

tical purposes. A few have participated in large-scale commercial developments on university-owned lands. Such actions say more than any number of glossy publications or learned speeches about the real institutional priorities that apparently do not have much to do with trees, forests, and biodiversity. Land holdings, including those in forested land, are appraised mostly for their cash value, not for their value in preserving biodiversity or in educating the young about forests.

Intended or not, decisions to sell off natural lands do have an effect that can be rightly described as educational. Colleges and universities educate by what they do as well as by what they say. Students no doubt will observe that when the going gets a wee bit tough, their intellectual mentors and role models regard natural lands and whatever biological diversity they hold as expendable. They will note that those presuming to educate them rarely see any serious educational value in wild lands or even in ancient trees that contain enough genetic information to fill the college library several times over. Whether outraged or apathetic, they will see that universities, which pay their chief executive officers, various deans, and football coaches six-figure salaries, can seldom find the relatively small amounts of money necessary to manage increasingly rare natural areas. Students may even note the discrepancy in the minute efforts to fund such things as opposed to the effort exerted to fund, say, campus parking facilities. The alert may also correlate such decisions with the manifest decline in their life prospects. All of this provides a liberal education in how educational institutions work and how sometimes they do not work for the good of the world the students will inherit.

The willingness of institutions to preserve natural areas is, however, only a small part of a larger problem. In a culture that regards land as a commodity, it is easy to think of forests and natural areas as merely resources expendable to support other, and more serious, things. This attitude reflects a deep conflict between humankind and forests as old as civilization itself. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (circa 4700 B.C., republished in Sandars, 1972), the hero kills the appointed guardian of the forests so that he can "strip the mountains of their cover." By cutting down the cedar forest, he intends to "leave behind . . . an enduring name." The angry gods' reprisal, predictably, takes the form of a series of ecological curses. "It is a sorry fact of history," in Robert Harrison's (1992) words, "that human beings have never ceased reenacting the gesture of Gilgamesh" (p. 18). The epic and its historical reenactment through the ages is a story of violence and madness. The same can be said about the destruc-

tion of forests in our time. Forests have been a mirror of sorts, reflecting back whatever humans wished to see. Minds receptive to mystery, like that of John Muir, have seen forests as sacred places. Thoroughly utilitarian minds see little more than something to sell, whether board feet or visitor days. University administrators hard pressed for cash see windfall profits. But whatever our rationalizations and practical material needs, "there is too often," in Harrison's words, "a deliberate rage and vengeance at work in the assault on nature and its species" (p. 18).

In the coming century humankind will need healthy forests more than ever, both for practical reasons of survival and to preserve sanity, an utterly practical reason. The effort to rethink ancient habits and antagonisms must begin with a different kind of education in which forests become a significant part of the general curriculum. That will require confronting paradoxes deeply embedded in the curriculum about forests and their relation to human progress.

Madav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha (1992) describe two such paradoxes, the first of which has to do with the fact that

hunter-gatherers live *in* in the forest, agriculturalists live adjacent to but within *striking distance* of the forest, and urban-industrial men live *away* from the forest. Paradoxically, the more the spatial separation from the forest the greater the impact on its ecology, and the further removed the actors from the consequences of this impact! (p. 52)

In other words, forests out of sight are forests out of mind. Civilization was planted in a clearing both literally and figuratively. As civilization grew, forests receded, becoming ever more peripheral to our imagination and to our sense of reality. Our use of forests, accordingly, has become increasingly mindless, driven by large impersonal forces that undermine our long-term prospects.

The second paradox is even more threatening to our established academic ways:

The faster the development of formal, scientific knowledge about the composition and functioning of forest types, the faster the rate of deforestation. . . . the belief that science provides an infallible guide has nonetheless encouraged major interventions in natural ecosystems, and these have had unanticipated and usually unfortunate consequences. The history of both fisheries and forest management are replete with illustrations of the failure of sustained-yield methods to