

Harry MacCormack's

COSMIC INFLUENCES ON AGRICULTURAL PROCESSES

(Sunbow Books, 2011, 142 pages, \$15.95)

Review by Dan Armstrong

“The purpose for writing this book is to stimulate your daily movement in the world as a continual awakening.”

-Harry MacCormack

We live on a planet that is enmeshed in a set of interrelated rhythms and cycles, a repeating 24-hour day, a monthly waxing and waning of the moon, a season-changing trip around the sun every 365 days—to name the most obvious. But there are many more such cycles that affect our biosphere in more subtle ways— the periodic changes in the earth's magnetic field, the movement of the other planets within our solar system, the arc of our solar system across the Milky Way—all impacting other cycles and rhythms, like the bloom and collapse of a bacteria colony, the germination of a seed, the mating seasons of insects, even the rise and fall of civilizations. In his fascinating new book, *Cosmic Influences of Agricultural Processes*, Harry MacCormack appraises natural frequencies, large and small, through the lens of modern science and the lore of ancient and indigenous cultures. Half wizard and half scientist, MacCormack weaves together sources as diverse as the teachings of Native American elders, the interpretation of the Mayan Calendar, the work of Rudolph Steiner, and data from NASA's fifty-years of space exploration and places them into a single context—seeking resonance with these cosmic cycles in a way that both advances personal self-realization and allows insight into the optimization of agricultural processes on planet earth.

Harry MacCormack is a farmer in Oregon's Willamette Valley, most well-known for his work in advancing the philosophy and practice of organic farming. He was co-founder of Oregon Tilth, was instrumental in the creation of the Federal standards for organic certification, and he founded the Southern Willamette Bean and Grain Project. But more than that MacCormack is a poet, scientist, philosopher, and spiritual visionary. The third book in his trilogy, **How to Live with Planet Earth in the 21st Century***, *Cosmic Influences on Agricultural Processes* blends all of MacCormack's many intellectual and intuitional talents into a wonderfully written story** told through the eye of the cosmos. Both informative and profound, this is arguably the philosopher farmer's most impressive work to date.

MacCormack sets the tone for this weighty little tome in the book's introduction, writing:

“I’ve also been aware for years of the notion put forth by the Mayans and subsequently by Nostradamus that we will experience a galactic line-up around 2012 that will change life as we know it on this planet. Based on all my years of observations looking at cosmic influences on agricultural processes, I’ve wondered, ‘will the predicted changes impact our human food production systems?’”

With this statement as a backdrop, MacCormack tells his story. He begins with the sun, analyzing the sun’s gravitational field, its electromagnetic presence, the rhythms of solar activity, their effect on natural systems, and how these same effects were perceived and interpreted by various cultures throughout history. He does the same for the moon and the movement of the planets, looking at astrological, biodynamic, and biological meanings. He concludes the book with a chapter that ventures into the effects of human activity on our biosphere, our atmosphere, and the rhythms of the cosmos. Throughout, the focus is how cosmic events, near and far, might effect agricultural decisions on planet earth.

Of particular interest is MacCormack’s analysis of solar flares and sunspots and their influence on earth’s magnetic field and its climate. For almost fifty years a discussion has raged regarding the long term effect of burning fossil fuels and increased carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere. While MacCormack does not deny the greenhouse gas premise, he places it in the larger context of solar cycles and sunspots. Sunspot intensity rises and falls with a directly related heating and cooling effect on the earth, fully capable of creating a planetary cooling trend within and despite the man-made warming trend. Citing researcher Maurice Cotterell’s work on sunspot cycles and his interpretations of the Mayan calendar, MacCormack anticipates a coming decrease in solar activity and a related cooling:

“The current warming spell experienced by all agricultural pursuits across our world will end around 2010, slowly cooling over the next decade, with the 2020s being a cool decade, leading to a micro ice age during the 2030’s. Many, if not most, of our modern agricultural practices are predicated on the warming temperatures we have experienced since the 1950’s. It appears from the solar cycles that we are in for a huge change regarding food production.”

Once this sunspot activity moves through this low period, which could last well into the twenty-first century, we will then see the warming trend predicted by climate scientists. The implication is that all the actions of man are encased in larger periodicities capable of either ameliorating the effects of our actions or heightening them.

With this new book, MacCormack is offering us a peek into the internal workings of the cosmos. In a narrative voice, sometimes channeled, sometimes poetic, sometimes technical, he portrays an overlay of cycles within cosmic cycles like the workings of a complex watch. And in the spinning of those gears there is a kind of music of the spheres, a presiding and dynamic resonance to which all life responds—a cosmic gestalt to be sought for inner peace and resonance with nature.

Cosmic Influences on Agricultural Processes is a grand work with a grand purpose—helping us find our place on a planet set within the manifold dynamics of the cosmos. Reading it is like coming to consciousness through the layers of an onion—“a continual awakening.”

Notes:

*This trilogy also includes *A Catechism for the Children of De-light* and *The Transition Document: Towards a Biologically Resilient Agriculture*.

**The book is beautifully illustrated by Krishna Khalsa.