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BRILL

Worldviews 12 (2008) 221-236

WORLDVIEWS

www.brill.nl/wo

Sacrifice and Sustainability

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Abstract
Sacrifice in the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian traditions involves a giving up, a surrendering of something for the sake of a greater good. Sacrifice in times past took the form of a bloody offering. In Christianity this has been replaced with the Eucharist, which promotes human conscience and adherence to a moral code. Sacrifice in the ancient Vedic traditions of India entailed the offering of an animal or the symbolic offering of a human being that correlated bodily parts to functions of society and the cosmos. Sacrifice in India in rare instances still includes the killing of animals. Ritual throughout India, known as Puja, celebrates the body, the senses, and their connection with the physical world through offerings of fruits, flowers, incense, and other ritual objects.

The contemporary challenge presented by the need to develop sustainable lifestyles can draw from both traditions of sacrifice. The Mediterranean model urges people to do with less for the sake of a greater good. The Indic model encourages people to recognize the web of relations among humans, nature, and animals and develop sensitivity to the need for the protection of the earth. Both models of sacrifice can serve as inspiration for the development of reasonable patterns for resource management.

Keywords
sacrifice, sustainability, Vedas, Eucharist, Puja, violence, globalization

Sacrifice in Judaic, Hellenistic, and Christian Contexts

This comparative essay will explore models of sacrifice in light of sustainability from two cultural matrices, Mediterranean and Indic. It will also explore reinterpreting sacrificial ritual in light of the inter-relationship

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DOI: 10.1163/156853508X359994

between humans and the earth. Sacrifice has been defined by theologian Dennis Keenan as "a necessary passage through suffering and/or death (of either oneself or someone else) on the way to a supreme moment of transcendent truth" (Keenan: 11). Transcendent truth in light of global warming, resource diminishment, and species decimation, has become replaced with the "inconvenient truth" that human behavior in quest of the "good life" has become rapacious and destructive. How might the practice of sacrifice move human cultures away from these behaviors and toward the actualization of a sustainable lifestyle?

The word sacrifice in the English language means to make (*facere*) sacred (*sacre*). Throughout world history, this has often entailed killing an animal or a human in the context of religious ritual. Early anthropologists were fascinated with this process, prompting Hubert and Mauss, in their seminal book *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, to write that "sacrifice is a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it" (Hubert and Mauss: 13), indicating that sacrifice establishes a change in the one who performs a sacrifice and produces a larger social function. Durkheim postulated that sacrifice served an integral function in the social creation of religion, and hence human civility (Durkheim).

The core story of sacrifice in Western civilization can be gleaned from three sources, the Hebrew Bible, Euripides' play *The Bacchae*, and the New Testament. In the first narrative, God requests Abraham to sacrifice his first-born son. In the second, women driven mad by Dionysius kill Pentheus, a revered father figure. The third entails the crucifixion of Jesus. In this first story, God orders Abraham to substitute an animal, sparing the life of the son. In the second story, violence spins out of control and although the women of the Bacchae regret their actions, Pentheus cannot be brought back to life. The death of Jesus gives birth to a theology of atonement, a doctrine that contemplation on the suffering and painful death of Jesus, combined with reflection on and repentance for one's own sins, results in rectification and forgiveness. The first story indicates a transition from violence to humanistic compassion; the second story warns that humans hold the capacity to stray from the rational and fall prey to violent urges; the third story suggests a framework for learning from the mistakes of others (the Roman soldiers) and altering one's behavior. In accord with Durkheim, all three instances hold a moral imperative for the maintenance of the social order.

