶

The accounts of both Charles Taylor and Michael Saler rely on the narrative of a once magical world full of primitive others whose lives are fully enveloped by the sacred. However, while Taylor laments its decline Saler celebrates it. Yet, the narrative of the once magical, particularly in its ‘we were once all religious’ form, is largely a myth (Finke and Starke 2005; McGuire 2007). Religious participation and devotion to magic must be carefully contextualized. Disenchantment was a theoretical concoction rather than an empirical reality. That is not to say that bureaucracy, the relentless deployment of science in the service of states and capital (DDT was harmless; cigarettes too), and singular versions of truth (women were not legal persons in those days) did not harm and imprison. But enchantment, both immanent and transcendent, always remained active even if unseen and ignored by scholars.

Sources of enchantment in modern society vary according to those who claim a re-enchantment (Jane Bennett, for example, includes nanotechnology). Saler’s (2012: 3) version incorporates virtual worlds and secular epiphanies, “offering fully secularized subjects an affirmation of existence that does not come at the cost of naïveté, irrationalism, or hypocrisy” (Landy and Saler 2009: 2). For the purposes of this paper, I bracket these possibilities, focusing instead on the natural world, a categorization I acknowledge is problematic from many angles, but no less so than ‘technology’ or what counts as literature. Bennett (2001: 156; emphasis original) acknowledges the links between enchantment and the natural world when she states: “Enchantment is a feeling of being connected in an affirmative way to existence; it is to be under the momentary impression that the natural and cultural worlds *offer gifts* and, in so doing, remind us that it is good to be alive”. Landy and Saler (2009: 14) conversely limit enchantment to the human world, calling for re-enchantment because it is required for *human* flourishing. This is very similar to calls from religious studies scholars who have taken up the cause of the environment. They argue that the human relationship with the earth is broken, but that the solutions come from within religious traditions. Reconfiguring one’s relationship with ‘God’s creation’, and with God is core to producing a repaired environment. Religion in this approach equals morals and ethics, and in some cases is the only identifiable path to a repaired earth (Gottlieb 2006; Tucker and Grim 2014). This body of scholarship often, even if only subtly, positions ‘the secular’ as inadequate and even impoverished and imagines capitalism to be

a secular invention distinct from religious influence. For example, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (2014: 19) state: “Religion in its various forms, then, has proven to be persistent and forceful despite the increasingly rapid spread of modernization and industrialization around the world. Noted contemporary philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor are exploring the implications of this phenomenon”. They continue:

Habermas is deeply concerned that the moral grounds for transforming the economic globalization that is devouring Earth’s ecosystems are unavailable or inadequately stated in secular philosophy alone. He is keenly aware that something important is missing in our efforts to halt the social and ecological ills engulfing the planet. The rational appeal to justice, to enlightened self-interest, or even to the well-being of future generations does not alone seem to have had a significant effect or traction. (Tucker and Grim 2014: 20)

The missing link, in their view, is the ethical framework that only religions can provide.¹⁷ My argument is different: what would happen if we disassociate religion and spirituality from enchantment? Or, more accurately, if we relocate it in social relations that encompass non-human animals and more broadly the world around us? Shifting away from the centrality of the human, what if we instead focus on the flourishing of the other than human? And what if we take cues on what constitutes flourishing from that position? Neither science nor religion is expunged from this approach, although each would have, for its own reasons, difficulty with such a reconfigured entry point into enchantment.

Jason A. Josephson-Storm (2017) challenges the notion that enchantment disappeared and specifically that enchantment and science are at odds.¹⁸ He draws together evidence of belief in ghosts, and the intertwining of the lives of scientists such as Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton and Robert Oppenheimer, with practices such as alchemy, magic and mystic visions (Josephson-Storm 2017: 43). “It is hard not to be skeptical of claims to disenchantment as I write these words in a café adorned with flyers advertising ‘crystal healing,’ ‘energy balancing,’ ‘chakra yoga,’ and ‘tarot’ readings” (Josephson-Storm 2017: 23). Proving the existence of this underbelly of magical thinking and its continuous presence in so-called disenchanted societies is important. But I argue that this still embraces a too-narrow conceptualization of enchantment that fails to capture its broader meaning and practice. Enchantment is not just about ghosts, gods and goodness (for I think the three are related in many minds). It is also about wonder and delight.¹⁹

Here the work of William E. Connolly (2011) is helpful, not least because he comfortably rests in the world of radical immanence that was so cold and dark for Peter L. Berger, Charles Taylor and others. This is their imagined community of the nonreligious, who live in a bleak, disconnected, individualistic world with tenuous morals, values and ethical moorings. People who identify themselves as religious often disparagingly refer to this as ‘the secular’ (Gottlieb 2006).²⁰ Connolly refutes this bleak characterization of nonreligion, and like Josephson-Storm, posits a different vision. But unlike Josephson-Storm, he does not re-enchant the world with ghosts and gods. Neither is it the glorious re-enchanted secular world of Saler. The world of becoming described by Connolly does not, in his words, fit neatly into either the old enchanted world or a disenchanted world. Rejecting Taylor’s (2007) neatly bifurcated world of enchantment and disenchantment, Connolly (2011: 70) says:

A world of becoming can be enchanted in some ways, even if it does not express divine meanings that are partly revealed and partly hidden, and even if it is not a providential world. For a world of becoming is marked by surprising turns in time, uncanny experiences, and the possibility of human participation to some degree in larger processes of creativity that both include and surpass the human estate.

