### Creation Myths and other folklore

Creation myths are symbolic representations of the philosophy of ancient Humans, and tell stories of a presumably distant past that explain the origin and nature of the universe. Momentous, singular events are thought to mark the appearance of the first humans in the earth. The origins of humans are attributed to living entities larger, more powerful, and more enduring than themselves, responsible for molding mountains and islands, but equally prone to fits of fancy or emotional upheavals.

The simple reading of these creation myths would assume that the early humans had an unsophisticated belief system that was bound by fear and superstition instead of investigation and understanding. A more sophisticated reading looks into the natural elements encoded into the characters that populate creation myths. The **relationships** between these elements interact in ways that represent the community’s understanding of their natural environment. Moreover, there is not only a physical but also an ethical relationship that is presupposed: for the elder folk, knowledge always begets an **ethical responsibility.**

Indeed, whether myths and legends are appreciated for their entertainment value, or studied as active elements of the human psyche which try to find resolution through the grand epics of heroes and villains, or looked on as coded knowledge of living systems and their environments, myths and legends maintain their value as life-affirming and creative means for human communities to adapt with their natural and social conditions.

#### 7.3C. SAMPLE ACTIVITY: The Big Myths

Explore 25 creation myths from all over the world through this YouTube playlist: [The Big Myths](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcaFaX-GNqaW-muuwyD65E8I5-ZuKs81f). Myths can be better appreciated when taken in context of the place and culture of the peoples from whom they arose. The elements within the myths mirror the local ecological knowledge (LEK) and also values that promote sustainability and resilience.

For this activity, watch five creation myths from the playlist. Take note of the actors/ characters in the myth and correlate this with the local geography and ecology of the place where the myths originated. Fill out the following table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cultural Community | Place of origin | Creation Myth elements | How does the myth teach LEK, sustainability and resilience? |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

#### 7.3D. SAMPLE ACTIVITY: Philippine Creation Myths

Access the book [Philippine Folk Tales by Mabel Cook Cole (1916)](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12814/12814-h/12814-h.htm) from the Project Gutenberg website, or a similar tale in the [Folktexts](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html) website of the University of Pittsburgh. In this activity, we will try to give an alternate *reading* of a creation myth as a means of knowledge transmission. Note that myths can be read in many ways, literally and symbolically, to provide both shallow and profound meanings. All these ways of “reading” are considered correct and add to the wealth and variety conveyed by myths and legends!

Each of these accounts are very short, they are the exerpts and summaries of much longer and more involved long epics that sometimes take days in the telling. Thus, we do not have the benefit of apprehending the tale as it is told in its native form. Doubtless we are also missing some *clues* that can be found in the names of the characters and their subtle mannerisms. Nonetheless, we shall still attempt a casual *reading* of these tales.

Look for the elements and characters in the myth and try to decode the knowledge of living systems that is hidden within the myth. Moreover, identify the advise on ethical behavior that the myth appears to inculcate.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Myth | Characters/ Elements | Relationship | Ethical message |
| [Bagobo Origin Myth](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12814/12814-h/12814-h.htm#d0e3292) |  |  |  |
| [How the World was Made](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/creation-phil.html#thecreation) |  |  |  |
| [Igorot Creation Myth](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/creation-phil.html#thecreation) |  |  |  |
| [B'laan Creation Myth](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12814/12814-h/12814-h.htm#d0e3382) |  |  |  |
| [Mangita and Larina (a Luzon-based folktale), in Philippine Folklore Stories (Miller, 1904), p. 47](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.39000005818039;view=2up;seq=46;skin=mobile) |  |  |  |

### Indigenous Knowledge, Systems, and Practices

A product of careful and methodologically sound observations of the natural world, indigenous knowledges have been tested and re-tested for thousands of years in the most rigorous real-life laboratories for survival and well-being. This knowledge affect not only their forms of art and oral literature but includes all aspects of life: from knowledge of geography and climate that allow them to “read” signs from nature -- the wind, animal behavior, and the appearance of indicator plants’ leaves and flowers -- to predict future environmental conditions as accurately as any barometer or weather gauge. This has allowed them to create many inventions and technologies that relate to domestication of food, storage and preparation; herbal-based medicines; forms of clothing and transportation; astronomy; sustainable agricultural and industrial practices, etc.