According to Renée Girard, violence has played a central role in the history of sacrifice. He suggests that sacrifice, generally of a scapegoat, "serves to protect the entire community from its *own* violence… the elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated…." (Girard: 8). In his study of world history and human civilizations, Girard detects an irrefutable link between religion and violence, stating that the sacrificial act "curtails reciprocal violence and imposes structure on the community" (Girard: 317). For Girard, the Christian faith successfully defuses the power and allure of violence. He refers to "the acceptance of the cross as a revelation and cancellation of the original violence which founds cultural institutions."[1]

Keenan comes to a similar conclusion, citing Levinas's statement that "sacrifice requires being for the other." Keenan notes that sacrifice leads to *agape*, the selfless love that allows for social stability (Keenan: 75).[2] By participating in the Christian Eucharist, a ritual that recalls the passion and love of Jesus, one is brought to atonement. By drawing the Christian lesson into oneself through the act of mimesis, seeing one's own sin in light of the larger story of Jesus, violence within oneself can be mitigated. By replacing mimetic desires of violence with imitation of Christ, one becomes rectified. This served for many centuries as the foundational principle for civil society in western cultures: even the post-Enlightenment secular world, though proclaiming that its social norms are based solely on reason and natural law, in fact abounds with examples of sacrificial practices through which society is held in balance. The sacrifice of one's own selfish needs for the sake of the common good serves as cultural glue and stabilizer.

However, the rationalistic worldview that brought about our current civil order also paved the way for the birth of scientific method and its linkage first with technology, then resource exploitation, and finally the perfection of marketing, resulting in a voracious new religion referred to by theologian John Cobb as "economism." With advances in technology, some basic sacrifices required to ensure human comfort are no longer required. In turn, an obsession with human comfort has resulted in quintessentially modern forms of idolatry. These include over-concern with one's social status and body image, excessive consumerism, and a desire to

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1) Personal correspondence with James Fredericks, October 29, 1996.

2) Keenan defines *agape* as "the sacrifice *of* the sacrifice of one's pathological sinful desire to transgress the Law… sacrifice always has a transcendental intention" (Keenan: 29).

postpone one's death at all costs. Cultural cynicism and despair also may be seen as an outgrowth or byproduct of the success of the European Enlightenment, as well as a breakdown of the traditional moral order. Theologian Thomas J.J. Altizer has described the phenomenon as follows:

> What we have known as conscience and moral judgment is grounded in a fully individual conscience and consciousness, and with the collapse and transformation of that conscience and consciousness all which was once present as moral judgment becomes groundless. That groundlessness can be seen in the vacuity of our moral language, just as it can be seen in the inability of our moral judgment to confront the actualities of either culture or power.... Morally ours is the darkest of times (Altizer: 86).

The relativism and malaise of the post-Enlightenment emphasis on the supremacy of the human combined with the use of technologically enhanced weapons such as automatic artillery, mustard gas, and nuclear weaponry resulted in great violence in the 19th and 20th centuries. It also prompted a comfort-driven trivialization of human worth and meaning in the latter part of the 20th century, extending into the 21st century. With rise of individualism and a loss of a concern for the good of the group, a myopia has emerged eclipsing the efficacy of sacrifice.

In years past, the mimetic violence of ritual sacrifice helped slake blood thirst and establish a stable social order. Sacrifice helped quell hatred. Hatred boils into violent rage leading to murder; organized murder on a larger scale leads to war. The stories of Abraham, Pentheus, and Jesus helped direct human behavior away from senseless killing of other human beings. Although the efficacy of the sacrificial order went into a slow and steady decline with the birth of modernity, its enduring lessons helped prompt a turning away from the overwhelming violence that distinguished the first half of the 20th century as the most violent period in human history. However, only with radical reinterpretation may the stories of Abraham, Pentheus, and Jesus be seen as moral fables for countering human greed. Greed differs from violence. It entails a different, deferred form of destruction. This destruction can be found in exploitation of natural resources, devastation of landscapes and ecosystems, and a colonization of the mind with manufactured notions of products that must be consumed.

Today we suffer from the malaise of greed, stemming from what David Loy has referred to as the "religion of the market"(Loy: 275-90). War still simmers in various parts of the world, though the great destruction of the early to middle twentieth century will most likely (and hopefully) not be repeated. However, by the over-efficient exploitation of resources, human life has been placed in jeopardy by pollution, an autism to the natural world, a consequent non-acknowledgment of externalities (waste disposal, deleterious carbon gases), and a lack of political will. The cautionary tales that were learned from Abraham, Pentheus, and Jesus served to provide human beings with means to develop a workable polity, a system that with a few notable exceptions, helped tamp down the human tendency toward violence over the long course of history. However, making infanticide, passion-driven crimes, and religious/political persecution aberrant rather than expected, does not look beyond human concerns. The story of the sacrifice in the Judeo-Greco-Christian-Islamic continuum needs in the present age to evolve into a model that allows for the protection of animals, the protection of women, and the protection of the earth itself. We need a new model of sacrifice to counter the violence of greed.

