

Ecology, Spirituality and the Paranormal

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This paper will explore the threads that interconnect the ecological, the spiritual and the paranormal. It will consider the role of worldviews in mediating interactions with the environment and ask whether there can be a spiritual response to the ecological crisis. This has been a growing field of research in the humanities and social sciences in recent years, with increased awareness of the role of beliefs in influencing our environmental behaviour - good and bad - and particularly in light of the current ecological crisis. But there is another dimension to this discussion that is often neglected, and this is a common trend across social scientific approaches to religion and spirituality more generally. This is the challenge of extraordinary experiences, which often underly systems of belief, and seem to suggest that there may be 'more' going on than the standard models usually allow for. In an effort to understand the role of extraordinary experience in the development of worldviews, this paper will consider what psychical research and parapsychology can tell us about the processes involved in establishing relationships between the human and non-human worlds, and will tentatively suggest how this understanding can be applied to real-world environmental activism.