Connolly is not referencing a divine hand or godly presence in this statement, but rather affirming mystery, a ‘more-than’ unrelated to a transcendent being, and the simple workings of chance.²¹

RECLAIMING ENCHANTMENT

With this brief overview of enchantment, I would like to propose a *reclaiming* of enchantment rather than a ‘re-enchantment’. Reclamation has several requirements:

1. First, a rejection of the ‘myth of disenchantment’, which is a move supported by Josephson-Storm, Connolly, Jenkins, Bennett, Saler, and others. Weber’s observations about the disenchantment of the world were, ultimately, an expression of fear about the idea that science (and law and bureaucracy, which are often forgotten) make everything knowable and controllable. Weber was not lamenting the death of god, but was instead deeply concerned about human arrogance. He was not advocating for humility in the presence of gods. Nor was he rejecting science. Drawing from the work of Andrea Nightingale, Landy and Saler (2009, 7–8) explain that science has shifted from an instrumental approach to wonder, which sees it as only a temporary phenomenon

in the progression toward “wonder-free knowledge and thoroughly unmysterious certainty”, to “the single most powerful generator of the marvelous”. This shift in science has reverberated across research areas, including on animal intelligence. In *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* scientist Frans de Waal (2016) notes the move from human-based measures of intelligence to more complex understandings of non-human animal ways of knowing. “Turtles know turtle things”, as one of my interviewees said in my research on sea turtle activists (Beaman 2017: 25). Of course, this shift is not universal, and it has not eliminated the hierarchy that is endemic to human conceptualization of other species who are often presented as wondrous but ultimately inferior.

Nonetheless, the move toward a more nuanced understanding of the natural world, including the human place in it rather than above it, may include what Bruno Latour describes as a move from Science to the sciences. Latour takes up the question of Big Science (what he calls Science) in his 2004 work *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Latour describes the science engaged in the religion/science binary as ‘Science’ and it is this science that is very often mobilized (he uses the word ‘brandished’) as the alternative scripture to those of religion. “Science”, as opposed to ‘the sciences’, “is the politicization of the sciences through epistemology in order to render ordinary political life impotent through the threat of an incontestable nature” (Latour 2004: 10).²² Latour posits an alternative to this grand truth mission performed by a few experts whose authority is unassailable and which, he argues, politicizes the sciences.²³ It is the latter, ‘sciences’, that are the more modest, contextualized and even humble articulation of the sciences at the service of humans and non-humans alike, produced through collaboration of the human and non-human animal collective.²⁴ Uncertainty, or as Connolly would put it, *becoming*, is endemic to this collaboration.

2. The next step in reclaiming enchantment is to **expand** the definition of enchantment, effectively shedding the baggage of magic and religion and relocating the occurrence of enchantment as a possibility linked to multiple frequencies or registers,²⁵ none of which has exclusive licence. Any of these frequencies can access that spine-tingling moment of discovery or recognition. For me they come, sometimes, when listening to music, when one of the crows who lives in my neighbourhood follows me to my clothesline and chortles at me, when sparkles that flow from my fingertips run through water with phosphorescence in it on a night time walk on the beach, or when a curious ‘teenage’ minke whale comes up beside my rowboat in the Atlantic Ocean. In that moment, the original meaning of enchantment—incantare—to chant a spell, is lived to the fullest. I am

the human acted *upon* by the whale. Religion, magic and the divine do not own this space of wonder, awe and gratitude (to the whale, not god),²⁶ but share it with other nonreligious (for lack of a better word) frequencies. It is also a space of singing together, again to return to original meanings. The engagement with the whale is a space of relationship and connectedness. I do not have the capacity to understand or articulate its contours (perhaps answering de Waal's question, 'Are humans smart enough to understand how smart animals are?') and must tread lightly on the territory of cross species interpretation of meaning.²⁷ We are already familiar with the dangers of anthropocentrism. But that does not require us to reject entirely the possibility of similarity between species and interspecies relationships as a space for exploration.

A concomitant step with this expansion is acknowledging the fear that accompanies this discussion. The science/religion dichotomy has produced hardened positions that shape the possibility of admitting awe, wonder and enchantment as a lapse toward the transcendent.²⁸ This need not be the case—acknowledgment of connection is not the equivalent of admission of the transcendent. It is the opposite: a reaction to the world in which we live and share with others. Sizemore (2018: 12) reflects on the hermeneutics of enchantment and argues that it "takes seriously the principle of synchronicity, a structure of acausal connection that derives relational meaning from contingency or coincidence as opposed to cause and effect, a structure that privileges correspondence and parity between the past and the present rather than separation and hierarchy".

