

**Chapter 1 : Belonging Quotes | Quotations about or by Belonging**

*This item: Belonging to the Universe: Explorations on the Frontiers of Science and Spirituality by Fritjof Capra  
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Introduction Eyes accustomed to seeing the systemic interdependence of all forms of life observe the manicured green lawns of suburbia, or the endless acres of uniform crops on industrial farms, with a feeling of disquiet. Where others see enrichment, they see impoverishment. When Leopold wrote the words above, such eyes were rare: Now, nearly five decades later, their way of seeing is at the core of a growing national and international movement. Outwardly its missionaries fight on varied fronts, not for the salvation of souls, but of rainforests, of whales, of endangered creatures of every type. The media pick up readily on these outward causes, the more so because they often involve very real and dramatic conflict with the established order. Less attention, however, has been directed to the inner revolution that for many has accompanied this new way of looking at the world. Thus environmental consciousness, a sense of connectedness with and obligation to the life of the earth, has penetrated and found a place within all of the great historical religious traditions. My academic background is in philosophy and comparative religion, with a specialization in the traditions of East Asia. But the broad interdisciplinary program in which I teach has given me ample scope to explore the complex intersection of contemporary social developments with the increasingly borderless world of world religious traditions. In my courses I frequently encounter students for whom a new sense of the environment inspires a new religious identification as well: It seems that Zen, various forms of neo-Paganism, and Native American traditions have a particular appeal to those who sense an insufficient earthiness in the more familiar Christian traditions. But there are also students who embrace emerging forms of green Christianity as well, students who are quick to introduce "stewardship" and argue that anthropocentric dominion is no fundamental nor genuine part of the Christian heritage. But environmentalism also provides a central life orientation for many even without the benefit of traditional religious frameworks. When I teach Environmental Ethics, an entirely new contingent shows up in addition to the regulars, students who would not think of taking a religion course. For the "hard core" of these green students, the environment itself provides a framework within which they organize their values and map their life paths. They may even welcome the inconveniences of a greener lifestyle, the feeling for self-sacrifice in the name of ultimate values. Courses in environmental science and related subjects show up on the transcripts of these students with the frequency of religion on others--or one might say, in place of religion. Yet this bio-centric movement is separated by a widening gap from traditional cultural and religious moorings. The common refrain of the movement is the vigorous assertion that "humans are parts of the system, and no part is better than any other. Its clear intent is to flatly contradict the perceived wrongness of anthropocentrism: Anthropocentrism, long a fundamental assumption of our philosophic and religious heritage, thus now moves to center stage as an issue of urgent practical import. Questioning and even undermining the assumption that humanity is the pinnacle of some hierarchy demands a profound theoretical shift for Western cultures. But while the reframing of theory adequate to the task lags, for many a fundamental reorientation of values has already taken place. The idea that we might be intrinsically related to "lower animals" was initially both threatening and demeaning; even to its adherents, evolution seemed more a matter of living by hard scientific truth than a matter for celebration. In contemporary writing the attack on human distinctness, far from the earlier overtones of a reluctant relinquishing of a prized but unavailable status, often seems to celebrate our status as members of the biosystem as a sort of homecoming. The tradition of human supremacy finds continued expression in certain forms of evolutionary theory that see the emergence of human abilities as some kind of culminating achievement or systemic warrant of a dominant and controlling role. Traditional religion undercut mundane greed and acquisitiveness with the observation, "We have no lasting home here. Indeed, one of the best windows on the implications of this new sense of home is furnished by an inquiry into its contrast with its opposite in the philosophic and religious traditions of transcendence. The Problem The classical discourse regarding transcendence is inseparable from the problem of time, change, and meaning. In proportion as Greek art and literature idealized youth and beauty as the natural