The intimate knowledge of the interplay among elements in the local living systems give rise to many applications which have been validated by indigenous knowledge systems as well as modern scientific methods. This knowledge is called biocultural knowledge: knowledge that is rooted both in the natural environment and what is readily available, at the same time grounded on the culture – values and norms -- of the people who hold it.

The following table gives a few examples of the many forms of traditional knowledge that have proven their validity and relevance up to the present:

**Table 7.1. Examples of indigenous knowledge and practices that have been verified by scientific studies**

| Type of IK | Example |
| --- | --- |
| IK commercial utilization | The Hoodia plant is a case in the [successful commercialization of traditional knowledge](https://www.cbd.int/abs/infokit/revised/web/factsheet-tk-en.pdf) of the San people of South Africa. Its active ingredient for appetite suppression was patented by a South Africa-based research institute in coordination with the San people, and is now being used to help patients with obesity. |
| Medicinal Plants | 1. The DOH approved ten medicinal plants used in Philippine Traditional Medicine after undergoing clinical studies. [This blogsite for registered nurses](http://www.rnspeak.com/philippines-herbal-medicine-plants-approved-by-doh/) identifies the plants and how to use them.  2. The book [“The Best 100 Philippine Medicinal Plants Jaime Z. Galvez Tan and Isidro Sia (2014)”](http://www.map-abcdf.com.ph/documents/presentations/Countryside%20Development/Health/The%20Best%20100%20Philippine%20Medicinal%20Plants.pdf) presents 100 medicinal plants that are traditionally used for different ailments. The link connects to a slideshow of a number of those plants.  3. This [research article by Xin-zhuan Su and Miller](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4966551/) (2015) details the discovery of artemisinin, extracted from an herb identified by ancient Chinese healing texts, for the treatment of Malaria. This discovery led to a Nobel Prize in 2015. |
| Traditional health practices | Suob is a Philippine Traditional practice used during pregnancy and postnatal care. [This site explains the process and materials used for Suob.](http://www.stuartxchange.org/Suob.html) Suob is similar to steaming and mother-roasting practices in other SEA cultures, for which there is already some [published research](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4966551/) (read only the background of the study) |
| Traditional Knowledge on genetics | Philippine cultural concepts have some implications to genetic counseling. These concepts, identified by [Abad et al (2014)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4966551/) include *namamana*, *lihi*, *sumpa*, *kaloob* *ng* *Diyos*, among others. |
| Traditional Knowledge and Food Security | This web news article (Coates, 2015) mentions the need to revive old farming practices and traditional crop varieties in order to ensure food security: [Traditional knowledge the key to food security: academics say.](http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-10-12/traditional-knowledge-the-key-to-food-security/6846026?site=newcastle) |
| Biodiversity management | 1. Araral (2008), in his article [What can institutional analysis tell us about long lived societies? The case of the 2000 year old Ifugao society.](https://www.google.com.ph/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjs1e3jvdXYAhXIo5QKHUdTBpcQFghCMAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Fpublication%2F42762712_What_can_Institutional_Analysis_Tell_Us_about_Long_Lived_Societies_The_Case_of_the_2000_Year_Old_Ifugao_Society&usg=AOvVaw3sOCwEF69mN1cDlKpmpkWH) (in p. 17) relates how traditional rice cultivation practices by the Ifugao require the use of different rice varieties for several reasons. This is a means by which biodiversity in rice is conserved.  2. Traditional rice cultivation practices of the B’laan, T’boli, and Subanen indigenous communities maintain and protect biodiversity in the area. “The B’laan ethnic group of the south has more than 100 varieties of rice and the T’boli group has 160 known rice varieties. To further exemplify the type of rice varieties, [Sumingit (2005)](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo_grtkf_ic_9/wipo_grtkf_ic_9_inf_7_c.pdf) presents details of the characteristics of at least 38 varieties of rice among the Subanen seed keepers.” |
| Sustainable Resource Management | [Tebtebba Foundation (2010)](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo_grtkf_ic_9/wipo_grtkf_ic_9_inf_7_c.pdf) relate traditional forest practices of the Ifugao, Masadiit people of the Northern Luzon, indigenous peoples of Abra, communities in the Mt. Province, and the Talaandig of Mindanao as examples of how indigenous peoples take care to maintain their resources for the future generations. |
| Threats to Living Systems | 1. Threats to rice terrace ecosystem: [Araral (2008)](https://www.google.com.ph/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjs1e3jvdXYAhXIo5QKHUdTBpcQFghCMAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Fpublication%2F42762712_What_can_Institutional_Analysis_Tell_Us_about_Long_Lived_Societies_The_Case_of_the_2000_Year_Old_Ifugao_Society&usg=AOvVaw3sOCwEF69mN1cDlKpmpkWH) p. 23 narrates how the introduction of modern rice farming practices lead to threats to rice terraces stability.  2. [Traditional knowledge of extreme events](http://www.unisdr.org/files/5438_pr200809Indigeneousknowledge.pdf) were able to guide communities in Simeulue Island to seek safety from a tsunami in 2004. |