3. Third, I propose that **recognizing** these multiple frequencies or registers of enchantment is vital to the future of the earth. Two conditions are necessary for an inclusive conceptualization of enchantment that grants religion and magic an equal place with nonreligion.

Condition 1: That the harmful hierarchical framework of stewardship be jettisoned, or at the very least critically engaged with by both religious and nonreligious people. The idea of stewardship—i.e., that humans have been entrusted by god to take care of the earth, is aligned with disenchantment and 'Big Science' in its facilitation of harm to the world around us and to non-human animals in particular. While Charles Taylor (2007) argues that religion lost its influence on the modern subject because science eliminated the supernatural, Josephson-Storm demonstrates that this is not true. I would go further. If we see the notion of stewardship and the hierarchy at its foundation as located in the supernatural (i.e., divine will or a divine order), we can, in fact, observe that science, technology and the divine have partnered to maximize extraction and exploitation which are only possible through the logic of ownership supported by stewardship.²⁹ Here we can also implicate capitalism.

Strains of Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958b) can be heard in the background, but I will bracket that for now.

This is not to say that within a divinely inspired order enchantment is not possible, but that a much more critical engagement with the impact of that divine order is necessary. There are a number of scholars advocating for such a critical examination of religion generally, including Véronique Altglas and Matthew Wood (2018), and Mia Lövhelm and Mikael Stenmark (2020). Some of this advocating also comes from within the religious fold. Nancy Menning (2016: 171), for example, argues for *lectio divina* as a way to develop environmental virtues and flourishing rather than mere survival. In his encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis says: "Often, what was handed on was a Promethean vision of mastery over the world, which gave the impression that the protection of nature was something that only the faint-hearted cared about. Instead, our 'dominion' over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship" (para. 116). Stewardship, though, is in my view 'dominion light' in that it is ultimately hierarchical even with the addition of caring.

Perhaps the most influential critique of religion (in particular Christianity) and its approach to the environment comes from Lynn White Jr.'s 1967 article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis". He argued that "Despite Darwin, we are *not*, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim" (White 1967: 1206; emphasis original). White focused on dominion and its consequences for the environment. White saw the devastation of nature that was human-caused and, in his view, supported by Christianity. White (1967: 1207) recognized the early attempt by St. Francis to rectify the theology around human/non-human relations: "The greatest spiritual revolutionary in Western history, Saint Francis, proposed what he thought was an alternative Christian view of nature and man's relation to it: he tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man's limitless rule of creation. He failed". There was a scholarly flurry of response to White which continues even now. For the most part denial was the central theme, with the notion of stewardship emerging to solve the dominion dilemma. This scholarship did not address the core issue of hierarchy, but merely affirmed humans as caretakers, a move that may actually exacerbate environmental abuse by allowing humans to see themselves as uniquely qualified to manage nature. This in turn creates a validation of human moral superiority, but in a more sophisticated way than does dominion. The language of stewardship has become ubiquitous: it is the framework within which many environmental groups work in addition to the Christian mantra for human/animal relations

(humans are in the latter almost always distinguished from ‘animals’, as though we are special and distinct).

I leave open too the possibility of reconstituting stewardship. A move in this direction is made by David L. Clough (2017: 44), an evangelical who makes a Christian argument for vegetarianism: “I have argued that Christians have strong faith-based reasons to avoid consuming products derived from animals that have not been allowed to flourish as fellow creatures of God, and to avoid participating in systems that disallow such flourishing”. Clough (2017: 37) draws ‘animals’ into the divine order beside humans, stating, “For Christians, fellow animal creatures find their true meaning, like us and all other creatures, in their place in the divine life”. It is not clear how Clough knows how ‘animal creatures’ find their meaning, but this is presumably part of the divinely bestowed human capability to discern their lifeways. Clough (2017: 39) is careful to affirm human superiority: “To avoid any misunderstanding, let us be clear that a Christian vision of the meaning of the lives of fellow animal creatures before God does not imply any flat equivalence between humans and other animals”. Clough’s argument for vegetarianism is important in that it speaks to a particular cohort of Christians who may not have thought in this way about food consumption and their Christian responsibilities. However, ultimately Clough maintains the hierarchical relationship between humans and non-human animals.