accompaniments of nobility and goodness, their culture wrestled with the question of impermanence and change. The Greeks, above all, impressed these categories indelibly on Western thought. The problem of finding meaning in the world of flux overshadowed the celebration of youth and beauty in Greek art and literature and found a brilliant crystallization in the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, NeoPlatonism, and the Christian world that succeeded them. In the Platonic Dialogues the quest for knowledge moved to the center of human life. The problem of change moved beyond the transience of youth and beauty to encompass the realm of true knowledge, which Plato contrasted with the changing world of opinion and common sense. The quest for universality versus particularity, or necessity versus contingency, is inherent in this method: Aristotle brought the Platonic forms back to earth with his doctrines of substantial forms and teleology. But his identification of real knowledge with the apprehension of necessary causes simply moved the flight from contingency to a new arena. His teleology finds change itself is necessarily a matter of limit and imperfection. The entire universe of contingent motion must be grounded securely in the ultimate Unmoved Mover. Christian thinkers picked up both versions of the Greek problematique by identifying their God with Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, the Eternal and Unchanging Creator of all contingent being. From this easy synergy of Greek and Christian thought emerged the paired dichotomies fundamental to the history of Western philosophy and theology: Within this conceptual scheme "transcendence" both described a metaphysical structure grounding the contingent in the Absolute, and a practical spiritual quest of rising above changing worldly affairs to ultimate union with the Eternal. For this thought-world it is self-evident that the finite, temporal, and contingent cannot stand alone without meaninglessness and absurdity, for then our basic questions as posed by Plato would have no answer, and our existence no direction or purpose. In this form, the question of transcendence and contingency are clearly historical and the product of a particular sort of culture and world view. But minds nurtured in this tradition find it an almost irresistible way of understanding how meaning becomes Meaning as the deeds of daily life are subsumed under some sort of transcendent paradigm or norm. Eliade brilliantly adapted this structure to elucidate the religious meaning of myth and ritual in *The Sacred and the Profane*. In planting his yams or repairing his canoe in the manner the gods originally performed these tasks, the tribesman is able to live in a space of Ultimate Meaning as he goes through motions that otherwise would fall into the realm of mere contingency and only evanescent meaningfulness. Eliade In a similar vein the diminished role of myth in our secular society has been persuasively explicated by commentators such as Joseph Campbell, as a source of social ills. In spite of heroic attempts to turn absurdity itself into a spirituality, absurdity has remained trivial and unredeemed. The emerging biocentered life orientation has little patience for self-engrossed musings on absurdity, but it also locates its center of value, meaning, and purpose squarely within the realm of the contingent. Indeed, contingency itself is a central element of its salvific message. The problem is rather the people who cannot recognize and live by the implications of contingency, which environmental advocates perceive as bearing the most important meaning of all. Reevaluating Contingency Science now offers us an unprecedented perspective on the earth and its history that is taken seriously by many. In the evolution of life, million years is a respectable span for a species; dinosaurs survived about million. Humans and proto-humans have been around, by best estimates, about 3. And so the human species belongs to only the last one-tenth of one percent of the history of life, and In evolutionary time human civilization has more the status of a brief experiment than an established fact. Studies of the overall evolutionary record of species do little to reassure us that the experiment will be successful. Estimates vary considerably, but there is a wide consensus that of the many millions of species that have arisen, less than 1 percent still exist. And long-term survivors seem to be simple life forms such as blue green algae, rather than complex organisms such as dinosaurs or humans. The message is clear: What we make of such information depends on how we think of evolution, the theoretical framework to which the information belongs. Below I examine interpretations of evolution that remain anthropocentric, leaving traditional transcendence theories essentially intact. In the popular mind evolution is often considered a progressive process crowned with the emergence of humans, but science is more wary of importing purposeful direction into the picture. Contemporary genetics and theoretical understanding of self-organizing complex systems yield a much richer picture of the way a selective system becomes increasingly complex. A