Sacrifice in the Indian Cultural Context

By examining the ancient Indic models for sacrifice, themselves subject to periodic revision and self-correction, an alternative sacrificial model may be discerned, a model that might be even more easily adaptable to the modern call for species sustainability due to its emphasis on the connections between the structures of the human body and human cultures with the broader realms of creation.

In the Sanskrit language, the word for sacrifice, *yajña*, derives from the verbal root *yaj*, which means "to worship, adore, honor, consecrate, offer" (Monier-Williams: 838). The English usage of the word sacrifice places the materials of sacrifice in the place of the object. In other words, one configures a sentence "she sacrificed a goat," with the assumption that the goat has been offered to God. In India, the land of 330,000,000 gods and goddesses, one places the name of the recipient of one's sacrifice in the object part of the sentence, and uses the instrumental case to indicate the materials being offered and the dative case to explain the reason the offering is

being made. A sample sentence might be "he sacrificed to Laksmi with flowers and fruits for wealth." Though subtle, this linguistic difference signals entry into a different context for the purpose and performance of ritual. One considers the deity to whom the offering is made, drawing form myriad possibilities. One also chooses the materials to be offered and keeps in mind a particular goal.

Early sacrifice in India has been thoroughly documented. Just as the Abraham-Pentheus-Jesus story still influences European and North American ways of life, so also the models for sacrifice from South Asia hold enduring influence on the culture structures of South Asia. We will examine three narratives: the sacrifice of the primal person (*puruṣa*) in the *Ṛg Veda*, the *aśva medha* or horse sacrifice in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, a twin tale of sacrificial cosmogony and anthropogeny in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad.* Each of these demonstrate a connection between human order and the larger cosmos.

In the first, the human person, divided up, comprises both the social order and the various constituents of the cosmos. This Vedic hymn poses a question: "When they divided Purusha, how many pieces did they prepare? What was his mouth? What are his arms, thighs, and feet called?" (Lincoln: 7). The response makes direct correlations between these body parts and the now infamous caste system: "The priest was his mouth, the warrior was made from his arms; his thighs were the commoner, and the servant was born from his feet." In this correlative sociology, the higher tasks performed by priests, physicians, lawyers, and teachers require a sound head. The ownership of land and the maintenance of political order require strong arms. "Commoners" are referred to also as merchants, who move goods through the extended metaphor of the legs. Servants, the "salt of the earth," perform the sorts of labor required for agricultural production and construction projects. This deeply hierarchical social order reflects human physiology and gives sacrificial sanction to human occupations. Civil duty (*dharma*) assumes religious significance.

The second part of the hymn correlates the human body with the far-flung regions of the universe:

> The moon was born of his mind; of his eye, the sun was born;
> From his mouth, Indra and fire; from his breath, wind was born;
> From his navel there was the atmosphere;

From his head, heaven was rolled together;
From his feet, the earth; from his ears, the directions.

By identifying body parts with heavenly bodies, the heavens and the earth, and the elements of fire and wind, sanctity is given to both self and cosmos. Like the moon, our mind reflects and changes. Without the light of the sun, we cannot see. Our mouth proclaims our intentions and desires, and like the God of War, Indra, allows us to stake our claim in the world. Each breath we take generates and relies on the circulation of air. Our heard pulls us upward; our belly gathers us toward the center and allows us to expand; our feet anchor us to the earth. Our ears orient and stabilize us within the space of the four directions. Though this sacrificial vision, each human being finds a place of importance within the cosmos. This sacrifice signals a continuity between the human person and her place society and within nature.