Perhaps Pope Francis comes closer to an egalitarian conceptualization of non-human animal life and the environment when he says, “Neglecting to monitor the harm done to nature and the environmental impact of our decisions is only the most striking sign of a disregard for the message contained in the structures of nature itself” (para. 117). However, the Pope too insists on the uniqueness of humans, and his encyclical maintains human superiority as well as the necessary presence of divinity in his articulation of the nature of the relationship between humans and animals:

Christian thought sees human beings as possessing a particular dignity above other creatures; it thus inculcates esteem for each person and respect for others. Our openness to others, each of whom is a ‘thou’ capable of knowing, loving and entering into dialogue, remains the source of our nobility as human persons. A correct relationship with the created world demands that we not weaken this social dimension of openness to others, much less the transcendent dimension of our openness to the ‘Thou’ of God. Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. Otherwise, it would be nothing more than romantic individualism dressed up in ecological garb, locking us into a stifling immanence. (para. 119)

It is difficult to imagine that either Clough nor Pope Francis would entertain the position of Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka (2011: 170), who argue for sovereign territory for wild animals:

[W]hen we talk of recognizing wild animals’ sovereign rights to habitat, we are not talking about creating parks where humans retain sovereign authority, exercising stewardship over animals and nature. We are talking about relations between sovereign entities resting on similar claims to authority. This means that if and when we humans visit their territory, we do so not in the role of stewards and managers, but as visitors to foreign lands.

Their framework incorporates notions of equality for nonhuman animals.

There are some examples, albeit few, of Christian thinking and practice that exemplifies a more egalitarian approach, in both cases finding inspiration in the ‘failed’ attempt of St. Francis lamented by Lynn White over fifty years ago. In her study of ‘Green Sisters’, Sarah McFarland Taylor interviewed Catholic nuns who are environmentally active in the United States and Canada. Although not representative of everyone she interviewed, Taylor (2007: 167–168) quotes Jeannine Gramick, a vegetarian member of the Sisters of Loretto, who says:

‘I no longer believe in the old cosmology I had been taught—the hierarchical pyramid of creation in which human animals, near the top of the pyramid, are assigned more worth than non-human animals and other beings toward the bottom. I am beginning to accept a new worldview in which all creation has inherent worth and beauty—a moral order in which all created beings are moving to a stage of harmony, equality, and respect for each other ... I no longer believe that non-humans are inferior to humans in God’s scheme of creation’.

Another sister, Toni Nash, saw her vow of obedience as “as an act of worship in which one vows to listen to the ‘voice of the Spirit of the whole Earth community’” (Taylor 2007: 65).

At a theoretical level, Willis Jenkins (2013: 222) critiques the stewardship and dominion models, calling instead for a justice model: “Without capacity to make a claim on agents, nonhumans under our care or stewardship remain vulnerable to our self-serving conceits, the glosses we give our domination”. Jenkins sees the confrontation of power as central to the move to justice that cannot be replaced by care, stewardship and love. Like Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011), he advocates for legal standing for non-human animals, although he

rejects the idea of personhood for nature. This stance may force a reconciliation of ‘difference’, although the risk of this is that ‘different’ has a long history of being translated as subordinate. The risk of personhood, though, is ‘sameness’, which can quickly reduce to formal (and meaningless) versions of equality. Living well with non-human animals requires a complex imagining of equality.

Perhaps encouragingly, Donaldson and Kymlicka, Latour and Jenkins ask whether humans can learn to listen to non-human animals. Jenkins (2018: 457), for example, in discussing the Pope’s encyclical says:

The epistemic question here is: who knows, through what practices, for what Earth cries? When *LS* claims that humans learn the real worth of creatures not through instrumental mastery but through contemplative membership,³⁰ it names a kind of practice through which human minds may hear the voices of fellow creatures. That could seem to support an environmental politics of withdrawal, in which humans attempt to diminish their influence over ecological systems in order to give wild nature space to sing as it will.

Although Jenkins may be overly optimistic, he does recognize the need to listen to non-human animals more carefully.

Condition 2: The second condition for the achievement of multiple frequencies for enchantment is as follows: In order to mobilize a conceptually rich notion of enchantment, territory must be ceded. Religious people must stop imagining nonreligious people as bereft and barren, lost souls and ethical wastelands. Nonreligious people must stop characterizing religious people as deluded. Religious people must stop counting as one of theirs those who have withdrawn, rejected or minimized involvement. Nonreligious people must allow for the messiness of everyday life that includes strands of religious participation, the wisps of childhood socialization and fluctuations in practice and belief. Both must stop longing for the other to be like them. And both must acknowledge similarity in a manner that does not reduce to a will to religion or a will to nonreligion (Beaman 2013). Both must engage in agonistic respect in the project of world repairing.³¹ Why? Because we are ruining the earth and destroying the habitat of others whose lives count as fully as those of humans. In his environmental encyclical Pope Francis recognizes this need for combined forces: “Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality” (para. 63). This means that religious people must collaborate with those for whom gods are of no relevance. And nonreligious people must understand and respect those

for whom the transcendent is real. There may well be insurmountable differences, but the shared project of environmental action and respect for other than human life needs to supersede those differences.

