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## The Fourfold

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## The Fourfold

### Abstract

This is a film review of the animated short film, *The Fourfold* (2020), directed by Alisi Telengut.

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### Author Notes

John Lyden is Professor of Religious Studies and the Blizek Professor of Religion and Film at University of Nebraska-Omaha. He was been the Editor of the *Journal of Religion & Film* since 2011. He is the author of *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* (NYU Press), and the editor of the *Routledge Companion to Religion and Film* and co-editor (with Eric Michael Mazur) of the *Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture*. He also co-edited, with Ken Derry, *The Myth Awakens: Canon Conservatism, and Fan Reception of Star Wars* (Wipf and Stock 2018).



**The Fourfold (2020), dir. Alisi Telengut**

Alisi Telengut is a Canadian of Mongolian descent who has created an evocative short film expressing the beliefs of her religious heritage. She reappropriates the colonialist label of “animism” as a descriptor of the indigenous worldview, as it expresses well the view that everything in nature is alive and divine. Her film uses an animation technique that looks like impressionism in notion, conveying a notion of the creation of earth, sky, plants, and fire as the narrator speaks of the Sky God Tengri, Mother Earth, the Fire God, and all the Earth spirits and ancestors which fill the world and give it life. Repetitive music and the pulsating images viscerally express this ever-changing world of divine natural forces in an almost hypnotic fashion.

The film also expresses the reverence towards nature of her people, so at odds with the utilitarian view of the natural world that we associate with modern industrial culture. It begins with a description of an offering on an altar, made of rocks and colorful scarves, that opens the

worshipper to the world of creation and its power. In this way, the narration is not an abstract myth of creation but one embedded in ritual practice and the valuation of the natural world that is celebrated.