The indigenous knowledge systems also contributes to social institutions such as democratic governance; education of children; and social psychology. Elders of indigenous communities have, for centuries, been embodying and inculcating the holistic worldview to their children and grandchildren through forms of education that are in line with everyday activities. This is not to say that they are adverse to the current forms of education that take place within schools and universities. Indeed, they see university education – specialized and discipline-based – to be important in dealing with present-day realities such as government institutions as well as in order to safeguard their livelihoods. However, they believe that university education remains incomplete in teaching what it takes to educate the whole person.

#### 7.3E. SAMPLE ACTIVITY: Educating the Whole Person

Listen to Native American elder Oren Lyons as he narrates the important lessons taught to him by their tribe elder on the occasion of his finishing his college education. Take note of when, where, and how the teaching was imparted, when the lesson was actually “learned”, and the effects of that particular teaching event in the learner.

[Oren Lyons “We are Part of the Earth”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSwmqZ272As)

Gauging from the **cultural expressions** of their knowledge – that is, myths, songs, dance, and rituals -- the indigenous human communities’ worldview, philosophy, and “theories of mind” appear to be very different from what we hold today. Our usual forms of knowledge transmission – textbooks and lecture halls – are very different from the oral and experiential forms of teaching and learning of the ancients.

The first difference is in what is called *Ontology*, or what comprises our world. In the current scientific mindset, scientists only include as part of our world only that which is material, and which can be measured by our senses, and in extension, the tools and instrumentation that we invent. We can only also rely on reasoning that is based on this materialist perspective of the world, and thus, it is said to be Rational. Indigenous worldviews, however, believe that beyond (or underneath) the physical, material world is a spiritual world, and that the world that we know is a combination of the material and the spiritual world.

The second difference is in what we call *Epistemology*, or how we know what we know, and how we determine what is true. Current scientific mindsets base knowledge of the world and of truth on empirical evidence, this experience is then tested through experiment in order to be said to be true. However, most experimentation is said to be reductionist, meaning that only the measurable factors relating to a phenomenon are noteworthy, while the non-measurable factors are not considered to be necessary in defining the phenomenon. In the Indigenous worldview, however, empirical evidence is tested not only through experiment, but also through intuition and revelation, dreams and scripture. Thus, truth is evaluated not only through its rational but also metaphorical value, if it corresponds to both the material and spiritual worlds.

Similarly, there are differences in the perceptions of truth, of time, of focus of study, and of relationships. Current scientific mindsets see truth as universal and applicable at all times and all places. Progress is seen to be a function of time, which is linear, and perpetually moving forward to the future. The objectives of man are prioritized, and that nature is seen as valuable only to the extent that it answers to the needs of man.

“…That the larger world is meaningless and that only the human, the controlled and intended, can ever be meaningful is part of Enlightenment rationality… (It) in part frees us from what it called “superstition” but also cuts us off from enchantment and from certain important kinds of openness to chaos and wonder at the world” (Plumwood, 2002; p. 227).

Traditional Western worldviews tend to be more concerned with science and concentrates on compartmentalized knowledge and then focuses on understanding the bigger, related picture. Lastly, knowledge is seen to be an end of itself, can be appreciated separate from the knower, as knowledge does not carry an intrinsic ethical responsibility.