TURTLE RESCUE AND OTHER ENCHANTED MOMENTS

Mostly I have been talking about enchantment as something that acts upon us, in part to disrupt the story of human control, and to open space for both non-human animals and more than human environments. My argument is that the world has never been disenchanted because enchantment is not contingent on religion, a sacred canopy or a god. Jane Bennett (2001: 4) suggests that enchantment “is also a comportment that can be fostered through deliberate strategies”. She proposes three strategies, one of which is to reject the story of disenchantment which I have already discussed above. The second is to “hone sensory receptivity to the marvellous specificity of things”, or, as one of the participants in my study said, “turtles know turtle things”; and third is to “give greater expression to the sense of play” (Bennett 2001: 4).³² I am grateful to Bennett (2001: 4) for helping me to make the leap from tales of enchantment to action on climate change and the potential to shift human/non-human animal relationships with her simple statement that: “Even secular life houses extraordinary goings-on. This life provokes moments of joy, and that joy can propel ethics”. It is that moment that most interests me.³³

Methodologically, locating enchantment as well as any religious or nonreligious framing is ideally achieved through an oblique examination of everyday activities. This approach is perhaps inspired by my legal training, which instilled in me a sensitivity to leading questions that partners with my training as a qualitative sociologist. Studies of religion and nonreligion that press too heavily on those categories merely mirror what the social scientist wants to see. It is for this reason that I chose the world of sea turtle conservation to explore world repairing work, collaboration across difference, emerging worldviews about the natural world and (non)religion. This oblique focus was inspired in part by Anna Tsing’s (2012, 2015) research on matsutake mushrooms, through which she explores economic and social systems. The practices and politics of encounter are central to the examination of living well together. Mary Jo Neitz (2009: 357) says: “A task for us as researchers and as citizens is to encourage a politics of encounter aimed at understanding that we are not all the same, but to believe that it is possible to work together across our differences”. I am interested in human and non-human encounters as sites of ethical production.

In my ongoing project I have conducted fieldwork (participant observation, discourse analysis and interviews)

with people involved in sea turtle conservation in the wider Caribbean, India, Australia, Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Costa Rica and have been a participant observer at two meetings of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), at which paid programme directors, scientists and volunteers share information about scientific findings, community engagement strategies and best practices. The work of those I've interviewed is diverse: in Cape Cod rescue activities are the central focus of the volunteers, who patrol beaches in late fall to search for stranded juvenile Kemps Ridley turtles who don't make it around the geographic hook of the Cape in time to swim to warmer southern waters; in sites in Trinidad, Australia, Goa, Costa Rica and Curacao the focus is on nesting sites and their monitoring and protection. In some cases, volunteers work with scientists to lead small tourist groups to nesting sites. It is hoped that these experiences will embed a commitment to caring about both sea turtles and the larger natural world. The human consumption of sea turtle meat and eggs is an ongoing preoccupation. So too is the human intrusion on nesting beaches—light disrupts nesting and hatchling re-entry into the ocean. These activities engender complex and sometimes contradictory engagements with and understanding of the nonhuman natural world.

Turtle conservation offers a refraction point for a wide range of worldviews (Beaman 2020). Binary categories such as 'religious/nonreligious' seem out of place in making sense of the narratives of those who have talked with me about their experiences, motivations and ways of making sense of the world. I do not assume a spiritual imperative for humans (or non-human animals) nor do I erase spirituality from human lifeworlds.³⁴ I cannot presume to impute religious rituals and behaviour to non-human animals.³⁵ Humans have not developed an adequate capacity to understand non-human animal lifeworlds to a degree that would support such a conclusion.

In the course of this work human/non-human animal interaction produces moments of joy, awe and wonder—enchantment that invokes the origins of the word as a form of singing together and pleasure in encountering the 'other'. The research with turtle volunteers opens new possibilities for a reconceptualised notion of enchantment that is located in an immanent world of wonder. Such an immanent framing includes "mundane transcendence" (Connolly 2011),³⁶ a decidedly enchanted, but not divine, experience that has the potential to produce the revised ethics we so desperately need to address human abuse of the world in which we live. It might also be a 'disenchanted enchantment': tearing a fish hook from a turtle's throat in hopes of giving it a chance to eat again and thus to live is done in full recognition of the fact that human actions, often connected to broader economies, have created the situation in the first place.³⁷

Moments of enchantment abound in participants' narratives. That enchantment translates into an ethic

of commitment to the survival and thriving of sea turtles. It also manifests in discourses of respect and very frequently humility and gratitude to the turtles for allowing human beings near them. These are not stories of beautiful sunsets and stunning vistas. They are very often coupled with painful experiences, both for the turtle (physically) and the human (emotionally). For instance, one interviewee told the story of cutting free an entangled leatherback turtle who was almost completely immobilized by fishing nets and gear. She described cutting away the net with scissors until the turtle, who held still for her during the process, was freed. Describing the experience and that moment she said, "for me, that was magical". During the interview she emphasized the connectedness of all beings on earth and the current human failure to understand this connectedness: "Humans are not working with the planet". Ultimately, she saw nature as being far more powerful than humans, and that "we are here as long as nature allows us to be".

