

Suggested Reading for Salons 1-3: Nature, Place, and Education

Robin Wall Kimmerer (1953-)

“...is a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.... Kimmerer is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, whose mission is to create programs that draw on the wisdom of both indigenous and scientific knowledge for our shared goals of sustainability. In 2022, she was named a MacArthur Fellow. As a writer and a scientist, her interests in restoration include not only restoration of ecological communities but restoration of our relationships to land...”

from robinwallkimmerer.com

Podcast: [On Being, The Intelligence of Plants](#)

Article: [What Does the Earth Ask of Us](#)

Books by Robin Wall Kimmerer include:

- *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*
- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*
- *The Service Berry: Abundance & Reciprocity in the Natural World*

Jane Goodall (1934-2025)

“Dr. Jane was known around the world for her 65-year study of wild chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania. However, in the latter part of her life, she expanded her focus and became a global advocate for human rights, animal welfare, species and environmental protection, and many other crucial issues.

Jane was passionate about empowering young people to become involved in conservation and humanitarian projects, and she led many educational initiatives focused on both wild and captive chimpanzees. She was always guided by her fascination with the mysteries of evolution, and her staunch belief in the fundamental need to respect all forms of life on Earth.”

from janegoodall.org

National Geographic Documentary: [Jane Goodall: An Inside Look](#)

Podcast: [On Being](#)

Books by Jane Goodall include:

- In The Shadow Of Man
- The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times
- Through a Window: My Thirty Years with the Chimpanzees of Gombe

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

“...was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the *Upanishads*. He was educated at home, and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. [In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature, becoming Asia's first Nobel laureate.] In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates. This project brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest in social reforms. He also founded an experimental school at Shantiniketan, where he put into practice his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he resigned the honour as a protest against British policies in India...”

from [Rabindranath Tagore – Biographical - NobelPrize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org)

[Nature and Environment as seen by Rabindranath Tagore - Different Truths](#)

[Rabindranath Tagore Biography](#)

Works by Rabindranath Tagore include:

- *Gitanjali: (Song Offerings): A collection of poems that won him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.*
- *Short Stories: "Kabuliwala," "The Hungry Stones," "The Postmaster," and "Mashi".* 66
- *Poetry: Manasi, Sonar Tari, The Crescent Moon, Stray Birds.*
- *Plays: Chitra, The King of the Dark Chamber.*
- *Essays/Philosophy: Sadhana: The Realisation of Life, Nationalism.*

Rachel Carson (1907-1064)

“Rachel Carson garnered an international reputation as a natural scientist and public voice for the care of the earth by the time of her death in 1964. She was the most acclaimed science writer of her generation and a literary figure of first rank. She is renowned for two books: Her seminal work, *Silent Spring* (1962), a book that changed the course of human history and *The Sea Around Us* (1951).”

The magnitude of her impact on our understanding of ecology and environmental change was prescient. It was enough to have changed how humankind regards the living world and the future of life on earth. Like Thoreau, the complexity of her love for the natural world and her commitment to its wholeness capture a literary life of public service...”

adapted from [Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson](#)

Read especially: [A Fable for Tomorrow](#)

More Works by Rachel Carson:

- *The Sea Around Us* (1951)
- *Silent Spring* (1962)
- *Under the Sea Wind*
- *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson*

John Dewey (1859-1952)

“Though environmental philosophers trace the roots of environmental awareness to the decades of John Dewey’s prominence, Dewey himself was conspicuously mum about the environmental controversies of his day. A Deweyan environmental pragmatism, then, must find sustenance in less prosaically environmental themes of the American philosopher’s project. This chapter attends to Dewey’s notion of organism-environment interaction, which is at the core of Dewey’s understanding of experience and which informs Dewey’s philosophy from epistemology to aesthetics...”

from the abstract, [Oxford Handbook Book of Dewey](#)

Dewey stands within a deep tradition of thinkers and practitioners who shaped progressive education. As a philosopher and teacher, Dewey insisted on the vital relationship between education and community. A healthy, democratic school, he believed, must draw from the life, history, and natural environment that surround it—making learning relevant, lived, and meaningful. Place-based education grows directly from this insight: children need connections to place, story, and nature to become whole.

Works by John Dewey include:

- *The School and Society* (1900): Argued for schools to mirror community life through practical activities like cooking, building, and gardening.
- *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902): Addressed the tension between subject matter and the child's experience, advocating for a child-centered approach.
- *Democracy and Education* (1916): Linked education directly to democratic ideals, problem-solving, and social reform.
- *Experience and Education* (1938): Refined his ideas, critiquing misapplications of progressive education.

Environmental Ethics: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

“Suppose putting out natural fires, culling feral animals or removing some individual members of overpopulated species is necessary for the protection of the integrity of a certain ecosystem. Will these actions be morally permissible or even required? Is it morally acceptable for farmers in non-industrial countries to practise slash-and-burn techniques to clear areas for agriculture? Consider a mining company that has performed open-pit mining in some previously unspoiled area. Does the company have a moral obligation to restore the landform and surface ecology? And what is the value of a humanly restored environment compared with the originally natural environment? Many people think that it is morally wrong for human beings to pollute and destroy parts of the natural environment and to consume a huge proportion of the planet’s natural resources. If that is wrong, is it simply because a sustainable environment is essential to human existence and well-being? Or is such behaviour also wrong because the natural environment and/or its various contents have certain values in their own right so that these values ought to be respected and protected in any case? These are among the questions investigated by environmental ethics. Some of them are specific questions faced by individuals in particular circumstances, while others are more global questions faced by groups and communities. Yet others are more abstract questions concerning the value and moral standing of the natural environment and its non-human components.”

from [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Environmental Ethics](#)