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Interview with Alda Balthrop-Lewis, author of *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism*

Maymind, Ilana

Maymind, Ilana. "Alda Balthrop-Lewis, 'Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism.'" *New Books in Environmental Studies*, 25 September 2023. Mp3, 41:14.

Balthrop-Lewis's *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism* (Cambridge UP, 2021) presents a ground-breaking interpretation of Henry David Thoreau's most famous book, Walden. Rather than treating Walden Woods as a lonely wilderness, Balthrop-Lewis demonstrates that Thoreau's ascetic life was a form of religious practice dedicated to cultivating a just, multispecies community. The book makes an important contribution to scholarship in religious studies, political theory, English, environmental studies, and critical theory by offering the first sustained reading of Thoreau's religiously motivated politics. In Balthrop-Lewis's vision, practices of renunciation like Thoreau's can contribute to reforming social and political life. This book transforms Thoreau's image, making him a vital source for a world beset by inequality and climate change. Balthrop-Lewis argues for an environmental politics in which ecological flourishing is impossible without economic and social justice.

(Source: New Books Network)

In this episode from the New Books Network podcast, Alda Balthrop-Lewis is interviewed on her recent book, *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism.*

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- Alda Balthrop-Lewis, *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism* (book excerpt) https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/9391
- Alda Balthrop-Lewis, "Multispecies Walden Woods: Reevaluating Thoreau's Religion," *Arcadia* (2022) https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/9406
- *EcoCast*, "The Aesthetics of Asceticism: Thoreau, Religion, and Social Justice with Alda Bathrop-Lewis" https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/9433

Websites linked in this text:

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