Indigenous worldview sees principles as universal, but the truths are local and context-dependent. Time is perceived in cycles, where events flow like tides, rising and falling, and where the material world is created and recreated, flowing through one form to another. The balance of humans with the environment is prioritized, and that Nature is the great Whole of which humans are a small, but significant, part. Everything and everyone is related -- people, animals, objects and the environment -- reinforced by law, kinship and spirituality, to the extent that identity is defined by the strength of these connections. Thus there is a dominant current of respect and reciprocity amongst “all our relations”. The strongest connection is with the Land:

“Social groups form specific relationships with the land that will ensure survival of both. This order of things is sacrosanct for indigenous cultures. That is, land without the people is “empty” while people without their land are “rootless”.”

Similarly, knowledge is tied to the knowledge holder, who has a responsibility to ensure that the transmission occurs only to the appropriate persons and appropriate times who can thence hold the knowledge with respect and act on it ethically.

The table below organizes the differences between the indigenous worldview and the rational (Western Enlightenment) worldview that is the basis of most of the scientific advances in the last two centuries.

**Table 7.2. Summary of differences between indigenous and Western Enlightenment worldviews**

|  | Indigenous worldview | Rational (Western Enlightenment) worldview |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ontology | Holistic, spiritual | Materialist, Rational |
| Epistemology | Empirical, Intuitive  Symbolic, Metaphorical | Hypothetico-deductive method  Empirical, Reductionist |
| Knowledge transmission | Orality: myths, legends, riddles, rituals, music, art | Literacy: Books, journals, technology |
| Perception of Truth | Truth is contextual, it is correct if applied within the bounds of place and time | Truth is universal, it should be applicable at all places and at all times. |
| Perception of Time | Time is circular, there is no beginning and no end | Time is linear, future-directed |
| Focus of activity | Place (or land)-centric | Human-centric |
| Relationship with Nature | Dependence, Gratitude, Sacredness | Utility to human industry and economy |
| Relationship with others | Connected, Relational, respectful, reciprocal | Individualistic, Transactional, Compartmentalized |
| Relationship with knowledge | Knowledge is bound to the knower, who has an ethical responsibility to its use and transmission. | Knowledge is separate from knower. Knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge has no inherent ethical dimension. |

### A caveat on Indigenous Knowledge: Epistemic justice

From the Cartesian worldview and thereafter, studies on living systems by scientists and scholars have been taken on fundamentally different ontologies as compared with indigenous ways of knowing/being. Even though looking at the same phenomena, the objectives, the focus, and the means by which study is being done are fundamentally different, and thus the results and the information obtained are incommensurable. Indeed, it has proven difficult to integrate and benefit from indigenous knowledge within the context of the current scientific studies.

One of the usual misunderstandings when confronted with indigenous knowledge is the idea that somehow, the hypothetico-deductive method has disproven or overriden indigenous methodologies. This is so because the localized and contextualized indigenous knowledge system has been conflated with the abstract and theoretical Aristotelian worldview: our ancient and collective “unscientific past”. But rather than being disproven, indigenous knowledges, like the people who hold them, were overpowered as a consequence of historical circumstance of colonization. The European military and economic dominance in its colonies, such as the Philippines, from the 16th century onwards has ensured the dominance of European worldviews within education, governance, religion, and policy. A good part of what is known as the “colonial project” is to diminish the regard for all things indigenous, being that indigenous peoples were simple-minded savages, indigenous rituals were pagan thus leading to hellfire, and indigenous knowledge are based on superstition and thus of dubious value. The European arrogance in its own knowledge system has kept it from learning from the indigenous knowledge systems which were very much alive in the colonies they have subjugated for their economic benefit.

There have been efforts to address this, particularly among scholars who are looking to “decolonize” the disciplines. The move towards “epistemic justice” -- strong amongst the academics of Africa, the First Nations (American Indians), and the Aboriginal groups in Australia and New Zealand – is both an assertion of the ongoing relevance of indigenous knowledges as well as an effort to bring holistic, respectful, and ethical viewpoints as part and parcel of the scientific enterprise.

