At War with our Mother

LLI Course
by Douglas Kenning

outline

week 1. Exiled from ourselves

a. exiled from the womb
b. but we are Nature
c. since all things are one organism

week 2. Predation and competition are natural

a. “Nature red, in tooth and claw”
b. rapine -- a dilemma of cognitive dissonance

week 3. Nature speaks to us through us because we are Her

a. born of a living Earth
   Earth as a nurturing mother of all life
   "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"
   Earth specifically as our mother
   Earth’s shaping contours and guiding hands

b. animism comes naturally to a social mammal
   we are coded for community
   we are coded for bioiphilia
   innate pull toward groundedness
   Innate recognition of the superiority of the feminine
   Nature has agency
   we are coded to find intentionality
   thus our yearning for, seeking, recreating Nature as community,, thus,
   personal relations with the natural world
   we are coded for community – perhaps for asking permission
   we are coded for community – perhaps for gratitude

c. we are coded for stories
   we dwell within language
   we think in narrative and metaphor
   being coded for stories means living within stories
   myth is our blood asking for story
pathetic fallacy?

week 4. The Mythic Conversation is Local

the land raises us
landscape speaks in regional, geological, geographical dialects
why the Mediterranean?
why Sicily?
Sicilian land as limestone Mother
caves as the mouth of the Underworld

week 5. Separation from our Earth Mother

Why did we arrive at this estrangement?

a. 1st separation -- Neolithic distancing and the sedentary life

b. 2nd separation – human will = sky god?

c. 3rd separation -- male competitive striving
   the rise of arête
   yet the Earth Goddess remains
   Greek tragedy as a ritual affirming Earth’s authority
   authority of Earth in Roman times

d. 4th separation -- we became urban, scientific, and technological
   do you protect and preserve your Mother or take all that she can give?
   worse, we have become urban, urbane people
   worst of all, we've created a conceptual Anthropocene prison
   e. we’re losing the kind of rituals that speak with the Earth
      only participatory rituals are alive

week 6. Relations with our Mother are Tragic

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a. living the myth
b. the story of the land is a tragedy
c. history follows myth, and also is a tragedy