The horse sacrifice was performed in the twelfth year of the reign of powerful kings in India. For a full year, the king would pursue a horse, released to the northeast of his kingdom, leaving his hair uncut, his beard unshaven, remaining celibate for the duration of one year, following wherever the horse wandered, and eventually claming this territory as his own. At the culmination of the year, the horse would be captured and butchered, in what undoubtedly was a deeply emotional ceremony. Just as above, where human body parts were matched with larger realms, so also were the various portions of the sacrificial horse:

Om! Verily, the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse;
the sun, his eye; the wind, his breath; universal fire, his open mouth.
The year is the body of the sacrificial horse; the sky, his back;
the atmosphere, his belly; the earth, the underpart of his belly;
the quarters, his flanks; the intermediate quarters, his ribs;
the seasons, his flanks; the month and half-months, his joints;
days and night, his feet; the stars, his bones; the clouds, his flesh.
Sand is the food in the stomach; rivers are his entrails.
His liver and lungs are the mountains; plants and trees, his hair.
The east is his fore part; the west, his hind part.
When he yawns, then it lightens.
When he shakes himself, then it thunders.
When he urinates, then it rains.
Voice, indeed, is his voice (Hume: 73).

This description of sacrifice in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* adds the passing of time to a description of the physical aspects of the universe, correlating the steps of the horse to day and night and the year to its whole body. In a later section of the same text, the parts of the horse are aligned with human body parts, as in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Ṛg Veda.*

Another variation on this process of worldly creation can be found in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. The performance of sacrificial ritual generates a form of interior, spiritual, creative heat known as *tapas.* This heat explodes the body of the primal person, creating the various parts of the universe. After the pieces of the universe have been created, they again gather together, re-forming the human body.

> When the man was heated, his mouth broke off, like an egg. From the mouth there was speech; from speech, fire. His nostrils broke off. From the nostrils there was breath; from breath, wind. His eyes broke off. From the eyes was vision; from vision, the sun. His ears broke off. From the ears there was hearing; from hearing, the four quarters. His skin broke off. From the skin there were hairs; from the hairs, plants and trees. His heart broke off. From the heart there was mind; from mind, the moon. His navel broke off. From the navel there was the downward breath; from the downward breath, death. His penis broke off. From the penis there was semen; from semen, the waters (Lincoln: 9).

The scattering of body parts into the elements and heavenly bodies signals an intimacy between human physiology and the larger order and operation of the cosmos. As noted by Bruce Lincoln, this outward movement also has a moment of contraction in an endless pattern of expansion and contraction: "Each breath thus alternately de-creates the body while creating the world, then de-creates the world in order to re-create the body" (Lincoln: 10). The recreation of the body proceeds as follows:

> Fire, having become speech, entered into the mouth. Wind, having become the breath, entered into the nostrils. The sun, having become vision, entered into the eyes. The four quarters, having become hearing, entered into the ears. The plants and trees, having become hairs, entered into the skin. The moon, having become the mind, entered into the heart. Death, having become the downward breath, entered into the navel. The waters, having become semen, entered the penis (Lincoln: 9).

The sacrifice of (or sacrificial, meditative attention to) the body results in the formation of or instantiation within the cosmos. The sacrifice of the cosmos results in the creation of the human body. Our body parts all eventually return and disappear into the air and earth. By recognizing these connections, one sees a common origin and a common end, body and universe.

The early sacrifices of India were dramatic and bloody, especially the horse sacrifice. Sacrifice of goats, water buffalo, and chickens still takes place in certain parts of India, particularly Bengal, Orissa, and Assam. Pressure from the Buddhists and Jains, and more recently the British, has reduced the incidence of animal sacrifice, replacing it with "tamer" ceremonies known as *pūjas* that involve offerings of fruits and grains and flowers, as well as extensive cycles of prayer and chanting. Indicating a continuity with the earlier processes documented above from the Vedas and Upaniṣads, one priest , Kumar Panda described his process of readying himself to conduct a major animal sacrifice at Chandi Temple in Cuttack, Orissa:

> The priest [must] transform his body into a microcosm of the universe [through] the correspondences between nature and the human body: *earth* is equated with that part of the body below the waist; *water* is symbolized by the stomach region; *fire* is represented by the heart; *wind* is equivalent to the throat, nose and lungs; *sky* corresponds to the brain (Preston: 51).