Epistemic justice may not be long in coming. We find that the current ways of looking at living systems approximate the indigenous worldview in many ways, even as the complex systems perspective arose as a natural consequence of the progress in scientific knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems and the science of living systems have much to say to support, refute, and challenge each other. The lessons from the History of Science have shown that, over time, the pendulum swings from holistic to mechanistic paradigms and back again (Capra and Luisi, 2014). There is an emerging common ground from which scientific and indigenous knowledges can dialogue and complement to better understand how humans can regain our ability to live in harmony on Mother Earth.

### The Environmentalist Movement: an ecosystem of ethics, ideologies, and political engagements

The environmental movement can be seen largely as a reaction to the mechanistic worldview of the Enlightenment era. As early as the onset of industrialization in England and continental Europe in the 1800s, poets and novelists of the Romantic movement have begun to bewail what they perceive as the imminent loss of wildlife and spaces untouched by human designs. By the beginning of the 20th century, efforts to protect wildlife were already underway through the establishment of protected areas and National Parks, and nature appreciation clubs such as the Audobon Society were formed.

World War II conscripted scientists and engineers in creating weapons and defensive machinery which were afterwards re-applied for civilian purposes. The post-war period saw a rise in the power to manufacture a wide array of new materials: pharmaceuticals, agricultural chemicals, and later on plastics gave rise to mass-produced, quality materials available to the rising middle class. Indeed, science and technology and those who worked in these fields were revered as the saviors of the free world and the trustees of prosperity. However, in the 1960’s, unintended effects of agricultural chemicals, manufacturing by-products, chemical warfare, and a huge array of pollutants from households and industries started to have visible effects. A pivotal role was played by marine biologist Rachel Carson, who wrote [The Silent Spring](https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/rachel-carson-silent-spring.html#change-in-perspective) (1962):

“Sprays, dusts and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests and homes – non-selective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the 'good' and the 'bad', to still the song of the birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film and to linger on in the soil – all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects."

The book not only presented the compelling argument against unmitigated use of poisonous chemicals in the environment, it also called into question the paradigm of scientific progress that defined postwar American culture. The rise of environmental awareness in the public consciousness was linked to an expression of protest and a call for change, and so environmentalism was born.

Environmentalism is a broad philosophy, ideology, and social movement regarding concerns for environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment, incorporating the impact of changes to the environment not only on humans, but on animals, plants and non-living matter as well. The table below gives a concise (albeit very rough) guide on current political movements that are part of the environmentalism continuum. The activities and placement of actual organizations within this continuum are actually more nuanced and varied. However, we have identified these movements in order to show the variations of philosophy, ideology, and engagements as corresponding to a political ecosystem -- each organization in its own niche, bringing different aspects of environmental protection and sustainable development in a variety of ways to the forefront of public policy and action.

**Table 7.3. The Environmentalism Continuum**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Examples of… | Radical/ Extremist | Moderate/Syncretic/ Reformist | Conservative/ Corporate |
| Philosophy  (representa-tive reading) | Ecocentrism  ([Deep ecology](https://www.britannica.com/topic/deep-ecology)) | Stewardship  ([Ecoliteracy](https://www.ecoliteracy.org/)) | Anthropocentrism ([Pragmaticism](http://edwardwimberley.com/courses/Site/EcopragmaticsC.pdf)) |
| Ideology | [Radical environmentalism](http://users.clas.ufl.edu/bron/ern/R.pdf)  Radical [Ecofeminism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecofeminism) | [Romanticism](http://marcstier.com/blog2/?p=2275)  [Leopold's Land Ethic](https://www.aldoleopold.org/about/the-land-ethic/)  Cultural [Ecofeminism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecofeminism) | [Ecomodernism](http://www.ecomodernism.org/manifesto-english/)  [Environmental Justice](http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/10/10/105002) |
| Types of Engagement | Direct-action tactics (monkeywrenching,  ecotage), shock factor in media campaigns | Eco-villages  Eco-schools  [Ecological Economics](http://www.fritjofcapra.net/a-conceptual-framework-for-ecological-economics-based-on-systemic-principles-of-life/) | Dialogue, Lobbying  Earth Hour  Corporate Social Responsibility |

One major difference in philosophy is in how groups define the moral relationship between humans and the natural environment. Environmental ethics answers questions of value.