Drawing on the work of Levinas, Douglas Ezzy (2004) argues that such moments of encounter produce an intersubjective ethics. Levinas, according to Ezzy (2004: 22), "provides an analysis of the social (or should we say beyond the social) sources of a sense of ethical responsibility". Rather than top-down rules and imperatives,³⁸ these *ethics of becoming* prioritize and are rooted in a commitment to hearing the Other, or, more, listening to the Other. Returning to agonistic respect, this means stepping away from human measures of such things as intelligence, which have, among other things, been used to justify all manner of abuse of non-human animals. Agonistic respect also means transcending difference to find points of similarity to develop those ethics. There is passionate debate within the sea turtle community on all things related to human-turtle interaction, but these illustrate a vigorous commitment to an ethics of becoming that puts the turtles at the centre of concern rather than human flourishing.

CONCLUSION

Let's return to enchantment with a reinvigorated understanding of its origins and possibilities. Disenchantment is a myth. Enchantment belongs to both religion and nonreligion. An enlarged enchantment-propelled ethics has the potential to recraft human relationships with 'others'. By enlarged I mean both moments that social actors link to religion and those not linked to religion (nonreligious) as experiences of enchantment. Nonreligion opens the space to escape the confines of the harmful collaboration between stewardship and 'Big Science', allowing us to reimagine the world in ways that facilitate flourishing or living well together. It also inserts a desperately needed humility about what we know. Enchantment is not owned by religion. Wonder and delight

belong to everyone, including to non-human animals.³⁹ As stated above, humans do not have the capacity to fully understand how this manifests among non-human animals. But the focus here is on human capacity for enchantment as both immanent and transcendent. Recovering the former enriches the possibility of relational ethics.⁴⁰ At this moment in the history of the planet, described as the era of the Anthropocene, mobilizing the capacity of enchantment in all of its dimensions and manifestations is an urgent project.

While narratives of disenchantment have dominated scholarship and very often social life, processes, experiences and relationships of enchantment have continued. Equating religion with enchantment has exacerbated the paucity of creative and strong responses to an impoverished relationship between humans and nature. This is not to say that religious responses do not have a role. But imagining environmental destruction as a manifestation of a broken relationship between humans and gods captures only one of many ways of knowing that are necessary to move to repair the world.

Here we come back to the chorus. Recalling the etymology of enchantment, ‘singing together’ shifts our positionality, mingling our voices. This is not the collective effervescence of Durkheim, though some might imagine it to be so. Rather, it is shared engagement that allows us to exchange and co-create. A chorus is necessarily relational.

Encounters with ‘nature’ or non-human animals do not always inspire awe, wonder, or enchantment.⁴¹ That is not, however, the point of this discussion. Instead, it is the current dominant conceptualization of enchantment, associated with religious belief, belonging and practice to the exclusion of other ‘nonreligious’ experiences of enchantment that is problematic. To claim that society is disenchanted, people are disenchanted and searching for meaning (code for god), or that enchantment can or should only be associated with the supernatural leaves behind the possibility of mobilizing enchantment that can aid in responding to the climate crisis and human abuse of the planet. This is not a ‘universal’ solution: resolving these issues is a complex matter. But it is one piece of the resolution puzzle.

In his preface to the newest edition of his book *Epidemics and Society*, Frank M. Snowden (2020: ix) references the COVID-19 pandemic and notes that it has been made possible because of the society humans have created: “Epidemics afflict societies through the specific vulnerabilities people have created by their relationships with the environment, other species and each other”. The failure to respect other species, to understand that non-human animals have agency, and the corralling of enchantment into a transcendent relationship that mediates human relationships with other species are all part of this story. Immanent enchantment has the potential to change our ethical stance.

A foundation thinker of the environmental movement and in re-imagining human/non-human relationships, Rachel Carson inhabited a world in a space between religion and nonreligion that muddies these categories. Alternately citing the book of Genesis and scientific data, she marveled at the world around her and agonized over destructive human activities. In “The Real World Around Us” (1954) Carson (2008: 559) said: “[T]he more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction”.