For Kumar Panda, this results in a change of consciousness and a dissolution of his identity into the personage of the goddess for whom the ritual sacrifice is performed. He reports:

> After performing meditation and the ritual for two or three hours, lightning flashes before my eyes.... I become the goddess... There is no difference between *Ma* and me. Water and the coldness of water, fire and the burning capacity of fire, the sun and the rays of the sun; there is no difference between all these things, just as there is no difference between myself and the goddess (Preston: 53).

By becoming the goddess, one's body-feel expands beyond the confines of ego and moves into a trance (*samādhi*) of cosmic consciousness. The feeling of deep connection resides not only with the attendant priest but also with the tens of thousands who participate in this annual sacrifice.

Sacrifice expressed in simple ritual can be found in India in numerous ways, from the daily lighting of the kitchen fire to the creation of threshold art to the observance of a fast based on the phases of the moon. Veneration of animals can be found in the presence of cows, goats, camels, and elephants on city streets as well as in household ritual of feeding the birds on one's windowsill before starting one's own meal. According to Girard, sacrifice and the ritual of the Eucharist helps bring social stability and stave off acts of violence in Christian societies. In India, the excitement of large ritual moments such as the Kumba Mela, where millions gather at the confluence of the Yamuna and Ganges Rivers in Allahabad, serve to cement the religious identity of social groups. The constancy of small ritual moments such as prayer and the maintenance of one's household shrine serve to stabilize the family and the individual, establishing connections with the larger natural order.

The violence of Jesus' crucifixion symbolized by the Eucharist prompts the cultivation of human conscience and a move toward rectification and reconciliation. In India, rituals evoke a primal connection between one's sensorial body and the broader powers of the universe. In years past, India thrived in a village-based, subsistence economy. Emotional, cultural, and physical sustainability were achieved through a cycle of rituals and sacrifices within the context of one's religiously sanctioned social duty (*dharma*). Though oppressive by modern standards, this system provided an adequate method for the sustainability of Indian culture even in the face of inter-kingdom conflict, waves of migration, and periods of foreign rule, including the lineage of Mughal rulers from Afghanistan who dominated northern India for centuries, and the era of the British Raj, which extended its colonial administration throughout much of the subcontinent.

Sacrifice and Sustainability

For the European world and North America, the killing of the goat, Pentheus, and Jesus provided a model of sacrifice that involves giving up an object for the sake of a greater good. In the case of environmental degradation, this greater good would be a cleaner environment within the context of a sustainable economic system. Just as the goat, Pentheus, and Jesus gave up their lives, modern people are being called to give up aspects of their lifestyles that cause harm to the environment. In the current globalized

economy, changes would be required to make a shift from non-rewable energy sources such as oil to renewable sources such as wind and solar power, from health-damaging foods to healthy, from isolating activities that promote malaise to community building activities that promote connectivity and well being. The giving up of bad habits will need to be accompanied with replacement strategies to avoid economic and social upheaval. Re-developing a healthy sense of sacrifice will be essential for an effective change in energy and economic policies. This sacrificial model calls for a return to conscience, a reflection on the sin of over-consumption, and a resolve to develop a new conscience and abstemiousness.

The correlation of the cosmic person and the sacrificial horse to the broader forces of the universe and the ritual dismemberment of a goat in the contemporary sacrifice to the goddess Durga provide a different sacrificial mode. Rather than emphasis on loss, this approach to sacrificial ritual emphasizes connectivity. These rituals do not provoke recollections of a broken past or advocate social change or tweak an individual's conscience. The exuberant rituals of India proclaim that the human person stands in solidarity with and in celebration of the great forces that drive the universe. By seeing the changing nature of the human mind in the phases of the moon, by seeing the warmth of the heart reflected in the household hearth, sacrifice and ritual bring an individual to a place of identification with and empathy for the natural order. Mahatma Gandhi suggested that by returning to the bare necessities of life, one could disentangle oneself from the ravages of the British colonial system. He spun his own thread and wove his own clothing. He led salt marches that helped spare people from taxation and reliance on imported goods. India's response to the difficulties of an enmeshed global economy will be well-served by the Gandhian creed and adage: "There is enough in this world for every person's need, but not enough for every person's greed."