1. Anthropocentrism values nature in terms of material or physical benefits it can provide for humans. Humans are the sole bearers of intrinsic value and all other living things are there to sustain humanity’s existence (MacKinnon 2007, p. 331). Mainstream environmentalism usually follow this ethical viewpoint, using conventional social and political processes to achieve environmental goals and steering clear of contentious issue in order to court the support of powerful forces in legislation and industry. While in the 1960s, environmentalism per se was heretical, in the 1980s, it had become mainstream, with environmental organisations being invited into resource management committees and government task forces.
2. Ecocentrism values nature for its own sake, recognizes a nature-centered system of values, and extends the inherent worth to all living things regardless of their usefulness to humans (MacKinnon2007, p. 336). Radical environmentalism is perceived as a reaction to the failure of conventional environmentalist advocacy to protect natural resources against degradation. Radical ecofeminism views the “rape of women” and the “rape of Mother Nature” as coming from the same root cause: an inherently oppressive system which is patriarchal and heirarchical. Thus to embrace Nature is also to liberate women by changing the social status of both.

Many radical organizations use attention-calling, headline-friendly protest actions such as chaining the activists to the gates of government agencies, putting activists in the line of harpoon fire as protest against whale hunting, [protesting sans clothing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvi8jCg52Kc) as advocacy for animal rights, and so on. Ecotage is also an option, such as what happened in [GMO eggplant field trials in Laguna last 2011](http://www.greenpeace.org/seasia/news/Greenpeace-moves-to-decontaminate-Bt-eggplant-field-trial-site-in-the-Philippines/).

1. A third ethical approach is stewardship, which places humanity not at the center of life on earth, but part of nature. Being humans, we perceive value through human eyes, but recognize our responsibility based on knowledge of ecological principles in a networked, reciprocating environment. The main tenet is thus: “one species’ waste is another species’ dinner.” Humanity should live (work, act, do, grow, and be) with these principles – and constraints – in mind.

Ecoliteracy is a movement that embraces stewardship. It is predicated on knowledge of how Nature sustains life, and sustainability predicates our ability to understand the basic principles of ecology and to live accordingly. Situated at the confluence of streams of indigenous people, systems theory, dynamic communities, and place-based education, it offers a critique of current educational practices and to commit time to the study of natural systems roughly in the manner in which we experience them.

“We do not organize education the way we sense the world. If we did, we would have departments of Sky, Landscape, Water, Wind, Sounds, Time, Seashores, Swamps, and Rivers. Instead we’ve organized education like mailbox pigeonholes, by disciplines that are abstractions organized for intellectual convenience. (Center for Ecoliteracy, 2015)”

These philosophies play out not only in the political arenas, they are important in the values and beliefs we hold and which we use in making everyday decisions. When we consider our ethical relationship with Nature – in theory -- do we subscribe to the ecocentric, anthropocentric, or stewardship point of view? Or are we philosophical pluralists: preferring not to subscribe to any one perspective, and open to the practical suggestions of all three? How well do our philosophical beliefs tie up with the way we live our everyday decisions and actions?

#### 7.5B. SAMPLE ACTIVITY: Developing your Ecoliteracy

In [Five Ways to Develop Ecoliteracy](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_ways_to_develop_ecoliteracy) (Goldman et al, 2013), the authors identify the following guidelines with which each of us can increase our ecological IQ and EQ and “cultivate the *knowledge, empathy, and action* required for practicing sustainable living”:

1. Develop empathy for all forms of Life,
2. Embrace sustainability as a community practice,
3. Make the invisible ecological consequences to action visible,
4. Anticipate unintended consequences, and
5. Understand how nature sustains life.

Consider your personal beliefs about Nature (the stories you tell yourself about your relationship with nature) and the new ways of thinking that you are learning so far in Science 11. Also, consider the choices and decisions that you make everyday in how you do what you do, how and what you consume, and why and how you eat what you eat.

If you were to change the story of your relationship with Nature, how would you change it? If there is one thing you would change about the way you live your life right now, in order to increase your ecological IQ and EQ, what would it be? How would you do it?