NOTES

- 1 See O’Conner and Kellerman (2015).
- 2 This more contemporary meaning is common in a number of settings, including songs like “Some Enchanted Evening” by Frank Sinatra (1949) from the musical *South Pacific*.
- 3 This discussion of enchantment focuses primarily on the societies in which Christianity has been (and still is in many cases) the majority religion and about which the theorists I include are discussing.
- 4 In *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, Alex Owen (2004: 242) states: “The reference to ‘disenchantment’ was a direct acknowledgment of Weber’s pessimistic assessment of the modern age. According to Weber, the disenchanted modern age is one in which an all-embracing metaphysical or religious worldview falls victim to the same process of rationalization that had earlier created it”.
- 5 Richard Jenkins (2000: 12) notes that disenchantment is uneven or even absent in society.
- 6 “In Weber’s view, if instrumental reason is necessary for a wide range of cultural developments in the scientific, political, and economic sectors, it comes at the expense of spiritual death” (Sizemore 2018: 9).
- 7 “It is the historical process by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become experienced and understood as less mysterious; defined, at least in principle, as knowable, predictable and manipulable by humans; conquered by and incorporated into the interpretive schema of science and rational government. In a disenchanted world everything becomes understandable and tameable, even if not, for the moment, understood and tamed. Increasingly the world becomes human-centred and the universe—only apparently paradoxically—more impersonal” (Jenkins 2000: 12).
- 8 While this discussion focuses on relationships between human and nonhuman animals, I acknowledge that non-human beings on earth also include plants, lands, minerals and waters. These lifeforms find equal standing in Indigenous ontologies that oppose strict western binaries between ‘sentient’ and ‘nonsentient’ life.
- 9 The World Wildlife Fund’s (2018) report on biodiversity and climate change argues that “up to half of plant and animal species in the world’s most naturally rich areas, such as the Amazon and the Galapagos, could face local extinction by the turn of the century due to climate change if carbon emissions continue to rise unchecked”.
- 10 From the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’* of Pope Francis: “Yet it must also be recognized that nuclear energy, biotechnology, information technology, knowledge of our DNA, and many other abilities which we have acquired, have given us tremendous power. More precisely, they have given those with the knowledge, and especially the economic resources to use them, an impressive dominance over the whole of humanity and the entire world” (para. 104; Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).
- 11 To be fair, Taylor (2008: np; emphasis original) goes on to state that: “at the very least, we live in a *much less* ‘enchanted’ world” and therefore, as one of the reviewers of this paper pointed out, seems to acknowledge that some residual enchantment exists or that disenchantment is in progress.