Environmentalists such as M.C. Mehta have acknowledged that India's traditional environmental wisdom can provide a valuable resource for moving the public will into supporting the steps necessary to improve air quality, deal with water pollution, and take the necessary steps to slow global warming. He has commented:

> The elements of nature such as air and water are being overtaken by greed. Greed has overtaken us, leaving us under the cloak of greed. For people wearing that cloak of greed, it is very hard to come out and see real life. With

> correct understanding they will be in a position to respect law, and enforce it. Then we can have sustainable elements (Mehta: 2006).

For the world of India, the sacrificial model calls for a reconnection with the elements that have been celebrated since the Vedic period, an acknowledgment of the real connection between the human order and the cosmic order.

Rethinking Sacrifice for Christendom and India

Contemporary thinkers from each culture have made concrete suggestions for revisioning sacrifice through the principles of sustainability: Thomas Berry and Vandana Shiva. By following their key ideas, new approaches can be discerned for constructive sacrificial action that heighten one's sense of inter-connection with the larger forces of society and the universe.

Thomas Berry regards the earth to be the primary vehicle for revelation, the context for all human flourishing, and the only path toward self-knowledge. In *The Great Work* he writes that:

> Only Earth became a living planet filled with those innumerable forms of geological structure and biological expression that we observe throughout the natural world. Only Earth held a creative balance between the turbulence and the discipline that are necessary for creativity.... The universe [established on Earth] a creative disequilibrium expressed in the curvature of space that was sufficiently closed to establish an abiding order in the universe and sufficiently open to enable the wild creative process to continue (Berry, 1999:52).

For Berry, all Earth expresses the sacrificial process. In order for humans to remain viable, they must go beyond themselves and return to an appreciation of the magnificence of the earth. All encounters with nature can be seen as sacred and hence instructive, from the stark beauty of the Earth, to the realization of the harm done by human greed and exploitation. In a negative sense, the beauty of the world has been sacrificed not as a gateway toward the transcendent, but solely for the pursuit of market-driven values. Berry writes:

> Apparently, during the four centuries since Descartes, we have lost our basic sensitivity for the ever-renewing natural world with its wonder, beauty, and

> intimacy as well as its local and seasonal nourishment in response to our love and care of the land. We were willing to devastate all these for the illusive abundance offered by an industrial society (Berry, forthcoming, 177).

Berry has several proposals to restore balance to human-Earth relations, including foundational science education, a rejection of the idea of the "Earth as primarily natural resource for the unlimited use of humans," an improved legal system that extends protection to eco-systems, and a curbing of the power of commercial-industrial corporations. By "sacrificing" the modern fetishes of technology and consumerism in favor of simpler living, we can return to a world of wonder, and recover in Berry's words, "our communication with the deeper reality of things." Our quest for transcendent truth of necessity must take us on a return journey to planet Earth.

Vandana Shiva has become one of the world's most outspoken critics of globalization and has provided a trenchant critique of "patenting" of traditional ways of knowledge for economic gain by corporations. Her activism in the realm of seeds serves as a paradigm for exposing the excesses of the human attempt to manipulate nature. Like Berry, she takes a broad historical view in developing her analysis of "enclosure" or the marking-off of what once held in common, to be commoditized and controlled by industrial and commercial forces:

> The 'enclosure' of biodiversity and knowledge is the final step in a series of enclosures that began with the rise of colonialism. Land and forests were the first resources to be 'enclosed' and converted from commons to commodities. Later, water resources were 'enclosed' through dams, groundwater mining and privatization schemes.... The destruction of the commons was essential for the industrial revolution, to provide a supply of raw material to industry (Shiva, 2001: 44-45).