development in such a system remains radically historical and contingent on circumstances grounded on earlier circumstances. The only guarantee is change, with systemic collapse and redirection an ever possible feature. On the tree of life, we as a species are more a probing twig than an established branch, and civilization, let alone industrialization, is a radical experiment that depends on conditions civilization itself may systemically undermine. Radical environmentalists favor this non-teleological scientific interpretation for very practical reasons. The feasibility of the experiment remains an open question. This can be salvific knowledge: This view takes as salvific knowledge the very kind of irredeemable contingency identified with meaninglessness and absurdity within conventional transcendent frameworks: Here we are at a profound parting of the ways. Classical transcendental frameworks that seek reality and meaning by a transcendental grounding of the historical and contingent and write humans into the very fabric of existence. From the radical environmental perspective, the conventional claims make it impossible to confront the true nature of our situation and imprison us in destructive anthropocentrism as the price of a meaningful existence. The historical contingency of random self-organizing evolutionary systems brings us home into our biosystem, but that homecoming seems in the traditional perspective to undercut the very meaning of our existence. How are we to understand this alternative framework within which undirected historical process and profound meaning are compatible? As a first step of this exploration, it will be useful to examine more closely the anthropocentric turn involved in the common transcendental grounding of meaning. Understanding this linkage clarifies how to frame an alternative spirituality that avoids an over-confident centrality of our species and our projects. The grounds of the anthropocentric twist in conventional theories of transcendence are evident in the way Darwinian evolution has been made safe for meaning. Liberal Christianity, freed from the constraints of literalistic Biblical interpretation, can explain the whole evolutionary process through the creative will and intention of God. Human life is then founded on the self-validating purpose and intention of the Creator. Teilhard deChardin moved to a more radical centering on the evolutionary process as such, describing it as a trajectory of increasing complexity leading to the emergence of consciousness and beyond to Christ. This has resonated strongly with New Age orientations, where it easily combines with Hindu sources and becomes the story of the cosmic evolution of consciousness. They succeed equally in furnishing meaning by supplying a non-contingent purpose within all existence, described as the product of Divine will or as the inner nature of Being identified as consciousness. Both succeed in securing for humans a central place in the fabric of existence. Positing mind or consciousness as the ultimate origin entails this anthropocentric consequence. Once this is done, human consciousness, however described, becomes a central feature in a cosmos founded on consciousness. Rationality, ethics, or an enlightened human understanding thus emerges as the highest value. Within this framework, one cannot but imagine that the emergence of our kind of consciousness represents the highest achievement in our world. A spinoff of this vision has played a critical role in our secular confidence in the ability and suitability of our minds to comprehend and perhaps control the world through science and technology. If mind is somehow at the basis of all things, then it is plausible that human minds are proportioned to grasp and perhaps control the nature of things. It is an ironic historical unfolding that allowed us to become so fascinated with our own rational powers that we could displace the cosmogonic Mind in determining a purposeful ordering of the world. Here is where Darwinian evolution poses its most radical challenge. That Darwin would relate us to other primates was a shock to the sensibilities of his time, but systemically the blow was relatively superficial. The real problem was that he posed a vision of the evolution of life in which mind or consciousness were neither origin nor purposeful end achievements. Mind within the framework of natural selection has no inherent claim to superiority, nor can it escape the pragmatic question, "what is it good for? Nothing in this system supports New Age expectations or the technocratic dreams envisioned by the likes of Buckminster Fuller:

## Chapter 2 : Project MUSE - Welcome to the Neighbourhood : Belonging to the Universe

*Belonging to the Universe has 65 ratings and 4 reviews. William said: This book is the result of discussions at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur. It focus.*

## Chapter 3 : You Belong to the Universe: Buckminster Fuller and the Future by Jonathan Keats

*I believe humans belong to the universe resin being we have a thinking brain that can solve problems and the laws of physics are the same everywhere in the universe, with this we are able to function anywhere in the universe.*

## Chapter 4 : Books in Review: Belonging to the Universe

*You Belong to the Universe Buckminster Fuller and the Future Jonathon Keats. Provides a new perspective on Fuller's life and work, dispelling popular myths that discredit the man and his ideas.*

## Chapter 5 : Spirituality based on belonging to the earth and belonging to the universe

*This talk was given at a local TEDx event, produced independently of the TED Conferences. In his TEDxJacksonville talk, Anderson implores us to restore our link to nature, to turn off our.*

## Chapter 6 : Belonging To The Universe Quotes, Quotations & Sayings

*A remarkably compatible new view of the universe offered by the trailblazer of new science and a contemporary of Thomas Merton. "An entertaining, thought-provoking book filled with conversations, quotations, and colorful stories that make science and theology come alive."-*

## Chapter 7 : Universe - Belong to the universe

*Belonging to the Universe ends on a hoot, with the embracing, in the name of "world federalism," of Mikhail Gorbachev and assorted Sandinistas-Maximum Leaders of the People apparently still in office when the book went to the presses. Perhaps Steindl-Rast and Matus need a rest from jet-setting spirituality.*

## Chapter 8 : You Belong to the Universe - Jonathon Keats - Oxford University Press

*Steindl-Rast is a Benedictine monk and the author of A Listening Heart, Belonging to the Universe. Matus is a Benedictine Camaldolese monk who worked with Griffiths in India. Bibliographic information.*

## Chapter 9 : Belonging to the Universe : Fritjof Capra :

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