- 12 Charles Taylor is not the only scholar to link enchantment to religion in modernity. See, for example, Rodrigues (2017).
- 13 Alex Owen (2004) interprets Horkheimer and Adorno as arguing that the Enlightenment merely succeeded in replacing one myth with another. “Instead of an all-powerful God”, Owen (2004, 242) explains, “an enlightened world assumes the sovereignty of ‘man.’ This sovereignty in turn consists of ‘man’s’ power to know and thereby control nature. But herein also lies a great paradox: ‘the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant’”.
- 14 “Still less do we have in mind what one might call insidious re-enchantment, of the kind discussed at length by Theodor Adorno and others—the purported exploitation, that is, of a helpless population’s unwitting tendency to invest media and markets with a mystical aura, in order to keep the capitalist system in place” (Landy and Saler 2009: 2).
- 15 See both Michael Saler’s *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality* (2012) and Joshua Landy and Michael Saler’s *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age* (2009).
- 16 See, for example, Lu (2015) and Saliba (2007). See Lindberg (2008) for an historical overview of western science as we understand it today.
- 17 This may include ecospiritualities. See Lestar and Böhm (2020) for a discussion of ‘ecospirituality’ and sustainability.
- 18 In a similar way, Alex Owen (2004: 6) explores the relationship between occultism and enchantment, arguing that something that was obviously very socially important in the late 1800s and decades prior to the Great War has been largely ignored by historians.
- 19 There have been other attempts to destabilize the myth of disenchantment, or to tame it into manageable categories and stages: see, for example, Numerato (2009).
- 20 In this paper, I avoid the use of the word ‘secular’ which has the potential to detract rather than add to the analysis. It is a concept that is deployed in various ways and attaches to complex power relations in its manifestations.
- 21 Both Richard Jenkins (2000:18) and Patrick Curry (2016: 112) discuss modern and mundane aspects of enchantment.
- 22 Owen (2004: 242) develops a similar argument: “So that in a de-sacralized modern age the principle of transcendence and the ontological realities of a religious worldview are exchanged for a subject-centered immanence and the realities of a rational-scientific universe. By this reckoning, scientific rationality becomes simultaneously the only legitimate means of interpreting the world and the sole arbiter of objective world meaning. It is for this reason that Weber regarded science not as the antithesis of religion but as itself a religion”.
- 23 “*They can make the mute world speak, tell the truth without being challenged, put an end to the interminable arguments through an incontestable form of authority that would stem from things themselves*” (Latour 2004: 14; emphasis original).
- 24 Latour conceptualizes non-human broadly, in relation to what he discusses as ‘the collective’, and includes, for example, non-human animals, plants and minerals.
- 25 Connolly (2005, 2011) uses ‘registers’ in a similar context.
- 26 See DeMares (2000) for an investigation of peak experiences, which may include feelings of awe, caused by individual encounters with cetaceans.
- 27 Kenneth Shapiro (2018) argues that one source of awe (and I would argue enchantment) is that the world is partly opaque to our understanding. This “inherent residual opacity” means that “there is and always will be something beyond our understanding” and that a nonreligious response is not to turn to God as a source of meaning or explanation (Shapiro 2018: 200). In short, both what is and what is unknown are sources of enchantment.
- 28 The conceptual divide between religion and science has been addressed by numerous scholars, including Ann Taves (2009), who draws on the social and natural sciences to argue that “religious experience” should be conceptualized as “experiences deemed religious”. Thomas Berry (2009), a Passionist priest, takes a more theological approach by using scientific knowledge about the history of the Universe and Earth to shape an ecological cosmology. Science for Taves (2009) and Berry (2009) is not in opposition to religion, but a significant part of its numerous manifestations.
- 29 Anna Sofia Salonen (2019) asks: what is the framework that makes possible the idea that we as humans have the right to keep non-human animals for our food needs?
- 30 Jenkins’ choice of wording is unfortunate: the word ‘creature’ invokes a human/non-human animal hierarchy. Humans are rarely creatures, except perhaps women, who are referred to patronizingly as ‘the poor creature’. Men are rarely imagined as ‘creatures’.
- 31 Connolly (2005: 123) develops the notion of agonistic respect to describe a process of relinquishing one’s own ‘rightness’ in a relationship with others, which “grows out of mutual appreciation for the ubiquity of faith to life and the inability of contending parties, to date, to demonstrate the truth of one faith over other live candidates”. World-repairing might better be described as ‘world constituting’, following Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson (2020: xxi) and their use of the phrase “reconstitute the world”, which they in turn draw from Adrienne Rich.
- 32 Patrick Curry (2016) would seem to disagree, viewing enchantment as wild and unbiddable, although he admits that it sometimes occurs where it is invited. Ultimately, I think Bennett (2001) and Curry (2016) are not so far apart—Bennett is focused on cultivating the ground for the possibility of enchantment—she wishes to maximize the possibility. Curry (2016: 111) says that “enchantment is unbiddable; it can be invited but definitely not commanded”. Bennett’s (2001) strategies are directed toward cultivating the space in which enchantment can occur.
- 33 I leave aside for now Bennett’s (2001: 11) suggestion that there are also literary, machinic and electronic sites of enchantment to focus on “structures, entities and events in nature”.
- 34 See James A. Beckford (2012) and his discussion of the “reenchantment of culture”. In a related argument, see Altglas and Wood (2018) on lived religion.
- 35 My reluctance is not necessarily shared by others. Drawing on the chimpanzee waterfall dance first recorded by Jane Goodall, Donovan O. Schaefer (2015) thoughtfully argues that religion is located outside of belief and language and can rather be found in the affective realm of existence. Goodall (2005: 275) herself proposes that the chimpanzee waterfall dance is spiritual and may be a precursor to religious behaviour, or as Bron Taylor (2009: 30) puts it, “a kind of animistic, pagan religion”. Speaking of this dance, Goodall (2005: 276) asks, “What triggers these marvellous performances? Is it possible that the chimpanzees have a sense of awe, a feeling generated by the elements—rain, thunder, falling water?”
- 36 The bulk of the research on nonreligion and awe focuses on atheists, such as the finding by Ryan T. Cragun and Barry A. Kosmin (2013: np) that “there is growing evidence that at least some atheists consider themselves ‘spiritual’ in a purely secular sense for example, experiencing wonder and awe when observing nature”. Caldwell-Harris et al. (2011: 670) also elaborate on the ‘secular’ spiritual. This configuration of spirituality excludes attributing sacred meaning to ordinary experiences. See Shapiro (2018: 213) for a discussion of wonder and ‘faithful atheism’, in which “the preservation and betterment of the ecosphere—humans, other animals, and the earth itself—is the only transcendent good”.
- 37 A music video from Sea Turtle Conservation Curacao depicts the harmful impacts of human pollution, and especially single-use plastic, on sea turtles. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRrptVnOLw&feature=youtu.be>.
- 38 “Levinas offers an ethics without rules, imperatives, maxims or clear objections other than a passionate moral conviction that the Other should be heard” (Davis 1996: 144).
- 39 “Animals do not exist to serve human ends: animals are not servants or slaves of human beings, but have their own moral significance, their own subjective existence, which must be respected. Animals, as much as humans, are individual beings with the right not to be tortured, imprisoned, subjected to medical experimentation, forcibly separated from their families, or culled because they are eating too many rare orchids or altering their local habitat. With respect to these basic moral rights to life and liberty, animals and humans are equals, not master and slave, manager and resource, steward and ward, or creator and artefact” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011: 4).

- 40 Relational ethics are based on myriad types of interactions. For example, an encounter with a rare blue lobster in a crate of lobsters delivered to his restaurant led a British chef to not only find a 'forever home' for the blue lobster, but to take lobster off the menu entirely (BBC News 2021).
- 41 Franklin Ginn (2014: 536–537) writes: "Encounters with slugs are not enchanting, but suffused with disgust". Curry (2016) notes the relationship between enchantment and disenchantment, arguing that a healthy relationship to enchantment requires a strong ego and an ability to handle disenchantment. He argues for a way of living that recognizes and values enchantment, not a universal metaphysics that would see the world as 'enchanted'.

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