A Gandhian at heart, Shiva advocates "living economies" such as Mumbai's magnificent lunch distribution system, the Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Association, which delivers 175,000 lunches each day. "With no documentation, no order, no bosses" this group makes only one mistake every 16 million deliveries (Shiva, 2005: 70). This organization has been studied by Harvard Business School as a model for human and social ingenuity (*Economist* July 12-18, 2008: 73). For Shiva, this exemplifies the sort of people-based economy required for sustainability, joining self-determination

with interdependence. Her advocacy of sustenance economy would require a shift from a corporate model to one in balance in nature, valuing 'partnerships, mutuality, and reciprocity.'

Both Berry and Shiva share a core philosophy of relationality. The sacrificial model underlying their approach acknowledges that the microcosm reflects the macrocosm. A small act ripples throughout the larger system, for good or ill. If one person owns a highly efficient automobile, or chooses to ride a bicycle rather than drive, it might be seen as an oddity and dismissed as eccentric. The reverse might also pertain and that person's choice might be admired and imitated by others. One person's sacrifice might be another's poison, or a source of inspiration and change.

Berry and Shiva also could be seen as supporting the sacrificial worldview discussed at the beginning of this essay. Like Mahatma Gandhi, they see moral strength in the willingness to acknowledge and live within limitations. Berry has provided an ongoing prophetic critique for several decades that calls for a not only a re-enchantment of creation, but also suggests that the market-driven economy has resulted in a trivialization of human meaning. Likewise, Shiva warns of the dangers of a new colonialism wherein corporations take control of the long-earned fruits of local knowledge, creating commodities from what once was common. In traditional life patterns, the knowledge of the community was shared by all. According to Berrry and Shiva, this sense of corporate well being that values the contribution and personhood of the individual must be recaptured. The displacement of the small-scale farmer, the problem of global warming, the rise of the middle class worldwide; these and other difficulties suggest that a shift must take place from an ideology of hording to an appreciation of sacrifice and conservationism as primary values.

Sacrifice in its evolving meaning took on a negative connotation in the past thirty years, with little notion that sacrifice might result in an eventual benefit. The first part of the process, "a giving up, destroying, foregoing of some valued thing" and "a giving up of something for less than its supposed value" eclipsed an understanding that this process could lead to "something of greater value" (Webster: 1382). The current generation has no recollection of the food rationing and other sacrifices (nylon stockings, margarine, victory gardens) made by Americans during World War II. However, a change has begun. Rather than simply plucking items from the grocery store shelf and purchasing automobiles based on style and func-

tion, individuals are re-introducing a thoughtful process into their purchases, re-engaging the tools of conscience and moral judgment that Altizer had declared obsolete. By examining health effects to one's body as well as becoming cognizant of the horrors of factory farming, people are changing their food choices. By considering the social and physical effects on the human body of long commutes in oversized vehicles, as well as the impact of fossil fuels on global weather patterns, people are beginning to adjust their lifestyle expectations.[3] Sociologists such as Robert Putnam and Juliet Schor have pointed out the loss of human connectivity that has resulted from a purchase-driven culture. By combining the western approach to sacrifice as providing social controls with the Asian sensibility of sacrifice as a way to heighten one's awareness of relationality, the ideals set forth by Berry and Shiva can be realized.

Conclusion

In order to foster a sustainable economic and political and psychological and spiritual state of affairs, people need to adopt new models of sacrifice. Rather than feeling punished by high costs for goods and services, the new sacrificial order might help people return to a sense of immediacy and aliveness. As food becomes more expensive, it becomes more cherished. Similarly, travel, whether for work or pleasure, will require careful consideration not only of cost but of its wider impact on the production of carbon. Personal identity, rather than being tied to the acquisition and manipulation of things, can be measured in terms of one's connectivity with others and with the primary source of revelation, the earth community. In conclusion, sacrificial wisdom, though differing from one cultural context to another, holds promise as a conceptual and practical resource to inspire people to take the steps necessary for personal, social, and economic sustainability.

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3) Two web-based animations have been particularly effective in communicating these concerns in a graphic, easily graspable format: *The Meatrix* on factory farming and *The Story of Stuff* about the underbelly of consumer culture.

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